

## The Key to Freedom

Last week we talked about **Freedom From Bondage** and identified some things that keep us from living the life God has called us to. We surrendered those to the Lord and talked about some practical ways we can overcome those bondages. Today I want to zero in on the one thing that is absolutely crucial to our freedom from bondage; the key to unlocking the chains that bind us... TRUTH.

### John 8:31-32

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. **32** Then you will know the truth, and the **truth will set you free.**"

**Truth = a thing as it really is, not as it is concealed or falsified;** "genuine reality" in antithesis to appearance.

Alethia (a-lay'-thi-a) – "not concealed or hidden." It's the opposite of Lethe (lay'-thay') – "forgetfulness." We get our English derivative, Lethargy – "the quality or state of being lazy, sluggish, or indifferent," from this word. And Lethe comes from the root word Lanthano (lawn-thaw'-nō) – "to escape notice." We get our English derivative, Latent – "present and capable of emerging or developing but not now visible, obvious, or active," from this word.

Sometimes we forget the truth because we have been indifferent or lazy when it comes to knowing God's word. **John 17:17** says, "**your word is truth.**" When we aren't diligent about studying God's word, we lose sight of the truth and it begins to shape our way of thinking to be contrary to what is really true. The truth is right there but we miss it because we're focused on the wrong things.

So, we need to know God's word because it is the truth. And truth brings freedom. We are held captive and in bondage when we ignore the truth and hold on to the lies of the enemy. He messes with our minds, planting seeds of doubt and discouragement contrary to the truth. Those thoughts keep us in bondage. But the Scripture actually tells us that we can be free and we can hold those thoughts in captivity instead.

### 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **5** 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.

Our thinking does not control us – we control it! We are responsible for choosing what we think about and to make sure that it always lines up with the Word of God. We cannot

blame anyone else if we have chosen with our own free wills to constantly dwell on the lies of the enemy or the negative side of this life. What you choose to think about and dwell on in this life can make or break you.

**Proverbs 23:7** says, *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.*

### **You Are What You Think**

The people who always seem to be more happy, upbeat, and fulfilled with their lives are the people who are always thinking about and dwelling on the more positive things in this life. They choose, with their own free wills, to think this way. The people who are not happy and fulfilled, who are always pessimistic with negative attitudes towards everything, are all choosing to think that way. No matter what good may come their way, they always think that something better should have come their way. As a result of all of this negative thinking nothing ever makes them happy or content because nothing is ever good enough for them. This is why gratitude is so important!

**We need to renew our minds. Romans 12:2** (NLT) says, *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but **let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.***

**Ephesians 4:22-23** (NLT) says, *throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. **23** Instead, **let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.***

Our job is to work closely with the Holy Spirit as he targets specific areas in our thinking where we are really off base. It will be up to you to choose to work with Him to get that particular area cleaned up. If He tells you that you are too judgmental or too critical of others; if he tells you your thoughts are lustful or greedy or prideful, then your part will be to do the best you can to capture and cast down those types of destructive thoughts and replace them with more godly thoughts.

Here are some truths from God's word that are helpful...

### **1 Corinthians 2:16 - We have the mind of Christ**

As a result of having the Holy Spirit residing on the inside of us – we now have direct access to Jesus. As a result of having this direct access to Jesus through the Holy Spirit – we now have His mind; we can now have His mind operating through us. You don't have to do this in your own strength because you have the mind of Christ which is able to do it.

**We have a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7** says, *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

**Our thoughts will be established by God. Proverbs 16:3 (NKJV) says, *Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.***

Bottom line – we can decide what we want to think about in the privacy of our own minds. We can either choose to think about good and godly things – or we can choose to think about bad and evil things. God has given us the ability and the choice is ours.

