

WHAT IS GOING ON IN OUR HEAD?

2 Cor. 10:1-5

SLIDE 1

Introduction: A young man went to a Christian counselor for help for his thought life. After listening to his mile list of sins, the counselor didn't think he was being honest with him. So, he then asked, "Are you sure that is all?" "Yes," he replied. Still not quite convinced, the counselor asked him, "Are you positive you haven't been entertaining any impure thoughts lately?" "Oh, No" the young man replied, "but they sure have been entertaining me!" **SLIDE 2**

We are shaped by our thought life. That is why what is going on in our head is very important. **SLIDE 3** In our passage, Paul shows us **4 things that need to be going on in our head.** **SLIDE 4**

- I. **WE NEED TO HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST, vs. 1-2 "Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ -I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent! I ask that when I am present I need not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh."**

1. Paul in this context is not defending himself out of pride and egotism, but defending his office of apostleship. The message of the true Gospel and his authority as a writer of Scripture was at stake. By answering these accusations of false teachers, he was actually answering Satan Himself who was behind these false teachers.

2. Paul deals with this in true humility because he urged them by the **“meekness and gentleness of Christ.”** **CLICK** The word **“meekness”** means **“power under control”** (like a wild horse brought under control). It is the opposite of self-assertiveness. It is accepting calmly the wrongs done against us without trying to get even. **SLIDE 5**
3. The word **“gentleness”** means **“not demanding our own rights”**, **“giving people the benefit of the doubt.”** In order to respond in this way, Paul had the mind of Christ, instead of throwing his weight around, he appealed to them in Christ’s meekness and gentleness.
4. Notice whose meekness and gentleness it is. Paul says, **“by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.”** If we are going to have the mind of Christ, going on in our head, we have to realize that only He can reproduce it through us by His strength.
5. **Illustration:** We are given opportunities by the Holy Spirit to exercise this humble mind of Christ as we face certain situations in life. A pastor was asked to speak for a certain charitable organization. After the meeting the program chairman handed the pastor a check. “Oh, I couldn’t take this,” the pastor said with some embarrassment. “I appreciate the honor of being asked to speak. You have better uses for this money. You can apply it to one of those uses.” The program chairman asked, “Well, do you mind if we put it into our Special Fund?” The pastor replied, “Of course not. What is the special fund for?” The chairman answered, “It’s so we can get a better speaker next year.”

6. Paul was prepared to show boldness with them if it proved necessary. He would get “**tough**” if he had to, but he didn’t want to have to exercise his apostolic authority.
7. Not only does the mind of Christ include meekness and gentleness, it includes **mental toughness** as well. There were occasions when Christ had to be “**tough.**” He rebuked the Pharisees and even His own disciples when necessary.
8. Paul, in **vs. 2** was accused by the false teachers of hypocrisy and fleshly motives so it required the mental toughness of Christ to handle it. So, in order for us to have the right things going on in our head, we need mental toughness at times as well.
9. When others falsely accuse us or gossip about us or people at work give us a hard time because of our faith in Christ, we can calmly deal with it without trying to get back at them, if we have the mind of Christ.
10. Rather than judge people or be critical of others, we can give people the benefit of the doubt. When the situation requires mental toughness to deal with, or handle, the mind of Christ provides it as well.
11. In order to have the mind of Christ, we need to “**let the Word of Christ richly dwell within us,**” so it renews our mind and we “**set our mind on the things of the Spirit not the things of the flesh.**”
SLIDE 6
12. What is going on in our head? **CLICK** Is it the mind of Christ, so we express His meekness, gentleness, and mental toughness when needed? **The 2nd thing that needs to be going on in our heads: SLIDE 7**

II. WE NEED TO REALIZE WE ARE IN A SPIRITUAL BATTLE, vs. 3

“**For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,**”

1. Unless we recognize that the Christian life is a war, we will never have the right things going on in our head and will not live victoriously. **CLICK** Paul uses a military illustration in vs. 3-5 to show we are in a spiritual war. We have been enlisted as soldiers to carry out Christ’s campaign against the enemy, who seeks to destroy us. He will use anything he can to defeat us, and take us hostage and use us for his purposes. We must realize that we cannot win in this battle if we fight by the flesh.
2. Paul’s enemies were using a “**smear**” technique to try and discredit Paul’s ministry. At the end of vs. 2, they accused him of “**walking habitually according to the flesh or living in his own strength.**”
3. This was a false accusation because he knew his life was consistently letting Christ live in and through him and no longer walking in his own strength.
4. He uses a **play on words** in vs. 3. His accusers said, Paul “**walks according to the flesh**” and Paul answered, “**You’re wrong; I walk in the flesh, but I do not war according to the flesh.**”
5. Paul is saying in vs. 3 that even though we live our lives in our human flesh with all its weaknesses, we do not wage war by using fleshly means. We cannot fight spiritual battles with human reason, ingenuity or by our own strength and abilities. The flesh cannot handle spiritual warfare.
6. **Illustration**: A number of years ago tests that were made in the T-33 Jet Trainer made it possible to suspend gravity for 40 seconds. By

flying the proper curve at high speed, the occupants of the plane became weightless and gravity was suspended. Half of the men tested felt pleasant elated sensations. One expressed that he wished he could live forever at gravity zero since there was a feeling of complete relaxation.

