

A Lifestyle of Purity

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Introduction: Far more than women, men struggle with thought life. For the Christian man, the thought life can be especially frustrating because of the often sexually graphic or lustful images that seem to permeate our thinking, even when we don't want it to do so. Other times our thought life might not be sexually oriented, but reflecting anger or rage. Even in the midst of an innocent conversation with someone, evil thoughts might be presenting themselves in our brain. At times, these thoughts can be so distracting; it is difficult to concentrate even on talking. Let alone trying to concentrate on work, family, or just trying to go about your day!

As Christian men, is there anything that can be done to combat these evil thoughts? What about the often-paralyzing guilt that follows after we have allowed our minds to dwell on an evil thought? Is it realistic to experience victory and subsequent purity in our thought life?

Scripture is not silent about the thought life. In fact, the Bible talks extensively about righteous thinking and the mind. There is no "instant deliverance" from a thought life ravaged by carnal images. However, there is help available!

I. Foundations:

A. Understand That You Are Not Alone

- Satan enjoys separating Christians and heaping guilt and loneliness upon them.
- When Solomon says in Ecc. 1:9 that there is "*nothing new under the sun,*" he was right.
- The fact is that ALL men struggle with their thought life. It is not a problem unique to you!
- This can offer you encouragement that Jesus, Paul, and Billy Graham had to deal with their thought life. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

B. Where These Thoughts Come From and Other Things

- Evil thoughts come from different places but have one common source. They are placed in your mind either by the evil one, or through your own sinful nature.
- The usual culprit is the flesh. It is the old axiom: Garbage In, Garbage Out. If you allow filth to come into your mind on a regular basis, do not be fooled into thinking that it does not have an affect on you! You must make a conscious effort to discipline yourself to avoid evil images such as graphically violent television and movies and sexually explicit images from magazines, television, movies, and the **Internet**.
- Other times, the thoughts come into your mind from seemingly out of nowhere. This could be demonic attacks or your flesh. The initial thought in and of itself is not a sin committed on your part. **IT JUST POPPED IN YOUR MIND!** The sin comes when you take the evil thought and dwell on it, how much time does it take to "dwell" on something? There is not an absolute rule here. However, you know when you take a thought captive to Christ and move on and when you decide to "dwell" on the evil thoughts for a while!
- Instead, memorize and meditate on Phil. 4:8, "*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely,*

whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”

C. There Is a Biblical Principle to Grasp for Healing

- 2 Cor. 10:5 says, *“We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”*
- The secret to victory in your thought life is taking every thought captive to Christ. However, how do you do that?

D. There MUST Be Regular Meditation On the Word of God

- By placing God’s Word on your heart and meditating on it with your mind, you can effectively combat evil thoughts. Here is how, memorize and meditate on Scripture! Refer back to verses like Josh. 1:8 and Ps. 119:11. Now are you beginning to see why The Navigators place so much emphasis on Scripture memory? It is not motivated out of legalism, but to HELP YOU EXPERIENCE VICTORY IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE!
- Meditation on Scripture is like spiritual sandpaper on your mind: It smoothes down rough edges and conforms them to Christlikeness!
- The meditation on God’s Word acts like a stream of water flowing over our mind and soul. Notice how the stones in a riverbed are smooth and rounded. Originally this was not the case, but over time, the flowing water picked up small particles of sand and transformed the rough stones into smooth ones. This is precisely what meditation on God’s Word will do in your life, if you give it time. (There are many comparisons in Scripture of God’s Word to flowing water, refer to Ps. 1 and Ezek. 47.)

E. Meditation On Scripture Is Not Enough

- For the Christian man in today’s world, accountability is as important as ever!
- You CANNOT achieve victory over your thought life on your own power or strength. Ecc. 4:9-12 and Prov. 27:17 are wonderful examples of this. Confess any past sins to God, and have a close friend (a male) ask you WEEKLY very specifically how your thought life has been. Your accountability partner will pray for you, and that will force you to deal with the problem on a regular basis.
- Memorize essential verses that deal with your specific area of struggle in your thought life (anger, sex, etc.). The Holy Spirit will use the memorization and meditation on that verse as a bulwark against sinning.

F. God Forgives

- Finally, always remember that God forgives. If you have been defeated by your thought life until now, ask God to forgive you of sins you committed there and build in your life some disciplines to protect your mind. Remember, it is with our head (mind) that we wear the Helmet of Salvation in Eph. 6:17. Satan knows that if he can cripple our minds through our thoughts or ideas, he has rendered us useless to the Christian faith!

Resources That Can Save Your Life

Covenant Eyes Internet Accountability Software – www.covenanteyes.com
First Stone Ministries – www.firststone.org

Discipleship Library – www.discipleshiplibrary.com (There are 64 messages available on the subject of **Purity**, and 164 on the subject of **Holiness**)

Samson and the Pirate Monks, Nate Larkin

Dangers Men Face, Jerry White

Growth Into Manhood, Alan Medinger

Every Man's Battle, Stephen Arterburn & Fred Stoeker

The Pursuit of Holiness, Jerry Bridges

The Practice of Godliness, Jerry Bridges

Returning to Holiness, Greg Frizzell

Humility: The Journey Toward Holiness, Andrew Murray

Desiring God, John Piper

Faithfulness and Holiness, J.I. Packer

The Knowledge of the Holy, A.W. Tozer

The Pathway of Holiness, John White

Aspects of Holiness, J.C. Ryle

Holiness: The False and the True, H.A. Ironside

