

Blessings, everyone! Love y'all.

MYESE!

Part 28: Elevate Your Life!

Texts:

Ephesians 2:6 (NIV) - *"God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."*

Proverbs 4:23 (NIV) - "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

We are continuing a new series entitled, "Soul Detox." Today, I'll be speaking on:

Part 2 - Toxic Thoughts:

"How to Flush Out the Junk--for Good!"

A. We've learned how thoughts can have such an amazing impact on our lives and our world. Thoughts can even determine our actions and greatly impact our emotions.

1. As previously mentioned, God is very concerned about our thought life.
 - a. **Philippians 4:8 (MSG)** - "Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse."

- b. Summing "it" all up....those two small letters can refer to a lifetime of hurt, betrayal, pain and disappointment! But Paul STILL instructs us to think good thoughts!
 2. Why are our thoughts so important?
 - a. **Proverbs 23:7a (KJV)** - "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."
 - b. Thoughts create our world!
 3. Scientific research reveals that the average person has more than 30,000 thoughts a day—which would naturally have a profound impact on our lives. These studies also state that up to 85% of illnesses are caused or greatly exacerbated by toxic thoughts.
 4. Last year, my interest in this subject dramatically peaked from an intriguing TV advertisement about detoxing.
 - a. While there are many ads about detoxing, this one was different. Basically, a strip of what appeared to be medically treated tape would be applied to the bottom of your feet at night. The next morning, the tape will supposedly be discolored from the toxins removed from your body while you slept.
 - b. I have no idea whether the product really works, but it made me wonder what would happen if something could be used to detox the heart....or the mind! Or what about the mouth and the words we speak?
- B. We have been examining the life of Jacob and his many struggles with toxic thoughts that prevented him from enjoying God's favor and blessings.
1. What is so amazing to me is that with all the many blessings God had pronounced upon Jacob—even changing his name to "Israel," which means *favored prince*, he still could not accept his true identity. Today, I want to help you understand the reason for this.
 2. **Joke:** Speaking of "identity".... did you hear about Einstein's entrance at the Pearly Gates?

Einstein dies and goes to heaven. Standing at the Pearly Gates, St. Peter tells him, "You look like Einstein, but you have no idea the lengths to which some people will go to sneak into Heaven. Can you **prove** you're really Albert Einstein?"

Pondering a few seconds, he asked, "Can I have a blackboard and some chalk?"

St. Peter snaps his fingers and a blackboard and chalk instantly appear. Einstein proceeds to describe, in arcane mathematics and symbols, his theory of relativity.

St. Peter is suitably impressed. "Why, you really ARE Einstein," he exclaims. "Welcome to heaven!"

The next person to arrive is Picasso. And again, he is asked for his credentials.

Picasso asks, "Mind if I use that blackboard and chalk?"

St. Peter says, "Go right ahead."

So, he erases Einstein's equations and with a few strokes of the chalk, he sketches a truly stunning mural.

Clapping his hands, St. Peter exclaims, "You are definitely the great artist you claim to be! Come on in!"

Then St. Peter looks up and sees George W. Bush approaching. Scratching his head, he says, "Einstein and Picasso both managed to prove their identity. How can you prove yours?"

With a bewildered look, George exclaims, "Who are Einstein and Picasso?"

St. Peter sighs and says, "Come on in, George."

3. Since people are so serious about politics, I don't usually tell jokes about a president. However, I'm hoping a "past president" may be okay. By the way, George W. Bush is a Yale graduate and served in the Air Force as a fighter pilot. So, he is definitely smarter than most people give him credit for. He does, however, have a communications and a PR problem.

