

# Battle of the Mind 4

by Anton Bosch

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*We need to continually renew our minds through the Word of God and capture every thought to maintain our spiritual life and grow in our faith.*

**Duration:** 51:20

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 10:1

**Topics:** "Mind"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of renewing our minds by focusing on positive and virtuous thoughts. He references Philippians 4:8, which encourages believers to meditate on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. The speaker warns against allowing negative and destructive thoughts to take control of our minds, using the example of King David's downfall. He also highlights the need to bring our minds under control and tie down the thoughts that can hinder us from living a godly life.

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## Transcript

And we're going to read again, this is the last in the series from 2 Corinthians chapter 10. 2 Corinthians chapter 10, we'll read the first six verses again, and this is the final one next week, I'm going to speak from another passage, but something which connects to what we've been saying, but which is really a separate one. So, 2 Corinthians 10 verse 1 through to 6. Now I pull myself and pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent and bold toward you.

But I beg you that when I am present, I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

And being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. You need to keep your finger in there because we're going to come back to that, but we're going to go to a number of other scriptures. Now we've spoken about various things and I'm not going to recap all of that, that we've spoken over the last three or four weeks, but simply saying this that the strongholds that he is speaking about here for those who weren't with us before, these are ways of thinking, value systems that are in our minds, which are reinforced and built up over a lifetime.

Things that happen before we've come to Christ, after we've come to Christ, things that happen to us as children, as young people, as we grow up, they shape the way that we think and that we act and react. Many times these things control our lives and they are habits, they are ways of seeing things, they are addictions in our thinking, lust, anger, pride, complexes of various sorts, depression, all of these things, many of these things are shaped by our thinking and our thoughts form these powerful areas that control different areas of our lives because that's what a stronghold does, he speaks about these strongholds. It controls and dominates the landscape and controls that area.

Now what he says is that we need to bring these things down to the obedience of Christ because these strongholds control our lives, they enslave us and we spoke about that a week or two ago, about the fact that we become enslaved to these things that control us when in fact we should be free and we should be freed by the truth of the word of God. And so we're going to speak a little bit more this morning about how these strongholds can be brought down and if you go with me, as I said, keep your marker in the book of Corinthians and let's go to Romans chapter 12. And we made passing reference to this in one of the previous sessions, but in Romans chapter 12, he says in verse 2, And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Be transformed, be changed. The word transformed means to be changed. The Greek word there is to be metamorphosized.

We understand the word something which is changed in that way. It is one thing now and it becomes something different. And in fact I'm going to speak about that next week.

But he's saying that this needs to happen through the renewing of our minds. Now remember, he's writing to people who are already Christians. He's not saying this to unbelievers and saying they need to have their minds changed.

And he's not saying that this is something that will happen when you become a Christian, but once we are Christians, we need to continually have our minds renewed. Why do we need to do that? Because our minds are old. Obviously if it needs to be made new, it is old.

We need to renew this building. We're trying to renew it little by little as we paint some sections and we fix here and fix there. We're trying to renew the building.

Now we need to renew our minds. Because our minds are old because of the impact of the world. We spoke much in the previous weeks about the fact that the world and its systems and everything that the world is teaching us, is teaching us a way of thinking which is ungodly and which is unbiblical.

Now that needs to be replaced with a godly way of thinking and it needs to be replaced with a mind of Christ. Paul talks about the mind of Christ. So my mind needs to be made new.

And we know that the human body is being changed all the time. I don't know. I'm sure that Dr. Marcus will be able to tell us.

I've forgotten how many times, how often the cells in our bodies are changed, are renewed. The old ones die and we lose them in all sorts of different ways and new cells. And so we're being changed and so the physical body that you see here in a few months time will be a totally different one.

It looks the same, it acts the same, but in fact it is being changed all the time. And so my mind is being changed all the time. Not just women who keep changing their minds.

We all change our minds. And so our minds need to be changed and it needs to be renewed all the time. We need to expel old ideas that are wrong and we need to take on new ideas that are right.

We need to expel a worldly philosophy and a worldly way of seeing and doing things and we need to take on a godly way of doing things. And then of course the problem is that for every step we take forward, some of us take three steps backward. Because we spoke about the fact that we only allow our minds to be renewed for thirty minutes or forty minutes on a Sunday morning and then the rest of the week the world is taking us, dragging us back into its old way of doing things and thinking things.

