

CONNECTING MY MIND WITH MY LIFE

One of the goals for this series is to help you see how fearfully and wonderfully that you have been made. It will stretch your brain to understand how amazing God is. The more you see God in every area of your life, then the more you will be willing to trust Him. This series should give you a much greater appreciation for what it means to be “**made in the image of God**”. [Genesis 1:27](#) says,

Ge 1:27 (NKJV) So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Your mind and your brain are so amazing that it is almost impossible to even describe. I was reading about how both medical science and neuroscience have determined that many patients who were sick did not die from their actual illness, but from the fear that they were going to die. In fact, many surgeons who know that their patient is convinced they will die during the surgery avoid doing the operation because what the patient “thinks” adds a much greater risk to the surgery.¹ [1 John 4:18](#) says,

1Jn 4:18 (NKJV) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

The more you know Christ in an intimate way, the less fear you will have of dying. When you truly know how deeply loved you are by God and what He has prepared for you and what awaits you in eternity, there is nothing to fear. [1 Corinthians 1:2:9](#) says,

1Co 2:9 (NKJV) But as it is written: "*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*"

❖ BELIEVING CAN BE DEADLY

I read the story of a man who had been diagnosed with liver cancer, and because of that diagnosis he had been told that he only had several months to live. He was not a candidate for a liver transplant, and therefore his odds of survival were very, very low. Right after his death, an autopsy was performed and the autopsy revealed that the doctors had made a mistake and misdiagnosed his illness. He had a very small tumor in his liver, but it was not even close to being life-threatening. He would not have died from anything associated with his liver.

So, what killed this man? Well, he did not die from liver cancer, but from “believing” he was dying from liver cancer. Somebody told him that he was going to die, and he believed them. We will not call this believing a lie, but he did believe something that was not true, and in the process he just gave up, he stopped living, he became afraid. What he never understood was that the way he thought had a God given power to change him mentally, physically, and spiritually – either good or bad.² In his case, the way he thought literally pushed him physically and emotionally in the wrong direction – and he died.

What is so amazing is that your brain was designed by God in such a way that four distinct factors can physically change your brain and the way that you think. These four factors have the power to literally change your life. They are your **beliefs** (what Christians call “**faith**”), your **thoughts**, your **behaviors**, and even **what you eat**. Everytime that I say something like that in this study, you always need to realize

¹ Jennings, 10.

² Jennings, 11.

that the changes your brain makes can be either good and godly, or they can be bad and ugly. I do not think that the average Christian realizes how much their thoughts are impacting the physical landscape of their brain. If you actually realized how powerful your thoughts are in impacting your life, you would never think another negative thought.³ Why? It is because **what you think is what you become**. What you mentally think and spiritually believe are converted into external behaviors. If you think godly, you will become godly and do godly things. If you think ungodly, you will become ungodly and do ungodly things. I love [Philippians 4:13](#) which says,

Php 4:13 (NKJV) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Do you think like this? Do you believe the truth that is in this verse? Has your faith and confidence in this verse made a difference in your behavior, in your decisions, and in your lifestyle? Well, it should. That is exactly why it is there. This is the abiding truth of the Word of God. I want to be the best husband on planet earth, and I am fully committed to being the best husband my wife could ever have. I am fully committed to that. I know that I can love her like Christ loved the Church because this verse tells me that I can. It tells you that you can. You can be the best wife that your husband ever dreamed of having. If you are not now, by the power of Christ who strengthens you, you can become the love of his life. Why do I know that? It is because this verse tells me that you can. You can be the best employee in your workplace. You can be anything and everything that God wants you to be – but you have to believe this verse.

If you just casually read over this verse and fail to dig out of it the amazing truth that is contained in it, then you have literally missed out on the Christian life. This has to be one of the most powerful and exciting verses in all of Scripture - “**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me**”. The word “**strengthens**” is “*endynamoo*”, and it means to empower, to make you strong, to enable you.⁴ It means to strengthen you inwardly, spiritually, morally, emotionally, and mentally. It is in the present tense which means that Jesus is always willing to strengthen you. He never says “*Why don't you come back later. I have some errands to run.*” Once you begin to act on God's Word and implement His truth into your life, you will be strengthened in ways that you never even imagined were possible.

What neuroscientific research has proven is that how and what you think changes the actual “physical” structure of your brain, and ultimately of your life. What you think is deeper than just something mental or intellectual. It impacts you emotionally, physically, and spiritually. When I eventually get there, you will be staggered by the impact that television and video games are making on the physical structure of people's brains. When I did that research, I was overwhelmed about how the intellectual make-up and disposition of entire cultures is being radically driven to discredit and actually hate God. We see it being played out every day. The hatred and rejection of God is literally being wired into people's brains by what they watch and listen to on a regular basis. They see it visually, they hear it audibly, they think it mentally, and then they act on all of it with very negative impacts and results. In the midst of that staggering reality, the great news of being fearfully and wonderfully made is that you have the God given power to change your life for the better. You do not have to become a cultural clone that just adapts to whatever the culture feeds you.

³ Leaf, 15.

⁴ Strong, *endynamoo*, #1743, ep.

❖ I HEAR YOU AND I GET IT

Have you ever not understood something, but then in almost the blink of an eye you see it. It is like it was there all the time, but you just did not see it or get it. We have this little plaque in our den that has the word “Jesus” on it, but it is made in such a way that you may not actually see the word “Jesus”, but just some random little pieces of wood that make no sense at all. Then suddenly, you see the word “Jesus”, and immediately it makes sense.

