

Our Greatest Battle: Our Mind

(Go to Meeting)

Norbert Bohnert—January 22, 2022

Hopefully I can give you a message that may be a little negative on one side, but at the same time it becomes positive in the long run and that's what I'm going to try to get across.

In today's world we are facing dilemmas left and right. We are facing challenges left and right, whether personal, with people, with issues or events going on around us. Our life consists of a lot of challenges.

- What is probably the source of the greatest battle we face in our conversion process after we've been called by God?
- Now and how it will remain in the future?
- What's our greatest battle?

This the basis of my message!

I think that the answer to the question on very simple terms is quite simple. The greatest battle all of us face today in our calling and conversion process is ***the battle for our mind!***

This battle is something we must realize in our lives, and if we do not know how that war, that battle is waged, we will lose out. The battle for our future is in the hands of what actually takes place in our mind!

Not surprisingly, the Bible has much to say about this and what each one of us must face and be against in our continuing walk with God, in Truth and in Righteousness! That's what we're striving for, ***to walk with God in Truth and in Righteousness!***

We all know that we were born with carnal thinking. We were born with a mind that not reconciled to the might of God.

Romans 8:7: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*."

As Paul says here, the carnal mind is hostile to the mind of God, the way of God. That basically leads us in opposition to God, and the thinking that will bring us every good thing!

This is reality! I know that we've been harping on this reality in the last few messages, but I think it is important to really sit down and assess where things are going in this world today. More importantly, where we are headed spiritually-speaking, dealing with the reality that's out around us.

Romans 1:18: "Indeed, *the* wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the Truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest among them, for God has manifested *it* to them; for the invisible things of Him are perceived from *the* creation of *the* world, **being understood by the things that were made**—both His eternal power and Godhead—**so that they are without excuse**" (vs 18-20).

Creation speaks to the power of God, if we will accept that obvious statement! ***Sins take us out of that Truth and into a world of our own making!*** Sin puts us in a frame of mind that is based on half-truths and outright lies. That's why Jesus said in John 8, that **IF you abide with, engage with the Word of God, THEN you will know Truth**, and the Truth will set you free of the lies that we have become immersed in. Lies that get in the way of us conducting our lives in the manner that God has instructed us.

God's Word gives us clarity! Without it, we can drift into deceitful thoughts, opinions and lies! We must overcome that, and that is where we must begin, the battle in the inner mind that we all possess as human carnal-natured people.

Verse 21: "Because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful; but they became vain in their own reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

Because we do not acknowledge God at times, our thinking becomes wasted or ineffectual. We live in a state of unknown, removed from the Truth.

Verse 24: "For this cause, God also abandoned them to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to disgrace their own bodies between themselves."

Paul has seen that God has allowed our sins to play out so that we can see the consequences of that way of life. We see it playing out all around us today. We see the consequences of trying to reason out for ourselves what is right and what is wrong. We have changed the Truth for lies; lies that make us unreasonable and acting out on false information.

Our own sinful behaviors are the expressions of the lies that we believe. That is part of the personal war that we're engaged with, **the battle for our mind!**

Verse 28: “And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge, God abandoned them to a reprobate mind, to practice *those* things that are immoral; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, guile, evil dispositions; whisperers, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things *and practices*; disobedient to parents, void of understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable *and* unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death, not only practice these things themselves, but also approve of those who commit *them*” (vs 28-32).

All these things described here is directly related to our mind, our thinking, what goes in our mind that we have been given to think and to make decisions with.

Since we have turned away from the Truth by carnal nature, our behaviors become ***not grounded*** in God’s view of things. We do not see things as God does. So, we do what we ought not to do. We think in ways that we ought not to think.

This section of Scripture describes the conditions of our carnal mind!

- Do we see that today in society?
- and more directly:*
- Can we see that possibly happening in our own lives is our own mind?
 - Are we ignorant to the fact of that reality that we face even in our conversion process?

I think that’s a valid question that we must continually ask ourselves in our continuing walk with God! Where is our mind *spiritually* taking us? The knowledge of good and evil has given mankind awareness and knowledge of qualities like love, empathy and compassion.

