
Overcoming Stress, Anxiety, Depression (SAD)

Thought Conditioners

YOUR LIFE MOVES IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR DOMINANT THOUGHTS.

AS A MAN THINKETH IN HIS HEART, SO IS HE. PROVERBS 23:7

The Problem

Why do so many Christians never walk in the peace, joy and freedom of their salvation?

Why are so many believers frustrated in their faith walk and living so far below their potential in Christ?

Why are so many Christians struggling with stress and anxiety just as the world does?

Why are they going through the same problems the unsaved neighbors next door are going through?

Why are so few of us enjoying the freedom, abundance and productive life we have already inherited as believers?

Why? Deception. The god of this age has blinded their minds, and they can't see or believe the true glory and image of God. They are limited and held back. Even though they are on their way to heaven, hell is controlling their life.

Instead of being victorious, productive, joy filled Christians, many trudge through life under a cloud, trying to hang on until the rapture. The kingdom of darkness - depression, anxiety, inner conflict, tormenting thoughts, and addictive behaviors - can be far more real than the presence of God

So many try to break free from the hold of the world and its hurts, but they never succeed. It isn't that they haven't been truly born again or that they didn't really believe. For these struggling believers, the problem isn't in their spirits; it's in their souls. **Their minds haven't been renewed.** Though their spirits have been recreated, **their minds are still old.**

The lack of a sound, disciplined mind is a major problem in many people's lives today. The evidence of that lack is glaring: the failure of public schools, the number of hours the average person watches TV, the decline of real leaders and the rise of welfare cases.

If you aren't satisfied and fulfilled in your heart, then you are dying on the inside and change is necessary. If you don't wake up in the morning and feel like, "Praise God, another opportunity to do what the Lord has called me to do and make a difference in this world," then whether you realize it or not, change is needed.

Opening Thoughts

God wants you to prosper in every area of your life! It's not God's will for you to be sick, to not have your needs met, to be oppressed. It's not God's will for you to be discouraged and defeated. He isn't punishing you or trying to teach you something. That's simply not true!

God's Word promises protection, prosperity, healing and deliverance. If you will keep your mind fixed on God, these promises will work for you. Remind yourself of how God protected, prospered, healed, and delivered other people in the Bible. Keep those thoughts in the forefront of your thinking, and you'll have peace. But if you allow your mind to go the way the world is thinking—fear, doubt, and unbelief—you'll have all those things instead. It really is this simple.

If we don't continually read and study and renew our minds in God's Word, we leave them wide open to doubts, fears and anxieties about the worldly situations that surround us. Our souls

cannot prosper unless our minds are under control and our minds won't be under control unless we can cast out all negative imaginations and bring every one of our thoughts completely in line with the Word of God. If our minds are properly renewed, we will decide what we are going to think about. We will refuse to let any external situation control our thought process.

Ultimately, every Christian is responsible for his or her own maturity and freedom in Christ. Nobody can make you grow. That's your decision and daily responsibility. Nobody can solve your problems for you. You alone must initiate and follow through with that process. Thankfully, however, none of us walks through the disciplines of personal maturity and sanctification alone. The indwelling Christ is eagerly willing to walk with us each step of the way.

The greatest determinant of mental and emotional health and spiritual freedom is a true understanding of God and a right relationship with him.

Free in Christ

Christians all over the world are being deceived and living defeated lives. This is a real tragedy, because their heavenly father desires for them to live a free and productive life in Christ.

Are you one of those Christians who live in bondage to fear, depression, habits you can't break, thoughts or inner voices you can't elude, or sinful behavior you can't escape? God has made every provision for you to be alive and free in Christ.

**Jesus Christ has already won the victory!
He has already overcome the darkness and secured your freedom!**

Change Your Thoughts, Change Your Life

You will become what you think. (Proverbs 23:7) The reason most people have the problems they do is because they aren't controlling their thinking. Unless you do something specifically to keep your mind on the Lord, it will naturally go somewhere else. There just aren't very many things outside of God's Word that reflect God – pointing us toward and drawing us closer to Him.

The Word of God is pure light. (Psalm 19:8) When you study and meditate on God's Word, it changes the way you think. As our thinking changes, so does our life. That's why we must get to where we are dominated by the word of God.

The Word makes it clear that your experience, your surroundings – everything about you – is basically a result of the way you think. As you think in your heart, that's the way it is. When you think spiritually minded thoughts, you get life and peace. When you don't, you get death.

If you want something to change on the outside, then you're going to have to start by changing something on the inside. You cannot keep the same internal thought processes and believe that your external circumstances will change. That by definition, is insane! It begins on the inside. If you want change in your life, then you're going to have to do something differently in your spirit.

You can turn any circumstance in your life around by getting God's perspective and starting to think His thoughts. Some people call this by different names, but I believe this is what the Bible calls faith. Faith is simply seeing things from God's perspective.

The Antidote to Any Problem is the Knowledge of God!

All things that pertain to life and godliness come through the **knowledge of God**. It's not "some things" or "a few things," but "all things." This means that if you are sick in your body, you have a **knowledge problem**. If you're

poor, you have a **knowledge problem**. If you're depressed, you have a **knowledge problem**. Most people don't believe that. They think that if you have an emotional problem, you go take a pill for it. "This problem has nothing to do with me and my choices. I don't have any responsibility whatsoever. It's just the way my hormones are—my chemistry. It's what so-and-so did to me." All of these excuses are wrong in light of God's Word. You need to accept responsibility, go to the Bible, and start thinking according to the Word. The key is how you think!

**Joy and peace come through the way you think.
Think properly, and you'll have grace, joy, life, and peace.
These don't come by prayer, but through the knowledge of God.**

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue. 2 Peter 1:3

If you want your faith in God to increase, you must increase your **knowledge of God**. If you have little knowledge about God and His Word, you will have little faith. If you have great **knowledge of God** and his word, you can potentially have great faith. Faith cannot be pumped up by coaxing yourself, *if only I can believe!*

2 Peter 1:2 substantiates the principle that your thought life produces a harvest in the natural realm when it says, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the **knowledge of God**, and of Jesus our Lord." This scripture reveals that peace comes through the **knowledge of God**.

Peace in your life isn't the absence of problems or challenging circumstances around you. God's kind of peace is there even in the midst of a storm. It resides on the inside. Then, eventually, that peace on the inside of you will begin to change the circumstances on the outside.

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. 2 Peter 1:2

This verse says that God's divine power has (past tense) already given unto us all things. Most people want God to just come with his power from the outside, in. This scripture says that all things that pertain unto life and godliness come through the **knowledge of God**.

This includes healing, prosperity, deliverance, joy, peace, success in business, good relationships, and anything else. Everything that pertains to life and godliness comes through the **knowledge of God**. This means that the born again Christian already has the peace of God in their spirit. As they **renew their mind** to who they are and what they have in Christ, they draw that peace out into their experience.

