

Second Corinthians X

Bring Every Thought into Captivity #2

Our part in the process of conversion and battle against Satan
Fred R. Coulter—July 21, 2018

In connection with what we are doing with *bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*, what we're doing is having the transcripts prepared for *The Heart/Mind Connection*. Then we want to do a special study pack that we will entitle *The Process of Conversion*. We will add to that the booklet *The Washing of the Water by the Word*, and the sermons we're doing now *Bringing Every Thought into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ*. That tells us the whole process.

It's interesting the way that the Bible is put together. It starts out with the whole, and over a period of time seven divisions were created:

1. the Law
 2. the Prophets
 3. the Psalms
 4. the Gospel and Acts
- that's the fourth one, in the middle of the seven*
5. the General Epistles
 6. the Epistles of Paul
 7. Revelation

So, you've got the whole structure of the Bible, then you have the key things:

- Sabbath—the first step to begin to know God
- Passover and Holy Days—the framework for the plan of God

Then this is going to show the framework of conversion, our part!

The Protestants say that there's nothing more you have to do; if you say you believe in Jesus, it's all over and you have eternal life secure. Then they tell you that it doesn't matter what you do because God's love is unconditional.

Very few people know *our part!* Let's look some verses that will give us a clue concerning *our part!*

After telling us the thing we need to do in keeping the Laws of God in the letter of the Law, and our attitude and all of that, Jesus says:

Matthew 6:33: "But *as for* you, seek first... [Greek: 'protos' meaning *your primary goal*] ...the Kingdom of God and His righteousness..."

Matthew 5:48: "Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect."

Matthew 6:33: "...seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness... [*Look how those go together!*] ...and all these things shall be added to you." *That is whatever physical things we need to live.*

Matt. 7:7—here's *our part*. You always hear us talk about prayer and Bible study, and that is the key: *your personal prayer and your personal study every single day!*

Matthew 7:7: "Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you." *That's our part!* That's a brief description of everything that we do.

Then you can find many other places where it says to seek this, that and the other thing; you can do word studies on that.

Verse 8: "For everyone who asks receives..." But not everything you receive is *yes*, or what you necessarily expect. It may be more, or it may be less.

You may need a new car and ask God to provide you with a Cadillac, and He gives you a mini-coupe. But you got your car.

- you also have to ask and *not doubt*
- you also have to ask and *be persistent*

It make take a long time of much of the same prayer, because God wants to know if you are really, really sincere in it. Do you *really* want it! And you have to ask in faith.

What did this little discussion prove? *Everything in the Word of God is not found in one place!* There are many parts to it, so that when you have one part, you look for the other parts that come along with it and put it together. That's called *rightly dividing the Word of God!* You can look at it this way: Atheists believe in the 'Big Bang' and everything came from the 'Big Bang'!

We have the Bible, the Word of God and the Spirit of God, and everything is like a *big bang* out of that. But it's not an explosion, you have to dig for it, you have to work for it. There's another proverb that says it's a 'glory to God to hide and the honor of the king to find it.'

"...and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened" (v 8). That tells us part of the things of what we are to do. This is a

general framework. All of those are structured on the seven divisions of the Bible.

Psa. 33 is an interesting Psalm, and it really tells us a summary of God's plan. Also, it tells us that God is very musical.

Psalm 33:1: "Rejoice in the LORD..." That's part of what we're to do. Do you think you're going to get blessings from God if you're angry at Him? How did Jonah do? *He had to spend some time in a whale's belly!* Can you imagine breathing that air?

"...O you righteous ones; praise is becoming for the upright. Praise the LORD with a lyre; sing unto Him with a harp of ten strings. Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully with shouts of joy" (vs 1-3). *There's room for everybody who doesn't know how to sing!*

Verse 4: "For the Word of the LORD is upright..." The Word of God is true. Do a study on *the Word of God and the Word of the Lord!* The words of Jesus. Put it all together.

So, a lot of these Scriptures come along and they give us a starting point. Or, as in our previous study, it gives us another point to add to what we've already done.

