

1. Several years ago, I read what turned out to be a life-changing book. It's called **Battlefield of the Mind by Joyce Meyer.**
2. As the title indicates, it is a book about the spiritual battle that wages in our mind.
3. But more importantly, it is about how to win that battle and to have victory over the lies of the enemy.
4. I want to talk about the subject of our mind today, and I'm probably going to spend a few weeks on this subject.
5. Chances are you will not hear anything new or earth shattering today, but sometimes we need to be reminded of how God created us and how the enemy works, and how God wants to help us.
6. First and foremost, we need to know that...

We are engaged in a war.

1. **Ephesians 6:12** 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.
2. At times it might be a little bit easy to forget that we are in fact engaged in a war as Christians.
3. In our world you might hear words like fate, luck, karma or chance, but the reality is that as believers we don't believe in those things.
4. What happens in and around us is not happenstance. Our world and lives are guided by spiritual principles that are at work.
5. And as believers we are at war. Not with other human beings, but with the devil and his demons.
6. I hope that doesn't make you uneasy. It shouldn't make you uneasy, because it is the word of God, and yet I know people who simply don't want to think about spiritual battle with the enemy.
7. For a couple of years, I went to a lady regularly who cut my hair. She was a believer in Jesus, and I truly believe she loved the Lord.
8. One day in conversation, the subject of Satan and doing battle with Satan came up.
9. I don't even remember what I said, but I will never forget her reaction.
10. Her body physically shuttered, and she backed away from me and she said, I don't want to talk about that.

11. In fact, I don't even want to think about it.
12. And I honored her request, and I didn't say anything more about it.
13. But I couldn't help but say to myself, sister, you may not want to talk about it or think about it, but the reality is that the word of God says we are in a spiritual battle.
14. There is an enemy who wants to confuse us, he wants to hinder us, he wants to damage us, and he wants to destroy us.
15. But we don't have to be afraid of that when we know how the enemy works, and when we know how to use the weapons that the Lord has given us to win this battle. .
16. Satan attempts to defeat us with strategy and deceit through well-laid plans and deliberate deception.
17. John 8:44 tells us that Satan is a liar and the father of all lies.
18. If his mouth is open he is lying. He tells us things about ourselves, other people and about our circumstances that simply are not true.
19. He doesn't however tell us the entire lie all at once.
20. He bombards our mind with a cleverly devised pattern of little nagging thoughts, suspicions, doubts, fears, wonderings, reasonings and theories.
21. Satan knows our insecurities and weaknesses and fears. He knows what bothers us most.
22. And he is willing to spend great amounts of time, being patient, willing to invest all the time necessary to defeat us.
23. So we are in a war. Satan is our enemy not other people. And the battlefield, the place where the war takes place is our mind.
24. How do we know that? **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **5** 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.
25. In verse number 5 let's define exactly what several words here mean.
26. **Arguments?** Warped philosophies or pride.
27. **Pretension?** The act of pretending. Anything that pretends to be the truth but really isn't.

28. So what the enemy does, through careful strategy and deceit and lies, is establish strongholds in our mind.
29. What was a stronghold in the Old Testament?
30. In this case a stronghold is an area in which we are held in bondage due to a certain way of thinking.
31. Paul makes it clear in verse four that there are specific weapons that are at our disposal to defeat these strongholds of the enemy, and we will look at those a little later.
32. But for now, one of the ways that the enemy works against us is that he argues with us.
33. I don't know about you but I don't like arguments. One of the reasons I don't like them is because I am not very quick on my feet.
34. Meaning in the moment, I don't know what to say or how to respond. I normally think of a good response hours or days later. When it's too late.
35. But when it comes to Satan, we don't have to be afraid to refute his arguments.
36. The power, the strength, the ability to demolish these arguments is not from within and it is not from smooth talking.
37. Verse four says it is divine power. Supernatural power. Miracle working power.
38. But this power is not some mystic thing. It is not some abstract, vague, elusive thing that we hope shows up when we need it. It is real and powerful and useful.
39. That thing is the word of God. **The weapon that demolishes all arguments of the devil is the Word of God.**
40. **John 8:31-32** Jesus said, **"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**
41. What do you think that word hold to means? Remain faithful to. Continue obeying.
42. If we will do those things we will know the truth, and the truth will make or set us free.
43. Nothing casts aside lies like the truth.
44. Think for a moment about the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.