And so I need to be spending time in the Word, I need to be spending time meditating on the Word of God and while I'm doing that my mind is being renewed. The wonderful thing about this is that the older we get, the better we can get. What I mean by that is that our human bodies, even though they're being renewed all the time and the cells are changing all the time, unfortunately as we get older we get weaker, we get more sickly, we just are going downhill.

That's true of every one of us. Even young people think, well you know, we're not, but really from the moment you're born you begin to die. Because written into the DNA of our cells is the recipe for death.

And that's what everybody is chasing after, is how can we change that recipe, how can we change that formula which is written into my DNA so that I would maybe live a little bit longer. But unfortunately we can do nothing about that. And so physically we are going down all the time.

But spiritually we can be going up all the time. We can be getting better, we can be getting closer to the Lord, we can be understanding more of the Word of God, but more importantly we can be thinking more and more like Jesus as we go along if we allow our minds to be renewed. But the problem is that it is not a static process, it's not something that stands still.

Nothing in the spiritual realm ever stands still. In fact nothing in this world stays the same. And we spoke about this building.

If you locked up this building and we said, we're not going to allow any kids in here with dirty fingers and with coffee in the sanctuary, we're just going to close the building and we're going to leave it for 10 years. What will happen over that 10 years? Will it remain the same? No, it will go down. Moths will start eating away at it, rust will start corrupting it, it will oxidize, all sorts of things will be going.

And so you close it off for 10 years, you come back in 10 years time, it's going to go, it's going to decay, it's going to go backward. Everything in life is that way. And our spiritual life is even more sensitive to that sort of thing.

If you don't maintain your spiritual way of thinking for one day, it's going to start going back to the old way of doing things. One week and it has a bigger impact. A month, a year, and it goes even further and further down.

There is no way you can leave your spiritual position and say, that's where I am spiritually, I'm not going to do anything, I'm just going to leave it as it is and I'll be okay. You won't, because that's just one of those laws, it's one of those things that happens, is that it just keeps sliding back into the world's way of thinking.

And so you've got to work at it all the time, you've got to be spending time in the Word, spending time with God, spending time with Christians, and allow our thinking to constantly be renewed and constantly to be made like the Lord Jesus.

Let's go to the book of Philippians, and chapter 4, and here we find a verse which people like to quote, and again often quoted incorrectly and out of context, but Philippians chapter 4, and verse 8. Philippians 4 and verse 8. Finally brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things. Meditate on these things. Why? Because that's part of the renewing of our minds.

That's part of the way that we can change our minds. We spoke last week about the fact that the things that you look at, the things you spend time on, will shape the way that you are. I speak the way I do because I grew up amongst people who speak this funny way.

You speak the way you do because you grew up amongst people who speak your way. And even here in the United States we can often recognize people who come from other parts of the country, other parts of the states, because of the way that they speak, because of the things that they eat, because of the way that they live their lives. It's our environment to a large extent that shapes the way that we are.

And so our environment will shape, and what we put through our minds will shape the way that our minds are. And if we're going to feed it with worldly things, our minds are going to be worldly. If we feed it on spiritual things, our minds will be spiritual.

And so whatever it is that you put in, it's just like a computer. That's really all the mind is. And so there's an old saying in computer language or amongst computer geeks, and that is, garbage in, garbage out.

You can't put any nonsense into the computer and think it's going to give you good information. Whatever you put into the computer is what you're going to get out. And whatever you put into the computer of your mind is what you're going to get out.

You can't feed your mind with garbage all the time, and think it's going to produce good, wonderful, beautiful spiritual ideas and thoughts. And so whatever you feed your mind, if you feed your mind on negative things, it's going to be producing negative things. And so Paul says, think on the things that are wonderful.

Think on the things that are lovely. Think on the things that are of good report. Because that will change our mind.

That will renew our minds to become more like Christ. Now, if we go back to the book of Corinthians, you'll see that he speaks about bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Every thought.

We say, but surely, you know, every thought. How many thoughts go through our minds in a day? I don't know. I don't know if anybody knows.

50,000? Maybe, maybe more. But we have, yeah, thousands and thousands of thoughts that go through our minds every day. And Paul says that every thought.

Now, this is not some theoretical or theological thing he's speaking about. He's speaking about practical realities. He says every thought needs to be brought under control.

