Taking Control Of Your Thoughts

Billy Joe Daugherty

Contents

1 Be Transformed By the Renewing of Your Mind
2 Offering Yourself to God as a Living Sacrifice
3 God's Plans for You Are Terrific!
4 Kicking Wrong Thoughts Out of Your Mind
5 Stinking Thinking!
6 Your Thinking Will Control Your Believing
7 Think On These Things
8 Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind
Personal Prayer of Commitment

Chapter One
Be Transformed By the Renewing of Your Mind

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:2 In the *J. B. Phillips Translation* of the Bible, this verse says, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-make you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed. Thus you will prove in practice that the will of God is good, acceptable to him and perfect."

To be *transformed* is "to be changed or altered in the way you live by the renewing of your mind." The way you are living right now is a product of what is inside of your mind. You are living out what has been programmed between your ears!

You can demonstrate the perfect will of God if you align your thinking with His Word. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinks in his heart, so *is he."*

We are programmed to respond to people and situations by what has been put into our minds. This is one of the reasons I encourage you to guard what your children watch on television, because their minds are being programmed to respond in accordance with what they see. The average child growing up today, in a home where there is no screening of TV programs, sees thousands of murders in a year's time.

If we want to control our lives, we must start with what is going into our minds through the eye gate and through the ear gate. What you listen to on radio, tapes and discs, what you watch on television, videos and movies and what you read will program your life.

If you don't like the way things are right now, then you need to stop the input that has been negative, and add the input from God's Word that will reorient your life in the right direction.

It is possible to believe on Jesus in your heart and still have a mind that is going another direction. One of the most tormenting things in life is to be pulled two directions at the same time. Your heart says, "I really want to do this," but your head says, "Go this direction." Many people think they aren't saved when they have thoughts that are wrong.

We met a man in one of our apartment crusades who had been saved for many years, but cigarettes had control of him. He asked for prayer to be free. Today, he is no longer a slave to a health-destroying habit.

As a born-again believer, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and your money has been given to you by God. Therefore smoking is a spiritual matter. I'm not condemning people, but I'm saying that there is victory over cigarettes or over any other habit that has a hold on your life.

Perhaps the devil has tried to convince you that you'll never lick a particular habit. Renew your mind with Mark 9:23: "All things are possible to him who believes."

Renew your mind with Psalm 37:4, which says, "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."

If you'll get your mind aligned with what

God's Word says, then your spirit will dominate you and your mind will come underneath the control of your spirit. Your body will follow underneath both your mind and your spirit.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they allowed their body and mind to overrule their spirit. Man's spirit shifted to the bottom, and that's the story of the human race. There are wars and hatred for others because man's spirit lost the life of God in it. It became ruled by darkened minds and sensual, fleshly desires.

Until you are born again, you will be dominated by the soul realm (the mind, will and emotions) and by the body. But when you are born again, your spirit can gain the ascendancy over your body and mind by renewing your mind with the Word of God.

If you don't renew your mind, your spirit can be born again, but your soul and your body will go a different direction. You've got two against one, and that's where the pulling comes. Your heart wants to go one way, but your body and mind want to go another direction.

Many people cry out for deliverance, but if you don't renew your mind, you will go back to the old life. Part of deliverance is the prayer of faith that someone else can bring, but your part is to reprogram your computer (your mind) with God's Word so your thought processes come into alignment with God's will for your life.

Chapter Two
Offering Yourself to God as a Living Sacrifice

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:1

Dead sacrifices were offered on the altar in the Old Testament. Paul says we are to offer our bodies to God as living sacrifices. A living sacrifice is one that can crawl off the altar! That's why Paul is saying, "I beseech you to keep on offering your life unto God."

Your decision to offer your body as a living sacrifice to God isn't a one-time thing. There is an initial one-time offering, but it requires a daily follow through or a continual commitment to offer your life as a living offering unto God.

To offer your body as a sacrifice unto God refers to your *service* to God. Paul says that to offer your body unto God is your "reasonable service." In other words, God has a right to ask that you offer your life to Him, because He bought you and He owns you! When you are born again, you are no longer your own.. You no longer have a right to do your own thing. You have been bought with a price, and the price God paid for you was the blood of His own Son.