45. Three different times Satan tempted Jesus using a partial truth and a partial lie, and three different times Jesus responded with the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and the result was that Jesus defeated the enemy and sent him packing.
46. We have that same truth available to us.
47. But in order for that truth to do us any good, in the battlefield of our mind, we must get the word in us and we must allow the truth of the word of God to wash us and mold us and shape our thinking.
48. **How do we get the word in us?** Preaching, teaching, reading the bible, reading books, studying the bible.
49. We get the word of God in our lives when we get together with other believers in a small group setting, and together we allow the Holy Spirit to change us by the truth of God's word.
50. But it isn't enough to just tuck the word away on the inside. We must remain or continue or abide in the word.
51. Another way we can use the Word of God as a weapon is in the area of praise and prayer.
52. Praise is a powerful way to defeat the enemy. Praise immediately takes the focus off of what the enemy is saying and places it squarely on the Lord.
53. Praise however is not meant to be just lip service. Praise must be genuine.
54. The purpose of praise is not to manipulate God into doing what we want, the purpose of praise is to exalt Him. The result however is that it lifts us up at the same time.
55. Praise according to the word. Use, quote, meditate on the word as a part of your glorifying God.
56. Prayer is another weapon. Prayer is more than just asking God for help or talking to him. Prayer is about intimacy with God.
57. One of the best ways to promote intimacy is by praying the word or praying according to the word.
58. When we pray according to the word we are signifying to God, I care about what you say. I want to live my life according to what you call truth.

59. Again, prayer that is based on the word of God serves to shut out and shut down the lies of the enemy because Satan will not tolerate well, being around declarations of the truth.
60. An example of how you would pray the word might go like this.
61. Lord, I know your word says...so as I come to you today in prayer I stand upon that promise.
62. Lord, your word says you love to give good gifts to us.
63. Lord your word says that in all things God works for the good of **those who love him**, who have been called according to his purpose.
64. I believe what I am going through or experiencing is for my good.
65. You get the idea.
66. So the word can be used in various ways. We can pray the word, speak the word, sing the word and study the word.
67. And just as a side note. The design of digesting the word and using the word as a weapon is best accomplished as we allow the truth of the word to change us.
68. Over the years I have quoted, recommended and talked a lot about a book written by Dr. Henry Cloud. The title of the book is **Necessary Endings**.
69. In the book he paraphrases or kind of sums up three key truths that are displayed over and over again in the book of Proverbs.
70. He says the bible basically describes three types of people.
71. **The wise, the foolish and the evil.**
72. His contention is that you can tell what type of person you are dealing with by how they respond and react to the truth.
73. He says when a wise person hears the truth, they set out to adjust their life to match up to the truth.
74. The wise person loves truth. They want truth and they are happy when someone shares the truth with them even if the truth is a little bit painful.
75. The foolish person however is different. When the foolish person hears truth, he attempts to change the truth to fit his life rather than changing his life to fit the truth.
76. The foolish person will resist truth so they can stay the same.

77. Recently in our staff meeting we were discussing a person who several groups of people had been trying to reach and help. The difficulty however is that, when this person is presented with the truth they immediately try to change or twist the truth to fit what they want to do and how they want to live.
78. This group presented this person with truth. They didn't listen. Then they went to another group. That second group presented them with the truth. They didn't listen.
79. They went to a third group and again were presented with the truth but again rejected the truth. Every time they contended that their lifestyle and decisions were right, even though it was clearly proven that their choices and lifestyle are contrary to the word of God.
80. So someone ended up asking the question. How can we help this person?
81. The reality is there isn't much we can do as long as they reject the truth of the word of God.
82. The word of God has to be the basis and the foundation for what we believe. We must believe and live as though the word is truth.
83. The last person, the evil person, will get mad and angry when presented with truth. They tend to throw a tantrum because you had the audacity to tell them the truth.
84. So again, and will dissect this further as we go along, the word of God is a powerful weapon against the lies of Satan, if we accept the word as truth. When we accept the word into our mind. Believe the word as truth.
85. When we accept the word into our heart. We allow the word to change us on the inside.
86. And by our actions. We live out the truth of the word of God in our daily lives.
87. Satan knows if he can control our thoughts, he can control our actions. So that's why he bombards our mind with lies.
88. Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he: (Amp)
89. According to that verse our thoughts are very powerful. What we think is generally what we become.