"...and all His works are *done* in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the loving kindness of the LORD" (vs 4-5).

It also says in Matt. 5 that He even causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

Verse 6: "By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made... [by His command] ...and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathered the waters of the sea together like a heap, putting the depths in storehouses" (vs 6-7).

They have discovered that below the surface of the earth and below the oceans there's a huge layer of water that is specially there, which is more than all the water that is on the earth. So, when God broke up the fountains of the deep, you see what that does. Do you know the Word of God? When God broke of the fountains of the deep when the Flood came, there was plenty of water to cover the whole earth!

If you break of the fountains of the deep, what happens to the land? *It goes down!* When you put the water back in, the land comes up.

Verse 8: "Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him, for He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. The LORD brings the counsel of

the nations to nothing..." (vs 8-10). Read what's going to happen in the book of Revelation. Is that nothing?

"...He frustrates the plans of the people. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, **the thoughts of His heart to all generations**" (vs 10-11). *His plan is going to encompass everyone!* You'll find that when you come to The Last Great Day. The greatest secret listed in the most unusual place called *the eighth day*. Look how great that's going to be!

Verse 12: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD..." That used to be Israel. Still is to the extent of the prophecies and blessings that God gave to Israel.

We are called *a nation of priests* (1-Pet. 2). Didn't Jesus say to the scribes and Pharisees that 'you've been evil and rejected everything of God, the Kingdom of God is going to be taken from you and given to a nation that bears fruit.' That's talking about *us!*

"...and the people He has chosen for His own inheritance" (v 12). Look up *inheritance* in the New Testament. We're going to be *'joint heirs with Christ'*! That's a pretty high level. What I want you to do is see how great the Word of God is, what He's doing, His plan and so forth.

Verse 13: "The LORD looks down from heaven..." Does He know what's going on in the earth all the time? How does He look down from heaven?

Someone is going to say, 'How can God know everything, everywhere at all times?' *He's got angels, the seven spirits of God, etc.!*

"...He beholds all the sons of men. From His dwelling place He looks intently upon all the inhabitants of the earth. Together He fashions their hearts alike; **He considers all their works**" (vs 13-15).

- you can look at what God did to the nations before the Flood.
- what happened after the Flood
- what happened to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel and Judah
- look at all the other nations that God has dealt with
- God says that He judges the nations, whether they do good or evil, having nothing to do with Israel or Judah (Jer. 18)

Even though, He is still judging Israel and Judah!

All of this shows *God's part* in conjunction with ours. Now let's see *our part* in these three

things:

1. the heart/mind connection
2. the washing of the water by the Word
3. bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

I think that will represent a really, really good study for people to go through all of that. And here's another basic thing, *the woman at the well*, as she was talking to Jesus:

John 4:20: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain... ['Aren't we good?'] ...but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem.'.... [that was true then] ...Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father.'" (vs 20-21). ***This is signaling the change that is coming!***

What is that change? *He tells us right here;* v 22: You do not know what you worship. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, **when the true worshipers...**" (vs 22-23).

That's an interesting statement! What is He saying? *If all worship of God was worship of **God**, how could there be **true** worshipers? If there are true worshipers it tells you that there are **false** worshipers! It's famous to say today that there is **fake news**. Well, there is **fake Christianity and fake Christians and fake worshipers!***

Verse 22: "**You do not know what you worship...**" *Think about that!* How many people have a worship of God that they don't know what they're doing? ***God wants us to know what we're doing!***

"...We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews" (v 22). Where did all of the New Testament come from? *All the apostles came from the tribes of Israel, mostly Benjamin!*

Verse 23: "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth..." ***That is our responsibility back to God!*** So, we have our part to do and God has His part to do.

"...for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner" (v 23). He's got the seven spirits of God that go into all the earth seeking that all out.