- C. As he did with Jacob, Satan wants to steal and change our identity.
1. Have you ever wondered how--or when God created all human souls?
 2. Jewish theologians have taught for many thousands of years that in Genesis, chapter 1, God created all souls in the six days of creation. (See <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13933-soul>).
 3. When it was time for a soul to be born into a family, God would ask who would be willing to live for Him on earth—and a volunteer would step forward. They further state that when this volunteer chooses their parents, they also understand the painful circumstances, suffering, divorce, rejection, and the many types of losses they will face.
 4. However, the Rabbis teach that while these souls know everything, all is forgotten at birth. At the moment a soul enters its body and appears on earth, an angel strikes it on the mouth and everything is forgotten!
 5. Regardless of whether or not these theories are accurate, Satan **does** try to make us focus on the negatives in our life in an effort to change and limit our destiny.
- D. While there are many types of toxic thoughts, these are the four basic categories:
1. **Negative thoughts:** Is your thinking distorted?
 - a. Negative thoughts can be included in your personal identity, such as: "my arthritis," "my multiple sclerosis," or "my heart problem."
 - b. Or how about making a problem part of your identity by saying, "my divorce," "my surgery," or "my bankruptcy?"
 - c. Even comments can become negative, such as: "nothing ever goes right for me;" "everything I touch fails;" or "I always mess up!"
 - d. **Titus 1:15 (NIV)** - "To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted."

2. **Fearful thoughts:** Do you have irrational fears about losing your health, your marriage, finances, or anything of importance?
 - a. **1 John 4:8 (NKJV)** - "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."
3. **Thoughts of discontentment:** Do you make statements, such as: "I don't like my job," "I'm unhappy in my marriage," or "I hate my life."
 - a. Being unhappy about everything was certainly one of Jacob's struggles.
 - b. After all the favor shown to him by God, we read in **Genesis 47:9a (NKJV)** - "And Jacob said to Pharaoh, 'The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life.'" The **NIV** says, "few and difficult"!
 - c. Despite his incredibly good fortune of being a wealthy chief advisor to King Ahasuerus, Haman complained in **Esther 5:13 (NKJV)**, "Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."
 - d. Can you imagine having so many good things going his way, yet in Haman's mind, it was all worthless and void because a man he hated had been promoted!
 - e. Contrast Haman's discontentment with Paul's description of the painful circumstances he had endured: **2 Corinthians 11:23b-28 (NIV)** - "I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. [24] Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. [25] Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, [26] I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in

danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. [27] I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. [28] Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.”

f. So, what was Paul's response to his many trials and afflictions? Was he discontented and unhappy? No!

g. **Philippians 4:11 (NIV)** - “For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”

h. **1 Timothy 6:6 (NIV)** - “But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

4. **Critical thoughts:** Are you hard to please or do you find fault with everything?

a. A critical person wants to be in control. Because their self-esteem is so fragile, they demand that everything go just the way they think it should. If it doesn't, they think it makes them look bad.

b. Since this person can't keep their critical opinions to themselves, they quickly find themselves in trouble with God!

c. God despises criticism. **Numbers 14:29-30 (NIV)** - “In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.”

d. **1 Corinthians 10:10 (NKJV)** - “...nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.”

e. Why does God dislike our complaints? ***It limits the potential of the one who complains!***

- f. "I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself." Rumi
- g. On the other hand, don't allow criticism to keep you from becoming the person God meant for you to be. There will always be someone who dislikes your way of doing things or who thinks you should do it differently.
- h. "If I would have asked people what they wanted, they would have said 'faster horses'." Henry Ford

E. How can you "flush out the junk" and get rid of negative thoughts?

1. **Step One:** Understand that thoughts are real and have an actual anatomy.
 - a. Thoughts have a structure that occupies space in the brain.
 - b. Thoughts and memories, which are known as 'neurons' or 'nerve cells' resemble trees.
 - c. Information that is dispersed from the five senses is processed in a certain area of the brain. Branches are then formed on the 'trees' to hold this information in long-term memory.
 - d. These branches, which are *grown* in the brain, create your attitudes, influence your decisions, and become part of you!
 - e. Because thoughts create a structure in the brain to which the emotions will react (such as memories), never allow one or more thoughts to chaotically roam unchecked through your mind.
2. **Step Two:** Examine toxic thoughts by asking yourself: "Is this thought good for me? Is it from God, the devil, or my own confused thinking?"
 - a. Develop a 'conscious awareness' in your thinking until it becomes a habit.
 - b. How long does it take to form a habit? You've probably heard 21 days; some will say, 28 days. Guess what? True research has never supported those figures.

