

## *The Disciple and His Thoughts*

### ***Ephesians 4:8***

*Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things.***

1. There is no greater place of battle for your life between the devil and the Lord than your mind! Everything the devil does or says is contrary to what God says or does. That is why your mind is a fertile battlefield—you don't always know what God is doing and saying!

2. Read Genesis 3:1-7.

According to 3:1, what did the devil question first?

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*He questioned what God had said!* The battle was on for all of humanity, and it began in the **mind** of Eve!

According to Gen. 1:4, what did the devil then question?

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*Once he had Eve questioning God's **words**, he then had her question God's **actions**.* He proceeded to tell her that God was a liar! Read Titus 1:2. Can God lie? \_\_\_\_\_. Have there been times in your life when you have questioned the truthfulness of God? Does it seem, at times, that God is not being truthful? The Bible says He never lies. Why then do we have trouble believing Him?

3. Thoughts are the **seedbed** of our actions. We never act without thinking (*our thoughts may be conscious or subconscious, but they are there all the same!!*). Read Proverbs 4:23. (In the NIV version it uses the words *wellspring of life* for *issues of life*.) Note that you are to **guard your heart**, because everything comes from there. Your heart is the essence of who you are; and who you are is determined by what you think!!

4. Read Matthew 16:13-23

These verses are divided into three sections: what people think, what Peter thinks, and what the devil thinks.

• ***Soul Thoughts***

In the first section Jesus asks Peter what **people think** about who He (Jesus) is.

According to Matt. 16, people think Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_

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For this study we are going to call what the natural man thinks, ***soul thoughts***. These are thoughts that are earthly, not spiritual in nature. Non-Christians have this kind of thinking. Read Ephesians 4:17-19.

How does Paul describe their thinking? \_\_\_\_\_

How does he describe their understanding? \_\_\_\_\_

Soul thoughts are our thoughts without the enlightenment of God or His Word. They can be good: when you need your car fixed you don't turn to Ephesians, you go to the repair manual!! However, for understanding life, knowing who you are, and discerning God's will, soul thoughts are of no value.

• ***Spirit Thoughts***

Go back to Matthew 16 and read verses 15-18.

Who did Peter say Jesus was? \_\_\_\_\_

How did he know it? \_\_\_\_\_

What verb does Jesus use to describe how he got this information from God?

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***Revelation*** is God's self-disclosure. Without revelation no one would know God, or even about Him. This revelation we will call ***Spirit thoughts***. Spirit thoughts are spiritual insights and wisdom.

Read James 1:1-8. When a person is being tested and does not understand, what is he to ask God to give him? \_\_\_\_\_

Wisdom is God's insight into suffering or testing.

Since the things we think control the actions we do, it is important to think properly about ourselves. On the following two pages is a list of truthful things God has said about you, personally.

If you would read the list daily, and believe what God says, because He cannot lie, ***you would be a different person—for the better!***

**WHO AM I?**

- I am the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13)
- I am the light of the world (Matt. 5:14)
- I am a child of God (John 1:12)
- I am part of the true vine, a channel of Christ's life (John 15:1,5)
- I am Christ's friend (John 15:15)
- I am chosen and appointed by Christ to bear His fruit (John 15:16)
- I am a slave of righteousness (Rom. 6:18)
- I am enslaved to God (Rom. 6:22)
- I am a son of God; God is spiritually my Father (Rom. 8:14,15; Gal. 3:26; 4:6)
- I am a joint heir with Christ, sharing His inheritance with Him (Rom. 8:17)
- I am a dwelling place—of God. His Spirit and His life dwells in me (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19)
- I am united to the Lord and am one spirit with Him (I Cor. 6:17)
- I am a member of Christ's body (I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30)
- I am a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17)
- I am reconciled to God and am a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18,19)