Verse 24: "God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must... [it's obligatory] ...worship in Spirit and in Truth." ***That's the whole summary of conversion!***

- in spirit with God's Spirit

- in Truth; the Word of God is true
- truth within us

That's how we overcome the sin within! You can't overcome the sin within if you don't put in truth! Can you overcome a deceitful nature with more lies? *No you can't!*

Let's see *our part* and what we have to do, how we have to look at it and how these things come together. We have to fight off Satan the devil. We covered some of that in Eph. 6. This is the battle that we are facing every day:

- spirit and truth toward God
- Satan and his powers today

Ephesians 2:1: "Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past **according to the course of this world...**" (vs 1-2). Who is the 'god of this world'? *We read it! We studied it!* (2-Cor. 4:4)

"...according to **the prince of the power of the air...**" (v 2). What does he do? Remember that it says that we use the shield of faith to thwart off the fiery darts of Satan (Eph. 6). What is he doing? *He's got a lot of things to do it today, and you can carry it right in your hand wherever you go!* It's called a *cell phone, the Internet!*

Sidebar on the Internet: I learned something watching the History Channel. Where is the cloud? Everybody thinks it's in a satellite somewhere in space. It's not! It's in servers on the earth! How do all of these servers communicate? *Some of it's satellite, but most of it is cable laid in the bottom of the ocean around the world!* It showed a picture of all the cable that is there. It's an amazing thing!

I thought, it's interesting that you call it *the cloud*, but it's not up there, and you call it the *worldwide net*, and you think it's in satellites, but it's at the bottom of the ocean.

Then it showed that when they had the terrible earthquake off of Formosa or Taiwan now. That disrupted everything for about two weeks until they could get it connected again.

What amazed me was that they have these ships that lay the cable. They have special plow that goes all the way to the floor of the ocean, and it digs a ten foot trench and lays the cable. I was thinking when I saw that: I wonder what's going to happen when all these earthquakes in Revelation take place?

"...the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience" (v 2). If you don't think that's true, all you have to do is turn on your news and watch it for a while and see how that works.

Verse 3: “Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the world*.” *Then God calls us!*

Bringing every thought into captivity is what’s important! Let’s see how that works. We have:

- the heart/mind connection
- the washing of the water by the Word
- led by the Holy Spirit
- bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

All to develop the mind of Christ! All of those things come together, but the whole plan of God is laid out in many different aspects. What is all of this based on in every part of the Bible? *To love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being! To love your neighbor as yourself!*

Philippians 2:1^[transcriber’s correction]: “Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions.” This shows how we’re to develop this kind of character.

Verse 2: “Fulfill my joy that you **be of the same mind, having the same love, being joined together in soul,** minding the one thing.” What is the one thing? *Seek the Kingdom of God!*

See how the Bible all comes together! Isn’t this the ultimate goal of the Kingdom of God? Phil. 2:1-2? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 3: “**Let** nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself.” That’s a hard thing to do!

Verse 4: “**Let** each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus**” (vs 4-5).

That means that *God is not going to put it in there unless you desire it!* You have to agree with God and want it! All of these things are choices that we must act upon, and God will fulfill. But if we don’t act upon them, God will not fulfill.

Verse 6: “Who, although He **existed** in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God... [*‘existed’ means was God*] ...but emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant; and being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross” (vs 6-8).

I just did a couple of Church at Home on *the Shroud of Turin*. Steve Green did a good job in working up all the details for us to help put it together. Jonathan did a good job of running the camera. I was reading out of *A Harmony of the Gospels* so fast that he didn’t know where I was, because I didn’t give him *A Harmony*.

We talked about the scourging. Randy Vild got a really good picture of a ‘cat o nine tails’ and what it was like. All the sharp barbs on the end to tear the flesh. I pointed out that the prophecy of Christ, looking down at His ribs when He was on the cross, He could see His bones.

When you look at the shroud there’s nothing there to show that He was ever hit with a scourge. So, they give 40 lashes, and Randy got the footage to show what the back of a man would look like with 40 scourges. Every time of those 40 strokes, there would be eight red lines that would come down, showing that it’s drawing blood.