When you think, your brain **adapts** and **changes** to three specific elements. It adapts and changes based on (1) what and how you think, (2) what you believe (which is huge), and (3) what or who you worship.⁵ Your brain literally and physically rewires itself based on these three major areas. Think of it this way. Your brain “hears” and your brain “understands” what your mind is actually thinking, and it begins to build neural pathways that mold and shape your life in that direction. Your brain gets it. I am fully “molded” in a God direction. You should be fully molded in a God direction. Everything about your life should let people know that reality. If your life is not headed toward God, it is because of what and how you think, of what you believe, and what you worship. **You make your choices and then your choices make you.** What happens is really very simple. How you think about God and the truth of Scripture is able to bring healing to every part of your life. However, if your view of God and His Word is distorted and you give it little to no attention and refuse to believe it, you will experience emotional pain and mental confusion on a regular basis. That is why the world has developed mental health programs and institutions. How you think and what you think wires your brain in that direction. **The only way that you can stop going in a certain direction is to think in a different way.** That is the only way to make the change – the only way.

So, what this study is designed to do is to help you understand that **real change only happens when you think a certain way.** If I can say it in a different way, it is to help you change the way that you actually think about change. I can hardly wait to see what God wants to change next in my life. It is as exciting a life as someone can live. Whatever He wants me to change so that I can reflect Him more, that is what I want, and that is what you should want. I know that I have no power whatsoever to change anyone, but at the same time God clearly wants me to be an aggressive encourager so that you may become motivated to make the kind of changes that He wants you to make in your life. It may be to grow a deeper commitment to God’s Word and His life-transforming truth. It may be that God wants you to worry less and trust Him more. It may be that He wants you to eliminate anger or toxic thoughts from your life. It may be that He wants you to embrace more of the fruit of the Spirit in your life. Whatever it is, I want to be an encouragement to you to let Him have His way in your life, to let Him stretch you and push you into a deeper walk with Him and with others.

I will never try and coerce you or try and make you feel guilty because you may not be where God wants you to be at this point in your life. We all need to grow in different areas of our life, and that certainly includes me. However, by the same token, I do not want to be passive in my approach, but I want to be very pro-active in challenging you and in provoking you **to learn** to think differently than you are currently thinking. The goal is that every encouragement will have a biblical foundation that is more

⁵ Jennings, 11.

than obvious to you, and that it will bring about God's conviction if you know that some kind of change needs to be made in your life.

My ultimate goal is to motivate you to always think like God thinks. You may think that will be hard and difficult, and unsustainable, but that is only because you think a certain way – right?. It is only because you believe something that is not true. I hope that you are starting to see that reality. It is actually very easy to think like God thinks because He has clearly revealed exactly how He thinks in His Word. **Change always begins in your mind.** You must understand that reality when trouble and confusion and heartache show up. **Your mind is not only your battlefield, but it is also where you exercise your faith and your trust in God.** Think of what needs to take place as being twofold. First, you want to learn how to think like God thinks. That has been our consistent theme. Secondly, however, you want to learn how **NOT** to think like the enemy thinks. That is just as critical. The enemy's strategy to win over your thought life will never end, and this war is clearly happening in your mind. You have to know that so that you can counter the devil's strategy and his lies with God's truth. Later on in this series, I will teach you how you can recognize and counter the lies of the enemy.

KEY PRINCIPLE 10: YOUR MIND IS WHERE YOU WIN THE WAR THAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR MIND.

As you place the truth of God into your mind, it becomes your "shield" against the lies of the devil as well as the life changing "wisdom" that you need to live so that you can be an overcomer. On the one hand, the enemy is always lying to you in your thought life, and on the other hand, God is always telling you the truth and what will always work to help you. It just becomes a matter of who you listen to the most. There is not one single principle in the Word of God that is ineffective – not one. They all work all the time for every believer. **What is ineffective is your unwillingness to integrate God's truth into your life.** At a very personal level, I hear the devil playing his "sleight of mind" tricks all the time. However, I know God's voice, and His voice is able to trump the lies of the devil. Jesus said these amazing words in [John 10:27](#),

Jn 10:27 (NKJV) **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

The more time that you spend in real fellowship with God, the easier it will be for you to recognize His voice. Knowing His voice allows you to think like He thinks. Please understand that even though you may "know" some things about God's Word, that **the truth that you know will never benefit your life UNTIL you actually believe it and apply it to your life.** This has to be an anchor in your understanding, in your mind, in your thought life. You should constantly be encouraging yourself with these words – *"I will believe God's Word and I will apply it to my life – no questions asked. If it is something that I know that God wants me to do or not do, I will yield to His Lordship over my life."* That is thinking like God would want you to think.

KEY PRINCIPLE 11: GOD'S TRUTH HAS TO BE BELIEVED AND THEN APPLIED TO YOUR LIFE TO BE EFFECTIVE.

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

1. **What you think is what you become.**
2. **You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.**

3. **Your brain “hears” and your brain “understands” what your mind is actually thinking, and it begins to build neural pathways that mold and shape your life in that direction.**
4. **You make your choices and then your choices make you.**
5. **Real change only happens when you think a certain way.**
6. **KEY PRINCIPLE 10: YOUR MIND IS WHERE YOU WIN THE WAR THAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR MIND.**
7. **KEY PRINCIPLE 11: GOD’S TRUTH HAS TO BE BELIEVED AND THEN APPLIED TO YOUR LIFE TO BE EFFECTIVE.**

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