We do not know them the way that God does! We do not know Godly love to the fullest extent, so we cannot practice and apply it correctly as God does.

We’re not at that point! Today we see the uneven, unjust and misplaced application of love; unfortunately, many times! We don’t relate or connect to the mind of God.

That’s what we’re all striving to do, to develop the mind of God!

- Am I being too critical with making that statement?
- Am I being too unreasonable?

There again, I think we have to look at reality. I’ll let you make that determination based on your understanding and personal relationship with God. That is a blessing in itself that God has given us that mind, that we make those decisions, and that we have that personal relationship one on one with God.

Paul also said that disobedience and our version of God’s way suppresses the Truth, ***because God is Truth!*** Sin puts us at the other end of that spectrum!

Our over-communicative environment creates greater opportunities for deception. We share 70% of the same genes as a pumpkin does. For those of who have been on the Internet any length of time, we can attest to that fact. We are gullible at times, and confused by the many truths, because we do not see the one true Truth given to us by God and through His Word!

This is evident externally, but also internally, as I will explain later. We speak of love, justice, freedom, fairness and responsibility, but do we really fully understand what all these things are and mean? Without a grasp of Truth that we can get from God’s Word and way of life, there is no way with our carnal nature and mind that we can make the correct decisions necessary to live up to that potential that we are all striving for.

As a group, generally we are pretty quick to recognize deceptions in the world around us. We are not often fooled by the direct attacks on the basic Laws of God, like His moral laws, the Sabbath and Holy Days, or we probably would not even be here today.

But where we can usually be deceived is by ***the lies that we believe that are lurking within us that are behaviors and ultimately affect our lives!*** Lies that we have formed to help us justify or explain and make sense of our experiences.

Today we’re going to focus on the deceptions that play out in our own mind, the ***everyday lies that we tend to believe!*** There are three things I would like to cover today that we need to guard our thinking and direct our thoughts with the help of God’s Holy Spirit working within us:

1. identify the lies within
2. replace them with the Truth
3. reframe our life from God’s perspective

Let’s break these down in a little more detail, identifying the lies. We need to identify the lies; that’s where we have to start.

I. **Identify the lies**

God has called some people out now out of that no-win situation that Paul describes to see themselves for what they are: **hostile to the mind of God!** So that they might turn away from that way of life and begin to connect with the mind of God. That's what we should be striving for, to turn away from that life of lies and begin to connect with the mind of God. That is where you and I should be at, *but it is a battle!*

2-Corinthians 10:3: "For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh."

The world is fighting a different battle amongst itself with incomplete and faulty knowledge. It's a no win situation, because they do not have the full and complete Truth available to them as we do. We are in a different battle. Our minds have been miraculously opened to the Truth, and that is critical, so that we can transition from a carnal mind with carnal thoughts to a mind aligned more closely to God's mind and reality. God gives our mind the ability to make connections to spiritual thoughts through His Spirit.

Verse 4: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds."

The weapons of the world are compromised, mostly of self-help, willpower and carnal reasoning alone. While those things can have a positive effect at times, they can only take you so far. Our battle requires much more, **because we are in the process of converting to a spiritual mind!** How do we do that? *We need Divine tools!*

Verse 5: "Casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ."

Paul describes the battle that takes place. He talks about strongholds, those things that we fervently believe that have compromised us and set us up against the knowledge of God, because of the environment around us, our experiences, and the people that we associate with.

Paul is talking about the thoughts that we have that are in opposition to the mind of God, and consequently cause us to behave carnally. The problem in many of us is that **we are not waging a war!** We are passively hoping it will turn out all right. We try harder, we get distracted and we lose battle after battle. We should be fighting back, as Paul says, by using the Divine power of God's Holy Spirit, and by taking control of our thoughts and measuring them against the mind of God as defined by His Word.

Our thoughts are like soundtracks on a

continuous loop playing in our mind that is made up of the experiences that we've had since birth. We tend to treat our thoughts like something we have no control over. Do we have that attitude that they're just our thoughts?

Those thoughts control us! That is where the problem comes. Are we taking this to where we want to go, and where we want to end up? Over the years we have created those soundtracks that are constantly looping through our mind that define what we think about relationships, our work, our play, people, politics and God.