- I am a son of God and one in Christ (Gal. 3:26,28)
- I am a heir of God since I am a son of God (Gal. 4:6,7)
- I am a saint (Eph. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2)
- I am God's workmanship—His handiwork (Eph. 2:10)
- I am a fellow citizen with the rest of God's family (Eph. 2:19)
- I am a prisoner of Christ (Eph. 3:1; 4:1)
- I am righteous and holy (Eph. 4:24)
- I am a citizen of heaven, seated in heaven right now (Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:6)
- I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3)
- I am an expression of the life of Christ because He is my life (Col. 3:4)
- I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4)
- I am a son of light and not of darkness (1 Thess. 5:5)
- I am a holy partaker of a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1)
- I am a partaker of Christ; I share in His life (Heb. 3:14)
- I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5)
- I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession (1 Pet. 2:9,10)
- I am an alien and stranger to this world in which I temporarily live (1 Pet. 2:11)
- I am an enemy of the devil (1 Pet. 5:8)
- I am a child of God and I will resemble Christ when He returns (1 John 3:1,2)
- I am born of God, and the evil one—the devil—cannot touch me (1 John 5:18)
- I am *not* the great "I Am" (Exod. 3:14; John 8:24,28,58), but by the grace of God, I am what I am (1 Cor. 15:10)

#### **SINCE I AM IN CHRIST, BY THE GRACE OF GOD ...**

- I have been justified—completely forgiven and made righteous (Rom 5:1)
- I died with Christ and died to the power of sin's rule over my life (Rom. 6:1-6)
- I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8:1)
- I have been placed into Christ by God's doing (1 Cor. 1:30)
- I have received the Spirit of God into my life that I might know the things freely given to me by God (1 Cor. 2:12)
- I have been given the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16)
- I have been bought with a price; I am not my own; I belong to God (1 Cor. 6:19,20)
- I have been established, anointed and sealed by God in Christ, and I have been given the Holy Spirit as a pledge guaranteeing my inheritance to come (2 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13,14)
- Since I have died, I no longer live for myself, but for Christ (2 Cor. 5:14,15)
- I have been made righteous (2 Cor. 5:21)
- I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I am now living is Christ's life (Gal. 2:20)
- I have been blessed with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3)
- I was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and am without blame before Him (Eph. 1:4)
- I was predestined—determined by God—to be adopted as God's son (Eph. 1:5)
- I have been redeemed and forgiven, and I am a recipient of His lavish grace.
- I have been made alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:5)
- I have been raised up and seated with Christ in heaven (Eph. 2:6)
- I have direct access to God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:18)
- I may approach God with boldness, freedom and confidence (Eph. 3:12)
- I have been rescued from the domain of Satan's rule and transferred to the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13)

- I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. The debt against me has been cancelled (Col. 1:14)
- Christ Himself is in me (Col. 1:27)
- I am firmly rooted in Christ and am now being built in Him (Col. 2:7)
- I have been spiritually circumcised. My old unregenerate nature has been removed (Col.2:11)
- I have been made complete in Christ (Col. 2:10)
- I have been buried, raised and made alive with Christ (Col. 2:12,13)
- I died with Christ and I have been raised up with Christ. My life is now hidden with Christ in God. Christ is now my life (Col. 3:1-4)
- I have been given a spirit of power, love and self-discipline (2 Tim. 1:7)
- I have been saved and set apart according to God's doing (2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5)
- Because I am sanctified and am one with the Sanctifier, He is not ashamed to call me brother (Heb. 2:11)
- I have the right to come boldly before the throne of God to find mercy and grace in time of need (Heb. 4:16)
- I have been given exceedingly great and precious promises by God by which I am a partaker of God's divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4)

• ***Snake Thoughts***

Read Matthew 16:21-23.

What did Jesus say was going to happen to Him? (verse 21) \_\_\_\_\_

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What did Peter say? \_\_\_\_\_

What did Jesus then say, and to whom? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Just moments after Peter had revelational thoughts about Jesus he spewed out devilish snake thoughts. He was unaware that he was speaking thoughts the devil had put into his head. That's why Jesus rebuked the devil and not Peter.

