

EQUIPPED

A STUDY OF THE ARMOR OF GOD

WEEK 5: The Helmet of Salvation

Jesus rescues us from the battle of the mind.

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:17

DAY ONE: THOUGHT LIFE

BIG IDEA: The mind is a battlefield between healthy and unhealthy thoughts.

I am amazed at my mind's ability to jump track in a nano-second. One minute I'm praying, praising God and the next moment my mind has jumped to the list of things I need from the grocery store. The next moment I remember I forgot to text that sweet, hurting woman in my small group. Ugh. The enemy knows the power of the mind and he loves to distract us from enjoying God and serving Him. He will use anything at anytime to distract us or trigger our needs, worry, doubts, and fears.

As we study the helmet of salvation this week, we will find that God gives us many instructions regarding our thought life. For this reason, God has given us the helmet of salvation. The helmet is *assurance* of our salvation. It is a strong defense against anything the enemy throws at us. Our salvation is not a once and done event. It is daily protection from our sinful tendencies and the scheme's of the Devil.

It's interesting that in Ephesians 6:17, the verb for take (put on) the helmet is in the passive tense. We don't put the helmet on ourselves. Instead, we must allow God to place it on our heads to protect us. God equips us with the helmet and places it securely on our heads to protect our minds. Our work is to receive the gift of protection He offers. **How is this similar to God's work of salvation in our lives?**

The helmet God offers us is *salvation*. What does that mean? Salvation suggests we need saving from something. The Greek word *soterion* implies "deliverance." In Scripture we find Christ's work on the cross delivers us in three ways:

- **Justification** ("just as if I'd never sinned") - This salvation is when we first accept Christ's gift, penalty of sin removed.
- **Sanctification** (practical right-living) - This salvation gives us power for daily battles we fight with sin.
- **Glorification** (our future in heaven) - This is our ultimate salvation, living out eternity in heaven with no sin nature to battle.

God's salvation delivers us from the penalty, power, and eventually the presence of sin. Wow! Did you catch that? Back up to the bold words above and write "penalty" under the word "justification." Write "power" under "sanctification" and "presence" under "glorification." We want to remember these aspects of our salvation. **When our minds are wrapped in these truths, how could that protect us from worry, discouragement, and fear?**

We all have runaway thoughts - those distractions that creep in and redirect our focus. **What are some thought patterns that women in general struggle with? Consider this list and then add others you think of in the area to the right:**

- Worrying constantly about things we can't control
- Rehearsing unkind words or actions toward us
- Making judgments about other people's behavior
- Allowing unfounded assumptions to grow in our mind
- Unhealthy day-dreaming

Many of our spiritual battles begin and end in the mind. We will dig into what God's says this week. **For now, look at 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Summarize in your own words how we wage war and what our weapons accomplish.**

What practical advice does verse 5 give regarding what we should do with our thoughts?

If we take our thoughts captive to obey Christ, how would that change your day-to-day life especially in relation to bad thought patterns we have considered today?

Pray asking God to help you recognize harmful thought patterns and to take those thoughts captive to obey Christ.

DAY TWO: TAKING THOUGHTS CAPTIVE

BIG IDEA: Captives don't call the shots - they do what they are told!

Taking thoughts captive means choosing not to dwell on thoughts that do not agree or align with God's Word. When we experience angry thoughts toward another person we choose to be patient, saving comments for a time when a helpful, unemotional conversation can take place. When we experience sexual temptations, we choose to turn from those thoughts and think on things pleasing to God. When tempted to worry, we choose trust and turn to God in prayer.

We need to teach our thoughts how to behave and to obey the parameters Christ has given us. It's not easy but it's worth it! Here is one practical tool: **What does Philippians 4:6 say about worry and anxious thoughts?**

In order to fight anxiety, what two things does the passage say that we need to do in every situation?

- 1.
- 2.

We need to tell God what we need, and then thank Him for what He has done. What He has done includes providing our salvation – past, present, and future. **Spend a moment telling God what you need regarding the situations, people, and things that are causing you the most worry and anxiety in your life right now. Write it out below:**

Now take some time to thank Him – for His death on the cross that brought you back to Him, but also for His current work in your life. **Write what you are thankful for here:**

This week, as we study the helmet of salvation, let's dig for practical things we can do. Think about ways to put on His protection to help reign in your thought life and experience true transformation. Consider how to make changes in your thinking that will lead to better spiritual mental health.

Take a moment to pray thanking God for equipping you to take your thoughts captive, freeing you from destructive patterns.

DAY THREE: MIND CONTROL

BIG IDEA: Time in God's Word increases the Holy Spirit's vocabulary in our hearts!

Ever feel like you are going crazy? I do. My mind races with thoughts that cause emotions to range from joy to anger in nanoseconds. In one pre-breakfast session, I might contemplate how I overslept again starting the day with stress for me and my family(guilt). I remember the bill that's overdue (shame) or a doctor's appointment that's coming up (fear). As I ask God for His protective helmet to free me from these unhelpful thoughts, I listen for the still, small voice of His Spirit filling my mind with the truth of Scripture to reign in or heal my wandering thoughts.

Look up the following verses - write it out if it helps you remember!

2 Corinthians 12:9 _____

Romans 8:1 _____

Romans 8:18 _____

Write your favorite verse that protects your mind from runaway thoughts: _____

The more we know and study God's truth, the more we increase the Holy Spirit's vocabulary in our lives! Beth Moore once said, "The Word of God healed my mind." I can relate. You? As I read, meditate, and memorize the truth from God's Word, my thinking is realigned, taking control of the craziness that is brewing! Some days are worse than others. Many days I can live in the freedom of thinking thankful, loving, and peaceful thoughts. Other times, I have felt a specific attack on the battlefield of my mind.