- these thoughts are very powerful
- they dictate our future

Have we ever looked at that!

If they are in line with the mind of God, they bring us meaning, contentment and success. But if they are based strictly on human reasoning, they are toxic! They at best hold us back, but more likely they have the potential to destroy everything that we are working toward.

Our mind is designed to be efficient. Everything we have thought or experienced is interpreted and collected in our brain to be able to predict our next thought or action.

Frequently, without us even knowing about it, we are stuck on autopilot. Our mind looks for stimulus that connects to what is already there. It weeds out what does not connect to anything stored in our mind, unless we intervene. We must intervene!

It's quite natural then for the carnal mind to weed out Godly thinking! It just does not compute, and we must realize that in our journey and walk with God.

Many times our mind is not looking to create something new and different, but to manipulate already what is there. To retie those connections that already exist. In other words, to connect the dots that are already there and to confirm what we already believe. It's a natural mindset that all of us tend to have at times.

Generally our mind will only accept what matches prior knowledge and experience. You and I do not have the mind of God, yet. Satan uses that fact to His advantage. The carnal mind tends to connect with carnal ideas. That's just the way it works; there are no ifs, ands or buts! Another way of saying it is that *we have a bias of carnal thinking!*

Unless expressly acted upon, we gravitate to carnal thinking, because we find it reasonable at times and most relatable. It's connection to what really is there.

In contrast, the spiritual mind connects the spiritual thoughts. But it is unnatural and requires spiritual tools to make that place for God's Word to reside in our head!

Our calling by God allows those connections to be made! That's the starting point! It truly is an opening of our mind by God. If we are to win the battle of our mind, we must actively fight and wage war because of the way that our mind is wired to work.

Not surprisingly, God tells us how to get there, because it is critical to our overall success. It's not really that complicated, but at the same time it's not that easy either. It's a war that we wage that we personally have to take on, whether we like it or not.

We cannot just become spiritually minded and change our behavior on our own, as we many times think we should be able to do. To become spiritually minded is about transforming and aligning our thoughts to God, to God's mind and thereby change the behaviors flowing from that new perspective of what we are seeking.

If we feel like giving up, it is because we are trying to change without the power. The changes that we need to make we are trying to do it on our own. That will not work! We cannot do this on our own! In other words, ***we are trying to make spiritual changes with our limited physical tools!*** It just doesn't work!

Let each one of us ask of ourselves: **What kind of lies do we believe?** Our background may lead us to believe that

- if I have more I will be happier. So, we spend to make ourselves feel better; it's a natural instinct
- maybe we think we need to grab onto something to make our lives more manageable and pleasant by relaxing and our troubles will go away.
- maybe moral, sexual issues are what we believe will solve all our problems
- maybe we need food to relieve our stress

Is that the answer? We often form our own little lies around those things that we believe that are missing in our personal lives.

- What is that thing that provides you with the momentary endorphin rush that never ends well? *We must ask ourselves that question!*
- Do we sometimes think that nothing ever good happens to us, so why try? *We have the tendency to give up!*
- Do I think that God will not provide me

with someone special, someone I can share my life with?

- Has that happened to many of us?

So, you take up the attitude of not making the effort. That's just an example! It's very common. But only we can make that assessment of ourselves and should only be making that assessment. No one else should be making that assessment for us.

Our insecurities drive our most deeply held lies. Our insecurities make us crave respect and cause us to act in ways that actually hurt us and diminish us. 'What happened to me is that I did not think I am worthy of love.'

Ask the questions of yourself:

- Why am I drawn to bad relationships?
- Why do I worry about things I have no control over?
- Why do I insist in being in control?
- Why do I do it?
 - ✓ because of fear?
 - ✓ because of boredom?
 - ✓ because of endorphin rush?
 - ✓ because I do not know any other way?

All questions we must face and answer personally, each one of us, if we are dealing within that inner battle within ourselves.

Insecurity, stress, anger, jealousy, sometimes strangers will put these thoughts in our heads. Sometimes it is even someone very close to us. Sometimes we do it to ourselves; sometimes we mostly do it to ourselves.