Offset the Stress & Anxiety

When challenges in your life threaten to dominate your thoughts and your emotions, you must have something to offset the stress and anxiety. The "something" you must have is an abundance of the Word of God living in your mind and your heart. Regardless of the type of struggle you are facing, you must have an ample supply of God's Word living in your mind and your heart so that you will be able to reach deep down inside of yourself to receive powerful spiritual sustenance.

Where will we get these new thoughts? Hint: we won't get them from scrolling through social media posts, listening to our favorite playlists, or phoning a friend for their opinion. To stop the lies and replace them with truth, we need to look to God's word.

We can live peaceful, joyous, prosperous, healthy lives in this world. Jesus Christ has paid the price for our peace, our joy, our prosperity, and our health. However, this peace, joy, prosperity and health are not "automatic" while

A Prosperous Soul – Greg Mohr

we are on this earth. We will experience them only to the degree that we renew our minds to God's Word on a daily, continuing basis.

Meditate the Word

When I studied the Word of God, the Lord imparted truth to me. I could tell that change was happening in my life. I heard the Lord tell me, "if you will take my Word and meditate on it day and night, then My Word will teach you everything you need to know. My Word will change everything."

From that time forward, I just poured myself into the Word of God. I immersed myself for long periods of time in God's Word.

God is no respecter of persons. If you put His Word first place in your life and meditate on it on a consistent basis, it will change you.

It is worth the effort of meditating on God's Word to be able to see clearly instead of having a negative perception that always makes every cup look half empty. What a benefit it is to be able to see the positive side and to see a way through everything. That's what the Word of God does.

God's Word is the sword of the spirit. (Ephesians 6:17) That's the weapon you use to fight off depression, discouragement, and despair. Yet many people simply wallow in their tears, wanting God to come down to their level and help them by saying, it's really bad!

The number one reason why people aren't receiving from God is they have not studied to show themselves approved - they haven't taken the time to learn the truths of His Word and plant them in their heart to renew their mind and achieve transformation. Joshua 1:8 says that we will "deal wisely" if we meditate continually on God's Word. Proverbs 10:14 confirms this great spiritual truth by saying that "wise men store up knowledge in mind and heart."

Carnally Minded

Romans 8:6 reveals, "for to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

If you have death in any form working in you – including depression, discouragement, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, etc. – it's because you've planted death. I don't say this to condemn you, but rather to enlighten you and show you where the source of your problem lies.

If you're having something other than life and peace, then you're something other than spiritually minded (Rom. 8:6). You may desire the right things, praying and begging God for them, but you don't receive victory by desiring or begging for it. You receive the victory He's already achieved and provided for you by focusing your attention on the spirit. When you do that, you'll overcome.

Spiritually Minded

I don't have to be with you when you plant your garden to see what you've sown. All I have to do is be there when the crop grows up to know what you've planted. If you have death in your life – if you're depressed, discouraged, angry, or bitter – you haven't been meditating on the Word of God. Spiritual mindedness only produces life and peace.

Jesus said, "the words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63) Since God's Word is spirit, to be spiritually minded is to be Word of God minded. If you are Word of God minded, this will produce life

and peace.

Spiritual mindedness releases the flow of God's life in you, but carnal mindedness shuts it off. Simply stated, carnal mindedness = death, and spiritual mindedness = life and peace (Rom. 8:6).

"Death" means "anything that's a result of sin." This isn't limited only to the ultimate physical death of your body but includes all of death's progressive effects as well (i.e., sadness, loneliness, depression, bitterness, illness, anger, poverty, etc.). In this fallen world, being dominated by your natural senses produces death.

But spiritual mindedness produces life and peace! Jesus declared, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). When your thoughts are dominated by what the Word says, you're spiritually minded.

Attend to the Word

Some might say, but I've done all of these things, and I still have terrible problems in my life. I would say that you may have read the Word of God or heard somebody else quote it, but you haven't attended to it. You haven't inclined your ear and kept his sayings in the midst of your heart. (Proverbs 4:20–22)

You've let your eyes depart and focus on other things. If you do what God's Word says, it will produce the results that the Word said it will produce. Proverbs 4:20 – 22 reveals that God's Word will be life to those who find its sayings, and health to all their flesh.

God's Word is Perfect

So many people carry around baggage – hurts and pains from years before – from all kinds of things like previous marriages, losses, disappointments, and broken relationships. They just never seem to recover. That's because they aren't taking the Word of God and properly using it in their life. Psalm 19:7 tells us that, "God's word is perfect. It will convert your soul." It will restore you to your original God-intended condition. Psalm 19:7 says, "the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

Do you know what God's Word says about those who are depressed and defeated? "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." (Psalm 19:8)

If you're struggling with depression, you're not meditating on the Word of God day and night.

If you aren't full of joy, peace, and rejoicing, the problem isn't your circumstances. (1 Peter 1:8) If you have ashes, mourning, and a spirit of heaviness instead of the oil of joy and the garment of praise it's due to the fact that there is a vacuum on the inside seeking to be filled. (Isaiah 61:3) You don't know the truth of God's Word. The statutes of the Lord are right, and they will rejoice your heart. If you are discouraged, take the Word of God. Start speaking the promises of God to yourself. You can get happy in a hurry.

If you aren't experiencing the abundance and victory that the Lord has promised, it's not God who has failed. Praying longer and petitioning harder won't change anything. You must take the incorruptible seed of God's Word and keep on planting it in the garden of your heart.

Perfect Peace

It doesn't matter what your physical circumstances might be—God can keep you in perfect peace. As your mind stays on Him, your soul agrees with your spirit, and God's peace is released into your soul and body.

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You (Isaiah 26:3)

On the other hand, you won't experience the peace within when your mind stays fixed on your problems. Peace—an emotion—is linked to the way you think! Your lack of peace isn't because of any circumstance or person; it's just that you've allowed your mind to be dominated by what you can see, taste, hear, smell, and feel. You're busy thinking about the potential damage, considering what the problem has done to others, and hashing through their opinions on the subject. All the while, God's peace has been present in your spirit, but you haven't drawn it out.

Your born-again spirit is always in perfect peace—it's just a matter of drawing it out!

Alienated Through Ignorance

Believers shouldn't live like lost people who are trapped in their carnal, physical world. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (Eph. 4:17). In context, "Gentile" was a non-Jew, someone not in covenant relationship with God. In other words, unbelievers don't use their minds to perceive spiritual truth.

Ephesians 4:18 talks about "having the understanding darkened." If you don't **renew your mind** and use it to study and meditate God's Word, it'll automatically gravitate toward what you can see, taste, hear, smell, and feel. This darkens your understanding.

When a Christian walks like an unbeliever, they get the same results—death. Believers who don't understand and apply the **knowledge of God** in their lives gravitate toward carnal mindedness. Without spiritual knowledge and understanding, your mind can't be renewed, and the life of God in your spirit can't be released.

When a believer's understanding is darkened, they are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:18). In other words, the life of God is still there, but they are alienated from it due to ignorance, which refers to the mind. This is where most Christians live their lives—separated from the life of God within, due to their own ignorance of spiritual truth.

