

# What Does It Mean---

# "BRING EVERY THOUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY TO CHRIST"?

*Here's how you can rule over the thoughts of your mind!*

**A**RE you plagued by thoughts you know are wrong—by thoughts you desperately want to stop thinking?

Do you find yourself unable to master—to resist—the bad thoughts of your mind?

Why are some of you always having to fight wrong thoughts, but yet, somehow are never quite able to overcome them?

## **We Must Overcome**

Does God command us to do the impossible? No! For with God's help "all things are possible." You can learn to cast every wrong thought out of your mind.

God commands you to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5).

Does that mean every thought? Yes! Here is how God makes it possible. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to command, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Jesus Christ did not sin. His mind was perfect. All His thoughts were pure.

To rule over the thoughts of your mind, you must have the mind, the attitude, the determination, the character Jesus had. You can have that same mind—that same power—through the Holy Spirit. But you must also exercise your will to resist fleeting evil thoughts.

Christ commands us to become perfect, even as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

You CAN do as Christ commands!

## **Learn to Recognize Wrong Thoughts**

Some of you are thinking wrong thoughts without even realizing that you are allowing your mind to become enslaved (Rom. 6:16). You must learn to detect wrong thoughts immediately so you can cast these thoughts from you before they become so firmly implanted in your mind that you are unable to drive them out.

There is one sure way you can learn to recognize what a wrong thought is. Open your Bible to see if your thoughts

are producing the fruits of God's Spirit.

Are your thoughts producing "love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance"? (Gal. 5:22-23.)

Any thought that does not produce joy, love and peace is a wrong thought. The thoughts that are in captivity to Christ produce the fruits of the Spirit.

Any thought contrary to God's law, any thought of criticism, accusation, lust, hatred, doubt, discouragement, adultery, fornication, envy, jealousy, is a wrong thought.

Jesus Christ warned that entertaining, harboring, dwelling upon evil thoughts breaks God's law. He said, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (mind)" (Matt. 5:28). Those who think such thoughts shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21).

## **You Must Want to Overcome**

When you allow evil thoughts to remain in your mind—when you allow them to conceive—the result is that you are sinning "...when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin..." (James 1:14-15). You must repent—you must stop thinking these thoughts.

Many of you realize that you frequently entertain evil thoughts, but you do not always know how to repent, how to cast them out of your mind.

Some of you are sorry when you think wrong thoughts. But merely being sorry does not stop you from sinning—being sorry is not repentance unless there is also the will, the action to bring about a permanent change.

Repentance means change. It means STOP sinning. Yet, we must realize the carnal mind doesn't really want to repent. You must earnestly ask God to give you the God-given desire to repent, to STOP sinning.

The strong desire to stop sinning is a gift which we receive from God only when we ask for it with strong supplications.

When God gives us the gift of repentance, we must then use it. We must STOP sinning.

## **Resist Wrong Thoughts Immediately**

The key to overcoming a wrong thought is to resist it immediately.

The very split second a wrong thought comes into your mind, PRAY INSTANTLY—DO NOT DELAY. If you are in public, pray silently. Ask God for the power to cast this wrong thought out of your mind, ask to be cleansed of this evil thought.

Don't make the often-fatal mistake of letting evil thoughts dwell in your mind. You must cast them out immediately. The longer you allow evil thoughts to fester in your mind the harder it becomes to cast them out—for all carnal human nature loves to sin.

The carnal mind does not have the power to resist evil—to instantly pray to God whenever a wrong thought strikes. That power comes from God through the gift of His Holy Spirit. You have to ask for this power, the power which God is more willing to give you than you are to ask for.

Ask, God will give you the power to pray instantly when a wrong thought attacks your mind. Jesus Christ promises, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7).

The Holy Spirit inspired David to say, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Your commandments" (Ps. 119:60).

## **How to Replace Bad Thoughts with Good Thoughts**

Casting an evil thought out of your mind is only the beginning.

Realize that you cannot leave your mind a blank or it will be overcome by still more evil thoughts.