No one is responsible but ourselves to ourselves. But the thing is, we believe it and we act on it! What soundtracks play in our head that make us feel like the victim? The idea that we are a victim of our circumstances is the lie that Satan wants us to believe. It effects how we go through our life and with that how we view God.

These lies keep us from seeing a way forward. These lies undermine our potential and keep us from turning to God for help. We cannot do this on our own. ***Satan plays off building on our:***

- insecurities
- doubts
- emotions
- hurts
- anger
- feelings of helplessness

Satan just plays off of that, and we all share in those things! All of us do to some extent, and they affect our thinking and behavior to varying degrees. They

become a stumbling block to our spiritual growth. We must go to God and ask Him:

- What beliefs are driving my behaviors?
- Why do I think that He cannot provide me the peace that I need?
- Why do I think provide my needs?

These are question we should be asking ourselves!

Philippians 4:12: “For I [Paul] have experienced being brought low, and I have experienced abounding. In everything and in all things I have been taught both to be full and to hunger, both to abound and to be without. I can do all things through Christ, Who empowers me” (vs 12-13).

Christ empowers us! To believe otherwise is a lie!

II. What do we do?

We replace those lies! Once we identify the lies—that’s what we must do first—we need to replace them with Truth. We do things that numb us to our problems rather than turning them over to God. It’s a natural thing that we do. Sometimes worse than others.

Our thinking plays out in self-destructive behaviors. Every lie we have has a corresponding behavior that supports it. ***The response that we get to those behaviors serves to reinforce that lie!*** Thus the more ingrained it becomes. But it’s a lie! It’s just a plain old lie!

The only way to get out of this cycle is to first identify the lie and then replace that with the truth based on God’s Word. We must ask God to show us the lies that we believe. We need to acknowledge those lies that we tell ourselves, and replace them with the truth, stated by Christ:

Matthew 11:28: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are *overly* burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy, and My burden is light” (vs 28-30).

Christ offers us freedom from those lies that we believe! We need to replace the victimhood lies with the Truth that Paul wrote of:

Romans 8:31: “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?”

Verse 37: “But in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us.”

With the spiritual tool that God gives us, we

are more than up to that task. God has given us those spiritual tools. Our mind looks for stimulus that connects to what is already there. It weeds out what does not connect unless we intervene. Our brain is constantly under construction, and it takes from our environment around us.

A negative environment has a profound effect on how we go through life. If we feel like never goes right for us, then we look for evidence that supports that belief and weeds out anything else that does not support it.

That sets us on the road leading us away from God, so let us beware of these things. We all struggle against this. Sometimes we have to realize more than not.

The brain that God has given us is a highly experience dependent. That means that ***the life you lead influences your brain!*** Sometimes for the worse, and sometimes for the better. The human brain is designed to interact with the world and make corresponding changes inside our mind, depending on the quality of those inner actions.

If the young interactions are positive and sustained, you get one set of changes. If the interactions are negative and intense, you will get a different set of changes.

If you could personally go back and change your past, you would probably act differently, and therefore, experience the world differently today. But of course, we cannot do that. But what we can do is follow the formula for success that we are given:

Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatever *things* are true, whatever *things* are honorable, whatever *things* are just, whatever *things* are pure, whatever *things* are lovely, whatever *things* are of good report; if *there be* any virtue and if *there be* any praise, **think on these things**. Whatever things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, you do also; and the God of peace shall be with you” (vs 8-9).

God does not tell us to do these things for no reason. He designed can created us. What we think about affects our behavior and consequently the kind of life that we experience.

Satan wants nothing more than to crush us; that’s his entire goal! He wants to taint everything in our life that is good. If He can claim victory over our mind, he can eventually claim victory over our life. It is easy to dwell on the negative; it’s so easily done!

What’s not right and crowds out what we should be thinking about, and alters our disposition

and behavior. We have to be very careful. Negative thinking does not produce growth. It never will; it never has! ***Negative thinking does not produce growth!*** It's an important statement when you really think about it.

- it does not produce gratefulness
- it does not connect us to God

God says, ***'Do not dwell on negative thoughts'!***

- dwell on what is true
- dwell on what is right
- dwell on what is good
- dwell on what is excellent

Verse 9: "Whatever things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, you do also; and the God of peace shall be with you."

