

“Oh My God, Change Me!” – Part 2

(The Battle of the Mind)

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:2-3)

When we first come to Christ, so many things happen in our life instantaneously. We are forgiven. We are immediately born into God’s family and become God’s children. Our names are written in the Book of Life. Jesus becomes a “*friend that sticketh closer than a brother*” (Proverbs 18:24). All these things happen in a moment. What takes time is the process that occurs when we begin to “*work out*” (Philippians 2:12) our own salvation by allowing God to work within us. The Holy Spirit begins to form the character of Christ in us. As we surrender to His workings and choose to follow Jesus, God speaks His Word into our lives and His purpose is to undo a lot of the “junk” that had filled us over a period of time. He transforms us from “*glory to glory*” (2 Corinthians 3:18) into Christ-likeness. The God that produces the metamorphosis of an ugly caterpillar into a majestic butterfly, is the same God that will do a glorious work of transformation in our lives as well. The key for this to take place is that we need to long for and be desperate for this change!

To cooperate with God’s work of transformation in our lives, we need to understand the **battle of the mind**. There is a severe battle being waged for our minds. The enemy understands that if he can get into our thinking process, if he can sow some seeds into our thought life, then he will have a greater opportunity cause us to go the wrong way. Satan will do everything possible to hinder this glorious work of transformation that God wants to bring about in our lives.

2 Corinthians 11 reveals how, right in the very garden of Eden, the serpent sowed seeds into Eve’s thinking process. First of all, he managed to get her to look at the forbidden fruit. At that point, the enemy was then able to speak to her. The desire for those things began to get into her mind. Before long, Eve ended up completely disobeying God. These thoughts had gotten inside her mind, and she was not diligent to remove them. It brought ruin to her life, to her husband, Adam’s life, and consequently all of mankind!

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The god of this world (Satan) blinds the minds of the unbelieving. It is amazing how we can clearly speak the Gospel to someone, but they are totally blinded to it and the message just goes in one ear and out the other. The devil can do this with an unbeliever, and sadly, and he can do the same with believers in order to rob them of the great things that God has for them.

Over the years, we see how the enemy has done this with many truths of God’s Word. It happened when Jesus came into the world. It was the Pharisees, the most religious sect of Jews, that rose up in opposition against Jesus. Down through the ages, every time that God begins to do something new, there are those, including God’s own people, who rise up against it. The old always seems to persecute the new. Opposition arose against the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the early part of the 1900’s. About thirty years ago, when God began to set believers free from demons and demonic oppression, many in the church began to speak out against this also. We need to be very careful. We must be on guard because, like this, the enemy can use other people (even God’s own children who are unaware of it) to keep us from entering into new dimensions of God’s purpose.

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).*

This is God’s work of “renovation”. When we come to Jesus Christ, there is a serious renovation that needs to take place inside our mind. In order for us to cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s work of renovation in our life and in our mind, we want to look at **three important points**.

1. PASSION FOR PURITY

The **first point** that needs to be made is that we must have **a passion for purity**. Our thought life is vital to our relationship with God. We cannot expect to have a victorious thought life if we allow our minds to dwell in the gutter where the devil can spew out all kinds of vomit upon us.

In this day and age, one area which the enemy is using to pollute the minds of men, women, and young people is in the area of pornography. To our shame, it is a multi-billion dollar industry in this country! Some of the biggest corporations in our country have become embedded with this filth! It is a plan from the pit of hell. It is like a drug. A person can become totally addicted to it. When a person first gives room to pornography in any of its shapes and forms, that monster will put its tentacles

into that person's mind and life and it will ruin them completely. Because of how it is ravaging the society in which we live in today, we cannot be complacent about this. We must radically and determinedly stand up against it as individuals and as a church and say: "I will not allow this in my house!"

As Christians, if we allow any type of pornography into our lives, it will destroy our relationship with God. We will not have faith to walk with God as we should. We will not be the priest of our home as God has called us to be, and the enemy will work his way into our family and bring ruin and destruction. With a vengeance we must drive this thing out our life, our house, and wherever it may be trying to stick up its ugly head.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 55:7-8).

God is very much concerned about our thought life, because it is the direction that our feet will take. The Bible says that we are to have the mind of Christ. The way that God thinks – His thought-life – is His Word, the Bible. As we apply God's Word to our way of thinking, our life will begin to line up with the Word of God. We can see God's concern about maintaining holiness of mind **continually** when we turn to the Old Testament and glance at the garments that the priests had to wear:

*"And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre ["turban" in the New International Version]; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. It will be on Aaron's forehead . . . **It will be on Aaron's forehead continually** so that they will be acceptable to the Lord." (Exodus 28:36-38)*

Proverbs 5:1-18 speaks out very clearly against the dangers of pornography and immoral behavior. The New Living Translation brings out these thoughts very clearly. *[Please note that the blue bracketed portions are comments that we are adding to personalize the Scripture.]*

"My son [or daughter], pay attention to my wisdom; listen carefully to my wise counsel. Then you will show discernment, and your lips will express what you've learned. For the lips of an immoral woman [or man] are as sweet as honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But in the end she is as bitter as poison, as dangerous as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. For she cares nothing about the path to life. She staggers down a crooked trail and doesn't realize it. So now, my sons, listen to me. **Never stray from what I am about to say: Stay away from her! Don't go near the door of her house!** [or his/her internet website!] If you do, you will lose your honor and will lose to merciless people all you have achieved. Strangers will consume your wealth, and someone else will enjoy the fruit of your labor. In the end you will groan in anguish when disease consumes your body. You will say, "How I hated discipline! If only I had not ignored all the warnings! Oh, why didn't I listen to my teachers? Why didn't I pay attention to my instructors? **[Wouldn't it be awesome if they would read this in the public schools, or if they would pass out this Scripture portion rather than passing out other things to prevent the painful consequences of immoral behavior!]** I have come to the brink of utter ruin, and now I must face public disgrace." Drink water from your own well — share your love only with your wife. Why spill the water of your springs in the streets, having sex with just anyone? You should reserve it for yourselves. Never share it with strangers. Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth."

