

PART 40 – HOW TO THINK IGNORANTLY

A crucial area that we want to look at and address is how you can identify the lies of the enemy in your mind. This is really a very critical issue because **if you believe his lies, then you act on those lies**. If he actually has the power to place thoughts into your mind, and he does, then how can you know that he is lying to you at any particular moment. He can place wrong thoughts into your mind any number of ways – friends, social media, television, books and magazines, and even your own wrong thinking. You must remember that most of the time you are doing something else other than reading your Bible or praying when this happens. So, learning how to determine what he may be placing into your mind and what instruments and means he uses to do so is very important if you are ever going to be able to win the war in your mind.

Now, in order to be able to identify the lie that the devil is using against you, I think that you have to look backwards. **First, you have to identify what the problem is that you are struggling with at any given moment.** This is the easy part. It could be anger, frustration, irritability, marital issues, financial problems, laziness, ugly words, a contentious spirit, greed, bitterness – anything really. For instance, if you are that person who complains about having to stand in line at Walmart, then you are the problem. You know before you ever go in to Walmart that you will have to stand in line at the checkout, so why get angry at something you know will be that way when you arrive? Just stand in line and relax. Walmart lines have not changed. One option is to order online so you never have to go into the store. Another option is to go to another store which does not have such long checkout lines. The point is that you are the problem. End of story, so stop complaining about Walmart! **Identify the problem you are having.**

The second step is to ask very penetrating and analytical questions about the problem with which you are struggling. When you do this, you desperately need to pray and ask God for His help because **you will not be inclined to find much fault in your own life**. I have developed some simple analytical questions that you can ask.

1. *When did the problem actually start?*
2. *What actually served as the catalyst or reason for the problem?*
3. *Who was involved in the problem?*
4. *How did I contribute to the problem?*
5. *Do I have to always be in control?*
6. *Did I actually fuel and empower the problem with my attitudes and words?*
7. *If I did something wrong, did I seek the other person's forgiveness?*
8. *Have I even sought God's wisdom for the problem?*
9. *How did I react or respond when the problem began?*
10. *How am I reacting and responding now?*
11. *Is there something that seems to actually trigger a continuing problem?*
12. *Do I believe that God wants to use this problem to make me more Christlike?*
13. *Why do I feel that it is the other person's fault?*
14. *If I accuse the other person of doing something, do I do the same thing?*

The issue is that you cannot always be blaming someone else for the problem. [Matthew 7:3](#) says,

Mt 7:3 (NKJV) And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

When making your evaluation (if you are even willing to do that), you have to recognize what it is that you did personally that made matters worse. You will be much better off in doing this evaluation if you leave other people out of your initial appraisal. Why is that? It is because you are much more prone to see problems in someone else's life than you are to see problems in your own life. It is always easier to cast blame on someone else than it is to accept blame on yourself. We always see ourselves as good and someone else as bad. All of these are lies from the enemy that every one of us is quick to believe.

If you are always looking at the struggle as if you are simply the victim, then you have believed one of the enemy's greatest lies that creates one of his greatest strongholds. Listen to [Matthew 6:23](#),

Mt 6:23 (NKJV) But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Stated another way, if you always see things that happen to you the wrong way, then your entire life will be affected by your wrong thinking. If your “eye”, i.e., if the way that you see something is bad or wrong, then everything in your life will be poisoned and polluted by that perspective. You will only make the problem worse. The word “darkness” is used three times in this verse, but the first use of the is the Greek word “skoteninos” and it means to be “without light” or figuratively, without understanding. The next two uses of the word are similar, but different. They are the Greek word “skotos” which means to be “ignorant and in error”. You could think of [Matthew 6:23](#) this way: “*But if the way that you think is different than how God thinks, then your whole way of thinking will be without understanding. If, therefore, the understanding that you have is actually ignorant and in error, how great that ignorance and error will become.*”

<p>KEY PRINCIPLE 139: THINKING IN AN UNGODLY WAY CHANGES YOUR THINKING INTO IGNORANCE.</p>

Stated another way, it would be accurate to say that **your brain becomes filled with neural pathways that become strongholds of ignorance and error**. Unfortunately, the devil will always be trying to convince you that you have done nothing wrong – absolutely nothing. That way he can get you to pass the buck to someone else and never take responsibility for your personal issues that have obviously contributed to the problem.

The third step is to try and discern the actual lie from the devil that you have believed. This will not be easy simply because most people think that they are smarter than the devil and that they cannot be that easily deceived by him. Well, that is simply another lie that people believe. The devil is the grand master of deception, the greatest magician of deception that has ever lived, and the less you believe in his power to deceive you personally, the easier it is for him to actually deceive you. He is the most dishonest entity in the universe, so figuring out where he has deceived you may be more difficult than you think. He deceived Eve with no problems whatsoever. In the Tribulation he will deceive several billion people to take the mark of the beast. At the end of the Millennium after living under the grace and goodness of Christ, almost the entire world will follow him as soon as he is released. He deceived

David into thinking it was okay to steal another man's wife. When you get to heaven, ask David how that turned out for him. He is always deceiving people. That is the only thing he is interested in doing.

