

CONNECTING MY MIND WITH MY LIFE

Before we actually begin with this new series on “Connecting My Mind with My Life”, I want to provide a brief overview of how I am going to approach this subject. I think that will be of an ultimate benefit to you. A study like this is uncharted waters for me and how I am accustomed to teaching. It is a very topical subject and is not tied to any single passage of Scripture. So, it is not like I am teaching a book of the New Testament like [1 Peter](#) or [Galatians](#), and neither am I teaching on a particular doctrine as I have done in the past like the Incarnation. The study is based on “**Key Principles**” that I will give to you as we move along in the study. When I finish the series, I will probably have provided anywhere from 25 to 30 of these Key Principles. You will need to write each one of these **Key Principles** down because they are crucial to what this study is about.

I want you to think of each one of these principles as a new “**pattern**” of thinking and a new “**way**” of thinking that God wants you to develop in your life. These are not principles of pop psychology or just you thinking positive thoughts – not at all. Being positive does not mean that you are being spiritual. This is not mind over matter. This is not do good, be good teaching. This is not behavioral modification, even though that may ultimately be a by-product. Having said that, I want you to appreciate that I am not a self-help guru by any stretch of the imagination. I am a pastor who, for as strange as it may sound, is just stupid enough to believe God’s Word. I am naïve enough to believe that with the correct prodding that you will believe Him as well. Here is what I know about Christ. He defeated sin, He defeated Satan, He defeated death, and He arose from the grave, and that same power that resurrected Jesus from the dead is the same power that lives inside of you and me. In [Ephesians 1:19-20](#) it says that God wants us to know something. He wants us to know...

Eph 1:19 (NKJV) ...**what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,**

You as a believer are now a part of God’s kingdom and have you His power to be an overcomer in all things. You were not destined by God to be overcome by every difficulty and every painful thing that happens in your life. To the contrary, you live in a kingdom that is above this world, and you have to learn how to think like God wants you to think. If I can say it another way, you are not to fight against “**flesh and blood**”. **People are not your battlefield.** Listen to what Paul said in [Ephesians 6:12](#),

Eph 6:12 (NKJV) **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

You have to get this right. Here is what will happen in this study. You will finally realize that you have been spending all of your emotional energy and strength fighting on the wrong battlefield. No wonder you are losing the battle. It is no wonder that things are not working out like you hoped they would. You are in the wrong battle and are not using the right weapons. If that is the case, then you really do not have much of a chance to win. Here is what I want you to ultimately learn. **Every negative thought**

that you have, every toxic emotion that you display, every unpleasant and cruel word that you speak, and every lie of the enemy that you believe somehow involves a wrong belief about God.¹

Do you think God that God does not care how you think? I hope not.

Do you think God says it is okay to pour out your toxic emotions on other people? I hope not.

Do you think God says it is okay to just speak ugly words to people? I hope not.

Do you think that God wants you to believe the lies of the devil? I hope not.

Romans 8:5-6 clearly lays all of this out when it says,

Ro 8:5 (NKJV) For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

We eventually have to figure out that God does not think like we think. The truth of the matter is that many Christians have a very distorted understanding of what the Christian life is really all about, so no wonder they always seem to be defeated when difficult and testing moments arise in their life. The goal of this study is literally to **RETRAIN** and **REORIENT** your minds to think about God's truth as your first line of defense. The truth is what sets you free, and what you will find when you focus on God's truth is that it will produce its life-transforming fruit in your life. This is great news!

These **Key Principles** are the heart of the study and are how God wants you to see your life and how He wants you to think in your life. This is deliberate, intentional, purposeful, premeditated, calculated, and planned on my part. This study will look at the enemies of your mind and your thinking, and then we will look at the biblical truths that set us free from wrong thinking. You have to understand that God is living inside of you, that God is for you, and that when you yield your life to His ways that God will prevail for you. This study will engage you with Scripture, theology, neuroscience, spiritual disciplines, biblical principles, and ultimately what it really means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. You will learn what it means to constantly be “renewing” your mind. **Romans 12:2** says,

Ro 12:2 (NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

These **Key Principles** that you will be hearing should be written down and reviewed each week so that you do not lose focus on how God wants you to think. They should help you to develop new patterns of behavior, as well as higher standards for your personal faith. Every principle is not only important, but they are critical if you want to become an overcomer in your life over the difficult circumstances that you will invariably face.

