



First Baptist Church At The Villages

COMPANION STUDY TO MESSAGE: CONFIDENCE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE (6/7) •
STUDY TITLE: WHY IS IT SO HARD TO THINK DIFFERENTLY? • 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-6 •
FOR USE 6/7 THROUGH 6/13/2020

MAIN POINT

We have difficulty thinking differently because we often rely on our own weapons for the battle instead of God's.

INTRODUCTION

As your study time begins, use this section to focus your mind and heart on the topic of this lesson.

Describe a life experience that involved changing your mind.

What were the benefits you experienced as a result of changing your mind?

What were some potential negative repercussions if you had not changed your mind?

This is a study about the way our thinking influences everything we do. This is true even when we are dealing with God and what He asks us to do. We need to ask ourselves what happens when we make decisions or promises, but haven't changed our underlying thinking.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| READ 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-6.

What are some of the obvious differences between the mental pictures of "walking" (or living) and of "waging war"?

Why is walking a good metaphor for the journey of life?

What might be the problem with using flesh weapons in non-flesh warfare? Explain.

We use flesh weapons to react to offenses or to act in offensive ways. These weapons are readily available to us, and we think of them as effective ways to defend ourselves. They are not. And if those patterns go on in your life uninterrupted, you're sinning. You're not serving God. The proof of salvation is the progress in our sanctification, becoming more like Christ.

How many thoughts do you think in a day that you didn't consciously decide to think?

What happens when you "show your thoughts" who is really in charge?

When have you recently been willing to set aside a long-held opinion because you realized it wasn't the only way to look at reality?

Until non-captive thinking changes, nothing else is going to change. Non-captive thoughts are lofty opinions, or old ways of thinking that feel good to us but oppose God. We have to take every lofty thought captive. We have to decide: No more unfiltered thoughts. No more unapproved, unchallenged, "where did that come from?" thoughts. Every thought is going to get reviewed.

Paul told us that our arguments and lofty opinions are actually aimed "against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:5). At the end of the day, these bad reasons, old arguments, and lofty opinions oppose God. This will not change until we see our thoughts for what they truly are. When we oppose God's work, we oppose God Himself. Jesus suffered our pain to free us from sin. Sin only causes pain in the end. Sin doesn't help. It isn't good. It may bring pleasure for a moment, but in the end it destroys us. If we think differently, our behavior will change. That's what the gospel is all about. We are called to "be transformed by the renewing of [our] mind[s]" (Rom. 12:2).

In the NKJV translation, Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."

How have you experienced this truth in your own life?

How does the idea in Proverbs 23:7 relate to the truth we have looked at in 2 Corinthians 10 and the importance of changing our thinking?

Thinking determines outcome more than anything else. Our actions, attitudes, and self-awareness all flow from the ways we think. This is why it is so important to take our thoughts captive and gain control over them, according to the will of God, instead of letting them control you.

CONTEMPLATION & APPLICATION

Identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to your life.

There are four general reasons for our struggle to thinking differently:

1. The battle is not primarily physical
 2. The weapons are not readily accessible
 3. The strongholds are not easily destroyable
 4. Personal engagement is required
- Of these four reasons, which makes the most sense to you? Why?

When you think about "worldly weapons" or "flesh weapons," what weapons in your arsenal stand out to you? When do you find yourself using those weapons?

Considering mental wars we fight and spiritual warfare, there are five areas where we battle:

1. behaviors
 2. relationships
 3. finances,
 4. ideology
 5. morality
- Which of these areas seems most like a constant battleground for you?

Based on this session's teaching, how would you say your thinking affects your victory or your defeat in life?

In what ways does God's word to you in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 give you hope and encouragement?

PRAYER

Take a few minutes to pray for yourself and others. The strongholds each of us face can be daunting—that's why they are called "strongholds." Ask God to show you that the weapons He has provided really are powerful enough to destroy strongholds so that He can direct your new thinking.

COMMENTARY

| 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-6

10:4 Paul often used the language of battle and struggle (1Co 14:8; 1Tim 1:18; 4:7), but there is a right way and a wrong way to fight. Christians should resort neither to the literal weapons of warfare nor to the rhetorical weapons of sophisticated philosophical reasoning to advance the gospel. Divine, supernatural power is required to defeat Satan's strongholds. Believers experience this power by putting on the armor of God (Eph 6:10-18).

10:5 The high-minded thing refers to arguments made by false teachers. These would not be defeated by sophisticated reasoning but by the foolishness of the message preached (1Co 1:22). See 1 Cor 1:18-30 for Paul's earlier guidance to the Corinthians on this topic.

10:6 The phrase your obedience means the commitment of the Corinthians to Paul's cause in opposing the false apostles.