

Mind Games

Part Three: *capturing wrong thoughts*

February 18, 2024

In week one of this series, I said you must be strong in the Lord to stand against the Devil. To be strong in the Lord means to live by Jesus' wisdom and power. Then, last week, I said you must use scripture to renew your thinking to stand against the Devil. God uses Scripture to replace your wrong thinking with right thinking. Today, I'm going to teach you the third key to standing against the Evil One.

Where do wrong (sinful) thoughts or desires come from?

- The wrong (sinful) thoughts and desires bouncing around in your brain come from your sinful nature (James 1:13-15; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 2:1-10).

Satan does not need to put sinful thoughts and desires into your mind because your sinful nature already does that for him.

- All the Devil needs to do is tempt you to do what your sinful nature wants to do.

What do you need to do to stand against the Devil?

1st – You need to be strong in the Lord. Ephesians 6:10-17

2nd - You need to use Scripture to renew your thinking. Romans 12:1-2

3rd – You need to capture your wrong thoughts. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:3–5, ESV)

- First, Paul tells us we must use divine power to destroy mental strongholds.

Strongholds are mental fortresses built upon wrong beliefs (ideologies) and attitudes. These mental prisons are formed in our minds when we believe Satan's lies, and they keep us from trading love with God and doing what He created us to do. Paul calls us to use divine Power (Jesus' wisdom and strength) to tear down every one of our mental strongholds and all the arguments and opinions that support them.

- Next, Paul tells us we must capture wrong thoughts.

The word “capture” means to contain and control. As a police officer apprehends and handcuffs a criminal before he can harm someone, we are to arrest wrong thoughts before they cause harm. We cannot be obedient to Christ until we capture our wrong (sinful) thoughts.

How can you know if a thought is wrong?

- You can use the six aims listed in Philippians 4:8 to evaluate your thoughts.

“And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.” (Philippians 4:8, NLT)

1st Question: *Is this thought true?*

True means “containing only truth.” With this question, Paul wants you to consider whether a thought is built on the truth or lies. *How do you determine if a thought is true?* You must analyze it through the lens of scripture (Psalm 119:151; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

2nd Question: *Is this thought honorable?*

Honorable means “dignified” (1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2). With this question, Paul wants you to consider whether a thought is worthy of respect or worthless.

3rd Question: *Is this thought right?*

The word *right* means “righteous or conforming to God’s standards.” With this question, Paul wants you to consider if a thought is in harmony with God, His Word, and His will.

4th Question: *Is this thought pure?*

Pure means “morally clean.” 1 Timothy 5:22 translates the word as “free from sin.” With this question, Paul wants you to consider if a thought has been polluted with sin.

5th Question: *Is this thought lovely?*

Lovely could be translated as “gracious.” The word speaks of what promotes peace rather than conflict. With this question, Paul wants you to consider if a thought promotes peace or conflict.

6th Question: *Is this thought admirable?*

Admirable means “highly regarded by others” and relates to what is positive and constructive. With this question, Paul wants you to consider if a thought is helpful or hurtful.

What happens if you do not capture your wrong thoughts?

- Uncaptured wrong (sinful) thoughts eventually become wrong (sinful) acts.

Personal Questions...

1. *Do you have any mental strongholds that need to be destroyed?*
2. *Do you have any wrong thoughts that need to be captured?*