

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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**SERMON TITLE** Choose Your Thoughts

**SERIES** Matters of the Mind

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**KEY SCRIPTURE** Romans 7:15-25

## SYNOPSIS

There's a conflict in our minds between the sinful nature and the spiritual nature. We cannot win the battle in our own strength, so we must connect with God and concentrate on heavenly matters. We can choose our thoughts.

## HIGHLIGHTS



## ☞ CHOOSE YOUR THOUGHTS

### Review: The Power of Thoughts

Proverbs 23:7 says, “as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” What we think about has the power to affect our attitudes, behavior, and even the people around us. We are transformed into Christlikeness by renewing our minds - changing the way we think. We need to think about what we think about.

--Joyce Meyer... *Once I realized that right thinking is vital to victorious living, I got more serious about thinking about what I was thinking about, and choosing my thoughts carefully.*

1 Corinthians 14:20

Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

## ☞ THE CONFLICT IN THE MIND

### ☞ Romans 7:15-25

15 I do not understand what I do. For **what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.** 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. 21 So I find this law at work: **When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.** 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, **waging war against the law of my mind** and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Have you experienced this kind of struggle? I know what I want to do, but I don't actually do it. I know what I shouldn't do, but then I do it. It can be something as simple as diet and exercise. I know I should cut back on sweets, but I can't seem to get control of it. And, I know I need to exercise more, but I tend to just do the minimum. And that is just about physical health. Spiritual health is even more important. You want to read your bible and pray more often, but you don't get around to it. You know that sinful behavior needs to be put to rest, but you can't quite shake it. It's a struggle we all face.

--C.S. Lewis... *“No man knows how bad he is until he has tried to be good.”*

Paul's problem isn't a lack of desire – he *wants* to do what is right. His problem isn't knowledge – he *knows* what the right thing is. His problem is a lack of *power*: (I cannot carry it out v. 18)



There is a conflict in the mind. When you come to Christ and give your life to him, he begins a process of renewal in you. You are born again, a new creation, with a new spirit, but **you still** ☞ **have the old mind and flesh**. Everything about this old flesh stinks of the sinful nature, which is at war against the spiritual nature. The deciding factor is in the mind, which is in constant conflict.

Sometimes we don't know what to do and that simply requires us to look into the Word or seek counsel. But the truth is that we usually do know what to do, we simply lack the ability to actually do it. There are times we aren't motivated enough and we can try to pep ourselves up, but often that doesn't actually work. And there are tons of self-help resources available, but even then, we don't make any progress. There's a real problem here. We all struggle with sinful patterns and there's a conflict in our minds. We don't need a motivational speaker or coach or ☞ some guru – **we need a savior**, and that is Jesus Christ, the Lord.

--David Guzik...

*The glorious truth remains: there is victory in Jesus! Jesus didn't come and die just to give us more or better rules, but to live out His victory through those who believe. The message of the gospel is that there is victory over sin, hate, death, and all evil as we **surrender our lives to** ☞ **Jesus** and let Him live out victory through us.*

### ☞ **CONNECT WITH GOD**

#### ☞ **Matthew 22:37-38**

**'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'**  
**This is the first and greatest commandment.**

Love = agape: love dearly. When used of love to God, the word involves the idea of affectionate reverence, prompt obedience, and grateful recognition of benefits received. There is depth of meaning in this word, "agape." It includes intensity of feeling with accompanying action to display those feelings; it includes utter contentment with something or someone and a commitment to that object as well. So, to love God means to feel strong affection for him and to express those feelings in word and action. To love God is to be completely content with him, ☞ no matter what else happens in life. And to love God means an absolute **commitment to him**, regardless of circumstances.

God expressed this kind of love for us in John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The Lord showed his feelings of affection in action and it was a huge commitment to send his son.

--Vine's... *This love that God displayed was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice.*

☞ We also, **choose to love God with all our heart, soul and mind.**



Heart = innermost part; feelings  
Soul = breath of life; desires; will & purpose  
Mind = deep thoughts; understanding

Loving God fully includes not just obedience in body, commitment in will, and passion in feeling, but also thinking in a way that honors God.

The mind has to do with reasoning. We can systematically and logically look at the ways God has intersected our lives and give Him praise. Love the Lord with your mind.

The mind also includes memories. Memories lead to gratefulness and worship. When we use our minds to remember His kindness, faithfulness, patience, peace, etc. we loving God with our remembrance.

To love God with all our mind also involves taking time to fill our mind with God's Word and to rightly agree with who He is. Knowing truth and loving God are deeply connected. Jesus is the Truth. As our mind grows in the knowledge of Jesus, we are liberated to love Him more.

The problem is that our minds get filled up with a lot of stuff.

- To-do lists
- Lists of things I never get to
- Expectations I fall short of
- Writing ideas
- A bit of jealousy over things I missed out on
- Fear of all the things that could go wrong

Jeremiah 17:9

The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? NLT

This verse reaffirms the fact that there is an inner conflict for all of us. And it adds the clarifying truth that we can't really trust ourselves, because our **hearts and minds are deceitful**. In fact, in several places the bible talks about deceiving yourself. Therefore, we must choose to connect with God. The Lord is the only one who can properly deal with the battle in our minds. So, our minds need to connect with him.

### ☞ CONCENTRATE ON HEAVENLY MATTERS

#### ☞ Romans 8:5-9

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but **those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.** **6** The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; **7** the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. **8** Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. **9** You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.



Colossians 3:1-2

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

☞ Set your mind = seek; aim at; strive for by **thinking, meditating,** and **reasoning.**

*--Adam Clarke... Love heavenly things; study them; let your hearts be entirely engrossed by them.*

Psalms 27:4

One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

This speaks of a high priority. This is the main thing. Think, meditate and reason on the things of ☞ God. **Read your bible;** dig in and study it. **Pray,** asking the Holy Spirit to focus your attention on spiritual matters. And, there's a reward for this – the mind controlled by the spirit is life and peace.

*--Dallas Holm...*

*Some people say you can be too heavenly minded  
To be of any earthly good  
But I don't think you can be too heavenly minded  
In fact, I think that thinkin' bout Heaven is good  
So I think about...  
Heaven, Heaven  
Heaven, it's always on my mind*

Concentrating on heavenly matters is more than just imagining eternity in heaven. It's about focusing on spiritual truths instead of earthly values. Set your minds on things above – those things are greater than the natural. It's easy to focus on the negative and get caught up in sinful thinking. We must make an effort to concentrate on godly matters.

☞ **Philippians 4:8-9**

**Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.**

It's a matter of the mind. There's a conflict in our minds between the sinful nature and the spiritual nature. We cannot win the battle in our own strength, so we must connect with God and concentrate on heavenly matters. We can choose our thoughts.