

PART 23 – HOW TO BECOME DISCONNECTED

❖ TRAPPED

Have you ever been trapped somewhere and remember how it felt? I remember being trapped out on the rocks in the middle of the river with the water rising and nowhere for me to go. I honestly thought that this may be the last day of my life and that I would drown in the cold, fast moving river that surrounded me. It was a little frightening for a young teenage boy.

Mentally, the problem is simple. When you think negatively, you begin to feel “trapped” in your life, imprisoned, stuck, anxious, afraid, and you become emotionally and mentally exhausted because having negative thoughts all the time can be so very discouraging. Some examples of how people think negatively would be like the following:

I do not enjoy working with this person.

The lines are too long at Walmart.

I cannot stand being around that person.

My boss irritates me to no end.

I cannot do this anymore.

I will be really glad when they leave.

I hate getting up early.

I cannot stand my job.

Who asked them to come anyway?

When will this day ever end?

Negative people have very little, if anything, to offer your life. It is like they are more than capable of just sapping your spiritual and emotional strength right out from under you before you know what happened. The good news is that **YOU** do not have to be a negative person – not at all. Why would anyone with any common sense want to live that way? I cannot find one good reason to be a negative person. The truth is that people live very negative lives because they refuse to think like God thinks. They have chosen how they want to think, and it seems that nothing can change their mind. It is like they think to themselves, “*This is the way that I am, and I have no reason or intention to change.*” Good luck with that! Honestly, if this is how you find yourself thinking, then you need a “**new normal**” because always thinking like the examples that I just gave is a “bad normal”.

BRAIN FACTS:

1. Neurological research says that the average person has approximately 30,000 different thoughts each day. So, if you are awake for 16 hours, that means that you have approximately 1875 thoughts per hour, or nearly 32 thoughts every minute, or one thought every two seconds.
2. Unfortunately, though, neurological research also indicates that the vast majority of people’s thoughts are negative – for some people up to 70% per day.¹

So, I further calculated that if just one half of your thoughts in a normal day were negative in some way, then that would mean that each year that you would have almost 5,500,000 negative thoughts. Just think

¹ Allen, 50.

about that for a moment – 5,500,000 negative thoughts each year. It is no wonder that life would not be treating you very well if that is the case. I have said it often, but if you are habitually thinking negatively, you will quickly become a negative person.

So, when things are not going well in your life and you get on a roller coaster of negative thoughts, then you have to **recognize** what is happening in your mind. In all honesty, the enemy is playing havoc in your mind. Here is what he is doing – and he is very good at his craft.

1. He is lying to you.
2. He is deceiving you.
3. He is challenging what you believe.
4. He is making you feel confused if you want to do what God says you should do.

When all of that happens, then you simply have to interrupt and disrupt what you are thinking. Now listen carefully. I call this “**the art and craft of disconnecting**”. Do you remember those old cowboy movies where someone jumps on the train and disconnects some of the cars of the train from the engine and the other passenger or freight cars? Well, that is what you have to do. You have to choose to disconnect your mind of thoughts that the enemy is clearly placing into your mind. When you recognize that your mind is headed off in the wrong direction, you have to immediately disconnect yourself from what and how you are thinking at that moment. This is not something that just comes naturally to you, so you have to learn how to do this.

KEY PRINCIPLE 69: YOU MUST LEARN HOW TO DISCONNECT YOUR MIND FROM YOUR WRONG THOUGHTS.

You have to find the quickest way to **disconnect your mind from your wrong thoughts** and get your mental and spiritual focus back on how God wants you to think. [Colossians 3:2](#) gives the motivation to do this when it says,

Col 3:2 (NKJV) **Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**

Paul is saying two things in this verse. First, he is saying “*Get your mind connected to what and how God wants you to think*” – i.e., “**set your mind on things above**”. Secondly, he is saying “*Disconnect your mind from what and how the world wants you to think*” – i.e., “**Do not set your mind on things on the earth**”.

Here is the key to being successful in the art and craft of disconnecting. You need something that you can use as a “**trigger**” to get you started. Think of a “trigger” as what you use to activate, to prompt, and to initiate you thinking the way that God wants you to think. Whatever “trigger” that you use to do this is what will help you to **disconnect** your mind from your wrong thoughts. When you start thinking the wrong way, if you are not careful, it will literally overtake your mind. It is like being in mental quicksand. You must recognize what is happening, recognize what the enemy is doing, recognize that you need to quickly get disconnected from your wrong thoughts. Maybe it is a verse that you have memorized for just these kinds of moments. For instance, [Isaiah 26:3](#) says,

Isa 26:3 (NKJV) **You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on You*, because he trusts in You.**

Philippians 4:8 says,

Php 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.