The back—because those scourges would come around and rip the flesh... You rip one way and pull and it rips the flesh. The whole back was red. Then it showed the shroud with a few little ‘tinker-toy’ marks on the back. When I saw that, and Randy did a great job on it. Steve did a good job in writing up all the things that we used to cover it.

Christ prophesied that His body and his visage would be more harmed, more marred than any other man in history. Think about what this tells us about the love of God. How much does He want us in the Kingdom? *So much so that He gave up being God:*

- to hold just a little bit of God
- to become a human being
- to be born of the virgin Mary
- grow up
- called the apostles
- have His ministry

Then He knew that He was going to die this way!

Now you know why the night of the Passover He prayed until the sweat was like great drops of blood coming down. Your back is the most sensitive part of your body.

“...obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross. Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name, which *is* above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (vs 8-10).

Read Rev. 5 where there’s the praise of God, all the angels, everything on earth and everything under the sea. I don’t know how a whale is going to

praise God, but it says that all that is in the sea is going to praise Him. Think of God's desire for us, and think about how we need to seek God.

Revelation 5:11: "And I saw and I heard *the* voices of many angels around the throne, and *the* voices of the living creatures and the elders, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing.' And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and those that are on the sea, and all the things in them, I heard saying..." (vs 11-13).

To me, this is the most astounding statement in this chapter, "...**To Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing, and honor, and glory, and sovereignty into the ages of eternity.**' And the four living creatures said, 'Amen.' And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped *Him Who* lives into the ages of eternity" (vs 13-14).

Look what Jesus had to do so that we could be co-heirs with Him! That is an amazing thing! All of this is in the Bible!

Now let's look at some of the things that we need to keep in mind. There's a lot we can learn in the Psalms and in the Proverbs on how to get our minds focused to think and to understand.

Think about how foolish it is for human beings to say that we don't need the Old Testament. Or for the Jews to say that 'we reject Christ, we don't need the New Testament.'

This helps us understand how God intervenes in our lives in an evil world; Psalm 64:1: "Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; preserve my life from fear of the enemy."

When we get into the history of the Church, stop and think about this: Every one of us has trial we're working on, and each one is a little different. Compare that to the Church of the Alps. They were being hunted down by the Romans: arrested, tried, persecuted, chased from place to place.

After being question they were taken out, lined up on the stake, lit the fire and burned you. Now then, how bad is your trial today compared to that? *Very light!* But it's still very heavy because we have more mental things to fight against than they did. Today we live in an age when more things can come into our mind through all the digital apparatuses and printed word and everything that we have.

So, our minds are really subject to more attacks of a greater intensity than the persecution

that they suffered physically. This is why it's so important that ***we learn to bring every thought into captivity to Christ!***

Verse 2: "Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked, from the rebellion of the workers of iniquity, who sharpen their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words; so that they may shoot at the blameless from concealment—suddenly they shoot at him, and fear not" (vs 2-4).

Isn't that true? Don't we have a lot of subversive things going on today? That are coming after people to take away their lives? Their rights? *Yes!*

Verse 5: "They encourage themselves in an evil plan; they talk of laying snares secretly; they say, 'Who shall see them?' They plot injustices, saying, '**We have made a perfect plan.**'..." (vs 5-6). What is that today? *The world order!*

"...For the inward thought and heart of man is [very] cunning.... [that's what we have to fight against] ...But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly they shall be wounded" (vs 6-7).

Up against all of these things, ***how do we bring thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ*** in a way that we can exercise our thoughts and know what to look for so that we don't get ensnared in their traps.

James will help us understand that many of the accidental things that get into our mind, ***as long as we are expelling them***, there is no sin!

(go to the next track)

We know that in the Psalms and the Proverbs that it tells us that the thoughts of man are vanity, especially when they exclude God. God calls us, and then we start applying our mind. It's quite amazing that we really haven't used our minds the way that they should be until God calls us.

- How do we know what to do?
- How do we know what to think?

God has entrusted us with His Spirit and with His Word! Now we have the time to study, to pray, to do all of these things. We're not chased from place to place, from city to city. The day will come when things like that will happen.