In other words, take what we learn and put it into practice. Let this be the basis for our behavior. As a result we will begin to experience the peace in our lives that God will give us.

If in the past you have allowed insecurity, anger, frustration, disappointment to dominate your thinking, then when things get hard for us—which we can definitely relate to—the easiest thing for us to do is fall back, unfortunately, on the lies and the corresponding behaviors associated to such and supported by emotions.

It's just a natural thing that occurs! You can't deny that. Whatever has happened to us, our brain has created a neuro pathway. As the years go by, we wave similar instances and experiences together to start to believe that we are a victim to our own circumstances. *We think:*

- we cannot win
- nothing will ever change
- that is stupid
- they're all laughing
- I'm a fraud
- I look ridiculous

We go through life waiting for 'the other shoe to drop'!

Whenever something bad happens, you go to the Mall and buy something: impulsive for many people. You feel better after you do that. Now every time you feel bad, you shop. Maybe you were depressed and you turned to candy or alcohol.

Our insecurities within ourselves are our worst enemy. It causes us to gossip, because it makes us feel that we are better than the next person.

What we do, how we cope is the result of those neuro pathways in our brain. These ruts that

we have created in our mind. These ruts define our character.

What's the purpose of our calling and conversion process? ***To change our character, to develop the mind of God!***

To get rid of bad behaviors, we need to replace those old ruts with new ruts. We need to take and make God's Word part of our everyday thinking. Like David wrote:

Psalm 119:11: "Your Word I have laid up in my heart, so that I might not sin against You."

When Jesus was tempted by Satan, He used God's Word to combat Satan's lies. That also needs to be our strategy in the way we handle things. We can use the words of God to combat any lies that come our way.

Romans 8:5: "For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh..."—*or what the flesh desires!*

What a true statement. Their mind naturally connects with the physical. Physical minds generate physical thoughts. That's how we are wired.

"...but those who walk according to *the* Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace" (vs 5-6).

One may conclude that this involves meditation. But not necessarily the meditation that we sometimes relate to, that is popular in the Eastern religions, for instance, but rather by meditation defined by God's Word and Truth.

In God view we are to fill our mind with *the Word!* To be intentional about what we are thinking. It's active and thoughtful; it involves weeding out any thoughts that are not aligned with the mind of God. Meditation is a tool to reflect on the gap between what we are in contrast to what God is.

Godly meditation is action based, with God's Word being our standard. That's what true meditation should be. The Eastern religious meditation is based on philosophical eternal cosmic duel of do-goodism and evil, at times which both are required for balance in the universe. A logical conclusion based on total carnality:

- the 'yin/yang'
- the essential/the spiritual
- the sacred/profane

all exist together eternally!

That's what they're based on, and this is clearly part of Satan's deception and this hope for good and evil to exist together eternally.

When we see things that shock us, it should lead us to double-down on our relationship with God. It's automatic and should happen. The knowledge of God's plan in itself and the understanding, that immense value that He places on the human creation gives us the foundation to avoid the many deceptions out there in this world today.

The Bible lays out a path for us to follow that involves the painstaking ordeal of personal change through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is difficult and what we learn along the way is not pretty. It's frustrating at times. It's not easy for the carnal mind to gravitate toward diversions, like mystical understandings or shortcuts and emotional experiences rather than facing the reality of our human nature.

We know that human nature is real. Carnal nature is real! God's instructions for our life that has led us to the things that really matter to us are not mysterious. The carnal mind complicates what God made so clear. Mankind is busy always searching for something. They just do not want the answer to be God or involve God.

Meditation is very important. Meditating on God and His Word, reflecting on our lives to see where we need to grow to get in alignment with God is so important in our spiritual lives.

Here's the thing: the lies that we believe do not look like lies to us. They have been carefully reasoned out by us to explain our experiences and to defend us from being hurt again, and defends why we do what we do.

As we examine ourselves, and we're coming to that season again, do those lies begin to jump out at us. This is where prayer and meditation comes into play. We need to look at everything through the lens of God's Word and weed out what does not fit. Replace the lie for the truth. Very simple! It's the only way we can affectively ***bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ!***

Studying God's Word and meditating on it is what we learned should be our critical tool for transforming our mind. With that transformation comes true conversion. Meditation helps to address the noise in our lives. Through meditation we rehearse over and over how God's Word relates to our lives.

