

Joke: A man driving all night needed some rest and decided to pull over on the side of the road to get some shut eye. Not long after he goes to sleep there is a loud banging at the window. The man jumps up and rolls down his window, outside is a jogger running in place in front of his window.

"Excuse me sir, I was wondering if you could tell me what time it is?" asks the jogger

The driver sleepily looks down at his watch, "Yeah, its 5:00"

"Hey thanks!" says the jogger and runs off.

The man goes back to sleep. Before long there is another loud banging on his window. He jumps again and rolls down his window. Another jogger is running in place in front of his window. "Hey there guy! Can you tell me what time it is?"

The driver irritated looks at his watch and says, "Its 5:45"

"Thanks, mister!" says the jogger and runs off.

The man irritated beyond belief makes a sign and posts it on his window that says

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS!

Relived the man goes back to sleep. He finally gets back to sleep but there is another loud knock at the window. The man bewildered, and annoyed rolls down his window and sees another jogger running in place in front of his window. The jogger looks down and says

"Hey man, it's 6:30" and runs off.

We started a series last week talking about winning the war in your mind. And I want to start with a Scripture I read last week it's found in Romans chapter 12

The apostle Paul said in Romans chapter 12 verse 2 he said this. . .

Romans 12:2 (NIV): Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world. Don't think like the world thinks, don't act like the world acts, don't behave like the world behaves.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed, be renewed, be changed.

And how are we transformed? He said by the renewing of your mind.

We're talking about Mind wars, how to win the war in your mind.

And I don't know about you but I've made some really dumb and irrational decisions in my life. Maybe you can relate.

Maybe you want to save some money, but then you find that thing you've been wanting and it's even on sale. Or you want to trust God with something but instead find yourself worrying about that thing that you want to trust Him with.

And it makes me wonder sometimes, why is it that we want one thing but we decide to do something completely different.

Why do we behave so irrationally?

Have you ever had a car that had an electrical short someplace. One minute it's working great then you park it for a bit and it doesn't start. Or like my last car before I bought my truck, every three or four months, without fail, every three or four months my drivers side headlight would just burn out. I bought extra bulbs and put them in the glovebox just so I always had an extra. I got really good at replacing that bulb. Why did it just go out. It had an electrical short somewhere.

Why is it that we behave so irrationally so often?

The reason is, because in our minds, we often have the wires crossed.

If you were with us last week, we talked about, when you think a thought, you create a pathway for the thought, a mental trail in your mind.

Your experiences and your thoughts wire or programming your brain.

Let me try to explain it this way. . .if a baby smiles and the mom smiles back and talks to the that little one, the baby's brain creates a little pathway that says smiling is good.

Or If a baby touches a hot stove, when they feel pain, the baby's brain creates a pathway that says, hot stove's bad.

The baby wants a sucker but mom says no. And that young one starts throw a tantrum with a blood curling cry. And the mom decides to give in and gives them a sucker. The baby's brain says crying gets me a sucker.

Here's what happens, when we think of a thought our brain is creating new neural pathways. And the more we think a thought, the easier it is to think that thought again.

And the more dominant that thought becomes, which isn't bad if we're thinking on truth. The problem is many of us are believing lies and not truth.

Why do we behave so irrationally? Often times it's because we have the wires in our minds crossed.

Let me recap some thoughts from last week.

Our mind is a battlefield and many of life's battles are won or lost in the mind.

We looked last week at 2 Corinthians 10. . .it says this:

2 Corinthians 10:3–5 (NIV): For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Paul says, as followers of Christ, we have spiritual weapons, they are not the same weapons the world has. Our weapons have divine power to demolish strongholds.

Remember what a stronghold is? It's a wrong pattern of thinking.

It's a place where the wires in our brain have been crossed. And listen some have a wrong view of themselves because of

the lies others have said to them. Some have a wrong view of God because the message they've heard was not the true gospel.

So, we demolish arguments and every pretension, every wrongly crossed wire that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ.

Why does every thought matter? It matters because, your life is always moving in the direction of your strongest thoughts. And what comes into your mind tends to come out in your life.

If you don't control what you think, it will be difficult to control what you do.

So today, we're going to look at some tools and and then next week and possibly the week after we're going build upon those tools.

And what I want to do is talk about how do you train your minds?

Maybe you've never thought about training your mind. Your dog maybe but your mind?

