

Fixing Our Thoughts on What is True

Message 02 in the series "Half Full"

A. If we want to see things half full, we need to fix our thoughts on what is true.

"...Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you."

Philippians 4:8-9 (NLT)

1. We can know the truth because God's Word is truth. "Jesus said to the people who believed in him, 'You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" John 8:31-32 (NLT)

"Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth." John 17:17 (NLT)

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."

2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)

2. We can know the truth because the Holy Spirit will guide us to the truth. "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth." John 16:13a (NLT)

"But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people." Hebrews 8:10 (NLT)

Note: We shouldn't expect non-believers to know the truth or think like we do. "No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us... people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means...we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ."

1 Corinthians 2:11-16 (NLT)

B. We are constantly involved in battles for control of our thoughts with three enemies who always lie.

1. We battle the world (our sinful culture). "Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave." 1 John 2:15-17a (NLT)

Life Application: "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." Romans 12:2 (NIV)

2. We battle the flesh (our old sin nature with its hurts, hang-ups, and sinful habits) "Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will...Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live."

Romans 8:5-7,12-13 (NLT)

Life Application: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:41 (NIV)

3. We battle the devil. "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 6:10-12 (NIV)

“(The devil) has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:44b (NLT)

“...Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.” 2 Corinthians 11:14-15a (NLT)

Life Application: “We are human, but we don’t wage war as humans do. We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NLT)

Life Application: “Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people’s hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil’s trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.” 2 Timothy 2:25-26 (NLT)

C. What we think about this week will determine our attitudes and actions.

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7a (NKJV)

“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!” Isaiah 26:3 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. Would you describe yourself as a “glass half-empty” or a “glass half-full” type of person? Would you like to be more optimistic than you are?
2. Discuss the following quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson. “Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.”
3. The Bible says we are constantly involved in battles for control of our thoughts with the following three enemies:
 - The World (1 John 2:15-17, Romans 12:2)
 - The Flesh (Romans 8:5-13, Galatians 5:16-25, Matthew 26:41)
 - The Devil (1 Peter 5:8-9; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, 11:14-15)

How well did you do in battle this past week? What was your biggest victory? How/where did you suffer defeat?

4. Discuss the following lies from the world, the flesh, and the devil as well as the accompanying truth statements based on God’s Word.
 - *Lie:* More money/pleasure/power will make me happy. *Truth:* Only a relationship with God can satisfy the desires of my soul. (Ecclesiastes 5:10, Luke 12:16-21)
 - *Lie:* I’m not pretty enough/smart enough/strong enough. My life doesn’t matter. *Truth:* God created me just the way I am. He has a wonderful plan for my life and promises to guide me, mature me, and empower me through the Holy Spirit so I can live life to the full. (Psalm 32:8, 139:13-18; John 10:10; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:13)
 - *Lie:* I’ve messed up too much. I’ve hurt too many people. I can never be forgiven. It’s too late for me to start over. *Truth:* God loves me so much that he sacrificed His only Son to pay the penalty for all of my sins. Through Christ they are forgiven and forgotten. He knows exactly how weak I am, and He loves me anyway! (Psalm 103:8-18, Luke 15:11-32, Romans 5:8-11)
5. In a day when few people trust the media, how does it make you feel to know that Jesus said the Bible is truth? (John 8:31-32, 17:17)
6. How does it make you feel to know that the Holy Spirit will guide us into understanding/knowing the truth? (John 17:13, Hebrews 8:10, 2 Timothy 3:16) Does it surprise you that non-believers are blinded to the truth? (Romans 8:5-13, 2 Timothy 2:25-26)

7. Read Philippians 4:8 & Isaiah 26:3. Then spend some time as a group praying that God will help us focus on things that are honorable, right, pure, and lovely. Also ask the Lord to protect us from the devil's schemes that trick us into thinking things that are hurtful, filthy, false, and terrifying.