

SPIRITUAL HEALTH CHECKUP: Mental Health
 You Are What You Think
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In 1940, outside of Nashville, Tennessee a little girl was born – she was the 20th of 22 children born to a Christian family. She was born prematurely and suffered many illnesses over the next few years. Her parents were told she would never walk, at least not without braces.

One day she asked her mother if she would ever be able to run and play like the other children. Her mother told her you have to believe and trust in God because with God all things are possible. She took this advice to heart and began to believe that God could make her walk without braces. She set her mind on this and began to have her brothers and sisters help her practice walking without her braces and without her parents knowing it. On her 12th birthday, she surprised her parents by removing her braces and walking around the doctor's office unassisted. She never wore the braces again.

She then decided if she could walk, she could play basketball. Once again she set her mind on thinking and believing that it was possible with God's help. So she tried out. The coach selected her older sister. However, her father told the coach that if he wanted one daughter, he had to take both. So he reluctantly did.

One day the girl told the coach that if he would give her an extra 10 minutes of coaching a day, she would in return give him a world-class athlete. He laughed, she was serious. So he did. Soon she was one of his best players and her team went on to win the state basketball championships.

One of the referees at the tournament, who just happened to also be the coach of the internationally famous Tiger Belles track club, noticed her and asked if she had ever run track. Of course she hadn't. He encouraged her to try it and she did.

She began winning all kinds of races. At age 16 she went to the Olympics in Australia and won a bronze medal for anchoring the 400-meter relay team. Four years later she went to the Olympics in Rome and there Wilma Rudolph became the first American woman to win 3 gold medals- the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash, and she anchored the winning 400-meter relay team- all in world-record times. All because a little crippled girl believed that with God all things are possible and that is what she set her mind to thinking.

Our thoughts are so important aren't they? Our thoughts can help us or they can hurt us. Our thoughts affect our health, our moods, and our personal relationships.

In fact, our thoughts affect every area of our life. If you want to change your life, you must change your thoughts. Change must begin on the inside before you will ever see it on the outside.

Proverbs 23:7 tells us that as a man thinks in his heart, so he is.

Paraphrased that might be

Where the mind goes – the man follows.

Today I want to talk about our mental health; our minds, our thought lives.
Just as the old saying, “You are what you eat,” is true.

So too, “You are what you think.”

Wilma Rudolph definitely proved that fact didn’t she!

Advertisers know this concept well; in fact they bank on it.

Ever watch a television show and see a commercial for something to eat?

You weren’t even hungry but all of a sudden now you want to eat.

If you sit here today and have your mind on eating a candy bar –

And you keep thinking about that candy bar – well let’s just say it is a Reese Cup
because who doesn’t want a Reese Cup.

you would go get one even if you know you shouldn’t
Think on it long enough and you will go get it.

Well, the same principle works in every area of our life

Where the mind goes - the man follows.

One of the greatest revelations that any of us can have is to find out that we can do
something about our thoughts.

We can choose what we want to think about, because you and I can actually think things
on purpose.

Turn with me to Romans 8:5-11 pg_____.

Paul, the follower of Christ who wrote Romans, knew very well that there is great tension
in daily Christian life.

The conflict is that we agree with God’s commands, with how the Bible tells us to live
and act and think.

But we fail to do it time and time again and so we are painfully aware of our sin.

You see Jesus died so that we could have life and not just life but life abundant,
overflowing, full of blessing.

The devil seeks to steal it away from us and he starts by filling our minds with his
thoughts.

Look with me at Romans starting with verse 5

The Bible talks about two mind-sets.

Sinful mind – which is the mind controlled by Satan –
the father of lies.

Spiritual mind – which is the mind controlled by God.

Our minds become a battlefield because whoever controls our minds; controls our lives.

If Satan dominates your thoughts, he will dominate your life.

If God dominates your thoughts, he will dominate your life.

When a person is determined to do something or to hold a certain belief or idea, we say
that person has a certain mind-set.

A mind-set:

- Determines how a person acts.
- Motivates a person
- Influences whom or what a person chooses as sources of knowledge and authority

- Affects a person's view on every experience
- Shapes a person's value system
- Dominates a person's private or inner and public or outer life.

Paul tells us in these verses that if you have a **sinful mind-set**; consciously and unconsciously life will be oriented toward:

Death – hostility toward God – rebellion – resistance to any form of submission - actions and attitudes that will not please God.

However if you have a **spiritual mind-set**; consciously or unconsciously life will be oriented toward:

Life and peace – friendship with God – obedience to the Spirit's influence – guidance by the Holy Spirit – love for God and neighbor – knowing and following the words of Christ.

So how do we have that spiritual mind-set instead of the sinful one?

Well quite honestly, apart from the Holy Spirit's power in our life, we can't.

Before you became a Christian, you were separated from God, ignorant of His ways and determined to live life by your own resources and natural abilities.

You were living life in the flesh or sinful nature.

When you accepted Christ as your Saviour, Redeemer, and Lord, you became a new person.

And the Bible tells us that the moment we accept Christ we have the Holy Spirit in our life.

Here is the problem:

No one hit the CLEAR button in your mind.

So although your new self desires to live dependently on God and follow his plan for your life, your sinful nature persists in wanting to live the way it always did.

Paul tells us in Romans 7, "I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate."

There is a battle going on in your mind between your sinful and spiritual mind-set.

And the world doesn't help out.

The world continually influences us to live by our own resources, our own independent means, our own strength.

Mass media and the worldly environment are dominated by the sinful mind-set.

