

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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**SERMON TITLE** Changing Thoughts Changes Us

**SERIES**

**DATE** 3/23/2025

**KEY SCRIPTURE** Romans 12:2

**SYNOPSIS** We are transformed into Christlikeness by renewing our minds - changing the way we think.

**HIGHLIGHTS**



## ☞ Changing Thoughts Changes Us

Last week we talked about **You are what you Think**. You can be generally happy and upbeat or sad and down – either case is strongly affected by what you think. You can control what you choose to think about which is important because what you focus on will shape who you become. Today, I want to continue on this topic. Thoughts are powerful and therefore, need to be aligned with Christ.

☞ **Romans 12:2** says, “**be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**” The NLT puts it this way: “let God transform you into a new person by **changing the way you think.**”

**Ephesians 4:22-23** (NLT) says, “throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. 23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.”

Thoughts are powerful.

— *Winnie the Pooh...* “Did you ever stop to think, and forget to start again?”

## ☞ JESUS CHALLENGED THOUGHTS.

Matthew 5:17 **Do not think** that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them

☞ The listeners had **preconceived ideas (assumptions)**, but they were wrong. Jesus challenged their thoughts.

Matthew 18:12 **What do you think?** If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?

In this case, Jesus is forcing them to process their thoughts. What would you do? What should you do? What is most important? **Think about your priorities.**

Matthew 21:28-31 **"What do you think?** There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 29 "'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 30 "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. 31 "Which of the two did what his father wanted?"

☞ **Think before you speak.** Don't make promises you can't or won't keep. Don't just go through the motions, saying what is expected; do what the Lord says.

Luke 12:51 **Do you think** I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.

Again, Jesus challenged preconceived ideas. It's still true today when people try to put Jesus in box, saying he is all about love and acceptance, therefore, we should never proclaim that something or someone is wrong in their behavior. Jesus, himself, took strong stands on issues.



When you really follow Christ, it can cause division when family and friends think you've gone ☞ off the deep end. You need to be aware of that and think it through. **Think about the outcome** of your decision.

Luke 13:2-5 **Do you think** that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? 3 I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. 4 Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them — do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

Here's a common thought for many people. "I'm not as bad as a lot of other people." Another variation of this is, "I must be alright with God since I am alive and well." Jesus challenges this ☞ kind of thinking. We all need to repent and get right with God. **Think realistically about yourself.**

John 5:39-40 You diligently study the Scriptures because **you think** that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

This is like the last one, but taken a step further. This kind of thinking is not only that "I'm not as bad as a lot of other people," but, "I actually read my bible and go to church. Therefore, I'm good with God." Jesus challenges this kind of thinking as well. The scriptures are not salvation in themselves, but they point to Christ. Reading the bible and going to church are good, but why ☞ do you do those things? **Think about your motives.** Scripture and church are designed to draw you closer to Christ.

Matthew 22:42 **What do you think** about the Christ? Whose son is he?

☞ This is perhaps the most important question of all time. **What you think about Jesus determines your destiny.** (John 14:6. John 3:16. Romans 10:9-10.) So, what do you think? Was he just a good man? A great teacher? Only a myth? An angel sent from God? The Son of God? Fully God and fully man? Jesus challenges our thoughts.

☞ **THOUGHTS CHANGE US.**

— Henry Ford... *"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't--you're right."*

— Bruce Lee... *"The spirit of the individual is determined by his dominating thought habits."*

Our minds are powerful, and our thoughts shape who we are and will become. **Dr. Caroline ☞ Leaf** says this in her book Switch On Your Brain, **"As we think, we change the physical nature of our brain.** As we consciously direct our thinking, we can rewire toxic patterns of thinking and replace them with healthy thoughts." It all starts in the realm of the mind, with our ability to think and choose. In essence, she says, science is proving free will and the relationship between thoughts and reality.



☞ **Proverbs 23:7** says, **“as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”** This is profound. How we think has a real effect on who we are and how we behave. Even science is finding this to be true.

*We are not victims of biology or circumstances. You are free to make choices about how you focus your attention, and this affects how the chemicals and proteins and wiring of your brain change and function. Research shows that 75 to 98 percent of mental, physical, and behavioral illness comes from one’s thought life. Science shows that our thoughts, with their embedded feelings, turn sets of genes on and off in complex relationships. Research shows that DNA actually changes shape according to our thoughts.*

☞ **How we think** not only **affects** our own spirit, soul, and body but also **people around us**. Have you noticed that just by being around certain people you tend to get depressed? In contrast, just by being around others, you are energized? We really do rub off on each other. What you think and how you behave affects those around you.

☞ **Changing the way you think changes your perspective, which changes how you act** in the world. Thoughts change us.

### ☞ **THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT.**

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

--David Guzik...

- a. Do not be conformed to this world: This warns us that the “world system” – the popular culture and manner of thinking that is in rebellion against God – will try to conform us to its ungodly pattern, and that process must be resisted.
- b. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind: This is the opposite of being conformed ☞ to this world. **The battle ground between conforming to the world and being transformed is within the mind of the believer.** Christians must think differently.
  - i. The problem with many Christians is they live life based on feelings, or they are only concerned about doing.
  - ii. The life based on feeling says, “How do I feel today? How do I feel about my job? How do I feel about my wife? How do I feel about worship? How do I feel about the preacher?” This life by feeling will never know the transforming power of God, because it ignores the renewing of the mind.
  - iii. The life based on doing says, “Don’t give me your theology. Just tell me what to do. Give me the four points for this and the seven keys for that.” This life of doing will never know the transforming power of God, because it ignores the renewing of the mind.



iv. *God is never against the principles of feeling and doing. He is a God of powerful and passionate feeling and He commands us to be doers. Yet feelings and doing are completely insufficient foundations for the Christian life. The first questions cannot be “How do I feel?” or “What do I do?” Rather, they must be **“What is true here? What does God’s Word say?”***

☞ **John 8:31-32**

**Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

So, how do your thoughts compare to God’s Word? Here are a few examples:

You think: "It's impossible"

But God’s Word says: All things are possible (Luke 18:27)

You think: "I'm not smart enough"

But God’s Word says: I give you wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30)

You think: "I can't go on"

But God’s Word says: My grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15)

You think: "It's not worth it"

But God’s Word says: It will be worth it (Roman 8:2)

You think: "I'm afraid"

But God’s Word says: I have not given you a spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7)

What might happen if you started believing all this? You would become freer than you ever imagined. Thoughts are powerful! Thoughts change us, so think about what you think about.

— *Albert Einstein... “The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”*

**Jesus challenged thinking. Thoughts change us. Think about what you think about. Changing our thoughts changes us.** It’s a matter of the mind. Thoughts are powerful! What do you think?