- c. Research reveals that some habits are formed in just a few weeks. Others take much longer. In one study, the time involved to change a habit from non-existent to automatic ranged from 18 days to over five months, with an average of 66 days.
 - d. Making a 'habit change' means an action becomes easier to do—than not to do. You'll know when a habit has been formed when it feels weird if you don't do it. The more difficult habits require more time to develop.
 - d. Why not allow TODAY to be the **first day** in the process of building a new habit of thought?
3. **Step Three:** While Step Two develops a conscious awareness of what you're thinking about, Step Three *does something* about that thought.
- a. This means making a conscious decision to actively accept the thought (if it's good for you) or reject it (if it's bad for you).
 - b. Thoughts can have as much control as we give them.
4. **Step Four:** Build new memories over the old.
- a. This is the really exciting part of dealing with the thought life. Accepting or rejecting a thought changes the neural circuitry in the brain. In other words, the brain can **grow** as you think—and you are in control of the process!
 - b. Step Four occurs when the brain steps in to create a structural representation of what you have chosen to accept (which adds more branches to the tree), and then converts the thoughts you have chosen to **reject** into hot air!
5. **Step Five:** Think empowering thoughts by daily speaking and praying declarations from God's Word!
- a. This is why reading and receiving teaching from God's Word are so vitally important to your life!

F. Here is a prayer that if offered every day for the next 30 days, could transform your thought life!

1. First written by a pastor in San Antonio, the prayer has been slightly revised. If you'll repeat it every morning for the next 30 days, you may even decide that it's so impacting, you'll want to repeat it the rest of your life!
2. If you continue to be tempted with negative thoughts, repeat the part that best applies to the thoughts you are struggling to bring into captivity.

"Lord, I praise You. I submit this day to You and receive Your guidance. Cause me to be who You say that I am. I declare that I am an **"overcoming over-comer."** As things come my way, I will overcome them.

"Lord, give me the mind of Christ this day. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Heavenly Father, cause me to walk in Your ways and in Your paths so that Your will would be done in my life on earth as it is in Heaven.

"Lord, I thank you for the faith You have given me that overcomes the world and causes me to walk in victory. Today, I will set the course of my life with my words and speak what You have spoken. I declare that I will not at all be defeated, discouraged, depressed, or disappointed. Instead, I will be filled with Your unspeakable joy and peace that passes all understanding.

"According to **Psalm 5:12**, Your favor surrounds me as a shield. I expect Your favor today, both from Heaven and from the earth. Jesus had favor with God and man according to **Luke 2:52**, and as He is, so am I in this

world. You have declared this in **1 John 4:17**. Therefore, I will also have unparalleled favor today with God and man. I expect and receive Your unparalleled favor in my life, favor in my home, in my work, my ministry, my finances, and in all my dealings.

"I will not be worried today. I will walk in health today. I will not be sad or depressed today. I will have no lack and will not be confused today. I have health, I have joy, and I have all the money and resources I need—in the name of Jesus! Where You lead me, God, You will provide for me! **Psalm 37:23** says that my steps are ordered by You, Lord.

"I have a covenant with You, oh God, and by the blood of Jesus I release Your divine protection and divine provision over my life and my family. By Your stripes I am healed. My angels are carrying out Your Word on my behalf. I receive supernatural strength and encouragement from You and my angels. Angels carry Your Word, Mighty God, and according to **Psalm 103:20**, even now as I speak, every word that's in alignment with Your Word is being brought to pass by my angels. Today I expect to have divine appointments, to connect with the right people, and to be delivered from the wrong people.

"In the name of Jesus, I expect that today will be the best day of my life because I am an "**overcoming over-comer!**"

"I am going higher and rising faster. I am being elevated."