

1. This morning we are going to continue with our study Battlefield of the Mind by Joyce Meyer.
2. Last week we talked about positive vs. negative.
3. One of the quotes I love so much is this. **Positive minds produce positive lives and negative minds produce negative lives.**
4. What we learned is that having a positive mindset rather than a negative mindset is a choice.
5. We must choose to think about good things and healthy things.
6. And we can do that with the help of the Holy Spirit. And God is eager to help us choose the right mindset.
7. This is another one of my favorite quotes from last week.
8. **It is not you against the devil; it is you and God against the devil.**
9. And you and God always make a winning team.
10. This week we are going to talk about...

**TITLE: Abnormal Mindsets for Believers.**

1. Specifically, we are going to talk about how it is not normal for believers in Jesus to have a judgmental or critical mind.
2. I don't know about you, but just making that statement makes me a little uneasy.
3. That's because in my life I have struggled with a judgmental and critical mindset.
4. So, let's talk about each of these mindsets and put them into words that are easier for us to grasp.
5. Specifically, we are going to talk about each of these dangerous mental conditions and discover what makes them so damaging.
6. Because a great amount of torment and destruction come as a result of judgmental critical minds.
7. First let's look at what it means to be...

**Judgmental.**

1. **Matthew 7:1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. (NIV)**
2. Being judgmental is one of the mindsets that the enemy uses to keep us bound in isolation and loneliness.

3. Sure, we have thoughts and opinions; but nobody wants to be around a person who feels the need to voice their opinion about everything and everybody.
4. The reality is, some people like to hear themselves talk. They like to give the impression that they are very knowledgeable.
5. It's not wrong to be knowledgeable, it is wrong to think we are more knowledgeable than everybody else.
6. Said another way. **It is quite destructive to have to always be the smartest person in the room.**
7. Vine's dictionary defines judgment as a decision passed on the faults of others. Condemnation. To condemn or pass sentence.
8. God is the only one who has the right to condemn or sentence, so when we pass judgment on another we are, in a sense, attempting to set ourselves up as God in that person's life. (pause)
9. Now. I know two things. I don't have any business trying to be God to or for anybody. My faults and failures are much too numerous for that.
10. But the reality is, I am still tempted to pass judgment on others.
11. Often times those judgments are seen in criticism and opinions.
12. It seems that criticism, opinions and judgment are all relatives.
13. So, now let's look at what it means to be...

### **Critical.**

1. A critical person is one who always seems to see what is wrong instead of what is right.
2. Some personality types are just bent toward being that way. Some personality types are more positive, and others are just more negative. I tend to fit in the negative category.
3. Because I am by nature negative, I have to be careful about sharing my negative opinions and outlook with others.
4. It is so vitally important to know that all of us have our own way of seeing things. And we tend to think our way of seeing things as always being right.
5. I used to subconsciously live by the motto: there is the wrong way and then there is my way. Inferring that my way was always right.
6. My view on the world is not always right.

7. Kayllen, graduation checks, directive to deposit them, didn't happen.
8. I saw her action, or lack of action as indifference. The reality was she was scared. I just couldn't see things from her perspective.
9. The underlying problem when I constantly think I have to be the smartest, the wisest and the rightest is pride.
10. **Romans 12:3** Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. (NIV)
11. We should think of ourselves with sober judgment.
12. The opposite of sober is drunk. A drunk person is a person who is under the influence of something. They are no longer in control.
13. So, what does it mean to think of ourselves with sober judgment?
14. When I don't think of myself soberly, it is usually a result of pride that has overtaken my life and has gotten out of control.
15. When we excel in an area it is only because God has given us a gift of grace for it. It is God who has distributed faith to each of us.
16. What is easy may not be easy for you and vice versa; but that doesn't mean that I am better than you just because I excel at something you don't.
17. One of my favorite passages in the bible is **Galatians 6:1-3** Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. **2** Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. **3** If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves.
18. What we find here is a perfect command about how to respond to the weaknesses of others.
19. We are not to ignore it. Refusing to be judgmental is not about ignoring weakness or sin in the life of another.
20. Being non-judgmental is about how we respond to their weakness.
21. Our goal should always be to work toward restoration.
22. That restoration should be done gently.
23. That restoration should be done with the understanding that we too can be susceptible to the same kinds of weaknesses.
24. The primary purpose in restoring someone who is caught in sin is not in pointing out their sin but carrying their burden with them.