❖ **HEY YOU!!**

Have you ever had someone yell at you the words “Hey you!” Maybe they did not know you and you had dropped something, so they yelled “Hey you!” in a parking lot.” Maybe you were walking on their property and they did not want you to do that, so they yelled “Hey you!” to get your attention. Well, in this study, I am saying “Hey you!”

¹ Allen, 65.

I want you to recognize that I am primarily talking to “**you**” as an individual believer. I.e., I will be speaking in the second person singular and second person plural rather than using third person plural pronouns like “we” or “us” or “they”. I am not going to say “We need to understand this principle”, but I am going to say “You need to understand this principle.” The second person singular is much more emphatic and keeps the focus on you the listener. In the Homiletic classes that I teach, one of the principles is that speaking in the second person singular challenges the listener much more than always speaking in the third person singular or plural. Once again, this is very intentional and is designed to compel you to realize that these **Key Principles** are not for someone else. They are for you. They are for you to personally embrace and then to incorporate into your life. It is like I am only talking to “**you**” and no one else.

At times, I am sure that it may make you somewhat uncomfortable, and that is actually why the second person singular is often used in teaching. I am **NOT** trying to play the role of the Holy Spirit in your life, nor am I trying to lord over your life in the teaching and in the dialogue that we will invariably have. However, I am consciously trying to force you to actually think about what is being taught. I want you **to think about thinking**. I want you to **think about thinking like God thinks**. You do not have to agree with me, but I at least want you to seriously evaluate the relevance of each one of these **Key Principles** to your personal life. Many people physically hear what you are saying, but more often than not they may not actually be listening to you. Your children may hear what you are saying to them, but in many cases they are not listening to you. There is a huge difference between “hearing” and “listening”, and the second person singular is designed to urge you to listen more.

So many Christians simply **do not think biblically**, and that reality in their life needs to change. Obviously Christians think, but not always biblically. So, this study will provide these very simple **Key Principles** by which every believer should think and live. What I really want you to see in this study is very simple - **your life will always be a by-product of what and how you think**. Just from personal experience I know how easy it is for something negative to happen, then me not deal with it properly, and before I know it everything seems to be negatively cascading completely out of control.

❖ **STUCK IN THE MUD**

Have you ever gotten stuck in the mud somewhere? The problem is that the more that you give your vehicle the gas, the deeper the tire rut becomes and the harder it is to get unstuck. The hole just keeps getting deeper and deeper.

Unfortunately, this is too often the way that many Christians live. They just get stuck in very negative patterns in their life. They can be so easily debilitated by one negative circumstance and by one negative conversation that their entire life begins to spiral out of control. They begin to say things they should not say. They make ultimatums, even threats. They make bad decisions. They become caustic in their relationship with someone. They lose their self-control and patience and quickly find themselves frustrated, irritated, and discouraged. I have taught it often, but **an irritation is simply a reflection that you do not possess a quality that God wants you to have**. When someone irritates you, that is a signal from God about an area of your life that He wants to change. Unfortunately, rather than seeing a difficult event from God’s perspective, many believers impose their negative and often caustic thoughts on to that moment, and completely lose everything of value that God wanted to create in them through that

event. Eventually, this becomes their way of life and if I can say it in a simple way, they just get stuck in the mud. They keep digging a hole and it gets harder and harder to get out of the hole. This scenario is played out so often that it is frightening to me. However, when you are able to finally gain control of your thought life in a way that is pleasing to God, at that point you will be able to find God's supernatural peace for your life – but not before.

So, it is critical that you understand how God may want to influence and impact your thinking process through this study. I want you to see that as the goal – to get you to think like God thinks.. As I teach, I will repeat, repeat, repeat. I will say something one way, and then say the same exact thing another way. This will happen all the way through the study. If I only tell you something once, you will rarely get the point and you will forget it before you leave church. So, I am going to teach, then repeat, repeat, repeat. That will be the method of teaching throughout this entire study. I will use the same Scriptures and express the same ideas differently all the way to the end, so I want you to be prepared not to be bored, but to be built up by the **constant reinforcement** that this style of teaching will provide for you.