That is because the god of the world – Satan – has opposed the Word of God since the Garden of Eden.

You see our spiritual mind-set tells us - believe and you will see.

The sinful mind-set, the worldly or fleshly mind-set tells us - see and then believe.

If you are a Christian, Satan has declared war on you...your family...your marriage...your faith...your church...your Christian life.

And friends he is good at it.

After all he has been doing it for thousands of years.

He's experienced, he's had millions of battles -
you are NOT his first.

The strength of the spiritual mind-set is determined by your personal conviction that God's way is always right and by how committed you are to believing Him.
 The strength of the sinful mind-set is determined by the amount of time and energy you invest in entertaining thoughts that are contrary to God's Word.

For example:

God's plan is that marriage be a monogamous lifetime commitment.

Sadly both Kevin and I when we met had been divorced.

So when we married we determined and set our minds to the fact that our marriage was going to be forever because that is what God wants and that was what we wanted as well. However, after we were married I discovered that Kevin had a couple of flaws.

Well let's just say that he had three flaws.

Now if I would have thought and thought and thought on those flaws, my sinful nature would have come up with reasons why they should irritate me and perhaps even led me to think about divorce.

Ever notice that what you meditate on you seem to magnify in your mind.

And where the mind goes the man will follow.

So, I took those thoughts captive each time they would appear and I would simply tell myself – this marriage is for life and divorce is not an option so let's see what we can work out.

I would then think of all the things that Kevin did and does that I love.

You see you can't just get rid of a thought, you need to replace it with a good thought, a Godly thought.

Now one of the reasons that worked so well for me is because I am pretty sure that soon after we married Kevin discovered that I had a flaw or two myself and he had to set his mind to thinking of other ways to deal with those thoughts so they didn't dominate his thinking.

You see we all are tempted to go down that slippery slope of sinful nature.

That is why one of my life verses found in Proverbs 3:5-6 is – "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

Oh my understanding can be so messed up without the help of the Holy Spirit.

"In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths."

Here is the good news:

God has provided all you need to win the battle for your mind.

In Romans 12:2, the Bible tells us to renew our mind.

Because - All thoughts and actions begin in the mind!

You are what you think!

Now renewing our mind is a continual process. To renew something and to keep it renewed is a constant, ongoing process.

It is like buying a new house. If you never do anything to keep it up, it won't be long before it is a pile of junk.

Well, the mind is the same way.

We can't just think something right one time and expect our mind to stay in good shape. You wouldn't go to the gym one time- work out and expect to be able to run a marathon. It is a continual process.

In Romans 12:2, it states we are to not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but to be transformed completely, by the renewing of our mind!

You and I can learn to how to think right if that's what we want.

But we are going to have to do our part.

Norman Vincent Peale, minister and author of the Power of Positive Thinking said:

“To change your thought pattern, you need God's help. But He also needs yours. It has to be a cooperative effort between you and God. When you and I are willing to help God change us, then He will.”

So here are some suggestions to help develop an intentional Spiritual Mental Health Workout:

Take charge of your thoughts.

Philippians 4:8 tells us to, “Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Think on purpose.

You and I can't just hope that we think good thoughts.

We have to learn the truth from God's word, Life groups, fellowship with other Christians, hearing the word preached and whenever we think something that does not line up with God's truth, we will recognize it as a lie from Satan and realize that we need to stop thinking about it.

Of course you can't just cast the thought aside and leave your mind empty; you need to replace the thought with a right thought.

I understand that is easier said than done, but that is why we need God's help and God needs our help.

Let go of negative thoughts

Have you noticed that the battle for your mind begins before you even get up in the morning?

The way your day starts is often the way your whole day goes.

Satan know this and that is why Satan tries to start your day off with a bad attitude

Let me suggest to you that as you lie in bed before you get up:

imagine a tablet and write 10 things on it that you are thankful for.

If you do this I guarantee you that - Your whole day will change.

In fact I believe you will totally change your life if you do this every day.

Remember: All thoughts and actions begin in the mind!

Feed your mind: fill your mind full of God.

If you are going to defeat Satan's lies then you are going to have to know God's truths. The more you are in God's Word the more the Word of God is in you.

Use affirmations.

I have to admit this one took some practice on my part.

Here is how I really learned the value of this one.

When mom died, I was finding it hard to find joy in my life.

Yet I knew from God's Word that the truth is God wants me to have joy.

So I found several verses such as the Joy of the Lord is my Strength and

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete and many more.

Each day I would say God's truth in a simple affirmation

– My life is full of joy because I am full of the joy of the Lord.

I would repeat these Bible verses.

And I noticed that my joy was coming back to me even though I still missed mom.

As my joy returned I also realized that as much as mom loved me, she would not want me to be sad but would want my life to be joyful.

It took time and a continual renewing of my mind but Satan lost the battle.

PRAY

Pray a great deal and always let your prayers take the form of thanksgiving.

Often when I am worrying about something, I realize Satan is trying to win the battle for my mind and so instead of worrying, I pray about the matter.

Many times when I am thinking something unkind about a person or situation, I will pray and ask God to bless that person or situation.

It is hard to stay angry at someone whom you are praying for.

Quite honestly if you are praying, Satan is losing.

If you want to change your life, you must change your thoughts.

Change must always begin on the inside before you will ever see it on the outside.

Because where the mind goes the man follows.

Friends, there is a battle going on for your mind.

Satan is always in the battle and he never lets up or gives up.

You need to know it and you need to actively be in the battle.

YOUR MIND IS AT STAKE!

So:

Let the mind of the Master be the Master of your mind.