25. When we talk about making disciples and being obedient to the great commission this is one of the areas we are referring to.
26. The body of Christ should not be a place to run away from or to be avoided when we fail or sin, the body of Christ should be a place where we are in meaningful relationships with other believers who we trust enough to help us and speak into our lives.
27. And yet so often, in the church today, people either run from the church when they fail, or they put on a mask and pretend that everything is ok when things really are not ok.
28. And the result is always isolation and separation.
29. Most often those are the two responses because we are afraid other believers will be critical rather than being helpful.
30. I believe that has to change.
31. If in our response to the weakness or sin of another we think we are somebody because they struggle with that particular area and we don't, we are deceiving ourselves.
32. We must be extremely cautious about having, or expressing an opinion about someone or something that is not under our authority.
33. **Romans 14:4** Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval.
34. If I were to give the Jeff Cox paraphrase of that verse it would be, stay out of other people's business, unless our motive is to bring love and restoration to that person's life.
35. If you're not going to help them or love them or restore them, we have no right whatsoever talking about them or thinking negatively about them.
36. We can get extremely wrapped up in having opinions, thoughts, judgments, and criticisms about things that are really none of our business. And that is extremely draining, a waste of time, and dangerous in our relationships with others.
37. Stopping and asking ourselves the question, is this any of my business, is a valuable tool to help us be mindful of a judgmental or critical spirit.

38. And then the next question should be, am I willing to love and help restore them back to a place of spiritual health.
39. Notice the two aspects of this truth. It's not just the action of saying something that can be dangerous. It is also the thinking of that that can be dangerous.
40. We can't think in terms of just actions, we have to think in terms of what we allow ourselves to think and ponder that is important.
41. And the rule is this. **Actions won't change until your mind does.**
42. So why is being critical or judgmental such a danger? Let's look at Matthew chapter 7 again to find the answer.
43. **Matthew 7:1-2** DO NOT judge *and* criticize *and* condemn others, so that you may not be judged *and* criticized *and* condemned yourselves. **2** For just as you judge *and* criticize *and* condemn others, you will be judged *and* criticized *and* condemned, and in accordance with the measure you [*use to*] deal out to others, it will be dealt out again to you. (AMP)
44. Why must we refuse to be judgmental and critical? Because if we sow judgment and criticism, we will reap judgment and criticism.
45. Sowing and reaping doesn't just apply to agriculture and finances, it also applies to our thoughts.
46. We can sow and reap an attitude.
47. I love the example of the pastor who always responded to unkind or judgmental comments about himself with the question.
48. Are they sowing or am I reaping? That's powerful.
49. **Matthew 7:3-5** Why do you stare from without at the very small particle that is in your brother's eye but do not become aware of *and* consider the beam of timber that is in your own eye? **4** Or how can you say to your brother, let me get the tiny particle out of your eye, when there is the beam of timber in your own eye? **5** You hypocrite, first get the beam of timber out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the tiny particle out of your brother's eye. (AMP)
50. The enemy loves to keep us busy, mentally judging and criticizing the faults of others so that we never have time to deal with what's wrong with us.
51. We can't change others. Only God can. We can't change ourselves either, except as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit and allow him to do the work.
52. When we are constantly consumed with thoughts and conversations about what is wrong with everyone else, we are usually deceived about our own conduct.

53. **Matthew 7:6** Do not give that which is holy (the sacred thing) to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls before hogs, lest they trample upon them with their feet and turn *and* tear you in pieces. (AMP)
54. When we have the command and the ability to love others and help restore them, but instead we judge and criticize them, we have taken the holy thing and cast it before dogs and hogs.
55. I have observed in my life and the lives of others that when we judge and criticize others, we become just as guilty if not worse than what we judged and criticized in them.
56. **Romans 2:1** THEREFORE YOU have no excuse *or* defense *or* justification, O man, whoever you are who judges *and* condemns another. For in posing as judge *and* passing sentence on another, you condemn yourself, because you who judge are habitually practicing the very same things [*that you censure and denounce*]. (AMP)
57. Often times we make excuses for our own behavior, but when someone else does the exact same thing we do, we are often merciless. We judge and criticize them to the enth degree.
58. We tend to focus on what is wrong with them and what is right with us.
59. Our negative and judgmental attitude toward them is a result of a negative and judgmental mindset.
60. So, we must guard our minds and our hearts. In the scripture the heart and mind go hand in hand.
61. **Proverbs 4:23** Keep *and* guard your heart with all vigilance *and* above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life. (AMP)
62. Notice with me that keep and guard are action words.
63. We are to be active in the keeping and guarding of our heart and mind and not passive.
64. So far, we have been encouraged to think about what we are thinking.
65. And we have identified several types of thinking or mindsets that should be abnormal in the life of a believer.
66. So how are we to respond to these truths?

### **We are to be active and not passive in our response.**

1. What does it mean to be passive?
2. Being passive has been described as a lack of feeling, a lack of desire, general apathy, lukewarmness, or laziness.