Most of us understand training our body isn't just about exercise. Sure that may be part of it if you want to stay thin and trim. But that training, isn't just about what you do with it, it's also what you put into it.

So it is with the mind. We can either train our mind to continue believing the wrong thing, or we can train our minds with truth.

And as you have heard and I shared last week. . .the truth will what? Set you free.

Once again the apostle Paul, says this in Philipians chapter 4 we will start with verse 8.

Before I share let me give you a little context, Paul was writing this from a Roman prison. He was locked up on house arrest, not an ideal situation, in fact a very terrifying place to be, he was awaiting possible execution. Not what I would consider the ideal place to be and here's what he writes. . .

Philippians 4:8 (NLT) And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Notice what he didn't say, he didn't say God thanks you let me down. All I was doing is preaching the gospel and telling G others about you, and look where I am.

And listen he could have easily had a reason to think that. He didn't say, things couldn't get any worse than this.

No, he said this. He said, one final thing from a Roman prison. He said, fix your thoughts.

He said, fix your thoughts on what is true. Fix your thoughts on what is honorable, fix your thoughts on what is right and pure and lovely and admirable.

He didn't say fix your thoughts on the worst case scenario, on your current situation, on what you hate, on what you're afraid of, on what could go wrong. He said, think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Listen to how the New King James Version puts it. . .

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV) - Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Meditate?

Let me pause here just a minute. Meditation in Scripture doesn't mean sit on some mat on the ground with your legs crossed and humming to become one with the universe. That's New Age junk.

Scriptural meditation is more like focusing your thoughts.

Focusing on what Paul told us what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Meditate on things like these.

Psalms 119:15 (NIV) - I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

Psalms 143:5 (NIV) - I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.

And that's the difference between New Age Eastern style meditation. That tells you empty your mind and try to focus on nothing and from there you can find your Nirvana and get into a state of calm and peace.

But Scriptural meditation isn't about emptying your mind, instead it's about filling your mind with truth.

It's fixing your mind.

The great theologian, Jackie Chan, once said, in the remake of the movie karate kid, and I realize he wasn't no Mr. Miyagi.

But Jackie Chan said, "Your focus needs what? More focus."

And there may be some of you here or listening online that needs your focus to have more focus.

Your mind needs to uncross the wires that have been programmed to believe something that's not true. And you need to focus on what is true.

Fix your minds on the things of God because when our mind drifts, and I don't know about you but my mind can drift very quickly. And when it does drifts it generally doesn't drift to that which is true. It generally drifts to my own insecurities, my difficulties, my own fears, that worst case scenario and the lies that the devil has been telling me about myself for way too long.

You're never going to be good enough, you're incapable, you should be ashamed after what you've done, how could God ever use you?

What we want to do is learn to meditate on truth, to focus and train our minds on God's truth.

And what I'm going to do is give you an exercise that's honestly not going to be easy.

This isn't something if you've been believing a lie for 5 or 10 years maybe even longer it just drops off instantly. No sometimes it takes a little while to deprogram that lie and replace it with truth.

But I believe focusing on what is true will transform you. And I encouraged you last week do do this and I want to do again this week.

The first thing is to ask yourself what stronghold is holding you back? What would you say is the top wrong mindset that's holding you hostage.

For some of you, it could be the lie that says, I've tried for three years and I can't overcome this addiction. I'm never going to be able to overcome this addiction.

Or I've tried to read through the Bible but then I got to that who begat who book and my mind drifted. And so, I'm never going to be close to God.

Or I'm never going to get married, I'm never going to have a blessed marriage. No one in my family had a marriage that lasted more than a few years.

What is the dominant stronghold where your mental wires are crossed, where the devil has trained you with the mental pathway to believe something that is not true about you.

The second part is to answer this question, what truth, what spiritual truth from God demolishes that stronghold?

Then what we're going to do is we're going to take a scriptural truth, not just a truth, but a truth that's empowered by God's living word. Because His words are powerful enough to bring transformation.

We're going to let his word renew our mind.

And what I want you to do is to write out some truth, very specific.

Whatever it is that demolishes that strong hold in your life.

Then after we've done that think about it, meditate on it, let it be born out of God's Word.

Then write it down, journal it, whatever. Then start thinking on it and declaring it.

Now let me pause here a minute and talk about declaring it. I'm not talking about speaking things into existence. I'm simply declaring in faith what God's Word says is true.