I have a very pointed question that I want to ask you. *"Do you genuinely believe that God can be trusted to the degree that you can personally trust Him with your life?"* That is a very penetrating question simply because it forces you to live out what you say you believe. **Obviously, God can resolve your problems, but you have to let Him do it His way and not your way.** Until you can actually see God in your problems, the devil will always be offering you his alternatives and you will be accepting them. Here is the spiritual problem you will most likely face. It is that you want to always be in control of your life and your decisions. It is always painful when you have to give the control of your life over to someone else. We always want to hold on to how we think something should be resolved. If that is the case, then I would say that you do not really believe that God can be trusted.

In the 6 surgeries that I had in 2021 / 2022, the one person that I wanted to say hello to was the anesthesiologist who was going to put me to sleep each time. I just wanted to make sure that he could wake me up. I knew he could put me to sleep with no problem, but could he wake me up after the surgery – that was the real question. I needed some re-assurance that he could because I knew that once I went to sleep that everything was out of my control. There was not one thing that I could control. When I get onto an airplane, I am completely trusting someone else to keep me safe. There is not one thing that I can control on that airplane – not one thing. So, if I can trust my life to someone I have never met and never known, why should it be so hard to trust my life to God who I profess to love with all of my heart, soul, mind, and strength?

KEY PRINCIPLE 140: IF YOU THINK THAT YOU HAVE TO BE IN CONTROL OF EVERYTHING, THEN YOU HAVE BEEN DECEIVED BY THE ENEMY.

You cannot be in control of everything that happens in your life. That is an impossibility. However, most people believe that they can control everything in their life and so they live that way. Trusting God and letting Him control your life is a much better option than you trying to control everything in your life. Just read the end of [Romans 8](#) to get God's perspective on some of this. For instance, [Romans 8:28](#) says,

Ro 8:28 (NKJV) **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

[Romans 8:31-39](#) is as powerful of a passage as you can read,

Ro 8:31 (NKJV) **What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?**
³² **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?** ³³ **Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies.** ³⁴ **Who is he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.** ³⁵ **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?** ³⁶ **As it is written: "*For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*"** ³⁷ **Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors**

through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What I have just read is the truth, and when you allow God to assimilate His truth into your mind, it will give you the confidence to begin to trust Him with everything in your life – with your job, your finances, your children, your marriage, your future, your tongue, your thinking – everything in your life! With Christ and through Christ, God says that “**you are more than conquerors**”, greater than conquerors.

So, what is a meaningful path forward that you can take to effect spiritual change in the ongoing battle for your mind, and ultimately for your life? **The first step is that you have to stop believing the lies of the devil, and the only way to do that is to know God’s truth and to replace the devil’s lies with God’s truth.** I have called it the Principle of Replacement. A key verse for this is [Ephesians 6:17](#),

Eph 6:17 (NKJV) **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;**

Remember that this “**sword**” is not a large sword, but a small dagger, and “**word**” is “*rhema*” which is only talking about a verse, or a small passage in the Bible. In order to resist the lies of the devil, the believer has to find specific verses or passages that apply directly to the issue that they are facing. Now, **if you do not believe in the power of the Word of God, then you have already accepted the devil’s lie**. The simple fact of the matter is that God has sovereignly chosen to exercise his divine power through His Word. Remember these two amazing truths. **God is eternally present in His Word** and **God is eternally powerful in His Word**. The Holy Spirit is overseeing the Word, and Christ, who is Himself the very “*Logos*”, is in the Word manifesting Himself to the listener. It is an invisible, unseen, imperceptible, concealed, and hidden work known only to God. You have to have both your mind and heart anchored in the power of the Word of God to make the necessary spiritual transformations that your life needs. You cannot make biblical life changes apart from God’s truth. The issue is that if you truly believe that the Word of God is as powerful as you say it is, then you need to fully realize that any spiritual changes that are going to be achieved in your life **MUST** come from the Word itself. Listen very carefully.

KEY PRINCIPLE 141: THE CHANGES THAT GOD WANTS TO MAKE IN YOUR LIFE NEVER COME FROM YOU, BUT DIRECTLY FROM HIS WORD.

You may often think that they do come from you, but that is the shortest and fastest pathway to diminishing the glory of God. As Paul said in [Ephesians 6:10](#), “**be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might**”. [Colossians 1:11](#) says to be,

Col 1:11 (NKJV) “**...strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;**”

The power of God gives patience, endurance, and joy in every trial you face. This must be a conviction of your life that will always be non-negotiable – your confidence in the power of the Word of God. The more that you use the Word of God to overcome your struggles, the greater becomes the neural pathways

that are being physically built into your brain. You are building a divine channel, a divine **physical** conduit for God's truth in your mind that will be your anchor and your foundation for being victorious over your struggles. The word that I want you to grasp when we talk about the Word of God in this respect is that you must "**internalize**" the Word of God.¹ It is like you are trying to "bottle up and store up" the Word of God in your mind. Think of it as being a prepper where you store up food for difficult times. You want the truth that you are using to overcome a struggle to always be in front of you, to always be in your mind, to be truth that you have made your way of life. [Psalm 119:11](#) says it this way,

Ps 119:11 (NKJV) Your word I have hidden (internalized) in my heart, that I might not sin against You!