It is reasonable, if someone saved you from hell, that you offer your life to serve Him. It's a debt that you can never repay. Scripture says you are to owe no man anything except the debt of love. (Romans 13:8.) We will forever be paying a love debt to Jesus Christ. Salvation is free, but for the rest of our lives, we are to offer our love and service to God and to other people.

When you are saved, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses you. Then by a decision of your will, you offer your life in service to God.

When I was saved, I accepted the gift of salvation because I didn't want to go to hell! It was at a later time in my life that I understood I was to give my life, my future, my career and my time to God.

I became a love slave of the Lord Jesus Christ. By my choice, I offered my life unto God to serve Him every day of my life. That's a choice every believer must make. It has nothing to do with the call to a specific office of ministry, but it has to do with being born again.

As we offer our lives to God, we can prove what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God.

Chapter Three
God's Plans for You Are Terrific!

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you," says the Lord, "thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Jeremiah 29:11

God's plans for you are terrific! Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for *good works*, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

Those works have already been planned out. God didn't bring you into this earth and then say, "What am I going to do with this one?" He already has a plan for you that is good, acceptable and perfect.

If you've made some mistakes in your past, God's grace will put you back on track. The story of Abraham is a story of God's grace. God doesn't recall any of his mistakes in the New Testament.

Instead, He says of Abraham that he was a great man of faith.

The scripture records King David's failures, yet in the New Testament he is called a man after God's own heart. God still worked in his life.

We're not talking about perfect people. We are talking about a perfect Savior who has a perfect plan for our lives as imperfect people. When we come by faith to Him, we receive His mercy and grace. God can change our thinking and cause us to walk out the plan that He has for our lives. It is a wonderful plan.

Sometimes I wonder where I would be today if I hadn't chosen the will of God for my life in earlier years. Some people have said, "I don't want to do what God wants. I want to do my own thing, because God's way would be boring and dull." Now, they are living a boring and dull life. Their lives have been ruined and wrecked, and they are trying to figure out what happened. It's worth it to live for God!

Other people have questioned, "How are you going to live if you serve God and go into the ministry?" God pays well. I can guarantee you, God will take care of you better than any company on the earth, because His benefits are out of this world!

Chapter Four
Kicking Wrong Thoughts Out of Your Mind

You can kick the wrong thoughts out of your mind that the devil has implanted in you by using your spiritual weapons described in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 KJV:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Spiritual weapons, such as speaking the Word and praying, will pull down strongholds. There are mental as well as physical and spiritual strongholds. If these strongholds aren't pulled down, they will rise up and defeat you.

Pulling down strongholds was involved in taking Jericho. The Israelites tore down Jericho by marching around it seven times on the seventh day, after marching around it once a day for six previous days. The Israelites possessed the land in one city after another. These things were written for our examples.

Why did God give the Israelites the toughest place to start? Jericho was a fortified city. If the Israelites had crossed at any other point and started into the land of Canaan, they could have been attacked from the back side by the inhabitants of Jericho. God is saying, "I want you to face the tough enemies to start with, and they will never come behind you again." Hallelujah!

The Jordan River was a barrier behind them, so they could march right through the land and take city after city. <u>If you don't, take Jericho. Jericho will take you.</u> If you don't take control of the thoughts in your mind, your thoughts will take control of you. The dominant thoughts in your life will ultimately be what you live out. What you're thinking now will be what you will do later.

If you have a thought that is of God and you think on it, dwell on it, conceive that thought down in your heart, it stays in your mind and you begin to declare it with your mouth, *it will come to pass in your life.*

You can think on, conceive and dwell on wrong thoughts in a similar way. You will then come to a point where you will believe and speak the thoughts of the enemy. It could be a thought of divorce, suicide, failure, or death.

If someone says to you, "We have no answer and no cure for the sickness that you have, so you are going to die in a certain number of days," you must cast down that imagination and take authority over that stronghold. That is not the truth. There is always an answer with God. Don't ever let anyone tell you there is no cure. There is *always* a cure in Jesus. From man's standpoint, there may be no cure, but we're not limited to man's abilities. We have tapped into an unlimited resource in God.

You must cast down the thoughts and imaginations that don't agree with God's Word. The imagination that you are going to die prematurely can be so strong you see yourself in a coffin. Those kind of lies and imaginations must be destroyed.

This principle works in every area: health, family, finances, career. What you see in your mind creates a belief in your heart if you let that mental image stay there long enough. Eventually, it will drop into your spirit. When it gets inside of your spirit, you will ultimately speak it out.