You must not only ask God to give you the power to cast wrong thoughts out of your mind, but you must also immediately ask for the power to fill your mind with good thoughts—thoughts which produce the fruits of the Spirit.

REMEMBER that you must always maintain a close contact with God.

Then you can ask for and receive His power instantly, split-second quick, when you need it.

### How to Become More Converted

Have you continually called out to God for help to overcome a wrong thought, only to find out that God seemingly failed to give you the power you needed in order to overcome?

Did God fail to keep His promise that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21)?

NO! "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). "God... cannot lie" (Titus 1:2).

If you believe the Scripture is true, then you must acknowledge that you somewhere failed your part.

Why have you failed? Why couldn't you bring your thoughts under control?

The surprising answer is: the carnal mind sins because it wants to.

If your carnal mind still has the upper hand to such an extent that you cannot stop thinking wrong thoughts, you have not learned to abhor evil. The thoroughly converted mind is one that *utterly abhors evil!*

You need to go to a private place, and fall on your knees and pour out your heart to God until you really know that you are converted by God's Holy Spirit, until you know God has given you the power to overcome.

You may even have to spend hours in FASTING and PRAYER—earnest, determined, persevering supplication—until you know that God has heard you.

Persevere in Bible study and prayer until the mind of Christ living in you has changed your outlook on life from a worldly, fleshly, materialistic viewpoint to an obedient, spiritual one—until you have, as the Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to command, "Set your affection (mind) on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

When you become deeply converted by the mind of Christ living in you, you will hate evil as God hates evil. You will abhor thinking evil thoughts. You will become more like God. You will stop sinning because your desire to obey God will become stronger than the carnal human desire to sin. You will stop sinning because you will stop wanting to sin.

The key to success is that you will be putting Christ's words, His thoughts into your mind. The more you let the words of your Bible imbue your mind, the less room there will be for any evil thought to cross your mind. You cannot replace evil thoughts by keeping your mind empty or by always thinking about that evil thought. You must place your

mind, concentrate your mind on the word of God, on doing God's will.

The Almighty God, who is faithful, promises, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8).

### Keep in Contact

Once you become thoroughly converted, you must always maintain such a close contact with God that you will be able to instantly ask for and receive the GREAT POWER you need in order to resist the evil and replace it with the good.

How do you maintain this close contact?

You maintain this close contact by submissive obedience to God's will and by spending as much time in Bible study and prayer as is necessary for you to have Christ's mind ruling in you. Then you will be instantly able to ask for and receive the POWER to overcome.

Eternal Life is worth the effort! You must never fail! Be vigilant!

REMEMBER that to keep from yielding to sin—even JESUS CHRIST had to offer up prayers to God with strong crying and tears (Heb. 5:7).

### Be Vigilant

After God has given you the victory—DO NOT LET DOWN. The key to continued overcoming is to BE VIGILANT. Be on your guard! Be awake! Be prepared!

That is where many of us stumble. There is something you must do.

The Apostle Paul told us how to remain steadfast overcomers. He said, "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done (overcome) all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13).

Then the Apostle Paul told us how to acquire this armour of God. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

Notice this important point, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; PRAYING ALWAYS with all prayer and supplication" (Eph. 6:13-18).

God does not do it all for us. Unless we put forth DILIGENT effort, we cannot be called OVERCOMERS.

But on the other hand, if we had the power to do it all, we should not need to ask God that Jesus Christ help us overcome our wrong thoughts.

Jesus Christ commands us to be persistent in asking for God's strength. He commands us "always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

### Pray for Others

Don't fail to show God how much you appreciate the power of His Holy Spirit, the power to overcome.

Rejoice, for Jesus Christ, who cannot lie, has promised, "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame" (Rev. 3:21).

Diligently pray that God give ALL of us whom He is calling in this end time the Spirit-led power, not only to cast evil thoughts from our minds, but also the power to fill our minds with thoughts that are pleasing to the Almighty Creator God who has called us to become members of His Family.