



Where the Battle Really Is

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The Christian life is not as hard as we try to make it. It's really a battle going on in your mind and it's a war going on between your ears. It's not a battle against devils and demons. It's a battle against their thoughts. Nowhere does the Bible say to take every demon captive, but as I'm about to show you, the Bible does say, "Take every thought captive." I'm not saying that you shouldn't cast out devils. You should cast out devils, but we cast devils out of demon-possessed people. If you're born again, you're a "Jesus-possessed" person not a "demon-possessed" person. You might have ways of behaving that are due to a system of thinking that needs to be taken captive. So when you destroy that system of thinking, your behavior will change.

You cannot change your life by changing your behavior.

You change your life by changing how you think. When your thinking lines up with God's thinking, then Satan cannot get in. He's sealed off. He cannot penetrate your life. He will come and he will try to penetrate. Remember, he is diabolos. He is going to throw accusations at you, and throw accusations at you until he penetrates and then releases his explosive power. But if he can't penetrate because you have your shield of faith up, if he can't penetrate because you have your breastplate of righteousness on, if he can't penetrate because you have your sword of the Spirit out, then he will have no success against you!



Have you ever met someone who you thought, "Oh man, they're a Christian but why do they act that way?" Why are they weird? Why are they strange? Why do I not want to get near that person?" It is because that person carries an attitude and carries a spirit about him that is built by a system of thinking developed in his life. I believe in deliverance, and I believe you can come up and we can pray and we can break the power of certain forces in your life, but you are going to have to change your system of thinking or you're going to be back up in the same prayer line with the same problem. If you smoke and you come up in the prayer line, we can pray for you to be healed from cancer, but if you keep acting like the Marlboro Man outside of church, then that cancer has plenty of access back into your life. In the same way, we can cast the devil out of you, we can bind the devil, we can pull down the strongholds and bind the principalities; but I'm telling you, if we don't change our system of thinking, then Satan will have the same access back into our lives that he had the first time.

When you were a sinner, Satan owned you. Because he owned you, he infiltrated your life with ways of thinking that were land mines to produce destruction along the course of

your life. Once you get born again, he no longer has authority over you, but he still has a system of thinking that he has placed inside of your head through this world's system and we need to break down that system of thinking so that it is no longer our way of thinking and, therefore, can no longer do damage.

That's what the Word of God is for—to change our way of thinking. It's to give us a new way of thinking so that we are no longer paving the way for Satan to have access into our lives. Proverbs 23:6-8 says, "Do not eat the bread of him that has an evil eye neither desire his dainty meats. For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. Eat and drink he says to you but his heart is not with you." The devil understands this verse. He cannot do anything to you unless your mind and your flesh cooperate with him. Notice the context in which God is saying, "As a man thinks, so is he." He's saying that a person can pay you compliments. A person can invite you to dinner. A person can say, "Eat and drink. You're welcome here." But just because they say that, it does not reveal who they really are. Who they really are is what they're thinking on the inside.

We have been told that we are what we say, but we need to understand something—what we think, is who we really are. What we're really thinking on the inside is who we really are. Someone may ask you, "How are you doing?" And you're thinking, "Man, I'm lousy. I feel bad. I don't feel good." And you say, "Everything is fine." You may be saying "Everything is fine," thinking you're making a faith statement. But what I'm telling you is: who you really are is made up of what you are thinking inside. As you think within, that's who you really are, and that's why we have to pay more attention to changing the thoughts that we think even more than changing the words that we speak. We can be saying things that we don't really believe and no matter how often we say those things, if we don't really believe, they are not going to have power. That's why so many Christians are discouraged with the concept of speaking the Word or confessing the Word.

I am an advocate of speaking the Word of God out of our mouths, but I am not an advocate of speaking the Word of God that you don't really believe in your heart. And that's why Romans 10:9 says, "If you believe in your heart and say with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' then you'll be saved." Salvation is a by-product of the words that we speak that are in alignment and agreement with what we believe in our heart. So, the focus needs to be on what we believe or what we're thinking. The focus can't be merely on just what we say. Look at Mark 11:23. It has been often quoted as: "Say to this mountain, 'Be thou removed and cast into the sea,' and it shall obey." But it doesn't say that. It says: "Whosoever shall say to this mountain, 'Be thou removed and cast into the sea,' and believes in his heart or shall not doubt in his heart that those things which he says shall happen, he shall have whatsoever he says." We see it as "Those things that he says shall be granted to him," but we are missing the most important step, and that is believing it in our heart. The reason we don't believe it in our heart is because we're trying to conduct ourselves in appropriate Christian manner, which is to say right things, to speak the Word; and that is proper conduct. But if we don't deal with our thought life, our conduct of confession will not produce any results.

Do you see why there are so many Christians that have spoken the Word, but they haven't seen anything change? That thing is only going to change based on the weight of confidence in your heart that you actually have—not just the words that you actually speak. It takes both of those working together. What you believe and what you think need to precede what you say. When you say what you really believe and what you really are thinking, that's when your words have power.

But when the things you say out of your mouth are not in alignment with what you really think in your heart, your words are not going to have any power. And that's why we're often discouraged. We have tried confessing the Word, but we have not focused on our thought life which is where our creative power is. Our thought life is the author or the parent of what we believe in our heart. What we believe in our heart, when spoken out, is going to come to pass; but when we speak something that we don't really believe in our heart, it won't have any power.

You may say, "Is that really true?" Well, think about it in your own life. Think about all the things that you really didn't believe but you said them out of your mouth anyway because you thought this "confession stuff" should work. It really didn't change anything because you didn't have the confidence in your heart to back up the words that came out of your mouth. It's critical those two things work together and that disconnect is why things aren't working. I'm not an engineer or an electrician, but if we plug something into a power outlet that is not connected to the power plant, nothing is going to happen. It may look like an electric outlet—it may look like a power source—but if it's disconnected behind the scenes, it is not going to produce any results. In the same way, you might speak words that may look like you're confessing the Word but if there's nothing behind the scenes, if you're disconnected behind the scenes, it's not going to change anything. That's why we've got to deal with what is behind the scenes. That's where our emphasis ought to be: in our thought life. That's where we ought to be changing things. Then our confession is going to come out of the overflow of our heart—out of the overflow of what we really believe and what we really think. That's when things will change on the outside! As a man thinks within, so is he.

That ought to set us free. That ought to make us skip like a kid and run like a deer. It ought to make us so free. Why? Because now I know what I need to focus on—what I'm thinking. My thought life is the road by which Satan gets access into my life and my thought life is the road by which God gets access into my life. And so I need to make sure I have some police officers patrolling that road. That's why it's so important that we deal with our thought life as Christians. So we need to get control of our thought life. Do some construction around those roads that are influencing our lives and make sure that our thoughts create a way for God to have access into our life, not the devil.