I think this is one reason God told Joshua to tell the people of Israel to keep their mouths shut while they walked around Jericho. They looked at the walled city every day. God didn't want them talking about it. In essence, He said, "Keep walking. When you open your mouth, shout. Don't murmur. Shout! Don't complain. Shout! Don't talk about how big the walls are. Shout!" When they obeyed God and blew the trumpets and shouted, the walls came tumbling down.

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

—Joshua 1:8

Chapter Five
Stinking Thinking!

One of the areas where people have wrong thinking is that disasters and calamities come from God. For example, I've heard people say in the case of a child's premature death, "It must have been the will of God." There's no Scripture to support this kind of logic, because God promises long life to His children.

Many insurance companies discredit God by saying that disasters, calamities and tragedies are "acts of God." You must change your thinking and know that God is a good God.

If you are indecisive about where the devil is and where God is and where you are in between the two of them, you will not know what to resist and what to lay hold of. If the devil brings something, but you think it is from God, you will embrace it. Remember, God is for you. He is on your side.

Some people believe sickness comes from God. They believe God uses calamities, tragedies, disasters, sickness and disease to mold their character and shape the diamond in their life, thereby removing the rough edges. It's true that some people have had things happen, and out of those things they have repented or asked God to help them, and they have improved their lives. But to assume your improvement out of a difficult situation is proof that God brought that bad thing into your life is absolutely illogical. Improvement comes when you turn *to* God.

If difficulties come from God and they automatically bring improvement into people's lives, then everyone who has troubles today would be deeply spiritual. Everyone who has gone through disaster would be madly in love with God. If this was true, everyone who has gone through sickness would be full of the Holy Ghost and overflowing with love, joy and peace.

Can you see how illogical that reasoning is? People are not drawn to God because of disaster. For every one person who has been drawn to God through difficulties, there are others who have turned away from Him and who blame Him today because of a calamity, a car wreck, or sickness and disease. They didn't turn to God. They turned away from Him, because some preacher told them that God did it. They said, "If that's the way God is, I don't want to have anything to do with Him."

Each of us will be held accountable for maligning God's character. God is a good God. James 1:13 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, ’I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone." The word *tempted* in Greek means "tested or tried."

This verse is saying that God never uses evil to test you. He may give you a command to do something to test you, but He's not going to send evil against you to test you. This is where many people have misunderstood. God tested Abraham, but it wasn't with an evil thing. God knew what He was going to do on that mountain, and Abraham knew if he sacrificed Isaac, God would raise him from the dead.

In James 1:14-17 KJV, you can almost feel the heat rising in James' bones because some people accused God of bringing evil against them in order to develop them. Let's look at these verses:

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

God does not change His character. There is no variableness in Him. There's not even a shadow of turning in His character. The good and perfect gifts come from God, and that which comes to steal, kill and destroy comes from the devil. Jesus said, "The thief [Satan] does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I [Jesus] have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

I need to hit another note while I'm playing this tune! If God is the author of sickness and disease, calamity and tragedy, why didn't Jesus bring it on people during His three years of ministry on the earth? Scripture says He was the exact representation of the Father God.

Jesus said, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works" (John 14:10). Jesus also said in verse 9, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

Some people have said, "We don't know what God is going to do. We don't know what God is like." Then you don't know Jesus, because the Bible says

Jesus is exactly like the Father. We can know how God is going to respond by the way Jesus responded.

How many people did Jesus lay hands on and say, "I bless you with sickness and disease"? To how many people did Jesus say, "You keep this sickness and disease until your character is shaped"?

Are you beginning to understand the importance of renewing your mind with the Word of God? Maybe you thought your mind was renewed, but you realize you have some old traditions that have led you down a pathway of destruction.

We need to get our mind renewed to the fact that God is a good God, and He wants good things for His children. When we believe that, then we will walk out the good, the acceptable and the perfect will of God.

It changed my life when I saw that Jesus turned no one away who came to Him in faith. *Never* did Jesus bless anyone with disaster, calamity, tragedy, sickness, or disease. I said, "Jesus, if You didn't do it then and You haven't changed, then You're not doing it now." I got rid of the stinking thinking I had in my life from religious tradition, and I started expecting, anticipating, believing and seeing that God wanted to bless me.

God is a good God all the time!

