

Spiritual Training Part 19 Thought life

(Two perspectives)

Perspective #1

Message: Cultivating a Peaceful Thought Life

Welcome everyone! You are good soil!

I wanted to share some insights from a recent spiritual training session I found thought-provoking. It's all about managing our thought life and staying grounded in peace, even when life throws us off balance.

Last week, we talked about how wrong thoughts can stir up storms in our minds. **Proverbs 8:33** reminds us to “hear instruction and be wise” and not neglect wisdom.

When negative or wrong thoughts creep in, they often come with an agenda—like a spiritual email with a harmful attachment.

But here's the key: Just because a thought comes to us doesn't mean we have to open it.

This week, we explored how thoughts—whether good or bad—get “opened.” Think about emails on your iPhone or computer; you click, touch, or speak to open them.

Similarly, we act on thoughts by dwelling on them or speaking them out loud. **Matthew 6** gives us some powerful instructions from Jesus on this.

Matthew 6:31 says, “**Take no thought, saying,** ‘What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear?’”

This verse highlights how worry begins when we start verbalizing anxious thoughts. The Greek word for “**take thought**” here refers to being anxious or overly concerned about possible dangers.

It's like planting seeds of doubt, fear, and worry in our minds—and those seeds can grow into storms if we're not careful.

Jesus urges us to shift our focus from temporary worries to eternal priorities. **Matthew 6:33** reminds us to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” and everything else will fall into place.

In other words, put God first, and let Him handle the rest.

Here's something practical I experienced recently that ties into this teaching. I got an unexpected Facebook message that seemed off.

As I started scanning it, wrong thoughts began to creep in—thoughts of doubt and worry. At that point, those thoughts were just seeds.

I paused and talked it over with my wife but made sure not to let her take up any offense over it. Eventually, I deleted the message without letting it take root in my mind.

Even after deleting it, curiosity lingered—a reminder that staying focused on God is an ongoing effort. **Isaiah 26:3** says, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

That verse is a lifeline for keeping calm amidst distractions. The Hebrew word for “**peace**” here means quietness, tranquility, and contentment—free from disturbance or turmoil.

To wrap things up, here's a simplified takeaway:

- 1. Thoughts (Discretion):** Open up the right thoughts (**Matthew 6:31**).
- 2. Priorities (Orderliness):** Place Jesus first (**Matthew 6:33**).
- 3. Peace (Availability):** Keep your mind on Him (**Isaiah 26:3**).
- 4. Authority (Boldness):** Speak calmness into your life (**Mark 4:39**).

Remember, you have the **choice** to open thoughts that bring storms or thoughts that bring peace. And when you stay focused on Jesus, He'll help you navigate life's challenges with calmness and clarity.

Perspective #2

Mastering Thought Life: A Spiritual Perspective

Our thought life plays a pivotal role in shaping our spiritual journey and overall well-being. As discussed previously, the mind can often act as a battlefield where wrong thoughts—laden with doubt, fear, and worry—seek to gain control.

These thoughts, like destructive emails with hidden agendas, can build false reasoning and lead to strongholds that hinder our progress.

However, with intentional action and spiritual discernment, we can **learn to manage** our thought life effectively and align it with God's Word.

The Nature of Wrong Thoughts

Wrong thoughts are not random occurrences; they are often strategically placed by the enemy with an agenda to disrupt our peace and faith.

Proverbs 8:33 remind us to "hear instruction and be wise, and do not refuse or neglect it." This wisdom applies directly to our thought life.

When we entertain negative thoughts, we open the door to doubt, fear, and worry—creating mental storms that can distract us from our spiritual focus.

The **analogy of spiritual emails** highlights this concept well. Each wrong thought is akin to receiving a harmful email with an attachment—a hidden agenda designed to lead us astray.

Just as we choose whether or not to open an email, we must exercise discretion in deciding which thoughts to entertain. Not every thought requires action or acknowledgment.