Every thought. And you know, it's amazing when we look at our minds, and we see the things that go through our minds. What we think about and what goes, you know, what we spend time wondering and thinking about.

And we say, but it's not important. You know, we think negative things. We think lustful thoughts.

We think thoughts of anger, and thoughts of vengeance, and thoughts of despair, and thoughts of unbelief. And you know, we say, well, you know, it's my little weakness. You know, I just have these few thoughts in my day that aren't so great.

Remember when we started speaking about this series, we spoke about the Trojan horse with which they captured the city of Troy. Remember, they built that big horse, and they put some men in there, and they left it out there, and then they took that horse into the city. How many men were in that Trojan horse? I don't know, I don't remember.

But how many did they need to have in there? Only one. Because all they needed was one man inside the city to open the gates for the whole army to come in. And that battle would have been won or lost by one enemy inside of the city.

How many terrorists came into the United States? How many were involved in the 9-11 destruction of the World Trade Center and of those airplanes? Just a handful. I don't remember exactly how many. Just a handful.

And yet they killed thousands and thousands of people. How many of the enemy can you allow inside of the borders of a country? And of course the answer is none. And of course there's a lot of anger today and in certain quarters about a famous Islamic singer who was not allowed into the country this last week, turned away.

People say how unfair, how unjust. But how many enemy agents can we afford to have inside of the country? The answer is none. Because any enemy agent will cause trouble of whatever degree.

And it only took a handful, it only took one or two men on each one of those airplanes to kill thousands of people. And we know that's true about war. And you know no country will allow an enemy agent inside of that country to just go about his business.

And the government of this country would be foolish to allow terrorists to just freely roam and freely set up their networks and gather arms and get explosives and just say, well you know, it's fine, it's just a few of them, it's not a big problem. We'll just let it be. That would be irresponsible of the government to do that.

And yet we do exactly that in our own minds. We allow thoughts into our minds which are destructive. Thoughts that will change us for the bad.

Thoughts that will bring us down. Thoughts that will bring us into the depths of despair. Thoughts that will bring us into unbelief.

Thoughts that will lead us into sinning in all sorts of different ways. And we say, well it's just one little thought, it doesn't matter. Folks, it does matter.

We cannot afford the enemy inside of the gates. One enemy agent inside the gates of your mind, and he will open up the gates to bring more of his friends in. And when more of his friends have come in, they will eventually take control and bring great destruction into your heart and into your life and into your mind.

You remember King David, he was walking about on the parapets of his castle, and he saw a woman down there, washing. How many thoughts began that whole process, which ended up in murder and adultery, resulted in the death of his son, and which eventually led to the loss of the kingdom. All of this began with one thought.

Just one thought. What if I could have her? And folks, if David had stopped with that one thought, and said I will not allow that thought into my mind, I will not allow that idea to take root in my thinking, and turned away the whole course of his life, and the history of Israel could have been different, could have been changed. But it began with one thought.

And that's why Paul says, we need to bring every thought into captivity. Every thought needs to be brought under control. You cannot allow all sorts of thoughts just to roam around in your mind, and think that you're going to get away with it, and you'll control it sometime later on.

Because it will bring destruction. Now, he goes on and he says, bringing every thought into captivity. Into captivity.

What does that word captivity mean? Simply what it says. Under control. When you capture someone, and when the FBI or whoever these guys are who go about chasing the terrorists, when they find a terrorist inside the country, what do they do to him? Well, they catch him.

They grab hold of him. And then they put handcuffs on him. They restrain him.

And then they put him in prison. Or they put him out of the country. They deport him.

So that he can no longer have an impact on the country. So that he can no longer do his terrible work. And that's exactly the language that Paul is using.

He's saying what we need to do with these thoughts is that we need to grab hold of them. Don't let them free. Don't give them free reign in your mind and in your thinking.

Take those thoughts and bring them under control. Subjugate them. Bring them into submission.

And then, throw them out. Don't even keep them in prison. Because sooner or later they're going to get out of prison, and then they're going to start their nonsense in your mind again.

So you've got to bring those thoughts when they come into your mind. Grab hold of them. Captivate them.

And throw them out. Deport them. Because they don't belong in your mind.

They don't belong in friendly territory. And so he says every thought needs to be brought into captivity. Needs to be brought under control.

Let's go to 1 Peter chapter 1. And you'll see that Peter takes up the same theme. This is not just Paul's idea. 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 13.