Here in James 1 it tells us ***the steps on how to bring every thought into captivity*** and to avoid sin. Not every thought that comes into your mind constitutes a sin that you have committed. It may be an evil thought thrust in there by Satan, 'the prince of the power of the air.'

What do you do when that happens? We have enough evil from our past lives that keeps coming up, that we need to get rid of, as well. So, the whole point of conversion is a complete renewal of the mind. Then, at the resurrection, the total transformation and elimination of all sin.

- What does God do for us so we can follow along and complete what we're going to read in James 1?
- In the New Covenant, how does God want us to handle His laws and commandments?
- How does God want us to accept them?

He's writing them in our heart and mind, inscribing them! The mind is inscribable, meaning that you can write something right on the very neural processes of your brain. Some of those things can be changed in a short period of time. Some of them it takes a longer time. But it's with the Spirit of God.

Now, tie all of that together with the first Psalm, the one who meditates on the Law of God.

What does that mean? Do you just sit around and meditate? *No! It means that you think with the laws and commandments of God, and the Word of God! That's how you think!*

James 1:1: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, which are in the dispersion: Greetings!"

Would you send a letter to people you didn't know to whom it was going, or where it was going? What does this tell us? *They knew where the 12 tribes were!*

Sidebar on James: There's no mention of the Gentiles. So, this is before 42_{A.D.}

Verse 2: "Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials." The first time you read that, you think: *this must be insane!* Why do you count it joy? *He answers the question:*

Verse 3: "Knowing that **the testing of your faith produces endurance.**" Who is going to be saved? The one who is well-intentioned? **or** The one who endures to the end? *The one who endures to the end!* Isn't that what Jesus said? *Yes!*

Verse 4: "But let endurance have *its* perfect work, **so that you may be perfect...** [Matt. 5:48] ...and complete, not lacking in anything. However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith..." (vs 4-6).

This is all telling us *the things we need to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ!*

"...not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the* sea that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (vs 6-8).

Now James is getting into the kind of faith we need, and how we need to handle it. I've said this: *double-minded is one foot in the world and one foot in the Church!* That's another way of expressing it.

Verse 9: "But let the brother who is in humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation, and *let* the one who is rich *rejoice* in his humble condition, because as *the* flower of *the* field, he himself will pass away" (vs 9-10). Isn't that true? *All of us here can attest to it!*

Verse 11: "For the sun rises with *its* burning heat and dries up the grass, and its flower falls off, and its beautiful appearance perishes. In the same way also shall the rich man wither in his pursuits. Blessed is *the* man who endures trials..." (vs 11-12)—*proving and testing and bringing every thought into captivity!*

"...because after he has been proved he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (v 12).

With all of that as a preface, then James begins telling us *how we bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ!* Though, he doesn't say that here.

Verse 13: "Do not let anyone who is tempted say, 'I am being tempted by God'..."

- Who is the tempter? *Satan the devil, and our own human nature and lusts!*
- Who is the 'prince of the power of the air' to stir up the lust of the mind, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the heart? *Satan!*

In this society, he doesn't have to be there personally. You can see it on television, in a movie, on a billboard, in a magazine, going through the checkout line at the supermarket.

Survey: Next time you go out to the supermarket and go through the checkout, ask yourself: How many magazines are advertised for men? Compared to how many are advertised for women? It just shows that Satan is clever.

"...because **God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one with evil.**" What does this tell us? *Everything that comes along is a choice!* We have to exercise our free moral agency to choose what is right, to do what is right, and *this*

is our part! God has His part, and this is our part!

Verse 14: “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away...”—from what? *From the thoughts of God, from the Word of God!* And his own human nature is beginning to take hold.

“...and is **enticed by his own lust**” (v 14). Notice that at every point *you can choose* to reject it. *It’s a choice!*

- that looks pretty good
- I wonder if God would allow that?
- it might be...

Notice that it’s over a period of time, v 15: “**And after lust has conceived...**” *You have convinced yourself that it’s okay to do!* We’ve all done this at one time or another.