There is a double pull in the Christian's life from the flesh and from the Spirit. If we face spiritual battles by the flesh, there will be a downward pull that leads to defeat, but if we trust Christ through His Spirit to defeat the enemy, there is victory and rest. We cannot experience victory if we go to war by the flesh.

7. We see some Biblical examples in Abraham and Moses. Abraham tried to help God produce the promised son, by his own fleshly efforts through having relations with Hagar. Then later he did it the right way by faith, waiting for God to come through with His promise and Isaac was born.
8. Moses tried to deliver Israel through his own fleshly efforts and ended up killing an Egyptian. Then after 40 years later God did it through him by His power.
9. Do we have the right things going on in our heads? If we do, we will realize we are in a spiritual battle that we can't win by going to war in the flesh. **The 3rd thing that needs to be going in our heads:**

SLIDE 8

- III. **WE NEED TO APPLY BY FAITH THE PROPER SPIRITUAL WEAPONS, vs. 4 “for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.”** **CLICK**

1. The phrase “**not of the flesh**” means “**belonging to the sphere of the flesh**”, anything that appeals to our human senses, cunningness, and self-ambition for the power and glory is in the sphere of the flesh.
2. If we have confidence in our position in life, our wealth, our influence, our own human abilities then we are relying on fleshly weapons. Anything we rely on instead of total dependence on Christ is a fleshly weapon. We must go to war with spiritual weapons. He will use our gifts, talents, personalities as spiritual weapons as we yield to Him.
3. Our proper spiritual weapons are “**divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.**” It is only through Christ’s divinely powerful spiritual weapons that we can destroy fortresses or strongholds in our lives and live in victory.
4. Fortresses or strongholds in Bible times were built for protection from enemy invasions. They were high walls built around a city and a few high towers were built on the wall and commands were given from those observation towers if the city was under siege. **SLIDE 9**
5. The fortresses which Paul speaks of are those things that oppose the truth and the triumph of Christ’s cause. The main fortress is our mind, where the battle takes place.
6. Paul is using this as an illustration of strongholds that are built in our mind, as we are controlled by sin. These are entrenched habits that hold us captive by the enemy, so we do not live free in Christ.
7. Strongholds can take many forms. We can have strongholds of deceit and lying, bitterness, unforgiveness, depression (**not caused by chemical imbalances**) and self-pity, gossip, a critical spirit, addictions, pride and self-centeredness, fear and insecurity, rebellion and self-will, greed and materialism, manipulation and control, lust and sexual

impurity, laziness and lack of discipline, and lack of prayer and spiritual growth.

8. These are entrenched habits that the enemy can keep us locked up in, with high walls and they seem impregnable. They are, if only we use fleshly weapons. These strongholds only come down through using spiritual weapons.
9. Our weapons are God's Word and the resurrected Christ living through us by His Spirit. These are divinely powerful battering rams that knock down these huge walls and destroy our strongholds in our mind.
10. What is going on in our heads? Is it destructive strongholds? Or, are we destroying the strongholds of our mind by Christ's divinely powerful weapons? **The 4th thing that needs to be going on in our**

heads: SLIDE 10

IV. **WE NEED TO APPLY THE RIGHT STRATEGY, vs. 5** **“We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,”** **CLICK**

1. The phrase **“we are destroying”** is a military term and means **“to tear down by force or demolish.”** It is in the present tense. If we are to have the right things going on in our head, we need to continually be tearing down the negative thoughts that lead to sin, by force, by the power of Christ. **These negative thoughts are expressed in 2 ways:**

SLIDE 11

2. 1st, **“speculations,”** which are thoughts or suggestions of evil philosophies and thinking of this evil world system headed up by Satan.