**That's why God's Word reflects you as righteous, holy, and pure.
The makeup of your born-again spirit is identical to Jesus Himself!**

Fix your gaze on God's Word! Let your spirit's reflected image dominate your thoughts. As who you are in Christ grows stronger in your heart, carnal "reality" must give way to spiritual reality. That's when you'll experience life and peace!

Constant & Stable

My relationship with the Lord is constant. He's always loving me. He's always pleased with me—the real me, the born-again me, my spirit (Eph. 1:6). That's the part of me that God loves and that I've come to love. I'm not enamored with my carnal self and actions. I don't like some of what I see, do, and think, but I've come to realize there's a new me. In my spirit, I am thrilled with what Jesus has done, and I place my full confidence in that. Since I walk by the spirit, and not the flesh, I experience God's peace, joy, and life on a daily basis.

My life is stable. I don't feel like I lose everything every time I sin or fall short. I don't think that I need to be born again, again and start the whole growth process over. This concept of "one step forward and two steps back" is totally gone. When I do fail, I just turn from it. I repent and get back on track with what God's told me to do, knowing that I'm still who I am in Christ and infinitely more in my spirit than I've ever yet been able to appropriate and manifest. That's why I actively and aggressively continue **renewing my mind** to His Word.

Dealing With Fear

If you're still in fear, don't pray over whatever it is yet. Just like you don't pull the trigger on a gun unless it's aimed and loaded, neither should you pray your prayer unless you know you're in faith! Draw near to God and deal with the fear. Praise Him for His awesome love until it casts out all that fear. (1 John 4:18.) Once you're rid of it and

know you're in faith, come back and do what you need to do to pray over the situation—but don't speak words in fear!

Fear compels people to do what they should not do and inhibits them from doing what they should do. People who are motivated by fear are not experiencing their freedom in Christ. Fear of anyone or anything other than God is mutually exclusive to faith in God. Satan wants to be feared because he wants to be worshiped, but the fear of the Lord expels all other fears (Psalm 34:4, 7).

Guilt and shame also need to be overcome by the grace of God because, "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

Grace and Peace Are Multiplied to You

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:6)

That's a law of God. The fact is you can't experience God's peace if you're constantly meditating on things that are contrary to peace—hatred, strife, and ungodliness.

You need to learn what God's laws are and then cooperate with them. You can't watch television programs that minister depression and then operate in joy. You can't take in all of the (bad) news without strengthening unbelief. If you want a pure heart, you can't watch movies that are full of adultery and fornication. You're going to have to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, virtuous, praiseworthy, and of good report. (Phil. 4:8.) Yet people misunderstand these laws.

You can't just pray and ask for peace. You must learn to keep your thoughts centered on God and His Word. You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Isaiah 26:3

Your emotions will follow what you think. That's a law of God. So if you're praying for peace but aren't focused on God, you're just spitting in the wind. It's not going to work. Desiring the things of God is part of the process, but it's not all there is to it.

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. 2 Peter 1:2

Grace and peace are multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord—not through prayer. It isn't a matter of you just pleading with God. The laws of God say that you must think on the right things to receive the right results.

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful [full of care] for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-7

As you keep your mind stayed upon the Lord, the peace of God will keep your heart and mind. The next verse continues about our thoughts, saying: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4:8

In other words, this is a command to keep your mind stayed on the Lord and His Word. These are laws of God. This is how His kingdom works.

God made you so that your physical and emotional health follows the way you think. If you're thinking on

depressing things, you'll be depressed. If you're thinking on the Lord and His Word, you'll be full of life, joy, and peace.

The dominant experience of your life is a reflection of the way you are thinking on the inside. (Proverbs 23:7) Instead of looking for a change to take place externally and everybody and everything else around you, the first thing you need to do is recognize that change begins on the inside of you. This occurs according to the **knowledge that you have of God.**

I'm amazed at some of the people who come to me wanting God to intervene in their lives. Just in talking to them, it's obvious they haven't spent an hour in the Word in a year. They don't pray or seek God. They haven't been attending church, studying the Word, or listening to Bible teachings. They're living their lives totally for themselves, bound by the discouragement and despair that comes from keeping their mind on evil things. Yet, they want all of the benefits that come from keeping their mind stayed on God. I get upset when people criticize and slander God as if He's the One who failed. The Lord isn't failing. We're the ones who have failed to understand and cooperate with His laws.

If you want to experience life and peace, then you need to become spiritually minded. Jesus said: The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63

Being spiritually minded is being Word-minded. It's thinking on what God has to say about your situation instead of what the world has to say. If you are Word-minded, you'll have life and peace. Grace and peace will be multiplied to you as you continually think on the **knowledge of God.** You can't think negatively—adopting the mindset of the world—and then experience the life, grace, and peace of God. It doesn't work that way.

If you swallow in all of the fear, doubt, and unbelief in the evening news, you'll be in turmoil. But if you listen to and go by the Word of God, you'll have life, grace, and peace.

How Desperate Are You?

The only reason for a Christian to be desperate is if that person doesn't understand what God has already done. The Lord has already blessed us, healed us, delivered us, and prospered us! He loves us and nothing will ever change that. The only reason to be hopeless, helpless, and in despair is if we don't know who we are and what we have in Christ.

Christians should never be hopeless or full of despair.

You must hunger for—strongly desire and focus on—the things of God in order to experience them. The Lord doesn't come to those who just passively seek Him. You must pursue Him wholeheartedly.

God Has Already Provided

God loves me infinitely more than I can ever comprehend or need. He can't love me more or give me any more love than what I already have. Knowing this has kept me out of depression and discouragement for over thirty-five years!

Although I've had thoughts of depression, I don't give in to them, because I also have this revelation that God loves me and has already provided everything I need. So instead of giving in to discouragement and despair, I remind myself of God's Word.

On the inside of me there is so much love, joy, and peace—all the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23.) Everything I need is already there.

"So, Father, I know that You have done Your part. It's not Your fault if I'm tempted with depression, discouragement, giving up, and quitting. It's my fault. I'm not focused on You. I've let my eyes be taken off of You and put on the problems of this world." I'll just separate myself and spend a day or so fasting, praying, and seeking God. What I'm doing is mining what the Lord has already placed within me.

Instead of asking Him to give me something new, I draw out the life that He's already given.

Within ten or fifteen minutes, I just decide that I don't want depression and refuse to have it. God has given me such joy inside that I can choose to rejoice at all times. (Phil. 4:4.)

The Word says, "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Ps. 34:1) This isn't telling you to just "fake it 'til you make it." Rather, this is talking about drawing out what's inside of you.

As I've drawn on the joy that God has already placed within my born-again spirit, I've lived a consistently victorious life. In the midst of great adversity, I've experienced continual joy and peace. It's not because I'm never tempted with the other but because I know in my heart that God has already done His part.

I start focusing on the Lord and His Word and draw out His abundant life from within me.

Many people desire these same results, but they think the way to achieve them is to passively ask God to do something and then sit back and wait. If things don't change, and victory—healing, prosperity, blessings, deliverance—doesn't instantly come, they get upset with the Lord, asking, "God, why aren't You doing anything?" That's not it at all..... if you're not seeing it manifest, it's not God who hasn't given—but you who haven't received!

