



INSIGHTS

**THE
“MOVIE”**
WE CHOOSE
TO IMAGINE
REPEATEDLY
WILL BECOME
OUR REALITY,
WHETHER
TRUE OR NOT.

Change YOUR THINKING

AND CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

BY DR. DENNIS BURKE



ur inner life includes both our spiritual life as new creations in

Christ and our thought life—our inner self-dialogue. It is in the patterns and habits of our thoughts that we have the biggest battles. The real war zone is in the mind.

For this study, keep in mind that the mind is a part of our soul. It is the mind, will, and emotions

that make up the soulful side of our inner life. It is also the soul that links our recreated spirit with this natural world.

Every gift God has deposited within us finds expression through our thoughts and then our actions. It will always require a decision on our part to act on any direction we receive in our spirit or from God's Word. This is the reason your soul has the capacity to be the pathway of spiritual power or the barrier to any flow from God coming

through your life.

Our new life in Christ requires a new way of thinking. In Romans 12:2 (TPT), we are told:

Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think. This will empower you to discern God's will as you live a beautiful life, satisfying and perfect in his eyes.

When we choose God's thoughts, we will begin to see with our inner eyes the working of His Word shifting things and bringing to pass the end result we desire.

The Jesus life brings with it a totally different mindset. Everything takes on a new perspective based on God's point of view. This is how we are transformed—by changing the way we think.

We know that God sees us in the light of all Jesus has provided for us. We are not simply the sum of our past deeds, both good and bad. We are totally new in Christ—but that reality in itself doesn't automatically shift all of our lifelong habits of thinking. We must continue the transformation by renewing our minds to think the way God thinks.

Isaiah 43:18-19 (TPT) gives light on this truth:

Stop dwelling on the past.
Don't even remember these

YOUR THOUGHTS CAN CHANGE YOUR DESTINY.

Learn to use God's Word to transform your moment-by-moment thoughts into powerful, God-breathed, barrier-breaking catalysts for lasting change.

former things. I am doing something brand new, something unheard of. Even now it sprouts and grows and matures. Don't you perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and open up flowing streams in the desert.

The War Zone Within

Our past will hold us prisoner if we allow it to. It's our choice.

Too often people live with the fears instilled in their thinking from negative experiences they have lived through. They allow their minds to dwell on those experiences until the fear becomes a stronghold in their souls, and at some point, they conclude that they cannot get past the devastations of their past.

What are strongholds of the soul?

- **They are not spiritual entities.**
- **They are areas of the mind where darkness has gained a foothold. As a result, spiritual perception diminishes and becomes dull.**
- **These strongholds build a "lens" over the mind that impacts and distorts a person's perception of everything.**
- **These strongholds will tint or cloud people's perceptions, giving them a wrong take on issues and situations that arise in their lives, as well as a way of justifying their skewed point of view.**

- **These distorted perceptions and conclusions drawn from flawed logic become rooted in a lie that people think is truth. But it is actually the "lens" of the mental stronghold that has skewed their perception of the truth.**

As a result of this process, destructive habits of justification form behind all habitual wrong responses, compulsions, or fears. This is how the enemy works in the war zone of our minds.

Satan will use real issues in your life to distort the present. He will use painful issues, events, and experiences from your past—marital problems, hurtful interactions with other people, difficult church experiences, etc.—to impose those negative feelings and memories onto current situations and distort what is actually happening or being said.

But there is a way to turn this satanic strategy on its head! Researchers have pointed to a part of the human brain called the Reticular Activating System (RAS), discovered years ago, that is actually designed to create what Scripture refers to as strongholds. (It's important to note that not all strongholds are bad.)

The RAS will flood our minds in a millisecond with information out of the brain's amazing databank that will work either for us or against us. In this "search engine" that

we all carry in our heads are millions of neurons firing to fill our thoughts with data that supports anything we determine is important, whether good or bad.

What this means is the moment you are reminded of a past situation that has been hurtful or defeating, the RAS will gather memories from your databank to reinforce the verdict you reach in your mind.

Once you reach a verdict in your mind, your RAS will find all the support you need. Say, for instance, your verdict is to focus in on how someone close to you has hurt or disappointed you. In that case, your RAS will run the search through all the data, and the list of hurtful memories and their accompanying emotions will come rushing into your mind.

As the RAS gathers these memories from your databank, they reinforce how hurt or defeated you felt in the past and how you feel now as a result. Those memories fill you in an instant with a perception of the current negative situation, providing enormous support for the inner conclusion that things are just as bad, hurtful, or disappointing as ever.