Memorizing God's Word helps us take thoughts captive while driving, waiting, and lying awake at night - times when we don't have our physical Bibles on hand. God can bring verses we have memorized to mind to stop our runaway thoughts in their tracks. **Where does Psalm 119:11 say to keep or hide God's Word?**

Once we have hidden it in our hearts, what does the psalmist say it will help us do?

God's Word hidden deep within our hearts will help prevent us from sinning. Sin often starts in the mind and then gives birth to sinful actions (James 1:14-15). **What are some excuses you use for not regularly memorizing God's Word?**

Read Psalm 19:7-14, a beautiful passage on the riches of God's Word. What are some benefits of God's Word? The last verse speaks of the meditations of his heart. Who does the psalmist want his thoughts to please?

End today by taking a few minutes to memorize Psalm 19:14. Copy it and put it where you can find. Try to say it every day this week and be ready to share your with discussion circle next week how God used it to help you with control your mind!

Pray asking God to help you take thoughts captive so that your thoughts are pleasing to Him.

DAY FOUR: MENTAL JUNK FOOD

BIG IDEA: Healthy, God-honoring thoughts protect us from spiritual defeat.

Much like our bodies, our minds need a healthy diet. Feeding our minds nothing but junk food leads us to unhealthy habits and choices. Conversely, feeding our minds a healthy diet of positive, helpful, correcting and encouraging principles from the Bible leads to godly choices.

Let's see what God's Word says about our mental diet. Draw a line from the passage on the right with the instructions on the left:

Romans 12:2	The eye is the lamp of the body.
Isaiah 26:3	I will not watch anything vile or vulgar.
Philippians 4:8	Peace comes when thoughts are fixed on God.
Psalm 101:3	Fix your thoughts on good and excellent things.
Luke 11:34	Don't copy the world, but let God transform your mind.
1 Thessalonians 5:21-22	Not everything we are allowed to do is beneficial.
1 Corinthians 6:12	Test everything. Stay away from evil.

What were some of the instructions that convict you regarding your thought life or habits?

Is there something you regularly allow into your mind that you know inhibits your spiritual growth?

Many of us often feel defeated spiritually. Yet we come to the battle with no helmet while our mind takes in messages all around us. Billboards, television, social media, and books bombard us mentally every day. When culture dominates our minds, we can struggle to think biblically and find our thought-lives spiritually weak. God asks us to study His Word, spend time in prayer, and hide His Word in our hearts. He wants us to be careful about what we allow into our minds through our eyes and ears because of the potential harm to our soul.

Romans 12:2 encourages us not to allow the world around us to consume our thought life. What does this verse tell us “not to do”?

After Paul warns us not to copy the behavior and customs of this world, he then tells us we should allow God to transform us. How does this verse say He will do that?

God wants to change the way we think. He knows the culture around us (often fueled by the enemy) wants us to accept the subtle lies that distort our clear thinking about God. **Can you think of some subtle ways the enemy tempts you to allow the patterns and customs of this world in through your eyes and ears?**

Today, ask God to help you to turn from the world's way and to be transformed by renewing your mind.

DAY FIVE: THE MIND OF CHRIST

BIG IDEA: Having the mind of Christ through the power of the Spirit gives us confidence!

When our mind wraps itself around the truth that Jesus died in our place to bring us into right relationship with God, it should evoke boldness! Yet many of us cower underneath thoughts of shame, fear, and a lack of comprehending that we have the mind of Christ. We dare not place our confidence in our own abilities. (Jeremiah 17:5-8). Instead, we should find great assurance in the fact that Jesus saved us from sin through His shed blood on the cross. It must break God's heart when we live with minds that dwell on sin past, present, and future when He sacrificed His own Son to protect us with the confidence of salvation. Without God's gift of salvation our minds can't think properly.

What do the following verses reveal about the minds of those who have not received deliverance through Christ?

Romans 1:21 Their thinking _____ and their hearts _____.

2 Corinthians 4:4. Their minds are _____ and cannot see _____.

In contrast to the darkness of futile thinking, we as Christ followers have spiritual understanding. Write 1 Corinthians 2:16:

When we choose to follow Christ, our eternal destiny is secured and we become indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Knowing that we have the mind of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit should give us confidence against the enemy. We should be bold women! Not arrogant, prideful, or haughty, but assured with the knowledge that Christ gives us His mind and places His helmet of salvation on our heads.

End this week by praying for your thought life.

“God, You have brought me out of darkness and into the light of the gospel of peace. Help me take my thoughts captive to make them pleasing to you. You have equipped me to stand firm against Satan, my enemy. You have given me spiritual armour to help me stand firm in each attack I face and battle I endure. Help me to hide your word in my heart.”

BIBLE MEMORY TIPS

- Don't bite off more than you can chew! Just like starting a new exercise program, you will be discouraged quickly if you set your goals too high.
- Set specific, measurable goals. Start with one verse each week of a favorite passage. Then reward yourself when you've met your goal. (chocolate, a lunch date with a girlfriend, fancy coffee drink!)
- Write out the passage. Writing it out helps it stick and slows you down to think about what the verse is saying.
- Carry it with you everywhere you go. Whether you put it in your journal, planner, on notecards or in your phone, always have it with you when you have a moment to spare.
- Get a partner. Everything is more fun with a friend! My partner spurs me on but doesn't judge when I get behind.
- Share it. Telling others what God is teaching you through your memory work will solidify the truths in your own mind and encourage others in faith.