One-third of your salvation is over. Your spirit is completely saved. It's identical to Jesus. It has His joy, His peace, His knowledge, His love, and His fruit. Everything that's true of Jesus is true of your born-again spirit. There's no inadequacy.

It's not in the process of growing up into these things. It's not that these things are in your spirit in seed form, but they have to mature; no, they are already complete and full-grown in the spirit. All you have to do is **renew your mind** and let these things manifest themselves through you. If this isn't a revelation to you, you need it to fully understand what I'm sharing.

God has already done it. This isn't just "in principle." It's not just written on a piece of paper somewhere. There was an actual transformation that took place in your spirit the very moment you were born again. Now you have love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. (Gal. 5:22, 23.) You are —right now in your spirit—identical to Jesus. (1 John 4:17; 1 Cor. 6:17.) It's infinitely easier to release something you know and believe you already have than it is to try and go get something you don't.

The same power that raised Christ from the dead now lives inside of you. (Eph. 1:19-20)

If you're not absolutely convinced that you've already got it, you'll either submit to or have to battle thoughts that you won't get it. However, once you know it's yours, how could you doubt you'd get it? This is simple, but so profound!

Accepted and Enlightened

Your five natural senses cannot perceive your spirit. Neither can you "feel" it with your soul (your personality — mind, will, emotions, and conscience). Most Christians don't know this, but God's glory is already inside their spirit. You must see who you are and what you have in the spirit realm through God's Word and then believe it by faith.

If you had a revelation of this, depression would have no power over you!

How could you stay down in the dumps when you truly know the hope of your calling and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in you right now? In order to stay depressed, you'd have to shut that revelation off and look only in the physical realm at your circumstances and other negative things. But if you focus your attention on who you are and what you have in Christ, recognizing that it's a done deal and that the glory you'll experience throughout all eternity is already inside you, depression would leave, and you'd start enjoying victory!!!

Soul Salvation

Your soul wasn't saved when you accepted Christ. This sounds strange to many people because they use terminology like "I'm a soul winner!" and "I came to see a soul saved" to describe an evangelist and evangelism. In reality, the New Testament only mentions "soul salvation" a few times—and none of them, in context, are talking about the born-again experience (Heb. 10:39; James 1:21, 5:20; 1 Pet. 1:9).

Soul salvation happens when an emotionally discouraged and mentally defeated Christian starts believing God's Word and then experiences victory, peace, and joy again. However, when it comes to being born again, your soul wasn't the part of you that completely changed!

If you were depressed before you got saved, you'll stay depressed until you change the way your soul thinks by renewing your mind to God's Word.

If negative strongholds had already been established before we became born again, we must go to work, capture every thought, and drive them out with the thoughts of God. Strongholds of fear, anger, poverty, low self-esteem, pride and selfishness continue to control many Christians years after they are saved. Though they have prayed about them and tried to get deliverance, the problem persists. And these things will never change in their lives until they are transformed by the renewing of their minds.

By Grace Through Faith

Your spirit is as alive as it will ever be. Even though your physical body may be hurting and your soul is still wrestling with depression, your born-again spirit is alive the way Jesus is alive. You have God's resurrection power inside you. You aren't trying to be made alive. You were already made alive in the spirit realm. Through faith, you can draw that life out of your spirit and into your soul and body.

Notice how following and being dominated by Satan was something in the past. You might think, I'm a Christian, but I'm still dominated by the devil. If that's so, it's because verse 1 isn't reality for you. (And you hath he quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins" - Eph. 2:1) You don't understand how you've already been quickened and delivered from the death that was in trespasses and sin. When you truly understand that you've been made alive, it breaks the power of sin, and you live in victory.

Your life will be characterized by victory instead of defeat. It's not that you reach sinless perfection and never make a mistake. It's just that when you understand and acknowledge that Christ has already done it—that you already have resurrection life and you are as Jesus is in the spirit—victory, joy and peace are an inevitable byproduct.

Every Good Thing

That the communication of thy faith may become effectual [begin to work] by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. Philem. 1:6

You'll see victory manifest—physically, financially, emotionally, etc.—as you acknowledge every good thing in you in Christ!

Again, everything is in the past tense. Some say, "But I'm still overwhelmed and depressed!" If so, it's because you haven't understood that, in the spirit, you already have everything. You are as complete as you'll ever be. Since you haven't understood and acknowledged the good things that are in you in Christ, you're still being dominated by the flesh.

As you look in God's Word, you'll discover your identity in Christ (who you are in the spirit) and act on that knowledge in faith - you'll see the life of God within you manifest.

The Word tells you who you are and what you have in Christ. It reveals spiritual truths and what's happening in the spiritual world. If you want to experience life and peace, then you need to be spiritually minded.

Satan Has Been Defeated

Before we received Christ, we were slaves to sin. Now because of Christ's work on the cross, sin's power over us has been broken. Satan has no right of ownership or authority over us. He is a defeated foe, but he is committed to keeping us from realizing that. The father of lies can block your effectiveness as a Christian if he can deceive you into believing that you are nothing but a product of your past – subject to sin, prone to failure, and controlled by your habits.

Not only were you made alive in Christ, but Satan was disarmed and defeated some 2000 years ago. His defeat is not pending, nor is it future; it has already happened. It is not our responsibility to defeat the devil. Jesus has already done that.

If Satan is already disarmed, why don't we experience more victory in our lives? Because the father of lies has deceived the whole world. Satan roams around like a hungry lion, looking and surrounding ferociously. A lion roars to paralyze its prey in fear, and they are consumed. But Satan's fangs have been removed and he has been declawed, and we have to believe that or we will be consumed.

You are free in Christ, but you will be defeated if the devil can deceive you into believing you are nothing more than a sin-sick product of your past. Nor can Satan do anything about your position in Christ, but if he can deceive you into believing that what Scripture says isn't true, you will live as though it isn't. People are in bondage to the lies they believe.

Even though Satan is defeated, he still rules this world through a hierarchy of demons who tempt, accuse, and deceive those who fail to put on the armor of God, stand firm in their faith, and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

A Battle Between the Spirit of Truth and the Father of Lies

The kingdom of darkness was established at the fall of humanity and is still ruling this world. The battle from Genesis to Revelation is between good and evil, between the Christ and the Antichrist, between the spirit of truth and the father of lies, between the prophets of God and the false prophets, between the wheat (sons of the kingdom) and the tares (sons of the evil one) (Matthew 13:38)

Freedom from spiritual bondage and conflicts is not a power encounter; it's a truth encounter. Satan is a deceiver, and he will work undercover at all costs. His demons are like cockroaches that scurry for the shadows when the light comes on. Satan's power is in the lie, and when his lie is exposed by the truth, his plans are foiled.

You don't have to out shout him or out muscle him to be free from his influence. You just have to out-truth him. Believe, declare, and act upon the truth of God's word, and you will thwart Satan's strategy.