SLIDE 12

3. 2nd, “**Every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God,**” which is every proud thing. **SLIDE 13** It is all the pride of the human mind; exalted opinions, self-confidence or anything that is against God’s Word and its values.
4. We must storm the enemy’s strongholds and tear them down by force by the power of Christ. We must get tough with anything that comes to our mind that is against God’s truth. But this is only half of the right strategy. We must also be “**taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.**”
5. Paul is still using here a military illustration. The winning army would lead away captives after they stormed the stronghold by tearing down its walls. **SLIDE 14** So, we are to take captive the thoughts that come to our mind that are contrary to God’s Word.
6. We are to bring them under the control of the Holy Spirit in line with His Word. After the army took prisoners captive, they then would lead them into a new stronghold. So, we are to bring our thoughts into the new stronghold of Christ and His Word.
7. **Illustration:** When we are down at the shore there are always people who like to feed the seagulls. It starts out that someone throws a peanut or piece of bread or other food and little by little they start to gather until you have them come from all directions and overpower the entire area. They then swoop down & try (sometimes successfully) to take your food right out of your hand. If we feed our thoughts from the power of sin and entertain them and do not say an authoritative “**no!**” to them to defeat them and take them captive to Christ, they can overpower us and

control us and lead us into sin. We must destroy them and bring them into the stronghold of Christ.

8. In order to have freedom from sin's control over our mind, we need to remember that victory over the power of sin is **won** at the **threshold** of our mind, not **in** our mind.
9. At the threshold it is still temptation, but once we accept the thought and let it in our mind and dwell on it, it becomes sin. It is far, far easier to deal with the temptation by the power of sin at the threshold than to try to deal with it after we let it into our mind.

10. **How do we apply vs. 5? SLIDE 14**

By using The 4 "R" Approach: **CLICK** **1st**, Recognize the origin of the thought. Thoughts come to us through the power of sin to tempt, deceive and accuse us. These thoughts are not generated by our new man, but we are responsible. We to deal with them and bring the thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. **CLICK**

11. **2nd**, Refuse to accept the thought as ours. We must refuse to dwell on the thought by refusing to let it have entrance into our mind. By Christ's power and our authority in Him, we can say an authoritative **No!** **SLIDE 16**

12. **3rd**, Reckon ourselves to be dead to the power of sin - (The word **reckon** means to **count on it, to be true because it is**). Since we have been crucified, buried, and raised with Christ, we are no longer slaves to the power of sin, so by Christ's authority we can count ourselves dead indeed to sin and alive to God. Our true desire is not to follow the power of sin because we are a new man in Christ. So, just as a dead person does not follow any physical stimulus, so we do not have to follow the stimulus of sin. **CLICK**

13. **4th, Rest in the total sufficiency of Christ** – We are in Christ and Christ is in us and we have His powerful resurrection life. He allows nothing to come into our lives that he does not either give us the power to escape or the power to endure. We are to thank Him for His complete love and acceptance of us and that we are seated with Him in our heavenly position of victory. We are safe, secure, and strong in Christ, so we can rest in His total sufficiency by faith. **SLIDE 17**
14. The important thing to remember about this **4 R Approach** is that it is only through Christ that we can apply it. **“Apart from me you can do nothing.”** **SLIDE 18**
15. **The 1st “R” – Recognize –** **CLICK** We need **His wisdom** from His Word to recognize the tricks of the power of sin. Through His wisdom we can see that the thoughts from our enemy through the power of sin are not His way for us. **SLIDE 19**
16. **The 2nd “R” – Refuse** – We need His power to refuse those thoughts, entrance into our mind. By His power we refuse self-pity, unbelief, bitterness, despair, pride, negative thoughts about others, sexual lusts, etc. **Ps. 16:8** says, **“I have set the Lord continually before me because He is at my right hand. I will not be shaken.”** **Eph. 6:10** says, **“Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”** **SLIDE 20**
17. **The 3rd “R” – Reckon** – We need His authority to count ourselves dead indeed to sin’s power over us and alive to God because we have been raised to new life in Christ. **Ps. 60:12** says, **“Through God we will display great strength, it is He who will trample down our**

enemies.” Rom. 8:2 says: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.” SLIDE 21

18. The 4th “R” – Rest – We need His grace to rest in His complete sufficiency we must walk in the complete assurance and firm conviction that He has by His grace taken care of my situation whether I feel any different or not. **Ps. 55:22 says, “Cast your burdens upon the Lord and He will sustain you.” Is. 41:10 says, “Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Surely I will help you; surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”**

Conclusion: Buddy was on his first campout, and as soon as he had pitched his tent, he went for a hike in the woods. About 15 minutes later he rushed back into camp, bleeding and messy.

"What happened?" asked a fellow camper.

"I was chased by a black snake!" cried the frightened youngster.

The other camper laughed and responded, "A black snake isn't deadly."

Buddy said, "If he can make you jump off a 10-foot cliff, he is!" **SLIDE 22**

It is very important what is going on in our heads! **CLICK**

What is going on in our heads? **SLIDE 23**

Do we have the mind of Christ and His weapons and strategy for victory?

May we have the right things going on in our heads as we go forth to battle!