You have to constantly be "**renewing**" your mind with the truths that God has given you to overcome your struggles. Now, this idea of renewing your mind is much more than just memorizing a Scripture. Obviously, memorizing is a critical part of it, but what you need to do is to keep defining and redefining the truth that you are internalizing in different ways. The Scriptures call that "meditation". I tell my students all the time that when I teach them in class that I am repeating myself over and over, but I am doing it in many different ways over an extended period of time until it literally becomes internalized in their mind and in their brain. Based on our brain language, I am trying to help them build strong neural pathways on a subject.

How do you do this? Well, as a suggestion, you would simply write down what a verse is saying in your own words. I do this all the time. You can look up the Scriptural words in a verse to help you understand the particular meanings and nuances that are in an actual word. It is getting to a place where you fully understand the verse and all of its implications. You cannot just sit around and keep repeating a verse to yourself. Rather, you want to be "uncovering, unearthing, and discovering" what is in the verse in ways that are meaningful to you and in ways that you will remember. You can combine certain verses. One example might be like the following:

"I know that God is for me, so who can be against me? I know that God is always working things out for my good even when I may not see His hand at work at the moment. I know that God has made me more than a conqueror through Christ who loves me and strengthens me in my struggles."

You could say,

"I know that God has given me everything that I need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Christ and this includes everything that I need to be an overcomer in my struggle. I will be content with however God chooses to work in me and for me."

You could say,

"I know that God does not want me to be impatient with His work in my life, so I am willing to yield to His deeper work that I know will take longer. I will not be contentious and argumentative, but I will be kind and supportive of others. I will not always be blaming someone else, but looking at what God wants to reveal to me and what He wants to change in my life. That other person is not my enemy, but the tool God is using to change me."

¹ Groeschel, *Winning*, 87.

One of my personal affirmations that I make every day is that *“I am going to love my wife like Christ loved the church”*. There may be days where I fail, but I will not let go of that command to me. That is a non-negotiable work of God in my life. My wife is my treasure. Wives, you should do the same concerning the relationship you have with your husband with something like *“I am going to honor and respect my husband as I would honor and respect Christ.”* These affirmations should be a constant reminder of God’s perfect will for your life.

So, when you do make these kinds of affirmations, write them down somewhere that is easy for you to have on hand. You can write these affirmations down in the Notes on your mobile phone. You can put them on 3x5 cards. You can keep a notebook. The more that you read your own affirmations from Scripture about God’s power in your life, the greater your mind is strengthened to trust God to do what only He can do. **You MUST remember that if your problem is a person, that you cannot change them.** You do not have that power. Only God can change a person’s heart, so your prayers may be for God to literally give that person a new heart and a new way of looking at their life. God can do that when you never can. This is one area of your life where you can be creative and imaginative.

Sincerely pray for both yourself and others as to how you know God truly wants both of you to become. You always have to be focusing on God’s work in you much more than His work in another person. Please leave that person to God. Give that person to God. Please give your circumstances to God and leave them in His hand. **There are circumstances that you cannot change, but once you have allowed God to use your circumstances to change you, then God is free to change your circumstances.** Write that down, internalize that truth, constantly remind yourself of what you know is God’s best for your life and NOT what you may want. **You cannot improve on God’s best for your life,** and unless you embrace that reality you will never be content or satisfied. Remember that **repetition is what makes the neural pathway stronger, so keep reminding yourself of what you know that God wants to do in your life.** Be creative with how you do this. You can even use voice memos on your phone so that when you are driving you can listen to what you have spoken.

There has to be a sense of determination about this that is not willing to give up just because you may not be able to see immediate visible results. Normally what you are doing is tearing down the strongholds that the enemy has already built in your life. The principle is that when you allow the enemy to create a stronghold in your life and in your mind like *“this is never going to work”*, or *“they will never change”*, or *“I cannot do this”*, or *“why do these things always happen to me”* that when you begin to succeed the enemy will go back to the stronghold to tempt you. He will say *“this is not working”* or *“they will never change”* and in your mind that is the thought that you will have. Immediately you have to replace that thought with God’s Word and your declarations that you have developed – the principle of replacement. Your mind is the battlefield and the Word of God is your sword, so use it. When the enemy says *“this is not working”*, you simply say that **“God is working. He is working all things together for my good and His glory and I will continue to trust Him”**. Keep reinforcing the truth in your mind. Trust me, but the enemy will not leave you alone. You may have to do this many times in a day, in a week, in a month until the enemy realizes that you are not going to yield to his lies in that particular area. **You can never get rid of the enemy’s lies.** He will always be attacking you with them because this is a war that you have to fight whether you want to or not. This is one of the areas of your life where it requires you to be strong in the Lord.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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