Truth is the Liberating Agent

Jesus is the truth, and he is the one who sets his captives free. Power for the believer comes in knowing and

choosing the truth. We are to pursue truth because we already have all the power we need in Christ (Ephesians 1:18 – 19).

That is why Jesus said, "you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32)

People in bondage are not liberated by what I do as a pastor, but by what they choose to believe, confess, renounce, and forgive.

Satan, the deceiver, can ruin us if he can get us to believe and live a lie.

Affirming the truth of Christ's victory and Satan's defeat is the primary step toward successfully standing against the enemies attempts to intimidate you.

In order to resist the devil, you first need to understand and appropriate your identity, position, and authority in Christ. Freedom in Christ is your inheritance as a Christian. (Ephesians 1:18 – 21)

**There is no need for the Christian to defeat the devil.
Christ has already accomplished that. We just need to believe it.**

**Satan and his demons have no more right to rule your life than
a Private has the right to order a General to clean the latrine**

When we read through the epistles, it is obvious that Jesus has already delivered us from Satan and sin. That was the good news Paul conveyed in his prayer. God has done all he needs to do for us to live a victorious life in Christ. Now we have to assume our responsibility.

It is your individual responsibility as a believer to repent and believe the truth that will set you free. Nobody else can do that for you. I can't put on the armor of God for you, believe for you, repent for you, forgive others for you, and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ for you.

The Christian worldview has a different center. Jesus confronts our self-sufficiency and offers a different perspective – one from the cross. Only when you live from God's perspective can you escape the bondage of the one whose intent is "to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10).

There is a price to pay for freedom. Are you willing to pay the price?

You Have Every Right to be Free

.....realizing that she was not just a product of her past, but rather, a new creation in Christ, she was able to throw off the chains of spiritual bondage and begin living according to who she really was, a child of God.

Satan didn't want her to know the truth of who she was in Christ, nor how Jesus meets her needs for life, identity, acceptance, security, and significance. He knew that God's truth would disarm his lie just as surely as light dispels darkness.

The last thing the devil wants you to know is who you are in Christ.

Nothing is more foundational to your freedom from Satan's bondage than understanding and affirming what God has done for you in Christ and who you are as His child. Your attitudes, actions, responses, and reactions to life's circumstances are greatly affected by what you believe about yourself. If you see yourself as a hapless victim of Satan and his schemes, you will probably live like a victim and be in bondage to his lies. But if you see yourself as a dearly loved and accepted child of God you will likely start living like one. (1 John 3:1–3)

Our identity and position in Christ are the basis for living a liberated life in Christ, but the foundation upon which we minister to others. We can't impart to others what we don't possess ourselves.

The Battleground of the Mind

The battle is being fought in the mind. If Satan can get you to think you are the only one in the battle, you will get down on either yourself or God when you sin.

This is what repentance is: a change of mind. We are transformed by the **renewing of our minds**. That is possible because "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16), and the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth. But the world system we were raised in and our independent flesh patterns are not the only enemies of our sanctification. The good news is that we can **reprogram our minds**, but we still need to check for "viruses."

Satan's strategy is to infiltrate your mind with his thoughts and to promote his lie in the face of God's truth. If he can control your thoughts, he can control your life. (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Deceptive thoughts come first person singular in such a way that we think they are our own thoughts. Thoughts like, "I'm stupid, I'm dumb, I'm ugly, I am no good" may be more than "self-talk."

We need to expose the spiritual battle for our minds for what it is so that we can have a comprehensive answer for those who experience it.

I can't explain the means by which people pay attention to deceitful spirits. Neither do I know how the devil is able to invade our minds, but I don't have to know how he does it in order to protect myself according to Scripture's instructions. The spiritual battle for our minds does not operate according to the laws of nature, which we can comprehend. There are no physical barriers that can confine or restrict the movements of Satan.

Much of what is being passed off today as mental illness is actually a battle for our minds. Proverbs 23:7 says, "as he thinks within himself, so is he." In other words, you don't do anything without first thinking it.

All behavior is the product of what we choose to think or believe. We can't see what people think. We can only observe what they do. Trying to change behavior without changing what we believe and therefore what we think, will never produce lasting results.

How do we know whether those negative, lying, and condemning thoughts are from the evil one or just our own flesh patterns? In one sense, it doesn't make any difference. We are to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. If a thought isn't true, don't believe it. Ask yourself: "did I want to think that thought or those thoughts? Did I make a conscious decision to think those thoughts?" If not, why do you think those thoughts are yours?

In the flesh, you don't have the power to resist Satan and his demons, but in Christ, you do.

The Army saw Goliath in relation to themselves and trembled; David saw Goliath in relation to God and triumphed. When you encounter the spiritual enemies of your soul, remember you plus Jesus equal a majority. A newly converted child of God has the same authority in the spiritual world that the highest-ranking official in the church does. We are to "glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3).

Spiritually defeated Christians see God and his kingdom on one side of the battlefield, and Satan and his kingdom on the other side as equal and opposite's. They are stuck in the middle between the two, stretched out like the rope in a game of tug-of-war. On some days, God seems to be winning, and on other days, the devil appears to have the upper hand. They feel like pawns in the battle between good and evil.

**Your mind is a war zone and you are under attack.
The battle for your life is won or lost in your mind.**

Spiritual authority is not a tug of war on a horizontal plane; it is a vertical chain of command. Jesus Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18); he's at the top of the chain of command. He has given his authority and power to his servants to be exercised in his name (Luke 10:17); we are under his authority, and we

share it for the purpose of doing his will. And Satan and his demons? They are at the bottom, subject to the authority Christ has placed in us.

Why, then, does the kingdom of darkness continue to exert such negative influence in the world and in the lives of Christians? Because Satan has deceived the whole world, and therefore, the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19). However, Satan is not an equal power with God; he is a disarmed and defeated foe (Colossians 2:15). But if he can deceive you into believing that he has more power and authority than you do, you will live as if he does!

You have been given authority over the kingdom of darkness, but if you don't believe it and live accordingly, it's as if you didn't have it.

When we boldly and humbly exercise the authority that Christ has conferred upon us over the spiritual realm, we experience the freedom we all have in Christ.

Your identity as a child of God and your authority over spiritual powers are not things you are receiving or will receive at some point in time in the future; you have them **right now**.

You are a spiritually alive child of God **right now**.

You are seated in the heavenly's with Christ **right now**.

You have power and authority over the kingdom of darkness and are able to do His will **right now**.

Free in Christ

Our sanctuary is our identity and position in Christ. We have all the protection we need to live a victorious life but if we fail to assume our responsibility and give ground to Satan, we will suffer the consequences of our sinful attitudes and actions. The good news is that we can repent and reclaim all that we have in Christ.

There is a place that we can go and feel safe, but it is not a physical location. Our only sanctuary is "in Christ."

Lying may be the number one social problem in America, and believing lies is what keeps people in bondage. Ironically, most people lie to protect themselves, but in reality truth is our first line of defense. Truth is never an enemy – it is a liberating friend.