Chapter Six
Your Thinking Will Control Your Believing

Your thinking will ultimately control your believing. If you think wrong, you will believe wrong. Wrong thinking will get down in your spirit when it becomes dominant in your mind. But 2 Corinthians 10:5 KJV says, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

It is God's will for you to prosper and do well. It is not His will for you to fail. Some people have an "I can't do" or an "I can't make it" attitude. We have all struggled with those feelings at times. The devil wants you to think those thoughts.

Paul got his mind renewed, and he said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

Now, if God didn't call you to the business you are in, that's a totally different issue. It won't prosper because you're not in the place God wants you to be. But if you're in the place God has called you to be, God didn't call you there to fail. He called you to succeed. If you are married, God called your marriage to be blessed and to succeed. It's time to pull down every stronghold of failure and replace it with a declaration of truth from God's Word.

This process is called "displacement." In other words, you don't just tell something to go, but you literally push something out of your mind by putting something good in its place. You don't need a vacuum head, better known as an air head! You need a head full of the Word of God! Hallelujah!

Displace bad thoughts with good ones.

Chapter Seven
Think On These Things

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are *true,* whatsoever things are *honest,* whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are *pure,* whatsoever things are *lovely,* whatsoever things are of *good report,* if there be any *virtue,* and if there be any *praise, think on these things.*

Philippians 4:8 KJV

You can get rid of wrong thoughts by putting good thoughts in your heart and mind. Your words have control over your thoughts. Don't ever say, "I can't quit thinking such-and-such," because you can. Some people say, "I can't get that thought out of my mind." Yes, you can. Some people have said, "This thing is controlling me."

How do you get rid of negative thoughts? Take the Word of God and literally shove the negative thoughts out of your mind with the Word.

You can do it by meditating upon God's Word and speaking it out of your mouth.

Let's assume you receive an evil report concerning your physical health. Begin to say, "I will live and not die. The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is raising me up and quickening my mortal body." What do you do if the thoughts keep coming? You confess, "I'm redeemed from the curse. The blood of Jesus cleanses me. Thank You, Lord, that You took my sicknesses and You bore my diseases."

If the thoughts come in the middle of the night, get up and say, "Jesus bore my sicknesses, and He carried my diseases." The Word is called the sword of the Spirit, and it was not meant to be put in the scabbard. It was meant to be unsheathed out of your lips. The Word is a weapon that will not defeat the enemy until it is on your lips. When you speak God's Word and declare it, you can drive out any wrong thoughts.

Maybe your thoughts have been of failure. Perhaps you are taking a course right now, and you can't comprehend how you will successfully complete it. Begin to declare, "I have the mind of Christ. The memory of the just is blessed.

Whatever my hand touches will prosper."

Or, if you're in a business and it isn't going well, take James 1:5 and apply

it: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." You can say, "Lord, I ask You for wisdom. I believe that I receive it. Thank You for anointing me with wisdom. Today I will walk in Your wisdom. I will walk in the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Start each day in the Word, in prayer and in communion with the Lord. Feed on His Word, replacing every wrong thought with a good thought.

If you have an impure or immoral habit, begin to say, "The pure in heart will see God. The Lord has redeemed me from all iniquity. Sin has no dominion over my life. I cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. I purify my mind and cleanse my heart with the blood of Jesus Christ. The shield of faith stops every fiery dart of the wicked, and the wicked one touches me not."

There is a Word from God to face every stronghold of the devil, but you've got to take down the Jericho (the imaginations and thoughts) before the Jericho takes you down! Start speaking the Word today!

Chapter Eight
Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:22-24

What I am teaching you is a principle for every day of your life, because we are always thinking something. We're either thinking what the evening news said, or we're thinking what God said in His Word in the good news!

When you hear a bad economic report and you listen to it, you might say, "There is going to be a recession. People are going to be without jobs. I don't know what they're going to do at my company." You can literally talk yourself into depression, or you can say, "Bless God, He will provide a table for me just as He provided manna for a million people in the wilderness. My God will meet all of my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The choice is yours.

Let's get rid of wrong thoughts. Let's kick them out and put in good thoughts by a choice. Don't let the devil tell you your children are going to serve the devil. The Bible says your seed will be blessed, so you can declare, "My children are going to serve the Lord. They are going to walk with God in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Lord, I thank You that my steps are ordered and that my future is bright. I am going from glory to glory and from strength to strength. Father, I don't trust in my own ability, but I trust in Your ability. I don't lean on the arm of the flesh, but I lean on Your strong right arm, Father."

