



DHM
Divine Healing
MINISTRIES

Take Every Thought Captive and Bring it in Obedience to Christ

By Phil Garrett

St Paul had a wonderful understanding of the problems that we encounter on this journey through life. He recognised our struggle with sin and in his letter to the Romans, he wrote;

'I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead I do the very thing I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong.... But I can't help myself.... No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't.... It seems to be a part of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.'
Romans 7:15-21

He goes on to say that the answer to this problem lies in Jesus Christ whose life-giving spirit has freed us from the power of sin that leads to death.

'If our sinful nature controls our minds there is death but if the Holy Spirit controls our mind there is life and peace.' Romans 8:6

St Paul was referring to eternal life here but these words have a very powerful bearing in our daily, day to day life. If the indwelling Holy Spirit controls our mind bringing life and peace, think what tremendous potential we have here for healing of negative thoughts, ideas and impulses etc in Romans St Paul advises,

'.... Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way that you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is.' Romans 12: 2

St Paul writes,

*‘Even though we live in the world, the war we fight is not of this world and the weapons we use are not earthly weapons, but are weapons with divine power to destroy the devil’s strongholds. With these weapons we break down every proud argument that keeps people from knowing God and **WE TAKE EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE TO OBEY CHRIST**’.* 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Basically, it is our own personal thoughts that we must bring into obedience to Christ before we start thinking about other people. If we act on every impulse that immediately springs into our own minds, without **CHECKING FIRST OF ALL IF THIS THOUGHT IS FROM GOD**, all the enemy has to do is plant a thought or impulse in our mind and we will act on it. In John 10, Jesus tells his disciples that his sheep will follow his voice because they recognise it; they will listen to his voice. Once we recognise Jesus’ voice, through the power of His indwelling spirit, we are in a position to be able to check if our thoughts and impulses are from God.

I have experienced the effectiveness of these principles in my own life. I had suffered depression for many years. This led to negative ways of thinking and I didn’t even realise that I was doing this, I wasn’t used to anything else so when something pessimistic entered my mind I just went along with it.

Once I encountered the living reality of Jesus Christ and His word I was healed of depression and my former way of thinking.

Sometimes when I am going through a stressful time or if I am over tired, old ways of thinking try to get back in and influence me but the answers lie in the word of God. Anyone who builds his life on the word of God and has faith, their foundation in Christ cannot be destroyed. God told us in Deuteronomy 12:26-27 *'Today I am giving you the choice between a blessing and a curse'*.

Apart from the Holy Spirit in your life the greatest power you possess is the power to choose. You can choose to pray or not to pray, read your Bible and obey God's teaching or not read your Bible and disobey God's teaching. You can choose to believe the nasty, condemning thoughts and lies that come from the devil or you can choose the voice that comes from God, those thoughts that bring life and peace.

God can transform you into a new person by changing the way that you think. If you entrust your life into His hands and trust in His love, if you ask Him he will give you the grace to take your every thought captive and make it obey Him.

Recently, I discovered an even deeper dimension to reinforcing these truths in the words of Jesus in Matthew 16: 19. He said, *'Whatever is bound on earth will be bound in Heaven and whatever is loosed on earth will be loosed in Heaven'*.

This means that if you bind your mind to the mind of Christ, then the very thoughts, feelings and purposes of His heart would be within your own thoughts.

Again, you can loose all wrong ungodly patterns of thinking, attitudes, ideas and behaviours. You can loose strongholds associated with these things, strongholds that have been justifying and protecting hard feelings against others.

Imagine how much more positive a person you could be and what a blessing you could be to others if the strongholds of unforgiveness, anger, fear and distrust were completely removed from you. We need to stand firm on the truth of God's word because after all, He said *'I'm giving you the keys to the kingdom'*. Do we have the faith to use those keys?

If you are struggling with depression in your life that is effected by negative thinking, I would strongly recommend that you consider some of the principles that are outlined above. Reflect on what St Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians 4:8 *'Fix your thoughts on what is true and honourable and right. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. If you put this into practice then the God of peace will be with you'*. What could be more wonderful, amazing and positive? What could be more healing than the God of peace?

If we're really serious in our desire to overcome the problems that have been mentioned above, including this type of prayer into our daily prayer life it won't take more than a few minutes but the effects will be on-going and life changing. Praying in this way keeps us in harmony with God's will and because we trust in His love we know that He wants a much higher good for us than we could ever

imagine. He will always move us towards wholeness if we pray for His will to be done.