Facing the truth is the first step in any recovery program, because all addicts lie. Many want out of their addiction because they are tired of living a lie. We have to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) if we want to live free in Christ and have meaningful relationships.

Freedom doesn't reside in the exercise of choice, it is always related to the consequences of those choices. Jesus set me free to make the right choices and live a liberated life in him. "It was for freedom that Christ set us free" (Galatians 5:1). The freedom we have in Christ is not a license to live independently of God, which has many unintended consequences. We will all be tempted by Satan to make sinful choices leading to bondage and death.

The first prerequisite is to be the Lord's bondservant. We need to be totally dependent upon God because He is the only one who can set a captive free and heal the wounds of the broken hearted.

You are a child of God and seated with Christ in the heavenly's (the spiritual realm). That means you have authority and power to do his will. Jesus set you free, and you will progressively experience that freedom as you respond to him in faith and repentance.

Deception vs. Truth

The Christian life is lived by faith according to what God says is true. Jesus is the truth, the Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth, God's word is truth, and we are to speak the truth in love. The biblical response to truth is faith regardless of

whether we feel it is true or not. Christians are to forsake all lying, deceiving, stretching the truth, and anything else associated with falsehood.

Believing lies will keep us in bondage. Choosing to believe the truth is what sets us free.

David wrote, "how blessed, happy, is the man in whose spirit there is no deceit!" (Psalm 32:2). The liberated Christian is free to walk in the light and speak the truth in love. We can be honest and transparent before God because we are already forgiven and, and God already knows the thoughts and intentions of our hearts (Hebrews 4:12–13).

So why not be honest and confess our sins? Confession means to agree with God. People in bondage eventually get tired of living a lie. Because of God's great love and forgiveness, we can walk in the light and fellowship with God and others (1 John 1:7-9)

Jesus is your rock, fortress, deliverer and refuge (Psalm 18:1-2). The more you learn how loving, powerful, and protective God is, the more you'll be likely to trust him. The more you realize how much God unconditionally loves and accepts you, the more you will be released to be open, honest, and (in a healthy way) vulnerable before God and others.

We must actively and intentionally choose to submit to God, resist the devil, and then he will flee from us.

You are not called to dispel the darkness, you are called to turn on the light. You don't get rid of negative thoughts by rebuking every one of them, you get rid of them by repenting and choosing the truth.

Being alive and free in Christ is an essential prerequisite for maturity in Christ. We cannot achieve instant maturity. It will take us the rest of our lives to **renew our minds** and conform to the image of God, but it doesn't take as long to realize our identity and freedom in Christ. The world, the flesh and the devil are enemies of our sanctification, but they have been and can be overcome in Christ.

Renewing your mind and conforming to the image of God is a lifelong process.

We are also experiencing a blues epidemic in this age of anxiety. Depression is so prevalent that it is called the "common cold" of mental illness.

On the other hand, extreme efforts at self-discipline without the grace of God often lead to legalism or perfectionism and result in self destruction. The world would have us think we are the "masters of our fates and the captain of our souls," but we really aren't. The human soul was not designed to function as a master.

Joint Heirs With Christ

As God's adopted child, you have been given a new identity and a new name. You are no longer a spiritual orphan, you are a son or daughter of God. As a child in God's family, you have become a partaker of his "divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). As a saint in Christ by God's calling, you share in Christ's inheritance.

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Romans 8:16-17

If you are beginning to think you are someone special as a Christian, you are thinking right – you are special! Your specialness is not the result of anything you have done, of course. It is all God's doing. We are what we are by the grace of God. All you did was respond by faith to God's invitation to be His child. As a child of God, in union with him because you are in Christ, you have every right to enjoy your special relationship with your heavenly Father.

How important is it to know who you are in Christ? Countless numbers of Christians struggle with their day-to-day behavior because they labor under a false perception of who they are. They consider themselves sinners who hope to make it into heaven by God's grace, but they can't seem to live above their sinful tendencies. (1 John 3:1–3)

What is the believer's hope? That you are a child of God now, who is being conformed to the image of God. The person who has this hope "purifies himself" and begins to live according to who he or she really is. You must believe you are a child of God to live like a child of God. "God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

It is important to establish our Christian lives on what we believe instead of how we behave. We need a firm grip on the truth of God's Word before we will experience much success at practical Christianity.

**We need to understand who we are as a result of who God is and what he has done.
A fruitful Christian life is a result of living by faith according to what God said is true.**

How can you hope to stand firm against the schemes of the devil if you have not internalized that you are already victoriously "raised up with Him, and seated with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus"?

When your basic belief system about God and yourself is shaky, your day-to-day behavior system will be shaky. When your belief system is intact and your relationship with God is based on truth, however, you will have very little trouble working out the practical aspects of daily Christianity.

Getting right with God always begins with settling once and for all the fact that God is your loving Father and you are his accepted child. That is the foundational truth from which you live.

You are a child of God, you are created in his image, you have been justified and positionally declared righteous by Him because of Christ's finished work and your faith in Him. As long as you believe that and walk accordingly, your daily experience of practical Christianity will result in growth. You will struggle, though, if you question the finished work of Christ, and try to become somebody you already are.

We don't serve God to gain his acceptance, we are accepted, so we serve God. We don't follow him to be loved, we are loved, so we follow him. It is not what we do that determines who we are, it is who we are that determines what we do.

"Beloved, now we are children of God" (1 John 3:2) That is why you are called to live by faith (Romans 1:16 – 17).

To live the victorious Christian life you have to believe what is already true about you. Will you have opposition to believing this truth? Of course! The father of lies (John 8:44) has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9), and he accuses the brethren day and night. If that isn't enough, others will put you down. We have to keep reminding ourselves of these positional truths.

Understanding our spiritual inheritance is the key to resolving our emotional conflicts.

The truth about who you are in Christ makes such a big difference in your success at handling the challenges and conflicts of life. It is imperative to your growth and maturity that you believe God's truth about who you are.

Jesus is interested only in creating new persons from the inside out by infusing in them a brand-new nature and creating in them a new self. Only after He changes who you are and makes you a partaker of his divine nature will you be able to change your behavior.

Is the law of sin and of death still operative? Yes, that is why Paul calls it a law. You can't do away with a law, but you can overcome it by a greater law, which is the "law of life in Christ Jesus."

If we walk by faith according to what God says is true in the power of the Holy Spirit, we will "not carry out the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). If we believe a lie and walk according to the flesh, we will crash and burn.

I do not believe in instant maturity. It will take us the rest of our lives to **renew our minds** and conform to the image of God. The seed that was sown in us by God is only a beginning. Being a child of God and being free in Christ is the birthright of every believer. Because of a lack of repentance and ignorance of the truth, many believers are not living like liberated children of God. How tragic!

Though flesh can refer to the body, our application is the learned independence on self which gives sin its opportunity. The natural man, who tries to find purpose and meaning in life independently of God, is going to struggle with inferiority, insecurity, inadequacy, guilt, worry and doubts.

Because he is yielding to the flesh instead of crucifying it, the natural man is also subject to feelings of inferiority, insecurity, inadequacy, guilt, worry and doubt.

