

Getting Rid of False Thinking

Message 4 of 4 in the series: "Pulling Weeds"

A. If we want to live fruitful lives, we need to make sure that our thoughts don't crowd out God's truth.

"The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced." Mark 4:18-19 (NLT)

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,' says the LORD. 'And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.'" Isaiah 55:8-9 (NLT)

"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**... So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.'" John 8:31-32 & 36 (NLT)

Note: If truth sets us free, then lies and errors keep us in bondage.

B. A fruitful life is the result of thinking in alignment with God's Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit reveals God's truth and thoughts to us.

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future." John 16:13 (NLT)

"But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets. 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... For, 'Who can know the LORD's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?' But we understand these things, for **we have the mind of Christ**." 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 & 16 (NLT)

2. Our minds and thoughts are crucial in determining the fruitfulness of our lives.

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

"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." Romans 8:5-6 (NLT)

Note: Our emotions and actions are responders to our thoughts, so changing our thoughts can change our emotions and actions. "...throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy."

Ephesians 4:22-24 (NLT)

3. A fruitful life is not positive thinking...it is truthful thinking. It is a life filled with faith and confidence in God because we are thinking truthfully about Him.

"When I **think** of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God."

Ephesians 3:14-19 (NLT)

“Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are **considerate** in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. **Then you will experience God's peace**, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. **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 4:4-9 (NLT)

Note: Truthful thinking transforms our lives. “Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by **changing the way you think**. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” Romans 12:2 (NLT)

C. A few things we can do to make our thinking fruitful:

1. We can feed our minds with truth.

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

2. We can take every thought captive to Christ.

“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.” 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV)

- We recognize our thoughts. “Therefore, with **minds that are alert and fully sober**, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.”

1 Peter 1:13 (NIV)

- We reject thoughts and lies that are contrary to God's truth. “For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and **they think only about this life here on earth.**” Philippians 3:18-19 (NLT)

- We replace wrong thinking with God's thoughts. “Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, **not the things of earth.**”

Colossians 3:1-2 (NLT)

3. We can help each other.

“This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory.” 2 Peter 3:1 (NLT)

“Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.”

2 Timothy 2:22 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Mark 4:18-19. How does wrong thinking about things in this world choke out the fruit God wants to produce in our lives?
2. Discuss the following statement: “If truth sets you free, then errors and lies keep you in bondage.” How are truth and freedom related to fruitfulness? Why do lies and wrong thinking keep us in bondage? (John 8:31-32)

3. In John 16:13, Jesus tells us the Holy Spirit guides us into truth. Share a time when the Holy Spirit revealed truth to you or guided your decision making.
4. Read Ephesians 3:14-19. How does thinking deeply about any of God's attributes (His love, patience, faithfulness, etc.) make it more likely that you will experience that fruit in your life?
5. Consider the following quote from A.W. Tozer: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." What do you think that means?
6. 2 Corinthians 10:5 encourages us to take every thought captive to Christ.
 - Why is recognizing our thoughts critical to taking them captive? (1 Peter 1:13)
 - How do you know if your thought is one that you should reject or keep? (Philippians 3:18-19)
 - Why is rejecting the wrong thought not enough? Why do we need to ensure that we also replace the thought with God's truth? (Colossians 3:1-2)
7. Read 2 Peter 3:1 and 2 Timothy 2:22. How do our Connect Groups help us to think truthfully?