Repetition creates new ruts in our mind. David said, 'Oh, how I love Thy Law, I meditate on it all day long.' ***If*** we are continually focused on God's Word, ***then*** these Truths will eventually become our dominate thinking!

Satan also uses repetition to make us believe lies about ourselves at times. He has been doing that with us for our whole life. The only way to combat this assault is through the repetition of God's Word. The negativity brought on by the lies we tell ourselves is part of Satan's offense. Replacing those thoughts with the Truth from the words of God allow us to renew our mind as we are instructed to (Rom. 12).

When things go wrong in our lives we want to have trained our mind on the Word of God so that we automatically fall into a pattern of thought related back to what God has taught us through His Word.

As Jesus graphically explained to His disciples in Matt. 15:16, everything we do comes from what goes on inside our mind. Our mind is like the command center of everything we say and subsequently everything we do.

Everything we do and how we interpret our lives starts inside our head. Jesus is telling us to get our head right and straight and the right behavior will follow.

Once we replace that carnal soundtrack running through our head continually with a Godly soundtrack, Godly behavior becomes much easier for us. God's Truth leads us to the right thoughts and actions, and the right way of thinking, the right use of our mind.

III. A new perspective

We need to see our past, where we are presently and the future from the new perspective of life that God has given us. God has given us a new perspective starting with our calling. We are blessed and should realize that. We should be using that incentive to move forward, to reframe our lives in the context of what God is doing in our personal lives. We experience life the way we see it. The world influenced by Satan has a perspective of a world opposite of how God views things.

It's critical that we learn to see our life from God's perspective and point of view. We must refrain from how we see things in terms of how God sees things as a matter of habit.

The Apostle Paul had no end of problems. Events over which he had no control. He could have complained and doubted God, made excuses. But instead he reframed his life from God's perspective.

From prison he wrote to the members in Philippi, and at the top of his letter he says:

Philippians 1:12: "Brethren, I want you to know that the things befalling me have turned out

rather unto *the* advancement of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ have become manifest in the whole palace, and to all others; and most of the brethren, trusting in *the* Lord, have been emboldened by my bonds to speak the Word more abundantly without fear” (vs 12-14).

Paul is saying that contrary to what you may think, looking at the events in our lives, God is actually using it in ways that we could never imagine. Like Paul, we, too, can reframe our circumstances, and our past for that matter to see what God is doing. But we have to have this spiritual mindset.

Sometimes when we look over our past, we can see where God did not do what *we thought* was best. Then in retrospect we are thankful for it. God is working in our lives at all times, and we can imagine what is best for us. But really, what is best for us through God’s eyes? ***God knows best*** what is best for us! He sees the overall picture, as He says:

Isaiah 55:8: “‘For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (vs 8-9).

Sometimes God says *no*, and we only learn later that what we wanted wasn’t what we needed. Has that ever occurred to you? Something you really desired and you were basically were told no. But that’s exactly what you needed to be told *no!*

Even in a discouraging experience that you go through, while difficult to say the least, God uses that to shape our character, and that’s what it’s all about. To develop the mind of Christ means that ***we have to change our character!***

If we look for the good, we will see it! Solomon observed that ‘time and chance happens to us all.’ That is the human condition without God. But God has called us out of this state and He will finish the work that He has begun in each one of us. He has promised that for those who trust Him, and He will guide those steps of everything we work on to further our eternal success.

Satan wants to fill your mind with doubt at all times. He wants you to believe that you will not make it, so why try. David wrote:

Psalm 23:4: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

That’s the attitude, the way we must think. David is saying that there will be evil around us; there will be lies to deal with, but don’t worry, we’ll

get through this. We will get to the other side because God is there with us. You will get through the valleys in your life. It may not be the way you would like or pictured it, ***but you will make it!***

Psalm 77:19: “Your way is in the sea, and Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps are not known.”

We may not see the path or the solution, but we keep walking in faith, because we know it is there and God is there with us. That is the conviction and commitment we are responsible for. God is wanting us to be there until the end. He does not want us to fail.