"His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence" (2 Peter 1:3).

Countless numbers of Christians have been born-again for years, even decades, and have yet to experience significant measures of victory in their faith walk. Ignorance, lack of repentance and faith in God, and unresolved conflicts keep people from growing.

We should be able to say every year, "I am more loving, peaceful, joyful, patient, kind and gentle than I was last year." If we can't honestly say that then we are not growing.

The world and the flesh are not the only enemies of our sanctification. We have a living, personal enemy – Satan – who attempts to accuse, tempt and to deceive God's children. Paul wrote about Satan: "we are not ignorant of his schemes" (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Perhaps Paul and the Corinthians weren't ignorant, but a lot of present-day Christians surely are. We live as though the kingdom of darkness does not exist. Our naivety in this area is exacting a crippling toll that keeps many Christians from experiencing their freedom in Christ.

The spirit of truth will always lead us to freedom, but the desires of the flesh will lead us to sin and bondage.

"Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). We can find rest for our souls if we learn to live by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.

How can you know if you are walking according to the flesh or according to the spirit? Take a look at your life. "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envy... And things like these" (Galatians 5:19 – 21).

These deeds are spiritually dead acts which do not reflect the life of Christ. So if people have outbursts of anger, are they living according to the spirit?

God Loves You Just the Way You Are

The primary truth that you need to know about God for your faith to remain strong is that his love and acceptance are unconditional. When your walk of faith is strong, God loves you. When your walk of faith is weak, God loves you. When you are strong one moment and weak the next, God still loves you. God's love for you is the great eternal constant in the midst of all the inconsistencies of your daily walk.

Don't trust your feelings. He loves all his children all the time, whether we do good or bad. That's the heart of God. When the 99 sheep were safe in the fold, the heart of the shepherd was with the one that was lost. When the prodigal son squandered his life and inheritance, the heart of his father was with him, and he lovingly welcomed his son home. Those parables reveal that God's heart is full of love for us even when we are lost.

With God all things are possible. He is the God of all hope. Return to God when you are depressed, as David did. "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, the help of my countenance, and my God" (Psalms 43:5).

When you begin to align your goals with God's goals and your desires with God's desires, you will rid your life of a lot of anger, anxiety and depression. The goal is to become the person God called you to be.

Because Satan's primary weapon is the lie, your defense against him is the truth. Dealing with Satan is not a power encounter, it is a truth encounter. When you expose Satan's lie with God's truth, his power is broken.

Strongholds of the mind are overthrown by God's truth

Turn to God when you are having anxious thoughts. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

We are tempted to say, "he made me so mad!" Or "I wasn't depressed until she showed up!" That's like saying, "I have no control over my emotions or my will." In reality we have very little control over our emotions, but we do have control over our thoughts, and our thoughts determine our feelings and our responses. That is why it is so important that you fill your mind with the **knowledge of God** and his word. You need to see life from God's perspective and respond accordingly.

The order of Scripture is to know the truth, believe it, live accordingly by faith, and let your emotions be a product of your trust in God and your obedience to him. What kind of a life would you live if you believed what you felt instead of the truth? Your life would be as inconsistent as your feelings.

Responding to Your Emotions

Your emotions are to your soul what your physical feelings are to your body. Nobody in his or her right mind enjoys pain. If you didn't feel pain, you would be in danger of serious injury and infection. If you didn't feel anger, sorrow or joy, your soul would be in trouble. Emotions are God's indicators to let you know what is going on inside. They are neither good nor bad, they are amoral, just part of your humanity. Just as you respond to the warnings of physical pain, so you need to learn to respond to your emotional indicators.

Emotions are a product of our thoughts. If our thoughts and beliefs are wrong, we will struggle with negative emotions. Persistent anger, anxiety and depression reveal a faulty belief system. The greatest determinants of mental and emotional health are a true **knowledge of God**, and acceptance of his ways and the assurance of his forgiveness.

You have three options in responding to your emotions. You can respond by covering them, ignoring them or stifling them. Stifling them is called suppression. You can respond by thoughtlessly lashing out, giving someone a piece of your mind or flying off the handle. I call that indiscriminate expression. Or you can peer inside to see what is going on. That is called acknowledgment.

James warned: "but let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (James 1:19, 20). Paul admonished: "be angry, and yet do not sin" (Ephesians 4:26). If you wish to be angry and not sin, then be angry the way Christ was: be angry at sin. Turn over the tables; don't attack the money changers.

Only God can set a captive free and bind up the brokenhearted. He is the wonderful counselor.

An excellent scripture for stress/anxiety/depression is found in Psalm 139:23, 24: "Search me, O God, and know my

heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way."

God knows about the hidden hurts within you that you may not be able to see. When you ask God to search your heart, he will expose those dark areas of your past and bring them to light at the right time. The Holy Spirit "will guide you unto all the truth" (John 16:13), and that truth will set you free.

See Your Past in Light of Who You Are In Christ

How does God intend you to resolve your past experiences? In two ways. First, understand that you are no longer a product of your past. You are a new creation in Christ, a product of Christ's work on the cross. You have the privilege of evaluating your past experience in the light of who you are today, as opposed to who you were then. The intensity of the emotion was established by how you perceived the event at the time it happened.

People are not in bondage to past traumas. They are in bondage to the lies they believe about themselves and God, as well as how to live as a result of the trauma.

As a Christian, you are literally a new creation in Christ. Old things, including the traumas of your past, "passed away" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The old you in Adam is gone, the new you in Christ is here to stay. We have all been victimized, but whether we remain victims is up to us.

Those emotions are rooted in the lies we believed in the past. Now we can be transformed by the **renewing of our minds**. The flesh patterns are still embedded in our minds when we become new creations in Christ, but we can crucify the flesh and choose to walk by the spirit. (Galatians 5:22 – 25).

God's Kingdom vs. the World System

The world system says the best, the strongest, the most beautiful and the most talented are "in." Those who don't fit those categories – which includes most of us – are "out," and we can succumb to society's false judgment of our worth. As a result, a large segment of the population is plagued by feelings of worthlessness, inferiority and self-condemnation.

Nobody wins in the world system, but everybody wins in the kingdom of God. God loves each of his children the same. We are not in competition with one another. Paul says, "we do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12).

We are loved and accepted unconditionally by God. There is a necessary place in the body of Christ for each one of us. Helping another person succeed only results in our succeeding as well. The more we build up one another, the more we help ourselves.

Setting Our Minds on the Things of God

The focus of our minds is vitally important. When we focus on fleshly, sensual, greedy and materialistic desires or thoughts of anger, frustration and violence, we are cut off from the life and peace of God. Then we find ourselves living out our thoughts. But when we focus on the thoughts of God, the Word of God and the way God would have us live each day, we live out His thoughts and have His peace, provision and protection.

Staying our minds on Him is how the life and peace of God become our life and peace. People are looking for peace through drugs, romance, material things, religion, New-Age philosophy and many other things, but they never find it. Peace only comes to those who have a spiritual mind which they focus on the Word of God, not allowing their flesh or the world to control them.

