

“Mind Wars”

Winning the Battle of the Mind

Proverbs 23:7

There is a very real enemy who is after your mind. It's not just the media - they *are* after your mind - but there's a much more malevolent force out there than media, marketing, and politicians vying for your votes. There's a lot more darkness happening from a very real enemy who wants to control your mind. The real battle is between our *ears*, and the real battle that we fight is an ongoing, every-day battle.

We'll spend the next few weeks talking about “mind wars”, and most importantly, *winning* the war for the battle of the mind. We all want to win that war - it's a real war. For many of us, watching television is a relaxing and comfortable way to spend an evening. But, on major network and cable T.V., things have gotten a little worse over the last ten years, and we probably find ourselves looking away or fast-forwarding through a lot more of the shows that we watch.

We may have asked ourselves, “*Why are we doing this?*” Is T.V. really evil? Not necessarily. Aren't there good things too? Sometimes it's not that one show, but *other* rabbit trails we go down that take us places. What happens is, inadvertently, our mind - our soul - our spirit is receiving all these signals coming our way. In time, it begins to wear us down little by little, where what we deemed immoral and ungodly ten years ago, we're now watching habitually.

Why is that? - because it's overwhelming, and coming so fast and often that we just get used to it. What happens over time is the line begins to move - that place of demarcation in our life that, at one point said, “*I won't go there,*” but when that line starts to move, you move with it a little bit, and suddenly you're being entertained by what is a tragedy for another family - by murder, sexuality, and crime.

That should bother us, but what do *we* do? We shake it off and keep going - or we can decide to buy back our time and our minds that we gave over to culture. Truth is, if we binge-watch something over and over and over, it affects us. Why? G.I.G.O. - garbage inn - garbage out - but, there comes a point where we have to take the garbage *out*.

That's a decision and a conviction each one of us can make in our own walk with Jesus, as to what we spend our time and attention on. But, if we're not careful, we'll give our minds over to someone else, or some-*thing* else. The mind wars that happen, they happen between our ears. These wars are "salt" on our lives, and no one else can keep us accountable for them but only we, ourselves, are the gatekeepers of our minds and thoughts.

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

What God has given us is the ability to think well and to literally manage what happens between our ears. It's a gift of God that we *are* the gatekeepers of our minds. This war being waged was the topic of a book by Joyce Meyer in 1995, "The Battlefield of the Mind". We should read it and then *re-read* it often. It's one of the best books on how *what* we think affects what we say, what we do, and how we behave.

Proverbs 23:7 NKJV

"For as [a man] thinks in his heart, so is he."

This was written in the context of verse six, which says, *"Do not eat the bread of a miser, nor desire his delicacies..."* - someone who is cheap or stingy - scheming - conniving. The word "thinks" literally means to calculate (like a miser), to estimate value, to be a gate keeper (to guard the gate). Our minds have a gate. There is an eye gate - a mouth gate - an ear gate.

Proverbs 4:23 NLT

"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life."

We become what we behold - whatever we ponder on, spend the most time with, gaze upon, gravitate toward, look at the most - whatever we're letting in through the gate the most. If we're not guarding the gate, then those things that we let in then cause the "so is he" part in *us*. As a man *thinks* in his heart (the seat of the mind, will, and emotions), or, *"as goes the head, so goes the body."* Whatever we're thinking about, that's what we will produce.

Gatekeeper - As the gatekeeper of your mind you have to calculate and estimate the spiritual, holy, eternal value of the thoughts that your thinking because, what you do with the thoughts you have determines who you are and what you will do. *You* are the "Gatekeeper" of your mind.

We shouldn't be shocked when people act out their behavior, because we know that's what was in their heart. *As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.* We will see that play out every day in our lives. What we fill ourselves full of is exactly what we leak out. We are the gatekeepers of our minds - no one else can keep it - only we can. God has given us that and also the ability to say "*Stop it!*", or to say, "*Get out!*" to what's already there.

We can't always control *what* we think, but we can control what we *do* with what we think. Thoughts happen to us all, but we can control which ones *stay*, and, to a large degree, we can control whatever comes into our minds in the first place.

