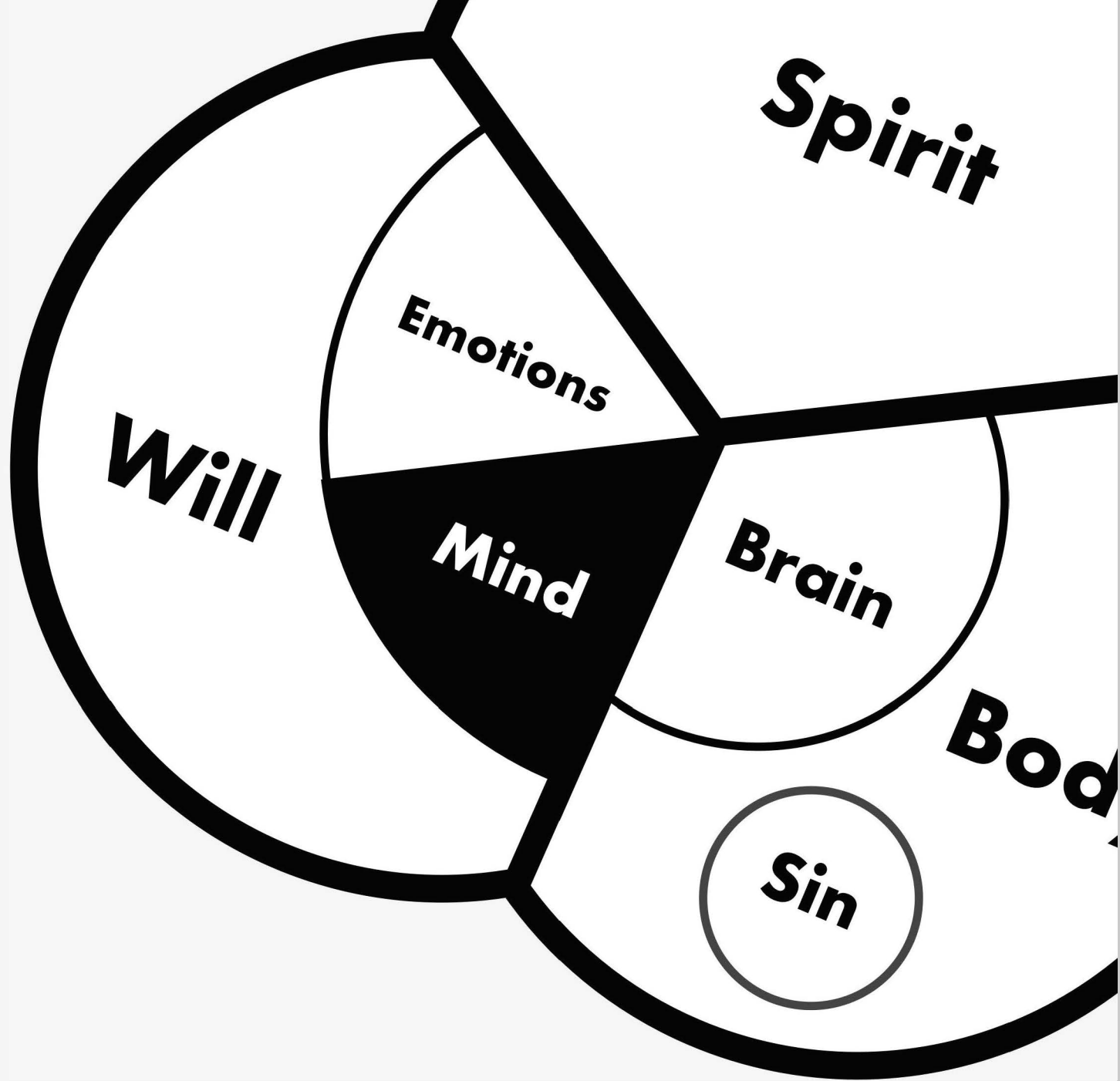




A Study of the Mind

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A STUDY OF THE MIND

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A STUDY OF THE MIND

Spiritual battles are won or lost at the threshold of the mind, not in the mind.

On days off I sometimes find myself worrying and mulling over the cares of my life, i.e., work, relationships, home, etc. As I become aware of the things my mind is dwelling on, I begin a battle to set my mind on relaxing thoughts. For me these thoughts might take me sailing, skiing, to a concert, or to an enjoyable time with my family or friends.