Write it, think it, declare it, until you believe it.

And allow God as you partner with Him to renew your mind with truth.

Let me give you some examples of what yours might look like.

I gave a few last week let me share a few more today. . .

You might be struggling to know God's will in your life. So you're going create a statement that might go something like this.

My life belongs to God. His word tells me that He directs my steps. I know His voice because I'm his and He leads me to His perfect will.

I'm not declaring something into existence I'm confirming what God has spoken until I can believe it for my life.

Write it, think it, declare it, until you believe it.

Over and over again, you're going to say that, my life belongs to God. His word tells me that He directs my steps. I know His voice because I'm his and He leads me to His perfect will.

You may be lacking confidence, every time you come in, you feel insecure, you feel inadequate, you feel like you're not enough.

And so, your statement might go a little something like this.

My confidence is in Christ and Christ alone. The same spirit that is in Christ, lives in me. I can do everything He has called me to do. My worth is in Him and what He says about me.

Write it, think it, declare it, until you believe it.

You might have a struggle with lustful thoughts and you're sick and tired of being hostage to the images that seem to be printed on your mind.

Job made a covenant with his eyes.

So, you're going to let God renew your mind.

You're going to say this over and over again. God has purified my mind and I now have the mind of Christ I am no longer a slave to those impure thoughts I will honor Him with my eyes and my thoughts. If I am tempted, He will always give me a way out.

Write it, think it, declare it, until you believe it.

Maybe you find comfort in food and you don't want to do that anymore. So you're going to declare, when I'm stressed I turned to God, not food. Jesus is all I need. In Him I find strength and comfort. He is my ever present help in time of need.

Write it, think it, declare it, until you believe it.

You might find yourself consumed with worry. So for you it might sound something like this. . .

Because of Christ, I'm not anxious about anything, but pray about everything. I cast my cares on God because He cares for me. I have the peace that passes all understanding.

Write it, think it, declare it, until you believe it.

Again, I'm simply believing the truths of God's Word. Why?

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV) - For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Amen means to stand in agreement.

What is the stronghold where the wires are crossed? What is the spiritual truth that will set you free.

Identify it. . .Write it, think it, declare it, until you believe it.

Listen church I've told you I still sometimes struggle with that feeling of inadequacy.

If I'm being honest there are still times that I'm more concerned about what people think than what God thinks. At work I'll sometimes pop my headphones on and listen to worship music to refocus my thoughts on what is pure and noble because no one stops by my area and says good morning and they've talked to everyone else. It's not that I'm at work to talk. . .I'm not. . .but.

And so because I still struggle with that insecurity I have to from time to time declare. My worth is found in Christ, because of what He did I'm the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. I want to please Papa more than anything. He loves me even when I don't feel loved.

Write it, think it, declare it, until you believe it.

I need to do that from time to time because life is always moving in the direction of your strongest thoughts.

So, church meditate on truth. Fix your mind on what is true and admirable and excellent and praiseworthy, meditate on these things.

Focus your mind on the truth.

Identify whatever stronghold, wherever you have the wires crossed and identify the truth about that thing and let the truth of that thing free you.

Write it, think it, declare it, until you believe it.

And as followers of Jesus, we will not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but we will be transformed. How?

Not by trying harder, not by more personal effort, not by performing better, but by the renewing of our minds.

And what is the greatest power to overcome the lies? It is the truth of Jesus.

He said, you'll know the truth and the truth will set you free.

And hear this church if you have come to know God. Truly walking in right relationship with him. You are a new creation.

You have the same power that raised Christ from the dead dwelling inside of you. You are a light in a world of darkness. You are not your past. You are not what you did. You are who God says you are.

And He says you're forgiven. He says you're redeemed. He says you're free.

You are not a hostage to your negative thoughts.

The weapons you fight with are not the weapons of this world. They have power to demolish strongholds. You have the mind of Christ directing your thoughts. You have the word of God directing your steps.

Worry is not your master. His peace guards your heart, and your mind. God has not given you a spirit of fear but of power, love and of a sound mind. You are not a prisoner to your past. You are a new creation. You have everything you need for life and godliness. You are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. His grace is sufficient for you.

I'm not declaring things into existence I'm just saying amen to what God has spoken.

This is truth, that will set you free.

Nothing will separate you from the love of God. Not death, not demons, not the present, not the past. No power on earth can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. God is love it's not just what He does it's who He is.