You have to find something that you can consistently use to help you interrupt all of the negative thoughts that the enemy is throwing at you at any given moment. When you know that your thoughts are basically out of control, just stop, take a deep breath, relax, and learn how to disconnect those thoughts from your mind by thinking about something else. Now, I know that some of you are thinking to yourself – “*Gary, this is way too hard. I have tried this a thousand times, but it just does not work for me. I cannot get rid of my negative thoughts.*” Sure you can. Why do I say that? Simple. It is because God says that you can. It is all about what and how you think. You can believe the enemy’s lie that you cannot, or you can believe God’s truth that you can. God would never tell you to do something that He knew you could not do. Listen to what God says that you have and what you can do.

1. **1 Corinthians 2:16** says that you have the “**mind of Christ**”. This is what you have.
2. **1 Peter 1:13** says that you are able to “**gird up the loins of your mind**”. You can do this.
3. **Romans 8:6** says that you can be “**spiritually minded**”. You can do this.
4. **1 Peter 4:1** says that you can “**arm yourselves with the same mind**” that Christ had. You can do this.
5. **2 Timothy 1:7** says that you have a “**sound mind**”.
6. **Colossians 3:2** says to “**set your mind on things above**”. You can do this.

This is not God teasing you with Scripture. This is God showing you how to be strengthened by Scripture. You will never rise above your level of ignorance on any matter. You have to know something in order to believe and implement something into your life. **2 Peter 1:3** says that “**His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness**”. God says that you have “**all things**” that you need to live a godly life – “**all things**”.

One of the triggers that I use to change my negative thinking to godly thinking is to literally begin to pray for all of the lost people that I know and care about. This has been so effective for me personally. Honestly, once I disciplined myself to do this when the enemy would try and overwhelm me in my mind, it just got easier and easier and easier. Today, I would say that it has become automatic in my life. I think of it as a godly fortress in my life. Over the last several decades I have found that when I do this one simple thing that the enemy is quicker to leave me alone and my mind gets refocused on how God wants me to think. If every time that the enemy tries to confuse, discourage, or disorient your thinking, you allow God to drive you to pray for lost people, then the enemy is not nearly as inclined to distract you in the future. You have to be consistent. You have to choose to do this. You have to develop this as a habit in your life. If you find a trigger that works for you, you must be determined and disciplined (and especially in the beginning) that every time the enemy comes against you in your mind that **YOU WILL PRAY FOR LOST PEOPLE**. You have to be like a bulldog with a bone.

Listen, you can find a way to do this. You can stop and be still. You can begin to thank God for all that He has done for you. You can begin to speak to yourself in “**psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord**” in accordance with [Ephesians 5:19](#) and [Colossians 3:16](#). You can pray for lost people. You can begin to remind yourself of all that God has done for you and promised you. You have to become what I want to call “**a thought warrior**”. You are fighting for your thought life to be what God wants it to be.

KEY PRINCIPLE 70: GOD’S TRUTH IS ALWAYS YOUR BATTLE PLAN.

Remember that **the enemy’s weapon is always his lies and God’s weapon is always His truth**. What you are doing when you learn how to disconnect your mind from your wrong thoughts is that you are building a neural pathway that will get stronger and stronger and stronger. This is exactly how God has designed your brain to work.

You have to find what works for you, but you cannot divorce what works for you from God’s Word. God has a “trigger” that He will show you personally to help you stop dwelling on the lies and deceptions of the devil so that you are focusing on God’s liberating truth for your life. This is not without effort on your part. You have to become deliberate and intentional and disciplined if you are ever going to be able to live this way.

If you are constantly struggling in this area of your life, then I would encourage you to get a small notebook and write down what I want to call your “**declarations of God**”. These are affirmations about God that you are willing to declare back to God and to yourself. Write down truth that God has used to change your life, truth that you know will help you. Then when the enemy begins to overwhelm you in your thought life, you open your notebook and simply begin to declare back to God and to yourself the truth that you know will set you free from the enemy’s lies. This is just one very simple way to constantly be renewing yourself to God’s truth for your life. Read your affirmations to yourself before you go to bed so that God’s truth will be on your mind before you go to sleep. You may think this is silly, and I would say that that is why you will not be successful.

KEY PRINCIPLE 71: YOU MUST LEARN HOW TO CONTROL WHAT YOU ALLOW INTO YOUR MIND.

You have to learn how to control what you **put into** your mind and what you **remove from** your mind. You have to find those simple triggers that will help you to refocus your thoughts and “**set your mind on things above**”. There are no shortcuts for this. This takes discipline and determination, but in the end, it will yield the “**peaceable fruit of righteousness**” in your life.