In much the same way, I must set my mind on spiritual things. The Bible stresses this fact in several places:

Isaiah 26:3 (Creation House Pub. 1960)

"The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee."

Isaiah 26:3 (New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1982)

"You will keep him in perfect peace, **whose mind is stayed on you.**"

Romans 8:5-6

"For those who are according to the flesh **set their minds** on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the **mind set** on the flesh is death, but the **mind set** on the Spirit is life and peace."

I Cor. 10:5

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."

Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and **your minds** in Christ Jesus."

Colossians 3:2

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

I Timothy 1:7 (J.B. Phillips, The New Testament in Modern English, Macmillan Co., 1958)

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and love and a **sound mind.**"

James 1:6 (Kenneth Taylor, Living Bible, Tyndale House, Pub. 1971)

But when you ask Him, be sure that you really expect Him to tell you, for **a doubtful mind** will be as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind."

The ultimate intention, as a result of having set my mind on spiritual things, is found in *Romans 12:2*. "Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind...**" In order that my mind may be renewed, I must set my mind on spiritual things.

Setting my mind on spiritual things is not as easy as it may sound. The Bible makes reference to a spiritual warfare, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God..." (*Ephesians 6:12-13a*) The

struggle to set my mind and see it transformed and renewed is not a casual thing; it is a **serious warfare**.

In her book **Streams in the Desert**, (*Zondervan 1925*), Mrs. Charles Cowman implies that the Lord cannot do much with a dejected soul, therefore, the adversary attempts to push the Lord's children into despair and hopelessness over their own condition or the condition of those around them. He will magnify and give a false interpretation to our problems, making the burden too heavy to bear. We cannot resist the wiles of the enemy while in this state, nor prevail in prayer for others. We need to understand the attacks of the enemy upon our minds and how to resist them. If the enemy can cause us to waver, then he seeks to "wear us down" by a prolonged siege, so that we, out of sheer frustration, let go of the "cry of victory," which is our hope of overcoming.

If God's enemy, Satan, can tempt me to focus on disappointments, it will not be long until these become discouragements, spiraling into depression, then despair and demoralization, finally resulting in a stronghold of the enemy, realizing little of the hope that lies **in** Christ. Satan will spare **no** effort to tempt, deceive and accuse me if it will result in my choosing to focus my mind on something, anything, other than Christ and Him alone. The efforts, often prolonged sieges, demand that as God's child I be mentally ready for these onslaughts.

One of the most important points to keep in mind when discussing these issues is the fact that Satan is a defeated foe, a "lion with no teeth," only a growl – a "dog that is all bark." He has no authority whatsoever over me. I DO NOT HAVE TO OBEY HIM ANY MORE. Regrettably, there will be times when I will obey him. I will be disobedient, and I will sin, but I do not **have** to!

It's helpful for me to think of my mental process in terms of two channels. Channel 1 is to follow Satan's suggestions and desires for my life, resulting in anger, disappointment, hostility, inferiority, depression, defeat, pride, a critical tongue, despair and other such things. Channel 2 is to follow Christ's will and goals for my life I sometimes refer to Channel 1 as "walking after the flesh" and Channel 2 as "walking in the Spirit." These channels are switched just like the television channels at home. A decision is made to change perspectives on my mental screen.

One of the most beneficial truths a Christian can grasp is the fact that "walking in the Spirit" or being under Christ's control is not an emotional or "feeling" concept. It can be, but most of the time it is not. Walking in Channel 2 or "in the Spirit," is something we choose to do and then set our mind on.

Just recently my alarm clock went off. I awoke to the sound of rain. The air was cool and clean and a nice breeze was blowing in my bedroom window. I wanted so badly to stay in bed for a while. I knew this desire would not be profitable, because it was a workday. Thus a decision was made: I chose not to lie back down but to praise God for such a beautiful day, get up and go on in to take a shower. Just like a television channel I switched from my feelings of sleepiness and set my mind on another perspective - the beautiful day that God had made, in spite of my drowsy feelings.

Setting my mind on spiritual matters is not dependent upon my feeling like this is what I should do. **It is entirely possible to control the focus of my mind.** To try to allow my emotions to set my mind focus is to destine myself for a rollercoaster experience in life. In His grace...I rest! I must get up and walk in the complete assurance and firm conviction that He has taken care of the situation whether I feel differently or not.