3. She makes the statement that **evil spirits are behind passivity. The devil knows that inactivity, the failure to exercise the will, will bring about the believer's ultimate defeat.**
4. Ephesians 4:27 says neither give place to the devil.
5. The place we give Satan is often empty space.
6. An empty passive mind can easily be filled with all kinds of wrong thoughts.
7. A believer who has a passive mind and doesn't resist wrong thoughts often takes those thoughts as his own and lives by them.
8. There are aggressive sins, or sins of commission, and there are passive sins, which are sins of omission.
9. In other words, there are wrong things that we do, and there are right things that we don't do.
10. The passive person thinks he is doing nothing wrong because he is doing nothing. Confronted with his error he will say, I didn't do anything.
11. His analysis is correct, but his behavior is not. The problem exists precisely because he did nothing.
12. When a believer is inactive in any area in which he has capability or talent, that particular area begins to atrophy and become immobilized.
13. The longer he does nothing, the less he wants to do anything.
14. Exercise is a perfect example. When I am active physically, walking and exercising regularly, the less hungry I am. The more calories I burn, the better I feel and the more motivated I am to do the right thing.
15. When I am physically inactive, walking and exercising less, the hungrier I am. The fewer calories I burn, the worse I feel and the less motivated I am to do the right thing.
16. The condition of passivity can be overcome. But the first step to overcoming passivity in actions is to overcome passivity in the mind.
17. I will not change my actions until I change the way I think.
18. I believe this is accurate and correct because of Romans 12:2.
19. **Romans 12:2** Do not be conformed to this world (this age), *[fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs]*, but be transformed (changed) by the *[entire]* renewal of your mind *[by its new ideals and its new attitude]*, so that you may prove *[for yourselves]* what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, *even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]*. (AMP)

20. The subject of this verse is not being conformed to the external, superficial customs of the world. Said another way, that is outward action.
21. So, what is the key to not being conformed to the ways or actions of the world? The transforming and renewal of the mind.
22. Right action follows right thinking. We will not change our behavior until we change our thoughts.
23. In God's order of things, right thinking comes first, and right action follows.
24. The right action or correct behavior is the fruit of right thinking.
25. I love the scripture reference in Ephesians 4:22-24 Strip yourselves of your former nature [*put off and discard your old unrenewed self*] which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts *and* desires that spring from delusion; 23 And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [*having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude*], 24 And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image, [*Godlike*] in true righteousness and holiness. (AMP)
26. Basically, verse 22 tells us to stop acting improperly, and verse 24 tells us to begin acting properly.
27. But verse 23 is the bridge that connects or leads from improper action to proper action. And the bridge is the renewing of the spirit of our mind.
28. It is impossible to get from wrong behavior to right behavior without first changing our thoughts.
29. A passive person may want to do the right thing, but never will until he purposely activates his mind and lines it up with God's word and will.
30. I have some counseling material that I have used in counseling couples who are considering marriage or who are already married.
31. The title is love and respect. In order to have a healthy marriage, the wife must feel loved by her husband, and the husband must feel respected by his wife.
32. If those two things don't happen it can lead a couple toward what they call the crazy cycle.
33. Usually when there is a lack of love or respect or both, the mindset has morphed into this.
34. The husband will say, I'll show her love when she shows me respect. And the wife will say, I'll show him respect when he gives me love.



35. Both of them agree that what is needed is love and respect.
36. The problem comes when the mindset of either person is, I will only give what they need when I get what I need.
37. And almost always there has to be a change of mindset. Without it, it is nearly impossible for restoration to occur.
38. No where in the bible are we told to do the right thing if someone else does the right thing. We are commanded to do the right thing even if the whole world does the wrong thing.
39. I use that example to illustrate the point. We will not see a change in our behaviors until we first see a change in our mindset.
40. That is active and not passive.
41. **Colossians 3:1-2** IF THEN you have been raised with Christ [*to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead*], aim at *and* seek the [*rich, eternal treasures*] that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** And set your minds *and* keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth. (AMP)
42. So again, we see. If we want to live the new life, the resurrected life, the powerful life, the key is to set our minds on, and keep it on things above, not on the things below.
43. Basically, what Paul is saying is, if we want good life then we must keep our mind on good things.
44. We cannot say we want the good life if we are passively sitting around wishing that something good would happen.
45. If we desire victory over our problems, if we truly want to live the resurrected life, we must have backbone and not wishbone.
46. We must be active, not passive.
47. Right action begins with right thinking.

#### Conclusion:

1. For the next several minutes I want you to forget about what I have said. I know that might sound strange.
2. What I want you to do instead is to focus on what the Holy Spirit is saying to you about your mindset.
3. **What is the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart about the truth we have heard from God's word?**
4. Is the Holy Spirit making you aware of a judgmental or critical mindset?

5. I believe with all my heart that the Holy Spirit will do His part, but we have to be willing to do our part.
6. What is our part?
  - a. Repent of anything the Holy Spirit shows us.
  - b. Submit to the work of the Holy Spirit when he reminds us.
7. Find someone you trust, confess your judgmental or critical mindset, and ask them to hold you accountable.
8. In other words, give them permission to speak into your life when they see judgment or criticism surfacing in your life.
9. That's active and not passive.
10. That is the key to your victory.