90. I was a supervisor several years ago and there was a person in a particular department that behaved at times in odd ways. At least it seemed odd to those of us evaluating his performance.
91. Several days later, this person shared a belief that had been taught to him earlier in his life.
92. After sharing that belief his behavior made perfect sense. Not that it was acceptable mind you. It just brought clarity to his actions. He was acting based on what he believed.
93. Also, he interacted with others based on what he believed.
94. His beliefs or thoughts about a certain subject acted like a filter through which everything else had to pass.
95. What we think acts as a filter for our life.
96. **Romans 8:5** Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.
97. Thoughts and actions go hand in hand. If our minds are set on fleshly desires, we will live out those fleshly desires.
98. If our minds are set on what the spirit desires, we will live out spirit desires.
99. Probably one of my favorite quotes about this battle in our minds is this. **You cannot have a positive life and a negative mind.**
100. Said another way, **we cannot think wrongly and live rightly.** The two go hand in hand.
101. For the believer, right thinking is a vital necessity. Like blood flowing through the veins or oxygen flowing through the lungs.
102. **Matthew 12:33** "A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. (NLT)
103. So just like a tree bears fruit our thoughts bear fruit.
104. Think good thoughts and it will produce good fruit. Think bad thoughts and it will produce bad fruit.
105. It's like riding a bicycle. When riding a bike, as long as you keep your focus on what is ahead, you will generally stay on a straight path.
106. But let your focus get on something else, say a bird or a tree or a light pole, and 9 times out of 10, you will ride that bike directly toward where you are focused.

107. It's the same with our mind. Whatever we think about, whatever we focus on, good or bad, our life will generally head in that direction. And so, because of that, to be spiritually strong and to be victorious in our battle with Satan we have to guard what we think.

108. We have to be proactive and not reactive.

Conclusion:

1. I would like to assign you a little bit of homework. Will you take note this next week about what you are thinking.
2. Pay attention to what you are thinking in various circumstances.
3. Write down your observations in a journal or some safe place.
4. Make note of thoughts that surprise you.
5. Also, make note of the fruit that your thoughts bear. How did you act based on what you were thinking?
6. What I believe you will find is that your life will mostly follow what you think.
7. And as we close today, I want to remind you of the weapon that we have, to keep our mind focused in the right direction, and that is truth.
8. Not your truth, not my truth, but the truth of God's word.
9. I want to ask you a personal question, but you will only answer yourself.
10. The purpose of these questions is not to make you feel bad or guilty. They are simply designed to help us see ourselves clearly.
11. What is your relationship with God's Word?
12. Do you spend time with God's word every single day? Is it a vitally important part of your every day.
13. Or is your time spent with God's word hit and miss, or maybe not at all.
14. Your relationship with God's word, the truth, will determine how effective you will be at winning this battle going on in our mind.
15. Will you commit to God's Word as truth?
16. Will you give the Lord influence over your thoughts?

17. When you read God's word, will you ask the Holy Spirit to make you aware of the truth.
18. Once you become aware of that truth, will you ask the Holy Spirit to change you on the inside with that truth.
19. And then, will you allow that truth and those changes to dictate how you live your life.
20. Just so we are on the same page, this is not just a you thing, this is an us thing.
21. One of the things pastors struggle with greatly is their personal time with God's word.
22. Many pastors tend to think that because they are studying God's word for sermons, that that is enough.
23. It's not enough. We all need personal, daily time with God's word.
24. How many here today by an uplifted hand would say, I want to have a good relationship with God's word.
25. I want to spend daily time with God's word.
26. I want to know the truth from God's word.
27. I want the word of God to change me on the inside.
28. And I want the word of God to change how I live on the inside.
29. Pray for one another.