John 16:33 (Amplified New Testament, Zondervan Pub. House, 1958)

"I have told you these things so that in Me you may have perfect peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer – take courage, be confident, certain, undaunted – for I have overcome the world. I HAVE DEPRIVED IT OF POWER TO HARM, HAVE CONQUERED IT FOR YOU."

Satan uses the Power of Sin to tempt, deceive and accuse me. The Power of Sin is referred to in scripture as "sin" (for example, see *Romans 7:20*). Now the Power of Sin disguises himself as my old dead self and addresses me in first person pronouns. This means that it will seem as though I am coming up with thoughts of depression, impurity, selfishness and covetousness. This, of course, leaves me wide open for what seems to be self-condemnation for thinking such crummy thoughts. The point is this: even though I feel as though these thoughts are mine...can identify with them and may be used to them, **they are not MY thoughts**, they are from the Power of Sin, who is also the one condemning me. Once I've been deceived into going along with the Power of Sin, the thoughts and condemnations have become mine; I've been deceived and thus have sinned. I must **RECOGNIZE** the origin of the thoughts; **REFUSE** to accept them; **RECKON** or consider myself to be dead to the Power of Sin and Rest...safe and secure and strong in the love of Jesus Christ, whether I feel that safety or not.

For example, I:

- 1) **RECOGNIZE** this is a condemning thought- attacking my character, accusing me and confusing me-a thought that will lead to my destruction and which is not true.
- 2) **REFUSE** to accept that thought as mine upon which to dwell. I know where it is coming from!
- 3) **RECKON** myself dead to Sin. My true desire is to not follow Sin. Thus, just as a dead person, I will not follow the stimulation of Sin's thoughts or accusations.
- 4) **REST** in the fact that I am in Christ and He is in me. Nothing can bother me unless Christ allows this for my benefit. Thank Him for His complete acceptance and love. Thank Him for seating me in heaven with Him. Thank Him for this moment of victory!

Only **through Christ** can I accomplish these things! I must have His **WISDOM** to **recognize** Sin, His **POWER** to **refuse** these thoughts entrance to my mind. His **AUTHORITY** to **reckon** myself dead to Sin, and His **GRACE** to **rest** in His sufficiency.

- a) Through His **WISDOM** I **recognize** these thoughts as the Power of Sin at work in my life. Through a knowledge of His word, I see that these thoughts are not His way for me.
- b) Through His **POWER** I **refuse** to accept thoughts of disappointment, despair, bitterness, hopelessness, self-pity, self-fulfillment, self-destruction, resentment, anger, unhappiness, defeat and unbelief. These thoughts are presented to me by Satan, "...the father of lies" (*John 8: 44*), through the Power of Sin, who then empts, deceives and accuses me.
- c) By His **AUTHORITY** I **reckon** myself dead to Sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. I do not have to obey Satan, speaking to me through the Power of Sin, because I have considered myself or reckoned myself dead to Sin.
- d) In His **GRACE** I **rest**. Many times I go through the first steps but never experience victory because I do not feel victorious. I must walk in the complete assurance – the firm conviction –

that He has taken care of the situation...whether I feel any different or not. *John 16:33*
"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

How many times a day do we have to do these things? A hundred, probably, and only ninety-nine on the second, and maybe ninety-eight on the third, but back up to ninety-nine on the fourth! For by now Satan will realize that we are really serious about this – that we are actually on the road to realizing our victory – and will hit us hard with his "BIG guns!" Now a "BIG gun" doesn't have to be traumatic catastrophe. Many times Satan hits us hardest with flat tires, smashed finger nails, rain instead of sunshine on the day of the picnic...simple things, disappointing things. As we claim this victory as ours – and practice it – one day we will actually sense that in some ways we "feel" victory. Praise God!

VERSES OF ENCOURAGEMENT

WISDOM...in order to **recognize** those thoughts that come to us from Satan – accusing, deceiving, tempting.

Proverbs 2:1-6

"If you will receive my sayings, and treasure my commandments within you, **make** your ear attentive to wisdom, **incline** your heart to understanding: for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you **seek** her as silver, and **search** for her as for hidden treasures; **then** you will **discern** the fear of the Lord, and discover the knowledge of God. For **the Lord gives wisdom**; from His mouth come **knowledge and understanding**."

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him **ask** of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and **it will be given** to him."

