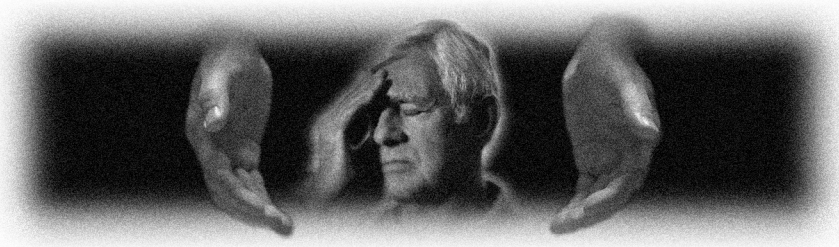


# Lord of Our Thoughts



## SABBATH—JULY 9

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** 1 Corinthians 2:16; Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:2-5; Romans 12:1, 2.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “You have been raised up with Christ. So think about things that are in heaven. That is where Christ is. He is sitting at God’s right hand. Think about things that are in heaven. Don’t [do not] think about things that are on earth” (Colossians 3:1, 2, NlrV).

**IMPORTANT THOUGHT:** Jesus desires to renew our minds so He can be Lord of our thoughts. It is God’s plan that all our thoughts be under Jesus’ will and control.

**THE BATTLE OF THE MIND.** Many new Christians think that once they have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, the battle is over. But really, the battle has only just begun. The same as in Jesus’ earthly life, Satan increases his attacks after our baptism (Mark 1:9-13). The battle is fought in our minds. One of Satan’s big temptations is trying to get us to remember our past. He tries to tempt us back to our old, sinful ways. But Jesus wants us to forget what is behind us so we can “be transformed<sup>1</sup> by the renewing [making pure] of [our minds]” (Romans 12:2, NKJV). The Greek verb translated “transformed” comes from the same verb used in Mark 9:2, when Jesus was “transfigured.”<sup>2</sup> What a wonderful example of perfection Jesus wants for each of His saved children. He desires to so renew (make pure) our minds that His glory will shine through us.

Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 16.

<sup>1</sup>transformed—to be changed so completely that we have new thoughts, goals, desires, et cetera.

<sup>2</sup>transfigured—changed into something glorious. Read Matthew 17:1, 2.

**SUNDAY—JULY 10****THE POWER OF THOUGHT  
(1 Corinthians 2:16).**

**What is the common theme in the following verses? Exodus 20:17; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Matthew 5:8; 1 Chronicles 28:9.**

The Bible has so much to say about our actions and our words, because our actions and words have a powerful influence on ourselves and others.

**The Bible also makes it clear that God cares about our thoughts. Why should God care about what we think? Genesis 6:5; Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 5:27-30.**

Our thoughts are the basis of all our words and actions. For this reason, what we think is important. Every evil action we do, every evil word we say, started as a thought. How many millions of people first had evil thoughts which led to words or actions that caused terrible damage? Who can know what thoughts will remain only thoughts or what thoughts will become actions that hurt someone? We can never know for sure. This is why we should try to control our thoughts before they turn into something painful for ourselves and others.



**What are you thinking right now?**

**Imagine if your thoughts were suddenly put on a screen for everyone to read! What would be on that screen? What does this tell you about what is in your mind? What thoughts do you need to change? How can you change them?**

**MONDAY—JULY 11****KEEPING EVERY THOUGHT  
UNDER CONTROL  
(2 Corinthians 10:3-5).**

**Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Then answer the following questions:**

1. What kind of battle does Paul say we are in?

2. How is this kind of battle different from a battle in which people fight people?

3. What are some of the worldly weapons Christians should not use? What are the weapons God provides for us? Ephesians 6:10-18.

4. Paul says he destroys “every . . . reason that keeps people from knowing God” (2 Corinthians 10:5, NIV). What are some of these reasons?

The word for “strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4, NKJV) means “castles” or “fortresses.” Paul is thinking of the inner fortresses of our hearts. They are the “castles” of our minds, the habits of sin and self that decide our character. The battle is one of truth against error. The battle is between the knowledge of God against ignorance.<sup>3</sup> The battle is a struggle of true worship against all idol worship. In the end, it is a great battle between Jesus and Satan for control of the human race. This battle happens in the mind and in the heart. We can keep the enemy out only with God’s power working in our lives.

**Why is controlling our thoughts so important in the battle we are facing? Why is controlling our thoughts the whole battle?**

<sup>3</sup>ignorance—lack of knowledge.

## TUESDAY—JULY 12

### THINKING ABOUT HEAVENLY THINGS (Colossians 3:1, 2).

We have received Jesus as Savior and Lord. But it is still possible to become interested in many earthly things. We easily can become so interested in earthly things that we forget God asks us to think about heavenly things. We live on the earth. We see around ourselves things of the earth. And many things of the earth are not bad (Genesis 1:31). The important thing is to learn to know the difference between what is good and what is bad.

#### **What reasons does Paul give for setting our minds on heavenly things? Colossians 3:1.**

Let us look a little closer at what Paul is telling us. We have been “raised with Him [Christ]” (Colossians 2:12, NKJV; read also Romans 6:4). We have died to self (Colossians 3:3). Now we have a new life in Him. For these reasons, our thoughts should be on heavenly things. Earthly things are the kind of things we thought about before we met Jesus. But Jesus died for us (Romans 5:6). He has paid the penalty for our sins (Isaiah 53:6, 8, 10). He has covered us with His perfect righteousness (holiness) (Romans 4:4-8). He is now working for us in heaven (Hebrews

9:24). For these reasons, we must think about Him and the salvation He has given to us (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Jesus, our Lord and Savior, is sitting at the right hand of the throne of God as our High Priest. We always must remember to focus our attention on His work for us as our High Priest in heaven.