“...**it gives birth to sin...**” (v 15). You don’t want to get into sin. But how many times do we ask ourselves, ‘Why did I do that?’

Notice the steps; at each one of these points we can cut it off. Each one of these points requires a choice, the exercise of God’s Spirit and God’s Truth to do it! That is called *building character!* That’s why they come along.

“...and sin, when it is completely finished, brings forth death” (v 15). *The wages of sin is death!*

If you stop and repent of it at this point, it’s over with. But if it comes to the point that it is sin, and there are more things involved, then there’s more repentance that is required, and more changing of your mind and attitude to correct the problem that went on in order to *bring every thought into obedience unto Christ!*

One of the things they have right now to get everybody all excited with emotion. They’ve got to bring all the children to the parents that they have separated from the immigrants coming in. They have a two-week period to do it. They never tell you that 80% of the children didn’t come with their parents.

So, the next time you watch the news, don’t get all involved with what a terrible thing separating the children from the parents.

Why did they leave home? Those that came with other than parents, why did the parents give the kids to the ‘coyotes’ to bring up here? What are you going to do? Everybody gets all excited over it, and ‘we’ve got to solve the immigration problem.’

- How are you going to solve the immigration problem?
- Do you know what the true cause is?

That’s why it’s important that you know the laws and commandments of God, and the Truth of God, so that when something comes along you can make the right choice. What is the bottom line problem?

1. leaving God
2. in the political landscape, *abortion*

Could it be that for every aborted baby God sends an immigrant? *The numbers are almost equal!* So, you can build all the fences you want, you can have all the law enforcement you want, but unless you get rid of the problem, you’re never going to get rid of the results of the sin!

That’s all part of the things we need to do when we choose. Some things are big problems! Some things are smaller problems! ***But they can all be overcome!***

Verse 16: “**Do not deceive yourselves**, my beloved brethren...” Don’t do that. Trust in God, *keep your mind on what He’s called us for!* Then James brings us back on how to think:

Verse 17: “Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning. According to His own will...” (vs 17-18).

Then he brings you right back to why you were called and what God is doing:

“...He begat us by *the Word of Truth*, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all **His created beings**” (v 18).

Prov. 16 is quite a chapter, talking about how to change, how to overcome, what is right, what is wrong.

Proverbs 16:25 {also found in Prov. 14:12}: “There is a way that seems right to a man...”

Think of it today. How many people are out there doing whatever they want to do, going hither and yon, doing their yard, shopping, visiting relatives and all of this sort of thing going on. They’re all having a good time and they all think that what they’re doing is right and good.

If you went up to them and said, ‘Do you know that you’re breaking the Sabbath of God by doing that?’ *Huh! It seems right to them!* Is society facing a lot of death because of the things that they are doing that seems right? The pleasant thing soon go down into the abyss of the evil things.

Just like drugs. I don’t know how on earth that NatGeo does it, but they get someone to go with the druggies and the dealers and follow them along when they do their work of selling, measuring it out

and all of this sort of thing. All they're doing is getting in there with lust and greed on both sides.

It seems good to the one who is doing it, even though he knows he's doing evil! 'If I don't get caught, it's good.' Well, the one who buys it says, 'If I don't become an addict, this is okay.' Both of them are wrong because they're caught in the trap of death.

Proverbs 16:2: "**All** the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirits." *God knows!*

What was the repentance of Job after he finally came to himself? *I know no thought can be withheld from You!* Furthermore, it's all recorded into your brain! *So, God will know anytime He needs to know!* Did Job think he was right? *Yes, he did!* Read through the book of Job; how much credit does he give to God? *and* How much credit does he give to himself?

Very few people understand that Job's problem was that he was setting himself above God. That's what his sin was. His actions were right and good, but he didn't give God any credit. He even said, 'My righteousness is more than God's.'

