

SESSION 4

SEPTIC THOUGHTS

Overcoming Our False Beliefs

It is amazing how often people think they are the victim of whatever thoughts happen to be running through their heads. It is as if they are passive spectators watching thought run across the screen, with no control over what is on it. However, there is a fundamental battle in the spiritual life being waged by the Evil One over the nature of the thoughts that run through your mind. The ultimate freedom that you have that no one can take away even in a concentration camp, is the freedom to decide what your mind will dwell on.

John Ortberg, *The Me I Want To Be*

GROUP DISCUSSION A key part of getting to know God better is sharing your journey with others.

Briefly check in with each other about your experiences since the last session ...or as a result of the last session. For example:

- What insights did you discover in your personal study or in the chapter you read from the Soul Detox book?
- How did the last session impact your daily life or your relationship with God?
- What questions would you like to ask the other members of your group?

VIDEO NOTES SEPTIC THOUGHTS. As you watch, use the outline below to follow along or to take notes on anything that stands out to you.

NOTES

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7 NKJV)

The thought really does count, because what you think determines what you become.

“Carefully guard your thought because they are the source of true life” (Proverbs 4:23 CEV)

“We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

Four Categories of toxic thoughts:

- 1. Negative thoughts (pessimism)**
- 2. Fearful thoughts (anxiety)**
- 3. Discontented thoughts (bitterness)**
- 4. Critical thoughts (criticism)**

You will always find what you’re looking for.

We must renew our thoughts.

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7)

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things” (Philippians 4:8)

Don’t think about what you can’t do; think about what God’s Word says you can do.

WHEN YOU THINK ...	REPLACE IT WITH ...
<i>I don't have what it takes</i>	I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength (Philippians 4:13)
<i>I'm never going to get over this</i>	I am an overcomer by the blood of the Lamb and by the words of my testimony (Revelation 12:11)
<i>I'm never going to have a great life.</i>	God knew me before I was born; He has plans to bless me, to prosper me, and to use me (Psalm 139:16; Jeremiah 29:11)
<i>I can't make a difference in this world.</i>	God is working in all things to bring about good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28)

“Don’t conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2)

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4)

“Yet you know Me, LORD; You see me and test my thoughts about You. Drag them off like sheep to be butchered! Set them apart for the day of slaughter!” (Jeremiah 12:3)

GROUP DISCUSSION Let’s talk about what we just watched.

1. What part of the teaching had the most impact on you

DISTORTED THINKING

2. What thoughts or emotions came to mind as you watched people writing their toxic thoughts on the walls at the beginning of the video?

3. Like toxic words, toxic thoughts distort the truth of who God made you to be. For example:

I’ll never overcome this issue/failure/addiction. Why try?

I am loved because of my achievements. No achievements, no love.

My security depends on having the right financial portfolio.

If I do everything perfectly from now on, I can make up for my past mistakes.

I hate myself. How could anyone else love me?

Everything in my life would be better if I were more attractive.

I could accomplish great things if only I had his money, her talents, or their smarts.

If I am careful and don’t take any risks, nothing bad will happen to me and I will be happy.

- When you consider your struggles or insecurities, how would you describe the toxic thoughts (s) behind them?
- Briefly describe a recent situation that illustrates how this thought has impacted you (for example: your outlook, behavior, decisions, or how you relate to God and others.)

ROGUE THOUGHTS, CAPTIVE THOUGHTS

4. Just like a yellow traffic light is sure indication that a red light is coming, our thoughts are sure indication of where our lives are going. If our minds are dominated by rogue thoughts, our lives will become increasingly negative and disconnected from God. The apostle Paul uses strong language in describing how to address this concern:

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 (2 Corinthians 10:5)

For a fresh perspective on this verse, read it again from *The Message Bible*:

We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5 MSG)

- For some, this familiar verse raises the discouraging prospect of “thought police” and previous failed efforts to “try really hard” *not* to think certain thoughts. How do the analogies – of taking thoughts captive, making them obedient, fitting them into a structure – challenge rather than reinforce this perspective?
- In practical terms, how would you describe what it means to fit loose thoughts into the structure of life shaped by Christ?
- Recall the toxic thought you identified in response to question 3 (on page 3). What thoughts or emotions are you aware of when you think about making this thought obedient to Christ?

MIND MAKEOVER

5. The apostle Paul describes a supernatural antidote to the poison of toxic thoughts:

Do not conform to the patten of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2)

The Greek word translated as “renewing” is *anakainosis* (an-ak-ah’-ee-no-sis), which means “to restore, to renovate, to make better than new.” Paul uses this same word to describe the transformation that happens when we surrender our lives to Christ:

He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior (Titus 3:5, emphasis added).

- Take a moment to recall your first renewal – the process and events that led to your salvation and the changes you experienced when you gave your life to Christ. Briefly describe what stands out most to you about that experience.

- How might the renewal process you experienced in salvation help you to understand what it means to experience an ongoing renewal of your mind and thoughts now?

6. At this point, touch base with each other about how you're doing in the group. Use one of the sentence starters below, or your own statement, to help the group learn more about the best way to companion you.

I want to give you permission to challenge me more about ...

An area where I really need your help or sensitivity is ...

It always helps me to feel more connected to the group when ...

Something I've learned about myself because of this group is ...

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY: What I Want To Remember

Complete this activity on your own.

1. Briefly review the outline and any notes you took.
2. In the space below, write down the most significant thing you gained in this session – from the teaching, activities, or discussion.

What I want to remember from this session ...