2. DON'T ALLOW YOUR PAST TO DESTROY YOUR FUTURE

The **second point** that needs to be made deals with a general problem we all face as imperfect humans living in an imperfect world. We often allow our minds to dwell on past failures, past trials, or past offenses. Offenses will come!

"He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come . . ." (Luke 17:1)

This world is filled with imperfections. It is impossible to live without being offended by someone or some situation, but we cannot allow these offenses to become strongholds of bitterness and unforgiveness in our minds. Let's watch over our thoughts. When something happens that offends us, let's bring it quickly to the Cross. Remember that unforgiveness will not hurt the other person, but it will hurt us if we keep it inside of us! We must not allow any past situation to destroy our future! By doing this, our mind will eventually become a prisoner to bitterness and unforgiveness. Realizing this area of human weakness, we should make it our goal to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ! The Bible says:

*"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).*

3. HAVE THE RIGHT CONCEPT OF OURSELVES: *LET'S SEE OURSELVES THE WAY GOD SEES US!*

Since we were born into this world, Satan has continually been scheming to get us to see ourselves as less than how God has created us: “*in His image and likeness*”. He has used people to speak negative things into our minds and lives: “You’re just like your father.” “You’ll never amount to anything.” “You’re a failure . . .” He knows that if he can sow these negative concepts into our minds and they begin to take root, then we won’t be able to succeed or proceed to the higher dimension of life to which God has called us. This then is the **third point** we want to emphasize: We must have the **right concept of ourselves**.

We see this clearly in the Old Testament story of how the Israelites failed to enter into the Promised Land because of their unbelief. In Numbers 13:33, notice what the doubting Israelites confessed about how they saw themselves:

“And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”

The way we see ourselves will be the way that other people see us. If we look at ourselves and all we see is a failure, then others will perceive us in the same way. The image we have about ourselves must be the same image that God has of us! We are not losers, we are more than conquerors! We are not failures, we are children of the King of kings! We must violently extract from our mind of all such negative images of ourselves.

One problem area that affects many people today is what we refer to as the “victim-mentality”. It doesn’t matter how much money they have, or even how much education they may have achieved, “victim-minded” people live their lives as if they are victims of circumstances. They feel that the world and everyone it will always owe them something. With this mentality, they blame everything that happens in their lives on someone else and they never learn to take responsibility for their own life.

This destructive “victim-mentality” must be transformed into a “conqueror-mentality”. “*We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!*” (Romans 8:37) The person with this attitude of a “victim” never has enough, but for those with the “conqueror-mentality”, even the little that they have is more than enough! A “victim-minded” person is only selfishly looking out for himself: “What are you going to do for me? What benefit can I get out of this?” The “conqueror-minded” child of God is always going to be thinking: “What can I do for someone else?”

When we rid our mind of this “victim-mentality”, only then can we begin to clearly see that God wants to do something awesome in our lives. He has great plans and purposes for us. We must not allow the enemy to hinder this, or we, too, like the Israelites, will find ourselves coming up short of God’s promise.

We are on the frontier of a fresh move of God here in Gulf Meadows Church. We are going to see some awesome leaders raised up out of this very congregation. These leaders are going to do great and mighty things for the Lord. As we permit the Holy Spirit to work out this mighty transformation in our lives, God can then begin to widen our horizons. We start to see ourselves as God sees us. When Peter saw the miracle of that great catch of fish, he began saying, “Lord, depart from me, I’m a sinful man.” Jesus reassured Peter, saying, “Don’t be afraid.” Then Jesus spoke into Peter’s life the correct image that God had for him: “I will make you a fisher of men” (see Luke 5:1-10).

We cannot allow the enemy to sow junk into our mind. We must take great care over the things which we see, the things that we hear, the friends that we have – in fact, every area of our life! As they say concerning computer programing: “Garbage in, garbage out.” We must keep depositing “good stuff” into the computer of our brain so that we can fulfill all that God has for us.

In Joshua 1:8, God gave Joshua the key for success in this battlefield of our mind. The previous generation of the Israelites had failed God’s purpose. They had allowed the enemy to use the impossible situation they were in to sow corrupt seeds of the wrong image of themselves. They could only see themselves as grasshoppers. Consequently, they failed to enter into the very land that God had promised them. Now Joshua was commissioned to take this new generation of Israelites into the promised land, and it is here in this Scripture that God gives Joshua the secret for achieving and maintaining the victory and success that God purposes for all of His children:

*“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt **meditate therein day and night**, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”*

We believe in prosperity. We believe in success. God has promised it to us, but this promise is totally based upon our relationship with Jesus Christ and maintained by this daily transformation that we allow God to perform in our lives. Let’s come before the Lord and make this our prayer: “Lord, we want You to rule and reign in and over our thought life. We want You to be glorified on the inside of our lives as well as on the outside. Lord, we will obey Your Word to Joshua. We will take Your Word and meditate therein day and night. We choose to apply it to our thoughts. Thank You, Lord, for this daily renovation that You will accomplish and cause to prosper in our lives!”