Peter says, gird up the loins of your mind. Be sober and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now we touched on this again on the Sunday night when we spoke about the armor.

We have the last of the series on the armor of God tonight. But you remember one part of the armor was the belt. Having your waist girt about with truth.

What was the purpose of the belt? The purpose of the belt was to keep that flowing garment of the soldier under control. Remember, they didn't wear fatigues like our soldiers wear today. They had these robes that were loose things.

And if you didn't bring that thing under control, if you didn't tie it down, it would get in between your legs and it would trip you up. It would get in the way when you're fighting and there's this thing flowing and waving all over the show. So you need to tie it down and control it.

And so this is the language that Peter is using and he says, gird up the loins of your mind. So my mind has all these thoughts that are flapping about. Thoughts that are running around in my mind, going this way and going that.

And what are they doing? They get in the way. They trip us up. And they prevent us from doing what we should be doing.

And he says, no, what I need to do is I need to take my mind and I need to tie it down. I need to control it. In fact, that's something we need to do.

That's part of what we call being a disciple, a disciplined one. Is bringing my mind under control. Don't allow these thoughts of negativity or these thoughts of lust or these thoughts of anger and of vengeance and all of the millions of bad things that go through our minds.

Don't allow it to run around in your mind causing trouble. Find it. Tie it down.

Gird up the loins of your mind. And then he says, be sober. And the word be sober there has got nothing to do with not being drunk or under the influence.

What he is speaking here when he speaks about being sober, he says be clear headed. Be level headed. Think clearly.

Folks, as Christians we should be thinking clearly. And this is one of the problems is that the majority of Christians are muddled in their thinking. And that's why my warning earlier on about the purpose driven life.

Christians who drink up that sort of garbage that is fed to them are muddled in their thinking. They are not thinking clearly and saying is this clearly what the word of God teaches. He says don't be muddled in your thinking.

Don't be hazy in your understanding. Be sober. Be clear headed.

Think logically. And you can apply that to the things that we've been speaking about. When we speak about fears, people live with all sorts of phobias and fears.

Remember Asterix, the sky is going to fall on my head. But what is the truth? The truth will set us free. Paul speaks in Ephesians chapter 6 and he says we need to have on the belt of truth.

It's truth that controls these things. Many of us wake up in the middle of the night and we begin to worry about all the things that are going to go wrong. Tomorrow and the next week and you know what if this happens and what if that happens.

And what if I can't pay my bills and what if you know this problem and that problem. And these minds, these thoughts just run away with us. But no, he says I need to bring these thoughts under control.

And every one of us has different areas in which we are struggling. But that's where the spiritual war is. And I've said this before, we want to go out and fight with the devil out there and we want to do spiritual warfare on high places and all sorts of other things when we haven't even begun to win the war in our own minds.

We need to win at home before we can win out there. And if you haven't won the battle on your home territory, forget about winning the battle out there in the world. And so I need to bring those thoughts under control.

I need to bring those thoughts under captivity. I need to gird up the loins of my mind. I need to be sober in my thinking.

He says, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the coming of the Lord, at the revelation of Jesus Christ, meaning the coming of the Lord. Now, Peter is writing this letter to Christians who are facing persecution like never before under Nero. This was a terrible time in the history of the church.

And many Christians' hearts were failing them for fear. Many Christians were abandoning the faith. Many Christians were compromising with the world at this time.

And he says, don't allow Caesar, don't allow Rome to rattle you. You understand that term? Don't allow him to cause you to become unhinged, but think clearly because Jesus is coming again. In other words, it doesn't matter what happens in this world.

It doesn't matter what Caesar can do. It doesn't matter what Nero will do. And even if he nails a million of you to a million crosses, Jesus is coming again.

And that is the truth. And that is far more glorious and far more true and far more wonderful than anything that Caesar can do. Rest your hope fully upon the fact that Jesus is coming again.

And so the world wants to convince us that whatever it's going to do to us, whether that's good or bad, is forever. Nothing in this world is forever. Nothing that goes wrong in this world is forever.

Nothing that is enjoyable in this world is forever. Scripture speaks about the passing pleasures of sin. It's just for a short while.

But God's eternity is forever. You see, we've got to get our thinking right. We've got to see it from God's perspective.