You will need to take notes. This entire study is about compelling you to **REASSESS what** you think about and **how** you think. So far, we have said that you need to **RETRAIN, REORIENT, and REASSESS** your thought life. The point is simple. **Your thought life is what shapes your daily life.** The greatest spiritual battle of our generation is not taking place in Washington, but between our ears.² It is the battle we have with the devil, with the world, with our culture, and with ourselves for our mind. Over and over Christians allow the enemy's lies to influence their thoughts about God and who He is. The result is a great deal of toxic, unbiblical thoughts that lead people into negative thought patterns, and they get stuck in a particular way of thinking. **Negative thoughts simply hijack your faith in God.** It is so easy to just park your mind in a bad place and then just stay there. I know so many Christians who are simply stuck in ungodly thinking ruts. It is like they just cannot get their thinking right.

The result is that the enemy has created these terrible strongholds in their life by just getting them to believe his lies and to think in a way that God would never want them to think. The problem with toxic and wrong thinking is that it fools you. It produces a false reality. It gets you to believe that something bad is good or that something wrong is right. Before you know it, your entire perspective has become distorted and you actually believe that your wrong thinking makes sense.³ Wrong thinking never produces good results – never.

What we will clearly learn as we progress is that when you begin to obsess and become consumed over difficult circumstances in your life that it will only deepen your emotional emptiness.⁴ So, one of the primary goals of this study is to provide you with meaningful insights and practical biblical tools that will help you to take control of your thought life so that your negative thought patterns do not control you. Most of the time, the primary barrier to your personal and spiritual growth is undisciplined thinking and negative thinking patterns.. Negative thinking will quickly stifle and paralyze you. That is why you have to learn how to deal with your negative thoughts and negative thought patterns. The end goal of

² Allen, 10.

³ Allen, 24.

⁴ Allen, Acknowledgements.

this study is to help you **take back the mental high ground** that God has designed for your life. [2 Corinthians 10:4-5](#) which is really a very important passage says,

2Co 10:4 (NKJV) For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

What this verse says in a very simple way is that thinking like God thinks is very possible. It is exactly what He wants for you. I personally think that the average Christian does not actually believe v5 – the idea of “**bringing every thought captive**”. They think that it is “*pie in the sky*”. It is like they want to say to me “*Are you serious?*” Well, yes I am serious. Just the fact that God has provided this verse means that it is very possible for you to control your thought life. If you do not believe that, then you simply do not believe God. Stated another way, you do not know how to think like God thinks. Paul says that God has given you very powerful “**weapons**” to pull down all of the mental “**strongholds**” that keep you in bondage to unbiblical thinking. You must by faith both believe and implement this spiritual truth into your life that you can control your thought life and be delivered from caustic thinking. Somewhere along in this study, I want you to see that much of your thinking can really be very dangerous thinking. It can create these “**strongholds**” that will completely stifle your life and hold you in bondage. **If you think wrong, you will live wrong**. However, if you truly want to be a follower of Christ, then you will have to think like Christ.

Most believers may never have even been confronted with a subject like this, so taking notes will help you to be able to go back and review what is being taught. Studies reveal that the average Christian who does not take notes has forgotten ninety-five percent of everything that they heard in a message within thirty minutes of having left the church - ninety-five percent. You are not the exception to this reality, so taking notes will be a very critical issue for all of you. I will put a transcript of each message on our church website, but as your pastor, I still believe that you will both learn and retain more if you will simply take notes.

I also want to mention that it will take me at least 3-4 messages, maybe more, before we ever get to the meat of what this study is about. When I get there, I want to talk to you about how your brain actually works and how it stores and retains information and what you think about. I will teach you about what brain scientists call “**neural pathways**”. The neural pathway is how God has designed your mind and your brain to function, and what you will find is that it is quite easy to change the toxic and harmful patterns of thinking that you may have developed over an extended period of time. [Psalm 139:14](#) says that you are “**fearfully and wonderfully made**”, and when we finally get to that point in the study, I think that you will have much to learn about why you think the way that you think. I want you to clearly grasp that **your life will always be a by-product of what and how you think**.