Any thought from the devil we call a ***snake thought***. These thoughts are always contrary to the mind and will of God. They never lead to life and happiness. Their end is inevitably destruction! That is the goal of the devil in your life: absolute worthlessness! Remember, thoughts are the seedbed of actions. If he can get us to think wrongly, wrong actions will follow!

Here are some snake thoughts:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| • I can't   | • Life is terrible.                  |
| • I'm afraid.   | • I'm no good.                       |
| • I'll never be happy.                                  | • No one loves me.                   |
| • I'm all messed up.                                    | • God doesn't care about <i>me</i> . |
| • God won't do anything for me.                         |                                      |
| • God helps those who help themselves.                  |                                      |
| • I got myself into this mess—I have to get myself out. |                                      |

*Can you think of more??*

**5. How to distinguish between snake thoughts and Spirit thoughts.**

• **How do your thoughts square with the Scripture?**

This is the most obvious, yet the most neglected way of checking our thoughts. Many just don't know the Word well enough to know if their thoughts are biblical. You must read, memorize, and meditate on God's Word to be able to judge your thoughts.

Ask your godly counselors to help you. Many times they have thought the same thoughts and have wisdom ready for you.

• **How do your thoughts affect your emotions?**

Emotions cannot always be trusted but God has given them to us as a barometer to help measure the atmosphere around us. Consider that while standing on the edge of high building, you will sense the emotion of fear. You respond wisely by backing away from the danger.

Read Numbers 13:33.

How did they feel about themselves? \_\_\_\_\_

Was their view of themselves correct? \_\_\_\_\_

God had told them to go in and conquer the land. When they believed they were grasshoppers, their thoughts produced weakness. If they had thought as God did, they would have believed themselves able to defeat any giant—and they would have! The emotion of fear should have triggered a question in their minds about what was truth in their situation.

Snake thoughts lead to the emotions of: worry, loneliness, depression, discouragement, fear, hopelessness, rejection, etc.

Spirit thoughts cause us to have: hope, peace, vitality, excitement, enthusiasm, encouragement, etc.

• **Are the thoughts you are having causing you to reach your goal?**

The goal of every Christian should be to be like Jesus. Are your thoughts carrying you to that end? Do they lead you to obedience?

**6. Steps to bringing your thoughts under control.**

Remember: you should control your thoughts—your thoughts should not control you!

Read 2 Corinthians 10:5.

*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

“Bringing into captivity every thought” is about making certain that what you are thinking is consistent with the Word of God and the Character of God. The idea of capturing every thought mind sound tedious, but if done consistently, you will sense the power of God in transforming you into His image.

Fill your mind with spirit thoughts and get rid of snake thoughts.

On the following page there are five important components to bring your thoughts under control.

- ***Ask God to show you which thoughts are His.***

Acknowledge snake thoughts and claim 2 Corinthians 5:17, *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Search the Word of God, ask other believers, ask the Holy Spirit to give an assurance about what you are thinking.

Claim by faith that you are a new person in Christ and you do not have to be ruled by snake thoughts.

- ***Ask God to forgive you for believing a lie.***

Be specific as possible. Name your wrong thoughts.

- ***Resist the devil by challenging every thought.***

According to James 4:7 we are to: ***submit to God, resist*** the devil, and he will flee. We resist the devil by judging every thought that he tries to put in our head. Judge them by seeing if they square with Scripture, how they affect your emotions, and whether or not they will lead you to be more like Jesus.

- ***Refuse to focus an old snake thoughts.*** Focus your thoughts on what The Lord says, not on what the enemy, or your old nature says. Memorize related Scripture and repeat it to yourself. Do it out loud as much as possible. Your ears need to hear your voice saying it!

- ***Build a tower or stronghold of truth.***

Read Psalm 18:1-3. David ran to his stronghold of truth. You can create that same stronghold in your own mind through Scripture memory and reading. Immerse yourself in the Word!