“Keep your thoughts upon the Savior. Go apart from the busyness of the world and sit under Jesus’ shadow. Then, among the noise of daily work and struggle, your strength will be renewed.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places*, p. 62.



Sit under Jesus’ shadow and think about Him.

**Take as much time as possible to think about the plan of salvation. Think about Jesus becoming human. Think about His death on the cross for your sake. Think about His ministry (work) in the heavenly sanctuary. What does the**

**plan of salvation show about God’s character? What hope does salvation offer you? What promises are yours because of salvation? How different would your life be if you thought about these things many times a day?**

### WEDNESDAY—JULY 13

#### RECEIVING A SANCTIFIED<sup>4</sup> IMAGINATION<sup>5</sup> (Romans 12:1, 2).

**Focusing on the theme of this week, write down what you believe Paul is telling us in Romans 12:1, 2.**

One of the important gifts we all have received from God is the gift of imagination. But sinful thoughts and desires have spoiled our imagination. We need our imagination to be sanctified. The Bible teaches us that our thoughts are important. So we should be encouraged to know God will help us control our thoughts and our imagination.

**How will God help us control our thoughts and our imagination? Romans 12:1, 2; Titus 3:5.**

Romans 12:1, 2 and Titus 3:5 are the only verses with the Greek noun translated as “renewing” (NKJV; making pure) or “renewal” (NKJV; to make

<sup>4</sup>sanctified—to be made holy; to become like Jesus.

<sup>5</sup>imagination—the ability to create new things or ideas; the ability to put old ideas into new forms.

pure). The great change of our minds in Romans 12:2 is done only by the power of the Holy Spirit. This change is the result of the Holy Spirit's work in Christians who have surrendered to Him. This surrender can require a great struggle on our part. It is easy for our mind to focus on earthly things. In Colossians 3:2, the real translation of "set your affection" (KJV) means "continually think of" heavenly things. Perhaps that is why Paul says we should "pray always" (2 Thessalonians 1:11, NKJV). Nothing can lift our thoughts to heaven like prayer.



**We can always pray. We can pray anywhere.**

**How do you use your imagination? Is your imagination working for or against your walk with Jesus? What can you do to receive the "renewal" of your mind?**

### THURSDAY—JULY 14

#### INFLUENCES (Philippians 4:8).

A drunken homeless man in a big city was sleeping in an alley. A group of about three young men saw the unfortunate man. They found a can of gasoline. As the man was sleeping, they poured the gasoline over him and set him on fire. He died a terrible death.

The boys were arrested and asked why they did such a terrible thing. One of the boys said they had seen the same thing in a movie. They just copied what they saw.

**What is the important principle<sup>6</sup> we see in what these young men did?**

God cares about our thoughts. He promises us strength to change our thoughts. But we do not just pray "Lord, change my thoughts," and then quickly we are pure in heart and mind. However nice that would be, it does not work that way. We have an important part in cooperating with God. The things we put in our minds will influence our thoughts. The more

<sup>6</sup>principle—a basic rule of life.

you read about Jesus, the more you will focus on holy things. The more you read about unholy things, the more you will think about unholy things.



Focus on Jesus.

How does Philippians 4:8 describe the principle we are talking about? List things that fit each of the words below from Philippians 4:8 (NirV).

true \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

noble<sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

right \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

pure \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

lovely \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

worthy of respect \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

excellent \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

worthy of praise \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(It would be interesting to compare<sup>8</sup> your lists with others in your class.) How well are you following Paul's warning about your thoughts?

Do you have trouble controlling your thoughts? Do you have

<sup>7</sup>noble—excellent, magnificent.  
<sup>8</sup>compare—show how things are the same.

**trouble thinking of heavenly things? The answer to your problem easily could be found in what you are reading and watching. Only you can make the necessary changes. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, decide now to censor<sup>9</sup> the things that come into your mind. If you do not, you will never have victory.**

### FRIDAY—JULY 15

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** “The apostle<sup>10</sup> Paul tried to teach the believers how important it is to keep the mind from wandering to wrong thoughts or foolish things. People who would not fall into Satan’s traps must guard well the avenues of the soul. They must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 518.

“With the Holy Spirit’s help, the training of the heart, and the control of the thoughts will control our words. This is true wisdom. This will give us a quiet, satisfied, and peaceful mind. There will be joy in thinking about the riches of God’s grace.”—Adapted

from Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 656.

“People who would desire wisdom from God must not become fools in the sinful knowledge of this world. They should shut their eyes so that they may not see and learn evil. They should close their ears so that they may not hear that which is evil and learn about impure thoughts and acts. They should guard their tongues so they may not speak unclean words or lies.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 404.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What things make it difficult for you to have pure thoughts?
2. How can prayer and Bible study help us control our thoughts?
3. What can you do as a church to help your young members protect themselves from negative influences that make it difficult for them to control their thoughts?
4. What plan does Ephesians 6:10-18 give us for victory in the battle for our minds?

<sup>9</sup>censor—to keep bad thoughts from coming into your mind.

<sup>10</sup>apostle—one of the disciples of Jesus whom He chose to preach the gospel after He returned to heaven.