Through months of diligent work in learning the Word and setting my mind on it, I began to get control of my

thoughts and build a spiritual mind. When I felt depressed, rather than having a drink or smoking a joint, I began to think on the destiny God planned for my life.

When I started to worry about bills and money, I would stop and think about God's promises to meet all my needs and prosper my life. Soon I began to experience the peace of God, because my mind was stayed on Him. I began to see His provision and blessing, because I was following the things of the Spirit, not the things of the flesh. And the same can happen for you.

We must practice setting our minds on the things of God, not the things of the world, so that our control centers will direct us toward God. Meditation is simply thinking about something. We all meditate every day, all day. But the problem is, we often meditate on negative, selfish, fearful, worldly things. However, if we think on or meditate on the Word of God day and night, Psalm 1:3 says that we will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

**When you can control your mind, you can control your destiny,
because the truth of God's Word is the basis for all success in life.**

Pulling Down Strongholds

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. 2 Corinthians 10:4,5

Paul is showing us in this passage where the greatest warfare of the Christian life really takes place—the mind. Though we do have to deal with demon spirits, Jesus has already defeated them and has given us His victory. However, we still do have to fight for the victory over the negative thoughts that can fill our minds and control our lives. As we have already looked at briefly, Paul says there are “strongholds” that can take root in the human mind but which must be brought down.

Some Christians have strongholds of fear and worry. Others have strongholds of anger and bitterness. Others have strongholds of sexual sin, greed, selfishness or laziness.

The first step in dealing with negative thoughts is to become aware of them so we can “capture” them. To capture these thoughts is to reject them from our minds once we recognize them. Then we must submit them to the Word of God. By rejecting negative thoughts and focusing on the thoughts of God, we pull down these strongholds and drive them out. Of course, this is not an instantaneous change. It takes discipline and diligence, but it can be done.

Blessed or Stressed?

Stress wouldn't be a part of your life if you were constantly in God's presence loving and worshiping Him. I don't have any stress in my life; I'm too blessed to be stressed! I'm not bothered by things because it's just not worth it. People criticize me and say all kinds of mean things, but nobody's going to rent space in my mind! I have more important things to think about than their criticism.

The things going on around me really don't matter because I'm seeking first His kingdom and righteousness. I'm not burdened, depressed, or defeated. I seek God and I'm a happy guy. I really am!

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). To the natural mind, this sounds unreasonable in light of the situation. Their Messiah, the One they loved and worshiped, was about to be executed. There's no natural way they could have peace in the midst of something like that, but Jesus had given them His Word. He'd told them many times, "I'll be crucified, but I'll rise again on the third day." If they had meditated on and dominated themselves by what Jesus had said, they would have released the supernatural peace of God they needed for that trying situation.

Loving and Worshipping God

The words of the song say it so well, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.” Looking into the brightness of God’s glory blinds you to other things.

I don’t have the worries and cares that other people have because I don’t see what they see. One reason for this is because my prayer life is 99 percent, “Father, I love You. You’re awesome!” I just fellowship and visit with God, which is what prayer is all about. I really don’t ask Him for much.

Your life will become stable as you enter God’s presence and primarily use prayer to love and worship Him. You’ll have a whole new outlook. You’ll think differently than those who don’t love and worship Him. If you’d quit asking for things and just start loving Him, you’d start seeing everything in your life change for the better. The Lord did say, “Ask, and you shall receive,” but it’s not what prayer is all about!

As you seek Him first with a heart full of love, worship, and gratitude, you’ll experience the joy and peace of God to such a degree that it wouldn’t even bother you if they repossessed your house or your car. You’d say, “Who cares? God will take care of me. Besides, I have a mansion up there where the streets are paved with gold!” If you could get that kind of attitude, deliverance would be no problem. You wouldn’t have to spend any time praying about your own needs!

When you are intimate with God, He’s blessed and you change! You’re infused with stability and strength. Instead of falling apart at the slightest little thing, you can boldly and honestly declare, “Come what may, I’ll make it through because God loves me!” If this doesn’t describe your Christian life, then it’s time to change your primary focus in prayer from getting your needs met to loving and worshipping God!

Prayer is primarily for loving and worshipping God. If you would seek first His kingdom and just fellowship with Him, you’d find your needs already provided. You wouldn’t have any “problems” because nothing would bother you. Instead of being depressed, the joy of the Lord would be your strength!

**Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy;
at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psalm 16:11**

If you’re depressed, you’re not in the presence of the Lord. He’s with you, but you’re not with Him because something else has you occupied. Get back in God’s presence and you’ll find fullness of joy!

My prayer life is all about loving God. I don’t ask for very much or do very much, but great things are happening. My Christian life is fun, and I don’t fret about things.

Worry is blasphemy against God’s promises. It stems from not being very intimate with Him.

What I’m sharing is simple, but it’s very profound. Of course, it takes effort to set aside self and focus on loving God. However, I’ve found that as I minister to Him, I get more blessed than He does! I’m not sure exactly how it works, but God won’t ever let me out-give Him! As I bless the Lord, I am overwhelmed with the positive emotions of love, joy and peace. He takes care of me and treats me well—much better than I deserve. I spend my time loving Him!

You shouldn’t ever need to bawl and squall because you’re always praising and thanking Him. “With thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6). This approach to prayer shrinks problems down so small that they’re literally no big deal.

Just keep praising and thanking God for what the Word says has already happened in the spirit until you know you’re not in fear or worry anymore and faith has been quickened inside.

The best results come from loving, thanking, praising, blessing, and worshiping God as the highest priority in life. It's simply staying in communication with Him all day long! Nothing this world has to offer can even compare to experiencing God's pleasure.

Your entire prayer life would be transformed if you'd get the heart of what I'm communicating. Everything in your life would change, and you'd become a totally different person. Loving God is all that matters. Everything else is incidental!

Putting all of this back into perspective, I don't spend much time asking for things. Ninety percent of my prayer is spent loving God. He keeps me in perfect peace because my mind is stayed on Him. (Isa. 26:3.) When I heard a bad report about our building contract falling through, it was no big deal. I'd been fellowshiping with Almighty God! As important as this building was, I knew it wasn't eternal. Besides, I had something better to do that night than worry, so I went to bed and slept. I never even prayed about it, yet this situation took care of itself and worked out just fine.

In a Nutshell

When you can see as God sees, it will take the fear out of life. It takes the laziness out. It takes the negative attitudes out. You get up every morning, crowned with glory and honor. You face every day, knowing you have dominion. You walk into every circumstance, knowing it's under your feet! That's the way God wants you to live! Why? Because you were made in His likeness and in His image!

**Decide within yourself today to receive God's truth that will set you free into the joy of the Spirit's new birth!
"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32**

These Thought Conditioners are not revelation that you only receive once and then never have to revisit. To become transformative, these principles should become part of your everyday thought life and walk of faith. Ultimately, you want this information to become alive and active on the inside of you. These truths need to go beyond mere intellectual knowledge and become revelation knowledge—direct from God to you!