1. If, after reading the above, you recognize that you have been thinking in negative ways, that is a good place to start. Owning up to our faults shows that we are open to change. We know that negativity is not God's will for us and we are told in Psalm 51:6 that sincerity and truth are what God requires of us, so revealing our feelings and releasing them to God are the first steps to true healing. In Psalm 25:8- 9 we are told that, *'The Lord shows the proper path to those who go astray and He leads the humble in what is right teaching them His way'*. Surely that is what God is doing when we take every thought captive into obedience to Christ?

2. If we are really sincere in our desire to change our negative thoughts, we must make a conscious decision, almost like a New Year Resolution, to try our utmost to implement change. God can see right into our hearts and He can see the longing there. We know that He will make us worthy of the life to which He called us and that by His power He will fulfil all our good intentions and faithful deeds, 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

3. Recognize that it will be difficult to try changing things that we have been doing over a lifetime, they are inherent within us but with God nothing is impossible. The key here is, not by our power or by our might but by God's Holy Spirit.

4. Once we have opened up to God and released our feelings and our wrong way of thinking, it is a good thing to say sorry to God for thinking inappropriately. Psalm 51 is a great prayer of repentance and if we say it humbly and sincerely, God will surely listen.

5. Before we open our eyes each morning pray in accordance with Ephesians 6 and '*put on the spiritual armour of God*'. Continue on in prayer asking for God's blessings on the day ahead and request that He will give you the grace to '*take every thought captive and bring it into obedience to Christ*'. Thank Him that moment by moment He is renewing your mind and changing the way that you think.

6. Understand that the enemy will try to disarm you by constantly planting pessimistic thoughts, ideas and impulses into your mind but although this is to be expected, stand firm on God's promises. Don't lose heart even if you feel you're not doing too well. Realise by faith that God is leading you along the proper path and teaching you His way. The old adage is true, practice makes perfect.

7. Keep enduring and gradually you'll see that you're able to recognize the things that creep into your mind that are not in keeping with God's Word. For instance, Satan will constantly remind you of old hurts that once had the power to hurt and upset you. You are now able to bring that situation before God and thank and praise Him that you've forgiven the people involved and that all that hurt is now under the shed blood of Jesus.

8. When negative thoughts come through, as they will surely do, don't hesitate for a moment to allow them to gain house room. Immediately we see that they're not in line with God's word, replace them with God's word. If possible say it aloud.

Before I came into a full understanding of the powerful and positive impact that this teaching could have in my life, it is fair to say that I could be '*problem centred*' rather than '*God centred*' and so if I hesitated to do something because of a pain problem, I just accepted that. Now I am able to counteract that idea with, '*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*', Philippians 4:13. '*God's strength is made great in my weakness*', 2 Corinthians:12:8 or '*By His stripes I am healed*', Isaiah 53:5.

I think the important thing to point out in this, is that this is not an overnight solution. God wants us to be obedient to Him and to appropriate His promises in scripture where relevant but He also wants us to persevere. Human obedience and perseverance is praiseworthy but obedience and perseverance in the power of the Holy Spirit is even more powerful because then we are allowing God to partner with us to bring us into even greater blessings and into accord with God's holy will.

I can honestly testify that the practice of the above methods in my own life has enabled me to overcome depression, fear, anxiety and even deep seated pain problems. Try to take time to read God's word and try to memorize passages and promises that you can claim and

use when you detect negative thoughts that try to influence you.

When you spend time alone with God, reflect on scripture passages that are gentle and reassuring i.e. Philippians 4:8. Ask God to make these words take root in your heart. If we assimilate these words they create a wonderful and healing peace within and around us. This reassures us of the presence of Christ.

When we visualize the living Christ beside us, we can understand that He's praying along with us and prohibiting dark thoughts that would seek to oppress us. Never give up for the blessings that you receive will be more than you ask for or even imagine and remember that even though you feel you've a long way to go, *'He who began a good work within you will bring it to completion...'* Philippians 1:6.

If you are deeply committed to changing negative thought patterns, *'let God transform you into a new person by changing the way that you think'*. If we pray in this way we can be assured that we're praying in accord with God's word and will and in doing so we *'will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is'*. Romans 12:2

In this way we know that our prayers will be answered and the consequences will help us and others to be the people that God wants us to be. To Him be glory and power for ever.

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Recommended Reading:

Shattering the Strongholds by Liberty Savard

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