Life sometimes overwhelms us and we want to give up. It’s very easily done. This is when we need to master our thoughts and focus on God rather than fixating on our personal problems, our needs and desires.

You will remember the story of how Elijah confronted and triumphed over King Ahab and his false prophets through God’s Divine intervention (1-Kings).

The embarrassment of that event led to the wicked Queen Jezebel to the degree that she would hunt him down and kill him. Afraid for his life, Elijah ran! It was an irrational move of considering what God had done. But Elijah allowed the negative thinking to overtake him and consume his thoughts.

That’s a good example how our mind works. Elijah went so far as to pray that he would die.

1-Kings 19:4: “Then he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he begged for his life, that he might die. And he said, ‘It is enough. O LORD, take away my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers.’”

Has there ever been times when you’ve delved that low? That you felt that way? We can be sure that Satan is attacking us! It is easy to get into a familiar frame of mind when we are faced with overwhelming problems. We can forget that God is with us every step of the way, as he was with Elijah.

Paul reminds us that God is always with us. God reminded Elijah of that, too. He asked Elijah what he was doing. Why did he run? (1-Kings 19:11-12).

Philippians 4:4: “Rejoice in *the* Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your moderation be known to all men; **the Lord is near.** Do not be anxious about anything; but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God in everything; and **the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,** shall

guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (vs 4-7).

What will seem irrational to the carnal mind influenced by Satan’s lies will make sense to the spiritual mind. God is nearby, we know that! Peter told us that:

1-Peter 5:6: “Be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time; casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you” (vs 6-7).

Humility is a quality of the spiritual mind that opens us up to God’s direction. When we acknowledge that God is near,

- we are more likely to pray to Him
- we’re more likely to trust in Him
- we’re more likely to connect our thoughts to God’s thoughts

Prayer changes us! It changes our thinking!

Our brain is always under construction. We do not want to build another day without God’s influence in our lives. God wants us to turn to him for all our needs. When we are faced with problems, we read in Philip. 4 that Paul told us to rejoice always. Recorded in Acts 16 is one of the most traumatic events in Paul’s life where he did just that.

Not because God delivered him and Silas, but because they knew that God was nearby; He was by their side. We read that Paul and Silas were out preaching and it led to a riot. They were beaten and thrown into prison. What made the mob so mad was not so much about what they were saying, but that they had healed a woman with a demon, ending her fortune-telling days, so the money her masters made of her were about to dry up.

As a result Paul and Silas were thrown into prison and put in chains. So, what did they do?

Acts 16:25: “But about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”

What a reaction! Admittedly, brethren, would that be our first reaction? ***When we change our thinking to be more aligned with God we can certainly think that way!***

Paul and Silas did not praise God because they were pleased with their situation, but because of Who God is! They praised God anyway and He intervened!

Verse 26: “And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so *great* that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors opened, and the bonds of all were loosed.”

He did not wait for God to do something for them first. They did it anyway, ***because that mindset was already a part of their thinking!*** It elicited that kind of response.

We will need this quality more and more in the days ahead. We need that quality! We must begin to develop that quality; preparing now! We are talking about the ability to focus not on our problems and life issues, but to see through them to what God is doing.

To look not at what is wrong in our lives, but what is right. That is not just ‘happy talk’ but a practical strategy that will bring peace and meaning in our lives. I cannot help but wonder if God is waiting on us to turn to Him!

If He is waiting on us to praise Him for what He has done for us through His Son Jesus Christ, opening our mind to the Truth and to His mind, He will intervene in our problems and troubles.

Something to think about is that through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can replace all the lies that we believe with the Truth. With the Holy Spirit we are never stuck! We are not slaves to wrongful thinking. We are not slaves to sin! God see immense value in our lives, even if the world around us does not. We need to believe that and act accordingly! ***We are only weak acting on our own!***

Paul had personal issues that God did not intervene to fix. Instead, Paul says that God told him:

2-Corinthians 12:12: “But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; ***for when I am weak, then I am strong***” (vs 12-13).

We are not called to be weak. We are called to be a witness to the power of God and what He can do in a person’s life.