One Christian neuroscientist that I was reading said something that simplified much of this for me. She said that “*Thoughts are real, physical things that occupy mental real estate. Moment by moment, every day, you are changing the structure of your brain through your thinking.*”² [Hebrews 11:1](#) seems to validate this physical reality in a spiritual way when it says,

² Leaf, 19.

Heb 11:1 (NKJV) **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

Dr. Zodhiates defines “**substance**” as “*that which underlies the apparent, hence, reality, essence, substance*”.³ The NASB, ESV, and AMP use the word “**assurance**”. I like what the NIV says,

Heb 11:1 (NIV) **Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**

“**Being sure**” where? It is “**being sure**” in your mind, in your heart, in your being. In simple terms, **faith is something that is real in your mind**. Stated another way, **faith actually exists in your brain**. If you truly believe God in your mind, then your brain has developed a neural pathway to support what you believe in your mind. You have become mentally convinced of God’s truth, you have trusted Him with your life and eternity, and the result is that what you believe spiritually has literally become a part of your brain in an actual physical way. Day after day as you place the Word of God into your mind to control your life, your faith is growing and your neural pathway is getting stronger and stronger and stronger.

Sometimes you may see another Christian and say to yourself “*That person has been a really strong Christian for a really long time.*” In all likelihood, that is very true, but it is not a coincidence. As I have stated so often, that reality is NOT an accident. What has transpired in their life has been very intentional, deliberate, and purposeful, and God has taken what they have put into their mind, their heart, and their spirit, and transferred all of that into their brain in a physical way. This is how your brain works. This is exactly why you have the ability, the resolve, the propensity, and the strength to trust God in your life. It is because God has physically rooted His spiritual truth into your brain through your neural pathways. I think this is one very simple, yet obvious reason why Scripture repeatedly encourages you to both meditate on and memorize Scripture. It first goes into your mind and then into your brain.

Look at the rest of this verse. It says that “**faith is...the evidence of things not seen**”. I.e., if you truly believe in God and His Word and have faith in Him and are firmly persuaded of His truth, then that mental and spiritual reality will be visible and evident in your life. There should never be any doubt to anyone who knows you that you are a genuine follower of Christ. That should never be brought into question. If that reality is not **evident** in your life, then there is something seriously wrong. You know many people who claim to “*know Christ*” and to “*believe in Christ*”, but there is no “**evidence**” and no conviction about that in their life. It is just words, but the words have no “**substance**” to them. It is like they have a make-believe Christianity that for some strange reason makes them feel good. What you are saying about the Christian that has been a really strong Christian for a long time is that they are always providing you convincing “**evidence**” of what they believe. I.e., you can see their faith being enacted in their life.

Everything you think, every action that you engage in, every sentence you speak, and every attitude that you develop begins in your mind. Now what I want you to do is to think of this in a spiritual way, so just connect the dots here.

1. Faith begins **in your mind**. God wants you to trust Him and the enemy wants you to doubt God.
2. Hope begins **in your mind**. God wants you to have assurance and the enemy wants you to have no assurance.

³ Zodhiates, *hupostasis*, 1426,

3. Kindness begins **in your mind**. God wants you to be sympathetic to people and the enemy wants you to be harsh with people.
4. Peace begins **in your mind**. God wants you to have great calmness and the enemy wants you to always be agitated.
5. Joy begins **in your mind**. God wants you to rejoice and the enemy wants you to be sorrowful.
6. Self-control begins **in your mind**. God wants you to have strength of mind and the enemy wants you to be self-indulgent.
7. Patience begins **in your mind**. God wants you to have endurance and the enemy wants you to be exasperated.

Whatever God wants to do in your life, the enemy always wants the exact opposite. So, if you see the exact opposite of what you know God wants in your life, what should be your conclusion? It should be that this is the lie that the enemy has placed into your mind.

So, what have we been calling this? This is when you learn to think like God thinks. Because of what God's Word says, this is you mentally convincing and assuring yourself that this is exactly how God wants you to live and to think. Two key thoughts and one Key Principle:

**Whatever you give your mind to is what you will become.
Whatever you put into your mind is what will come out of your life.**

**KEY PRINCIPLE 72: YOU MUST THINK ABOUT WHAT GOD WANTS IN YOUR LIFE
BEFORE IT CAN BE DEVELOPED IN YOUR LIFE.**

Spiritual fruit is not automatic. It is the direct result of "**meditating**" on what God wants in your life.

Phil 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 (THINK) on these things.

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