If, on the other hand, you reach a verdict that God's love is your priority in the present situation, your mind will be filled with data accumulated from your past times in prayer and the Word, in conversation with others, and so forth, that support your decision to respond in love to that person. Your feelings

will follow your decision.

The good news—the *great* news—is that we can actually *reset* the RAS! We can flip the script that has been our habitual way of thinking and rewrite it to create a new, life-giving stronghold. We can tear down the old stronghold working against us and build a new fortress based on Heaven's perspective of God's love, grace, faith, and righteousness. Once that new stronghold is built, the "movie" in our minds takes an entirely different twist. Our imagination creates a new "plot" or perspective that resists the old ways of thinking and helps us come to conclusions based on truth—God's Word.

Complaining is an exercise of supporting your negative verdict with data you have accumulated from past hurtful experiences. Confessing and declaring God's Word regarding the same matter is also an exercise of supporting a verdict you've made with data you've already accumulated. However, the second option actually reveals how your mind is renewed to think and to respond according to *God's* ways.

Notice what the Apostle Paul wrote in Second Corinthians 10:3-5 (TPT):

For although we live in the natural realm, we don't wage a military campaign employing human weapons, using manipulation to achieve our aims. Instead, our spiritual weapons are energized with divine power to effectively dismantle the defenses behind which people hide. We can demolish every deceptive fantasy that opposes

God and break through every arrogant attitude that is raised up in defiance of the true knowledge of God. We capture, like prisoners of war, every thought and insist that it bow in obedience to the Anointed One.

Many times a stronghold that has been built into a person's mind over time was started long ago with a devastating event or a serious disappointment, such as a failure in marriage or business, that has gotten stuck in that person's mind like an imbedded thorn. The pain of that thorn in the soul can lead to destructive attitudes and skewed perceptions that prevent the person from embracing the love of Christ and the grace He has provided to become more like Him.

The "movie" that plays out in our imagination is a God-given ability and part of our creative process. The things we choose to imagine repeatedly will become our reality, whether they are true or not. When we choose God's thoughts, we will begin to see with our inner eyes the working of His Word shifting things and bringing to pass the end result we desire. In this way, our imagination can produce an expectant hope that our faith can lock on to.

God gets involved with our hopes. Those hopes reach into the highest places of Heaven and become a strong anchor to keep our thoughts in the right place—*set* on things above (Colossians 3:1-2).

In the midst of the challenges of life, it can seem so easy to

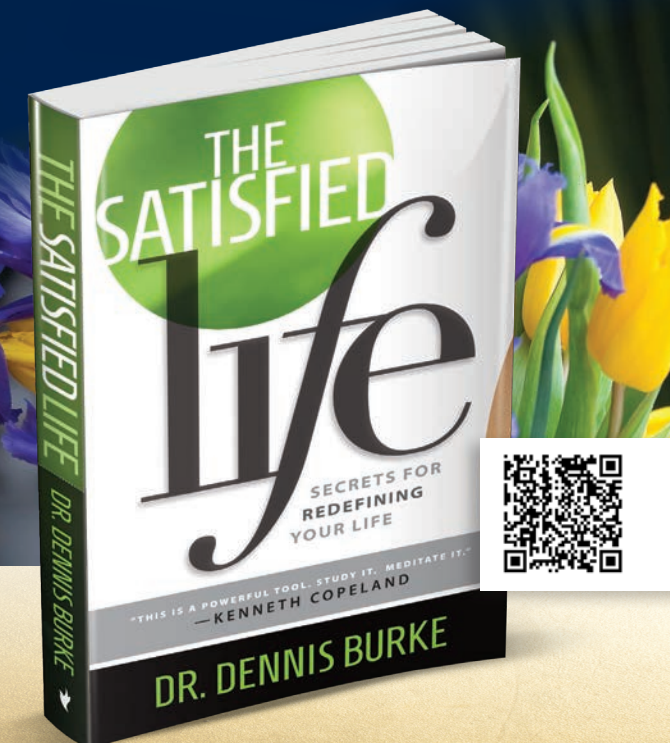
drift back to the negative in our mental "databank" and then to yield to that familiar habit of complaining. *But hope stops the drift!*

Notice how "hope" is described in Hebrews 6:19-20 (TPT): "We have this certain hope like a strong, unbreakable anchor holding our souls to God himself. Our anchor of hope is fastened to the mercy seat in the heavenly realm beyond the sacred threshold."

There is no need to wait a moment longer. Reset your RAS, and set yourself to imagine with strong, expectant hope that the change taking place in your thinking is truly changing your life. *Let the change come!*

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Palm Harbor Church Men's Meeting
Palm Harbor, FL 34683 | 727-812-2542
(Contact church for more information and registration.)

PALM HARBOR, FL | AUG 29
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