I wonder how he felt with boils from head to toe? Can you imagine that? Can you imagine that you just sit down covered with boils, and your wife says, 'Curse God and get it over with!' *I'll maintain my righteousness.* It was the only thing he could do. His three friends came and say before him, and they sat there for seven days and just looked at him. There he was with a potsherd scraping the puss off the boils everywhere! Imagine the flies, and throwing ashes on himself to keep the flies away!

Then by the time you get to Job 14, it says, 'The worms destroy this body.' What does that mean? *Maggots in his flesh, eating his puss!* Flies everywhere! This description doesn't do justice to what actually happened, but he thought he was good. *Every way of the man is good in his own eyes!*

- Who gave the laws that Job kept? *God did!*
- Who gave the crops that he harvested? *God did!*
- Who gave him his sons and daughters? *God did!*
- Who give him all the animals that he had? *God did!*

God created all of them! Job said, '**I know that no thought can be withheld from You!**'

Think of this in relationship to v 2: "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirits."

Verse 3 is the solution: **bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ!** That's what it says in the New Testament.

Verse 3: "**Commit your works unto the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established.**" This tells us how to do it.

If it doesn't tell us in one place in the Bible, study and find out where else in the Bible it does tell you.

Verse 3: "**Commit your works unto the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established.**" That's a promise.

If you have thoughts that are hard to overcome, ask God to help you with it. *He will!* Is a thought also work? *Yes, it's a mental work, not a physical work!* Have you ever been so intense in doing something mentally? You work and work on it!

Jonathan draws all these plans for all these fabulous houses that people build. He makes some great plans, and there's demand for his good work. But there are times when he works on it so hard to finish the plan that he's exhausted! Why? *Because it was work!* Not only your works, but your thoughts!

Verse 4: "**The LORD has made all for His own purpose;** yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."

- Why does He do that?
- Do you want God to come down against every person whenever they do wrong?

or

- Would you rather have God have people come after you?

Sooner or later God is going to take care of it, v 5: "Everyone who is proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD; *though joined hand in hand, he shall not be unpunished.*"

Here's another way of bringing every thought into obedience to Christ; v 6: "By mercy and Truth iniquity is **purged**..."—*gotten rid of!*

Do our minds need to be purged? *Yes! Especially when we have a lot of things in there cluttering it up aren't good!*

"...and by the fear of the LORD *men* turn away from evil" (v 6). I really think that this chapter is right on for bringing every thought into captive to the obedience to Christ.

Verse 7: "When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." That's a great one! Let's see how we do this.

Col. 3—the whole chapter focuses in on what we need to do with our thoughts. Changing our thoughts from what they were before we were converted to what they need to be after we were converted, and how to maintain that.

Colossians 3:1: “Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above...”

Where did we begin? *See the Kingdom of God first!* Ask, knock and seek and you’ll get your answers all right there.

“...where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God. Set your affection on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth” (vs 1-2). Those are all going to perish!

Verse 3: “For you have died... [How did you die? *Through baptism!*] ...and your life has been hid together with Christ in God. When Christ, *Who is* our life, is manifested, then you also shall be manifested with Him in glory” (vs 3-4).

What does Paul do? *He starts out and shows the goal:*

- pointing toward the Kingdom of God
- pointing toward receiving eternal life

Verse 5: “Therefore, put to death...” How do you put to death? *By expunging these things out of your mind, rather than letting them rule your thoughts!* That’s how! Tie that in with Prov. 16; you get your life right with God and your thoughts will be established.

Verse 5: “Therefore, put to death your members, which *are* on earth: sexual immorality...” *That’s everywhere!*

We’re faced with it every time we turn on the television, every time we turn on the news, every time we read the newspaper. Every mystery, every novel, everything that men have done, you go back and look at it all the way through all of history, sexual immorality is the main crime that causes so many problems!

“...uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires... [lusts] ...and covetousness, which is idolatry” (v 5). Remember what we talked about where the idols are. ***Idols in the mind!***

People can have very nice good behavior out here, but they may be plotting to kill you, or to rob you, whatever.