These first several studies will have a lot of information, but they are not the heart of what is going to be taught. They are more introductory in nature and will be building a foundation upon which the rest of the studies can be developed. If you are struggling in any area of your life – lack of self-control, inappropriate language, finances, relational issues, your marriage, raising children, anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, wanting to give up, impatience, wrong friends – anything, then this study will be exactly what you need to help overcome those areas that are hurting you.

So where do we start for a meaningful Introduction? Well, we want to start with the simple reality that **you need to think like God thinks**. That is foundational to this study and cannot be overlooked. It is a simple reality of the Christian life that so many Christians have completely ignored.

❖ **BACK TO THE BASICS**

Have you ever tried to put something together, but you thought that you were smart enough to do it without the instructions, and then you were left with screws and bolts and nuts that you had no idea where they were to be installed. Well, I certainly have. The frustrating part of this scenario is that now I have to disassemble the contraption and put it back together according to the instructions, which I should have read in the beginning. “Not me, I am a man. I got this.” I never tell my wife that I had to do that because she would immediately say “Why didn’t you read the instructions”, for which I would not have a very good answer.

We often hear someone say that we have to “get back to the basics”. What they are saying is that there are certain basic fundamentals required in every aspect of our lives. I want to call them **non-negotiables**. They are areas that you have to get right. Every area of your life is filled with non-negotiables.

You have to be to work on time, or they will fire you.

You have to pay your taxes, or the local government will come take your home from you.

You have to put gas in your car, or it will not run.

You have to pay for your groceries or the ‘I Stole Something Bell’ goes off as you leave the store.

You have to stop at red lights, or you will crash into someone.

These are all non-negotiables. All of your life is filled with these kinds of demands on your life. In the same way, the Christian life is full of non-negotiables, and one of those attributes for a follower of Christ is that **they must learn to think the way that God thinks**. If you neglect or ignore that simple basic principle, then things will most likely not go well for you. In the Christian life, there are specific fundamentals of the faith that are absolutely essential if you are ever going to be victorious in your Christian life. I am convinced that there are many Christians who really do not care that much about being victorious over sin in their life. They are more than satisfied with just thinking they are going to heaven. That is all they really want – just a free ticket to heaven. However, the Christian life is built on certain foundational truths that simply cannot be ignored.

The entire Old Testament is a testimony of God clearly communicating to His people what they needed to do to enjoy His blessings. Did they listen to Him? Are you kidding?. In fact, they ignored almost everything that He said and the recorded result is that life never went that well for them. If you leave certain biblical and foundational principles out of your life and just ignore them, you will never go on to maturity – never. You will be that person that struggles their entire life. Listen. You can choose to stay exactly like you are today. No one is going to be twisting your arm so that you have to cry “Uncle”. It is your choice. You can choose to ignore all that will be taught, or on the other hand, you can choose to let God show you how to change your life by changing how you actually think. I believe that you will actually be surprised and enjoy the results. Sometimes you just need to make some course corrections along the way, and this study is designed to help you do exactly that.

So what have we addressed today? What were the key points of this study today?

1. **People are not your battlefield.**
2. **Every negative thought that you have, every toxic emotion that you display, every unpleasant and cruel word that you speak, and every lie of the enemy that you believe somehow involves a wrong belief about God.**
3. **You have to retrain, reorient, and reassess your thought life.**
4. **God is living inside of you, God is for you, and God will prevail for you.**
5. **You need to think about your thinking.**
6. **Your life will always be a by-product of what and how you think.**
7. **Your thought life is what shapes your daily life,**
8. **Negative thoughts simply hijack your faith in God.**
9. **You need to take back your mental high ground.**
10. **If you think wrong you will live wrong.**
11. **Your life will always be a by-product of what and how you think.**
12. **You need to learn to think like God thinks.**