How Thoughts Are Opened

Thoughts—whether good or bad—are opened through action. Reflecting on **Matthew 6:31**, Jesus warns us about taking anxious thoughts by "**saying**" them aloud.

The act of voicing our worries gives life to those thoughts, transforming them from mere seeds into tangible concerns.

For instance, asking questions like "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we wear?" reveals underlying doubt and fear about God's provision.

The **Greek definition** of "**take thought**" (#3309) emphasizes worry and anxious concern rooted in apprehension about potential misfortune. By identifying these feelings within ourselves or others, we can pinpoint the presence of wrong thoughts and take corrective action.

The Power of Words

Words carry immense power in shaping our mental and spiritual state. **Proverbs 17:27** states, "He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding."

This verse underscores the importance of exercising restraint in speech, particularly when dealing with negative thoughts.

Opening wrong thoughts through words can create storms in our minds, while opening right thoughts can produce calmness and peace.

Jesus' instructions in **Matthew 6:25-34** further emphasize the need to avoid worry and trust in God's provision.

He reminds us that life is more than material concerns, urging us to seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness (**Matthew 6:33**). By prioritizing God's Word over worldly fears, we can cultivate a mindset of faith and tranquility.

Practical Application: Discerning Thoughts

In practice, managing our thought life requires vigilance and discernment. Consider the example of receiving an unexpected message—whether through email, social media, or another medium.

The initial reaction may involve curiosity or concern, but it is crucial to pause and evaluate the nature of the message before engaging with it.

Observing the message does not equate to opening its contents; similarly, acknowledging a thought does not mean entertaining it.

When confronted with wrong thoughts, discussing them with trusted individuals can provide clarity without spreading negativity.

However, care must be taken to **avoid transferring offense or worry to others**. As illustrated in **Isaiah 26:3**, keeping our minds stayed on God ensures perfect peace—a state of quiet contentment free from disturbance or turmoil.

Cultivating Spiritual Discipline

To master our thought life, we must adopt deliberate practices rooted in scripture:

- 1. Thoughts (Discretion)** – Exercise discernment in opening thoughts. Choose those aligned with God’s Word while rejecting those rooted in doubt or fear (**Matthew 6:31**).
- 2. Priorities (Orderliness)** – Place Jesus first in every aspect of life. Seek His kingdom and righteousness above all else (**Matthew 6:33**).
- 3. Peace (Availability)** – Keep your mind focused on God to experience perfect peace (**Isaiah 26:3**).
- 4. Authority (Boldness)** – Exercise spiritual authority over negative thoughts and circumstances. Jesus demonstrated this by calming the storm with His words (**Mark 4:39**).

The Role of Faith

Faith is the cornerstone of a healthy thought life. Those who worry often exhibit little faith, as seen in **Matthew 6:30**: "**O you of little faith.**" Strengthening our trust in God allows us to overcome doubt, fear, and anxiety.

By anchoring our minds on His promises, we can navigate life’s challenges with confidence and calmness.

Clear Communication: A Preventative Measure

Effective communication is essential when dealing with people and situations that may provoke wrong thoughts.

Lack of clarity can lead to misunderstandings or allow the enemy to fill in the blanks with false narratives. (*Straw people*)

By ensuring transparency in our interactions, we can prevent unnecessary mental storms and maintain peace.

Conclusion

Managing thought life is both a spiritual discipline and a practical skill that requires vigilance, faith, and intentionality.

By aligning our minds with God’s Word and exercising discretion in opening thoughts, we can cultivate peace and avoid mental storms caused by doubt, fear, and worry.

As **Isaiah 26:3** promises, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Let us commit to keeping our minds stayed on Jesus, seeking His kingdom first, and exercising authority over negative thoughts.

In doing so, we will experience the tranquility that comes from trusting Him fully—free from disturbance or turmoil—and empowered to live boldly for His glory and help those in need.

To be continued...

Until next time—keep your mind on Him and enjoy His perfect peace!

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