"Lord, I thank You that as my days are, so shall my strength be. I will have a sound mind, even in my old age. My mind will get sharper, and I will be wiser in the name of Jesus. I will be more effective in the name of Jesus. I am strong in the Lord. Thank You, Lord, that You renew my strength daily. All things are working together for my good in Jesus' name."

If you have been controlled by the personality of your relatives—and they

are gripers, murmurers, criticizers and complainers—don't say, "It runs in my family. That's just the way I am." Kick that stronghold out of your life today.

You receive a new family when you are born again. You receive new relatives who are washed in the blood of the Lamb. The Bible says you are to think things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, so begin to say, "I've got a new mind. I'm not a griper, a complainer, a criticizer, or a murmurer. I'm a person who looks for good to bless people."

If there is a sickness or disease that has been transmitted in your family, don't confess, "My grandmother had it, and my great grandmother had it, so I'll probably have it, too." You can say, "No way. I received a blood transfusion from the throne of God! I received a Spirit transfusion, and Jesus said, 'Old things have passed away, and all things have become new.' I'm a new creation. I'm a new person. I renew my mind with the Word. I put off the old man."

If you have been born again, you're not an old, dirty, rotten sinner. You have been redeemed. You have been washed and cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. Begin to say, "I am the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus' blood, not by my works, but by the gift of God. I am saved through faith. I am God's workmanship. Whatever I do prospers. I refuse to worry. I'll not let worry dominate my life. I am a peaceful person. I walk in peace. I'm not a depressed person. I'm a joyful person, because the joy of the Lord is my strength."

It's time to shake off the roller coaster Christian mentality—the up one day and down the next existence! You can control your temperament.

When you take God's Word, it doesn't matter what someone says to you or what happens, because God never changes. His Word never changes. Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." The Word works in the midnight hour when you are alone. It works when the devil tells you that you have a psychiatric problem in your life. You may have had one in the past, but now you have a renewed mind. Begin to declare, "I have a sound mind. It is kept by the power of God."

Make a decision to live above fear, woe, dismay and discouragement. You can consistently live on a level of faith that declares, "I have been raised up and seated together with Christ in heavenly places. I will not be ruled by ungodly thoughts. I cast down every imagination, every wicked stronghold, and I resist the devil with the shield of faith. Every fiery thought of the devil is quenched by my faith. I resist him by speaking the Word and dispelling those doubts and stopping those fears in the name of Jesus. The Word of God is working mightily in me."

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

PERSONAL PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Father, I repent of all the negative, wrong thoughts I have entertained in my mind of both myself and others. I am a candidate for cleansing of these thoughts with Jesus' shed blood and for replacement of these thoughts with Your Word, Father.

As a first step in receiving this renewal, I accept You, Jesus, as my personal Lord and Savior. I believe You are the Son of God, and I accept Your completed work at Calvary in paying the price in full for my sins, sickness and spiritual death.

Lord, I acknowledge that I am a brand new person in my spirit now that I am born again, but my mind must be daily renewed with Your Word. Help me to be diligent in studying and meditating upon Your Word, Lord, so I will rightly divide Your Word. (2 Timothy 2:15.) Put a hunger and a thirst in me, Lord, for more and more of Your Word, which You said is life and health to all my flesh. (Proverbs 4:20-22.)

Lord Jesus, I also ask that You empower me with the Holy Spirit so I am able to live in triumph in my thought life as well as in all areas of life. Amen.

Signature _____

Date _____

About the Author

Billy Joe Daugherty is the pastor of Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Present ministry outreaches include a daily radio and television ministry; monthly crusades in government-subsidized housing projects in the Tulsa area; and crusades held in other nations.

Victory Christian Center, established in 1981, operates Victory Christian School, Victory Bible Institute, and the World Missions Training Center. Other Victory Bible Institutes have been established in Russia, Mexico, Albania, and Czech Republic.

Billy Joe has authored several books including *Faith Power, Absolute Victory, This New Life, The Demonstration of the Gospel,* and most recently, *Led By the Spirit,* the testimony of God's divine direction for his life and ministry.

Billy Joe and his wife, Sharon, were married in 1973, and have four children: Sarah, Ruth, John and Paul.