And so be sober. Rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the coming of the Lord. And so, you know, we're talking about an area here which none of us can see.

I don't know what goes on in your mind, and neither does anybody else. And even the person who is closest to me, my wife, doesn't know what goes on in my mind. And you know, often in our minds lurk the deep, dark secrets and things that we spend our time fantasizing about, thinking about, wondering about.

And these thoughts go around and around. And we say, well, it doesn't matter, nobody knows. God knows.

And what's in the mind will come out in what you say and what you act. And we can't, and this is the problem, this is what most Christians try and do, is they try and change the outside. Now remember where we began in Romans chapter 12.

He says, don't be conformed, don't become on the outside like the world, but be transformed from the inside. And folks, it's no good putting on a Christian face and saying, well, praise God, I'm feeling good and, you know, the Lord's on the throne and, you know, wonderful, but deep down in my heart I'm living in fear and in despair and discouragement and despondency. Because it's going to come out in the way that you say it.

It's going to come out in the way that you live your life. And that's the problem, is that most Christians are trying to change the outside when in fact what God wants to do is change me from the inside. He wants to renew my mind.

And if my mind is right, my actions will be right. I will do the right things. I will act in the right way.

I will shun the wrong things. But it has to begin here. It's no good trying to change your habits.

It's no good trying to give up things that you're addicted to unless you begin to win the victory in the battle in your mind. And so Paul says, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. So there's the rule.

How do I know that my thoughts are right? If they're obedient to Christ. Because, you see, this is the problem, is that we have our own set of rules and we say, well, you know, I think that my thinking is not too bad in comparison to some other people. But that's not the question.

Is my thinking obedient to Christ? Am I thinking the way He wants me to think? That's a question we have to ask. And that's an audit you need to do. You need to do a check of your life and say, you know, the thoughts that have gone through my mind in the last 24 hours, is that what Jesus, is that how He wants me to be thinking? Is that if I brought every thought into control to be obedient to Christ? Or am I being obedient to what the world is wanting me to think? Or to what I want to think? Or even what the church wants me to think? I don't want anybody here to think, to say, well, you know, I think that's the way that the church wants me to think, and so I'll think the way the church... Don't think the way the church wants you to think.

Think the way Jesus wants you to think. And if a thought does not please Him, remember what would Jesus do? Far more important than what would Jesus do is, what would Jesus think? Would He be thinking this way? If not, let me take that thought and let me expel it. Let me throw it out.

Let me think of the ways that He would think. Let me value things the way He would value them. Let me see things from His perspective.

And I believe that in this lies the secret to victorious Christian living. But it's hard. It's easy to talk about them.

It's another thing to do it. And the only way you will do it is to take each thought as it comes into your mind and to bring it under control. Remember, friend or foe, when people come into the city, you want to see the identity of that person.

Is this a friend or is this an enemy? This is exactly what this country is doing right now. As you land at the airport, they want to see your passport or your identity document. If you're a friend, they'll let you in.

If you're an enemy, they send you back to where you came from. That's what I need to do with my thoughts as they come in. Is this a friendly thought? Is this what Christ would want me to be thinking? Let me let it into my mind.

Is this not what Christ wants me to be thinking? Let me send it back to where it came from. It has to begin at that level. And if we can begin to do that, I believe that we will live victorious and overcoming Christian lives.

Let's pray. Father, we talk about these things and they're easy to talk about. But, Lord, it's hard to do.

And maybe, Lord, it's easy to think about them when we're in the company of Christians and when we're here in the sanctuary. But, Lord, when we're out there in the world and when the world is having its impact on us and shouting at us from every angle, Lord, it's so easy just to go their way. Help us, Lord, to bring every thought under control.

Not to allow our minds to run away with us. Not to be disorganized in our thinking. But to be sober, to think the way you want us to think.

And so, Lord, help us just to struggle with these things and, Lord, to win the battle in our own hearts. Lord, that we may be victorious overcoming Christians. I believe that we can be, Lord, through your help.

But we need to be obedient to you. And so, Lord, help us to be obedient, even in our thinking. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Lord, as we go our different ways, we pray that you would go with us during the rest of this day. Put a guard over what we see and what we hear and what we think. Help us, Lord, to react and to respond in a godly way.

And so we pray that you'd be with us during the rest of this day. Bring us together again this evening. And give us a good meeting together tonight as we come again to worship you and to hear your word.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

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