Isn’t that the source of the mystery movies? Who did it? How was it done? Who thought of it? How about those who *almost* commit the perfect

crime? *Almost!* One case I remember, it was a splatter of a different blood that came from the killer. Blood doesn’t lie!

Verse 6: “Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, among whom you also once walked, when you were living in these things” (vs 6-7). When you’re living in these things, it’s hard to come out of them.

Verse 8: “But now, you should also put off all *these* things... [bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ] ...wrath... [that’s a hard one to get rid of] ...indignation, malice, blasphemy, *and* foul language from your mouth.”

I suppose that everyone of us could say, ‘What did I do this past week? *Did you do any of these?* ‘Yep! Probably did!’ *Repent!*

Verse 9: “Do not lie to one another, *seeing that* you have put off the old man together with his deeds.” What do you do? *You don’t put it out and leave a vacuum within!* So, you put in!

Verse 10: “And have put on the new man, who is ***being renewed...***”—*a process, the process!* That’s why we want to get all three if these together:

1. *The Heart/Mind Connection*
2. *Washing of the Water by the Word*
3. *Bringing Every Thought Into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ*

That is the process of conversion!

Verse 12: “Put on then, as *the* elect of God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; ***even as Christ forgave you, so also you should forgive***” (vs 12-13).

When you get on your knees and ask God to forgive you for your sins, and then you get up and you don’t forgive someone for their sins. That’s what it’s talking about here; all the character.

Verse 14: “And above all these things *put on* love, which is *the* bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...” (vs 14-15).

In other words, you need the Spirit of God and the power of the Spirit of God ***to give you the choice to choose to let those good things of God rule***—control—***your mind,*** because you’re controlling your thoughts. That’s the hardest thing to do.

“...to which you were called into one body, and be thankful” (v 15). How do you do this? *He gives a summary of it here:*

Verse 16: “Let the Word of Christ dwell in

you richly...”—abundantly. How do you get the Word of Christ? *That’s the message of Christ!* Everything that is there! Everything that is in the Epistles and so forth.

“...in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And *in everything*—whatever you do in word or in deed—*do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*” (vs 11-12)—*by bringing every thought into captivity to Christ!*

In Eph. 5 it shows the same thing, the putting away of sin, the avoiding of sin, the avoiding of deception.

Ephesians 5:1: “Therefore, be imitators of God...” Doesn’t that tie in with *become perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect? Yes!*

“...as beloved children; and walk in love...” (vs 1-2). *Everyone of these things is a choice!*

“...even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor....* [then reject what is wrong] ...But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, do not permit it even to be named among you, as is fitting for saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking or jesting, which are not becoming; but instead, thanksgiving” (vs 2-4).

All the way through here it talks about resisting the sin and doing what is right.

Verse 5: “For this you know, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous *person*, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Do not let anyone deceive you with vain words; for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be joint partakers with them” (vs 5-7).

All of these things are telling us what we need to do. When you get through all of this, not only is it Christ, but every part of the Bible is telling us how we need to live.

That’s how we bring every thought into the obedience of Christ!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 6:33
- 2) Matthew 5:48
- 3) Matthew 6:33
- 4) Matthew 7:7-8
- 5) Psalm 33:1-15
- 6) John 4:20-23, 22-24
- 7) Ephesians 2:1-3

- 8) Philippians 2:1-10
- 9) Revelation 5:11-14
- 10) Psalm 64:1-7
- 11) James 1:1-18
- 12) Proverbs 16:2-7
- 13) Colossians 3:1-10, 12-17
- 14) Ephesians 5:1-7

Scriptures quoted, not referenced:

- 1 Peter 2
- Jeremiah 18
- Ephesians 6
- Psalm 1
- Proverbs 14:12
- Job 14

Also referenced:

- Sermon Series:
 - ✓ *Heart/Mind Connection*
 - ✓ *The Washing of the Water by the Word*
- Sermon: *Bringing Every Thought into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ* (2-Corinthians series #9)
- Study Pack: *The Process of Conversion* (coming soon)
- Church at Home *The Shroud of Turin* {churchathome.org}
- Book: *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter

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