

In order to make memorials to God for the victories he has given us, we must first be able to see the victories. The problem that many of us face is the problem of vision, which in turn is a problem of thinking. We have problems seeing the victories God has given us because we are not thinking correctly about our God, our world, and ourselves. Throughout the next week we will focus on developing a mindset that allows us to take joy in all the victories God provides.

## Day 1

### Your Thoughts Matter

Most of us don't think about thinking enough. It can seem like our thoughts are a given, that they just exist and therefore we don't really analyze them or understand the power they have. Even though we are thinking all the time, little thinking is done about thinking, about understanding the role thinking plays in how our lives and all of human history unfolds. The reality is that thoughts matter. In fact, nothing determines the outcome of your life more than your thoughts. Research suggests that 75-90% of all mental and physical health problems are related to our habitual ways of thinking. Our thoughts determine our emotional state, and our emotional state has a profound effect on our physiological state which over time determines much of our overall state of health. Not only that, but our habitual ways of thinking also change the physiology of the brain itself, making it easier to continue in the patterns of thinking you have previously established. To make progress, we must understand the vital importance in aligning our thinking with God's truth.

Verses: Romans 12:2; Philippians 4:4-9; Isaiah 26:1-4; Ephesians 4:20-24

Prayer Topics: Mind, Thinking, Truth, Trust, Joy

## Day 2

### The Power of Choosing Wisely

It may not have occurred to us just how powerful our thoughts are, but not only our lives but the course of nations and empires are determined by the thoughts of humans being shared with one another through culture. If indeed it is true that our culture's future, our future, and even our health are largely determined by our thoughts, it would be great if we could do something about it. The problem is that many of us are too passive. We see our thoughts as something that happens to us vs. something we choose. The reality is, however, even though your pattern of thinking was largely determined early in your life by your culture and your parents, you have the power to choose how you think. The brain changes based on how we think, making our old pattern of thinking so easy and natural to us that it doesn't feel like something we choose but simply something that happens. But we choose what we will think, we choose what we dwell on, and we choose how we think about how we think. Brain imaging shows that when people are depressed or thinking negatively, that whole area of their brains are dark, almost like they are turned off. Positive, hopeful thinking, however, lights up the whole brain. If you want to change your mindset, you must first understand that you can choose to change it. You can first choose how you think about your mindset. You can recognize that it is unproductive and unworthy of the truth of God and what he has done for us, and choose to think differently about how your life is.

Verses: Deuteronomy 30:19-20; Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21

Prayer Topics: Choosing, Fortitude, Truth, Mental Toughness, Hope, Joy

## Day 3

Tag: Thinking About Identity

Hello, my name is... How many of us like to wear name tags? I suspect most of us do not. There is something about wearing a name tag that seems very reductionist in a way that telling someone your name doesn't. So, here is your chance to let us know who you really are. Finish the sentence, "I am ..."

Who are you? This is an important question when considering our thinking, because when you think about yourself you give yourself an identity. This is somewhat terrifying because we think about ourselves a lot, and all of that thinking is creating our identity, and we act in the world out of who we think we are. We not only act out of who we think we are, but we think out of who we think we are. We really cannot hope to make progress on our mindset without addressing how we think about ourselves. Are your thoughts about yourself positive? Overly so? Negative? The bible has a lot to say about our identity, and the more our thoughts about ourselves are informed by the truth of God's word, the more we can have a mindset that celebrates the victories that God has given us. The bible states that we were made to be prophets, priests, and kings, but through sin we have fallen. Scripture tells us that there was nothing that we could do to save ourselves, but that Christ saved us through his death on the cross, and that in Him we can be restored to the identity we were created to have. We can now think of ourselves soberly, relying on the gift of grace instead of hopelessness or naïve, false boasting.

Verses: Genesis 1:27; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:9; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:10

Prayer Topics: Love, Grace, God the Father, Redemption, Sonship, Identity

Day 4

Joyful Service

The parable of the talents is a story about having the wrong mindset. Two servants were given sums to invest by their master and successfully made those sums fruitful. Those successful servants then entered their master's joy. The third servant, however, was fearful. His fear came, according to the story, because he believed his master was a hard man. The kind of hard man that would expect a servant to do something he was not capable of doing. The kind of hard man that would set someone up for failure. The kind of hard man that gives herculean tasks and has expectations that are not reasonable. When we accept our identity and that we were equipped for good works, we will sometimes be tempted to see these good works as onerous, difficult, or un-rewarding. However, the parable of the talents shows that this is faulty thinking. The successful servants are indeed rewarded, and far from being onerous, they enter their master's joy. I believe this is the joy of being fruitful in good works. They experience it as a result of being fruitful. The response of the master also shows that this service was not difficult, that the unsuccessful servant could have just deposited his investment at the bank. The problem with the unsuccessful servant was, therefore, a problem of incorrect thinking. He did not trust the master, or see the glory of his identity as a servant. When God commands, he also equips. Our change of mindset is dependent on these truths.

Verses: Matthew 25:14-30, 1 Peter 4:9-11; Galatians 5:13; Mark 10:45; Colossians 3:23-24

Prayer Topics: Trust, Faith, Joy, Service, Wisdom, Spiritual Insight

Day 5

Having a Plan

We have spent time this week thinking about who we are and what we do. Now it's time to make a plan. Identify some negative, Ungodly, or untrue thoughts that have been plaguing you. We need to replace those thoughts with truth, so make a plan to do that. What is the thought or thoughts you want to address first? Which will make the biggest impact on your life? Where or in what circumstances do

you most often think these thoughts? What kind of reminder could you make to address them? What truth will you replace the thoughts with? How will you remind yourself of this truth? Repetition is the key to changing your thoughts. Once the new pattern of thinking is established, another thought can be tackled. What is the next step to keep the plan on track? Have you ended by celebrating your wins?

Verses: Galatians 6:9; Luke 11:9-10, Luke 18:1-8; Psalm 37:4; Proverbs 16:1-4

Prayer Topics: Plans, Perseverance, Persistence, Hope, Joy, Celebration