"Sow a thought, reap an action, sow an action, reap a habit, sow a habit, reap a character, sow a character, reap a destiny." - Stephen Covey, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People"

This is true, whether it's good or bad. Whether your destiny ends up being a holy destiny or an unholy destiny, it all starts with what you do with the originating thought that popped into your mind. You are the "Gatekeeper" of your mind. Our destiny begins with a single thought. Where we arrive - our destination - where we were destined to be. That's why we have to be gatekeepers - why we have to say, "*No more!*"

That's why we should just turn off the news. Right now there's a campaign in full swing - the "*Primary at the OK Corral*" - where guns are blazing and mud is slinging - to destroy people and politicians. We need to be careful what we believe - what we let in - because we're being inundated with propaganda. Above all, we need to pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit before we vote. That's a way for us to guard our gate from all the mess that's coming in now.

We guard our minds and therefore our hearts and spirits as well. When thoughts come to us, what do we do with them - those things we know are not the truth? We take the Word of God and Truth, and so fill ourselves with Truth that there is *no room* for lies to remain. It's a displacement approach - we displace the lie with the Truth. We know who the father of lies is, and he is an enemy that is after our minds. Like the serpent in the Garden of Eden, he tempts us to question the character and heart of God, and to cause us to doubt what God plainly said.

Whenever a thought comes in our mind, we need to ask, *“Where is this coming from? Is it from me? Is it from God? Is it from the devil?”* There is a very real enemy just waiting to bring something into our minds, and it comes in thousands of forms to weave a tale - a detailed narrative - if we aren't guarding our mind. Then, the enemy is like a serpent, wrapped around our unguarded minds, as the story is happening and we fall right into it. We might as well be signing a contract with the devil - shaking hands with him saying, *“I'm with you,”* as the lies keep coming in. Instead, we must constantly be saying, *“No. No. No!”*

Romans 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.” (NLT says - “...by changing the way you think”)

Transform means to literally change its shape or form. We're to change everything about ourselves. Conform means to be pressed into (this world) - so that we're not conformed to the world, but we're transformed into the image of Jesus by the renewing of our mind - by *changing* the way we think. That's how powerful the mind is.

“It is time for us to start thinking about what we're thinking about.” - Pastor Steve Berger

As gatekeepers, we don't just allow things to stick and to stay. Thoughts should not be “sticky”. We should be able to say, *“Wait a minute - where did that come from? Who did that come from?”* And if it's not of God - not of us - not life-giving and hope-filled, then we need to reject that thought. How different would our lives be if we were to become the gatekeepers of our thoughts - of our ideas - what we meditate on? How different would our day look?

It's not just about having a positive mental outlook, or getting rid of *stinkin' thinkin'*. It's not just mental ascent to a principle - but, rather, it's a spiritual *transformation* - a *biblical* mental outlook - seeing life through the lens of *Scripture*, where we see life as God sees it. When he created all life he said, *“It is good.”* - and *that* becomes our biblical world view.

Of Americans surveyed, 68% said that they were Christian, but only 4% have what would be termed a biblical world view. That's *cultural Christianity*. The word “Christian” is only mentioned three times in the Bible, but the word “disciple” is found 249 times. Based on that, we *should* be known as *disciples of Jesus Christ*, which is what we're supposed to be. Jesus said, *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.”*

Philippians 4:8 NIV

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.”

What we replace stinkin'-thinkin' thoughts with, that is how we guard our gates. With that, we're replacing and displacing contaminated and dark “water” with the Word of God. Light will always overwhelm and drive out darkness. Whatever it is we're thinking on, we are the gatekeepers of our minds. We should begin to replace those thoughts by thinking about “these things”. Say, *“I’m being inundated in my mind, so whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy - I’m going to think about such things.”*

Imagine when the news feed comes in and we say, *“Wait a minute - that’s not noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy!”* Then *this* becomes our litmus test of what we allow through the gate of our minds.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NKJV

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 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...”

On Thinking Well (Pastor Jimmy's devotional)

We become what we behold. We gravitate toward what we gaze upon. Garbage in, garbage out. Life in, life out. You alone are the Gatekeeper of your mind and what you dwell on. Scripture gives us a clear path for occupying our mental space. Focus on whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. If you spend your time thinking about these eight things, there will be no time to dwell on what is dark and destructive. Think about what you're thinking about and plot your course for what produces life and joy.

Prayer

Father, in Jesus' name, thank You for this Word. Thank You that You are speaking to us about being gatekeepers of our minds. You are teaching us how to win the battle of the mind.

We repent for abandoning the gates of our minds and we make a quality decision to focus on those things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy.

Holy Spirit, we invite You to convict us and show us where we're entertaining the wrong thoughts, and bring us back to the Truth of Your Word. We love You and honor You. In Jesus' name.

Amen