

Our Thoughts Will Determine Our Actions Which Will Direct Our Lives.

Carefully guard your thoughts because they are the source of true life. Proverbs 4:23 (CEV)
Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life

Why is God is concerned about changing your heart and your mind?

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.

4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The Battlefield of Our Mind

It is a battle between God's truth about you and Satan's lies to you.

Winning The War In Your Mind

1. Identify the number one stronghold that is holding you back.

2. Name the truth that demolishes that stronghold.

John 8:32 ...you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

We change our thinking away from the lies of the enemy,
and we reprogram them with the truth of God.

Romans 12:2 says, do not conform to the pattern of this world. By the renewing of your mind.

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We have Neural Pathways in our brains.

The more you think a thought, good or bad, the easier it is to think it again.

One of our problems with thinking God's thoughts and doing things God's way is our cognitive biases.

- **Cognitive Bias – Mistakes in reasoning based on personal preferences, beliefs, and past experiences.** (Mental filter or framework that impacts how you think.)

These cognitive biases effect how we see the world and often times lead to irrational decisions.

ILL: Tinted Glasses (Default filters—Default frames) helps us understand why people respond differently to same situation. Filters distort or the discolor the way we see the world.

These tinted glassed cause everything to be tinted yellow to be, you see the same thing, but differently.

- Wife: My husband never says he is sorry! He does but her Father never did. She projects on him.
- Past abusive relationship. Expects current spouse to be abusive. Sees abuse even if there is none.
- Mom is impossible to please — Now you are going through life feeling the need to be perfect.
- Was your Father loving and involved or distant and demanding? It affects you. Dislike Father God.
- Your boss gives you feedback. Are you offended or thankful? Your cognitive biases are at work.
- The church I grew up in was judgmental, therefore I'm against all organized religions.

It's not that the FACTS are different – It's the FILTER or Frame.

REFRAMING

- **Reframing—Creating a different way of looking at a situation, person, or relationship in a context that allows us to recognize and appreciate positive aspects of our situation.** (Changing or taking off the filter.)

ILL: A car cuts you off or flies past you at 80 mph in a 35 mph zone. You can say, “What a jerk!” Or you can say, “Wow they must be in an emergency. Glad they could get around me as fast as they did.” “Not only that... but they also gave me the one way to Jesus finger!”

ILL: The little boy who knew he was the greatest baseball batter in the world! It’s in how you frame it.

- **You can’t control what happens to you. But you can control how you frame it.**

The Apostle Paul’s Reframing

One of Paul’s life goals was to go to Rome and preach the good news of Christ Jesus. But in a strange twist Paul makes it to Rome, not as a preacher, but as a prisoner.

Have you ever had things go totally wrong or unexpected in your life?

- You honored God in your dating, married your sweetheart, and then divorce.
- You worked hard to get your degree, but couldn’t get a job because you were overqualified.
- You invest your lifesavings in a dream business and then lost it all.
- Maybe you are just saying, “At this point in life, I expected something different or better.”

Paul is now in Rome but in a prison! Not what he expected. Not the way he expected to get to Rome!

ILL: FRAMED DARK CLOUD:

- Paul could have said... *Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me really stinks. As a result of the hell I’ve been through, I’m quitting Life Group, won’t serve anymore, and never going back to church again.*
Philippians 1:12-13 NWV (New Whiners Versions) (BUT That’s not what he said!)
- Paul could of taken to social media and posted: Pray for me! Struggling! The food is horrible here. Rats are everywhere, the Guards don’t bathe, and they want to execute me!
#hate my life right now! # ministry stinks. (BUT That’s not what he said!)

Philippians 1:12-13 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.

13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

FRAMED BEAUTIFUL SKY: What most people would think is bad—I’m framing as good!

- While chained, I was able to preach to the Roman guards—got a new one every 8 hours!
- They thought I was their prisoner, they were really my prisoner! (Giving 8 hour sermons)

Philippians 1:14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

- God used my chains to embolden the family of Christ!

REFRAMING YOUR STORY AND RELATIONSHIPS

1) Thank God for what bad things didn't happen.

- Missed a work deadline and won't get a bonus — But didn't lose my job.
- I got into a car wreck — Expensive! — At least no one was hurt.
- I have cancer, but it's not as bad as what others are dealing with.
- Flight delayed problems with plane — Rather be down here with a plane problem than up there.

The Master Reframer: Girl came home at semester break and told parents—Met guy at bar—Hooked up—Preg with twins. Probation over in a year—Start looking for job once out rehab. Considering marrying me—Moving in (can't afford).

Actually, I got a “D” on my chemistry exam and just wanted to let you know it could be a lot worse.

Some times you have to just step back and say, in the whole of things.., It's not that big of a deal. I'm not saying to minimize the situation, but get the big picture and reframe it.

2) Practice pre-framing. Remember our Thoughts or Frames will shape what we experience.

- This is going to be so hard! Or this is going to be fun because I love a challenge!
- Can't stand going to these events. But at least I am going with my family. This is good.
- I hate running busy errands. But I'm thankful that I have a car and I'm healthy enough to do it.

What we **Believe** — Determines how we will **Behave**.

- Believe—No one will ever go out with me, they will laugh in my face, therefore I don't ask.
- Believe—Why not? Maybe they will actually say 'yes' and we will have 6 kids. Then you ask.

3) Look for God's goodness.

You will find what you are looking for! Want to see Bad, Negative, Challenges, you will.
Want to see Good, Positive, Opportunities, you will.

Buzzards find dead things. Humming birds find nectar. Why? That's what they were looking for.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

How do you see any good in Unemployment—Divorcing—Abused—Stage 4 Cancer—Child suffering?

This is where we as children of God has an advantage.

- A therapist will tell you that you need to do some cognitive reframing and empower you to decide how you want to see it the situation.
- We as Christ followers can say, “God, how do I reframe this? How can anything good come out of this?” Then we let Jesus help decide how to reframe a situation and help us to do it.

Even in the worst situations we can say, like the Apostle Paul, “For me to live is Christ—to die is gain—either way—I win!” We might pray, “Lord I would never choose this, but I'm thankful for what you did in this situation and I trust you.

Believing that Jesus works all things for good, reject unhealthy **Default Frames**.

Reframe rather than passively receiving the circumstances, we need to be actively interpreting them.

Bold Next Step: This week I will not interpret God through my circumstances. But rather I will interpret my circumstances through the goodness of God!

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