**2 Corinthians 10:5... we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**

*We all gets tons of flashing thoughts that will cross into our minds over the course of a day. It's not the bad thought that may flash across your mind that will get you in trouble – it is what you decide to do with that bad thought once it crosses your mind. You can either choose to let that bad thought slide right out of your mind, or you can choose to really start thinking about it and dwelling on it. And once you start to really think about and dwell on that bad thought – you will then start to feed it. And once you start to feed it – it will start to grow. And once it starts to grow – it can lead to a mental stronghold that you will have a hard time getting out of your thought process. And once that mental stronghold starts to grow and get deeper and stronger – you will start to get an actual desire to want to act out on it. And once you start to act out on it, an actual addiction can start to form where you will want to keep repeating the same behavior over and over again. And then it is going to be extra difficult for you to get free from this addictive and compulsive behavior! And to think that all of this started with just one, simple, little thought crossing over into your mind, and you then caused it to grow by constantly thinking about it and dwelling on it. As I said last week, we cause most of our own bondages. It's so true. But there is also an enemy that wants to help us create those strongholds.*

Satan is really good at lying. It's not just in his character, it IS his character. John 8:44 says, *When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* Let's **contrast some of his lies with God's Word...**

**Your past defines you, but Galatians 2:20** says, *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**You are inadequate, but Philippians 4:13** says, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

**You can't win against sin in your life, but 1 Corinthians 15:56-57** says, *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Sin isn't a big deal, but Hebrews 10:26-27** says, *If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.*

Some of us buy into the lie that we have to be perfect in order for God to love us. But Jesus died for us while we were still sinners, so we know that's a lie. On the other side of the spectrum, however, are those who believe that sin is no big deal. *It is a big deal.* Jesus didn't die on the cross for something that was "no big deal." The enemy likes to use both of these extreme views of sin to handicap our growth in Christ.

**Fellowship with other believers is optional, but Hebrews 10:25** says, *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Plus, all of the "One Another..." bible verses.

**You are all alone. No one understands you, but Deuteronomy 31:8** says, *The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."*

**1 Corinthians 10:13** says, *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man.*

**1 Peter 5:9** says, *you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

**We should fear the enemy, but Colossians 2:15** says, *(Jesus) disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

**1 John 4:4** says, *the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

Satan's power comes from his deception. So if you are armed with the truth, the enemy has no power in your life whatsoever. He only gains power when you believe him. When we recognize the lies of the enemy we can combat them with the truth of God's Word. If this sounds like a lot of work, consider it this way: If you needed a pill every day to keep you alive, you would take it, right? I urge you to consider it that important to study the Word daily. The Word will keep you on track and help you to flourish in life.

**Psalms 26:3 I walk continually in your truth.**

We have to think God's truth daily because it is only thing we know that sets us free. Knowing who we are in Christ and what we have in Christ is the key to setting our course and staying on track every day. So **read the Word and think the Word** every day. Put

Post-it notes of Scriptures on your mirror. Have the YouVersion bible read to you as you get ready in the morning. Listen to Christian radio or music on your drive to work.

Know the word and take those thoughts captive. Now, when someone is taken captive, he is still alive but held in confinement, contained and under control. Sometimes our thoughts will not die, but we can take them captive and control them. We have the power to intentionally quit thinking that way and think new thoughts based on God's truth. So, talk to yourself. Encourage yourself. Build yourself up. Tell yourself the opposite of all the lies you're hearing. When the enemy screams...*You are hopeless; you are useless; you're not good enough; you'll never measure up*, tell yourself the truth...

- **I am alive with Christ. (Ephesians 2:5)**
- **I am a new creature in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17)**
- **I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:21)**
- **It is not I who live, but Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)**
- **Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)**
- **I am greatly loved by God. (Romans 1:7; Ephesians 2:4; Colossians 3:12)**
- **I can do all things through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:13)**
- **I am God's workmanship, created in Christ for good works. (Ephesians 2:10)**
- **I am more than a conqueror through Him who loves me. (Romans 8:37)**

(There's a 10 page paper at the Information Center that I put together years ago that covers all these and many more; if we run out email the church and we'll make more.)

When the devil is screaming his accusations it's important to counteract them with God's voice. So, make conscious choices and put forth effort to reprogram your mind. Think about what you're thinking about. Stop yourself in your tracks when you're thinking the wrong things and fight back with the Word of God. Today, let's take charge of our thinking! Let's change our thinking! Let's think as God thinks!

**Philippians 4:8** says, *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.*

As the music plays, think about your thoughts. Identify those things that aren't in line with God's word. And, be encouraged by the words of the song.

**Video: Who you say I am  
Know the Truth and the Truth will set you free!**