- how a mind can be transformed
- how lies can be demolished

We are made strong through the power of God’s Holy Spirit!

God calls the weak to witness to the world. What God can do with a life that has been submitted to Him. Paul told a young Timothy:

2-Timothy 1:7: “***For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness.***”

We must do this for each other, too. It’s very

critical. How other people experience us, and how we choose to reach out, what life throws at us influences the structure and brains around us. God designed us to thrive in a community, and we have the responsibility to each other in how we act and the things that we say to each other.

In reading on the topic of neuro science, I found the following to be of interest, and would like to share this with you.

It has been said that changes in a person's body often prompts changes in another person's body.

Can you relate to that?

Whether it be romantically between a couple, or just friends, or even strangers in meeting for the first time. When you are with someone you care about, your breathing can actually synchronize, as can the beating of your hearts whether you have a casual conversation or a heated argument. If you raise your voice or even your eyebrows, you can affect what goes on in other people's bodies.

Does that sound bazaar? Well, God has created very unique individuals. It's also said that humans are unique. We know that! We know that in the animal kingdom, because we can also regulate each other with words.

Research shows that we can tweak one another's nervous systems in physical ways with a mere word that goes beyond what we suspect.

I may be saying some outlandish stuff here, but it's true. Words are the tools for regulating our human bodies. Other people's words have a direct effect on our brain activity, and our body systems at times. Your words have the same effect on other people.

It is an interesting concept, and I think we can relate to that quite well if we really think about it. We may not intend to effect others in ways, but we do. Paul has told us to look out for other people's interests and to esteem others higher than yourselves (Philip. 4)

- Do we need more opportunity to encourage that?
- To encourage others?

or

- Do we criticize them?
- Are we pushing our own thoughts and agendas on people?

or

- Are we building on our mutual calling from God?

That's what we should be striving for!

Paul told us that because of our words, we can affect other people's conversion process. Believe it or not brethren, that can happen.

Romans 15:2: "Accordingly, let each one of us please *his* neighbor for good, unto edification."

What we say to other brethren matters; it matters by design! We are in a battle today; a war is being waged in our mind and for our mind. We must respond to it using the weapons made available to us by God.

1-Peter 5:8: "Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour."

We must be aware of that! We must know what our goal is. Peter preceded that by admonishing us to be humble, because our arrogance sets opposition to the Truth. Pride defends the lies we tell ourselves, and doubles down on the status quo.

Paul underscores Peter's point by telling us that the battle we face is beyond our ability to face alone against the power we can only imagine.

Ephesians 6:12: "because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*."

No one forces us to make poor choices and lose battles. We are not prepared to do that. We let lies get in the way, unfortunately! Winning the battle for our mind begins now in the preparation of what is to come. We must prepare now to stay focused on God's Word even when the world around us is crashing in, turning upside down around us. Prepare now to not be distracted!

Exposed those lies! Expose the lies within yourself and replace them with the Truth, and see the events in your life in terms of what God has done for you and doing for you now. More importantly, what God is doing through you.

If we follow the strategy laid out in God's Word for our benefit and trust in the power of God, and His willingness to defend us from the powers of the dark work in which we live, we can win this battle for our mind. May God continue to work with each one of you and have a tremendous and uplifting Sabbath Day!

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* (these may differ from the audio)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 8:7

- 2) Romans 1:18-21, 24, 28-32
- 3) 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- 4) Philippians 4:12-13
- 5) Matthew 11:28-30
- 6) Romans 8:31, 37
- 7) Philippians 4:8-9
- 8) Psalm 119:11
- 9) Romans 8:5
- 10) Philippians 1:12-14
- 11) Isaiah 55:8-9
- 12) Psalm 23:4
- 13) Psalm 77:19
- 14) 1 Kings 19:4
- 15) Philippians 4:4-7
- 16) 1 Peter 5:6-7
- 17) Acts 16:25-26
- 18) 2 Corinthians 12:12-13
- 19) 2 Timothy 1:7
- 20) Romans 15:2
- 21) 1 Peter 5:8
- 22) Ephesians 6:12

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 8
- Romans 12
- Matthew 15:16
- 1 Kings 19:11-12

NB:bo
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