POWER...to **refuse** the entrance of these thoughts into our minds.

Psalms 16:8

"**I have set** the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand. **I will not be shaken**."

Ephesians 6:10

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of **His** might."

Colossians 1:11

"Strengthened with all power, according to **His** glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously..."

AUTHORITY... to rebuke Satan and **reckon** ourselves dead to Sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 60:12

"Through God we shall do valiantly, and **it is He** who will tread down our adversaries."

Matthew 28:18

"Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, '**All authority** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'"

Luke 10:17

"And the seventy returned with joy, saying, '**Lord** even the demons are **subject** to us in **Your** name.'"

Romans 6:11

"Even so consider yourselves to be **dead to sin**, but **alive to God in Christ Jesus**."

Romans 6:6-7

"Knowing this, that our old self **was crucified** with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; **for he who has died is freed from sin**."

Romans 8:2

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus **has set you free** from the law of sin and death."

GRACE...to believe and **rest** in HIS wisdom, HIS power, HIS authority and HIS finished work. (G-God's, R-Riches, A-at, C-Christ's, E-Expense...GRACE)

Isaiah 26:3

"The **steadfast of mind** Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he **trusts** in Thee."

Hebrews 4:2b, 3a

"...the work they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard, For we who have believed enter that rest..."

Psalms 37:23-24

"The steps of a man are established by the Lord; and He delights in his way. When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong: **because the Lord is the One who holds his hand**."

Psalms 147:5

"**Great** is our Lord and **abundant in strength**; His **understanding is infinite**."

Isaiah 41:10

"**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."

Micah 7:8

"Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise; though I dwell in darkness, the **Lord is a light for me**."

Habakkuk 3:17-19

"Though the fig tree should not blossom, and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail, and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. **The Lord God is my strength**, and He has made my **feet like hinds' feet**, and makes me **walk on high places**."

Romans 4:20-21

"Yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, **giving glory to God** and **being fully assured** that **what He had promised. He was able also to perform**."

II Corinthians 12:9-10

"And He has said to me. **'My grace is sufficient for you,** for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

Philippians 1:6

"I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it** until the day of Christ Jesus."

John 4:4 (NASB)

You are from God, little children, and **have overcome** them, because **greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.**"

Psalms 55:22

Cast your burden upon the Lord, and **He will** sustain you."

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your **mind dwell** on these things."

A STUDY OF THE MIND: REPRISE

Directions: A Study of the Mind: Reprise will ask you to think through the things you have read in **A Study of the Mind**. Take your time and enjoy investing a new, fresh, "reprise" look at **A Study of the Mind**, as you trust Christ to minister to you through this study.

1. What is meant by "spiritual battles are won or lost at the threshold of the mind, not in the mind? Especially define and elaborate on "...the threshold of the mind."
2. "Spiritual battles are won or lost at the threshold of the mind, not in the mind." The key phrase in this quote is, "...the threshold of the mind." In paragraph form describe how you can have victory over one of your temptations by dealing with it at the "threshold of your mind."
3. By setting my mind on spiritual things, the ultimate intention of God will be met. What is that ultimate intention? Support your answer from scripture and explain the ultimate intention in paragraph form.
4. According to Ephesians 6:10-18, why is it hard to control my mind?
5. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (*Eph. 6:12*). Is this verse suggesting that all of our struggles are spiritual struggles? Think of a major problem you are facing and explain how it is spiritual in nature.
6. According to *Ephesians 6:10-18* and *II Corinthians 10:3-4*, what are the weapons to use in dealing with struggles and what makes these weapons powerful?
7. When it seems that God has put too much on me and that I will fall under the burden, what is

the problem?

8. What is the underlying purpose to Satan's temptations, deceptions and accusations?

9. Why is Satan a "defeated foe?" – and what does this have to do with me?

10. What are some of the things that Satan uses through the Power of Sin to deceive you into "walking after the flesh?" Explain this in as much detail as you feel necessary in order to understand this problem.

11. What are some practical things that you can use to help yourself "walk after the Spirit?" In addition, list ten to fifteen (or more) Godly thoughts upon which to focus your attention.

12. How important is it that we **feel** the Spirit's presence while "walking in the Spirit?"

13. If you find yourself fluctuating between victory and defeat, what is a possible reason for the wavering based upon **A Study of the Mind**?"

14. Of what consequence is it to you that Christ overcame the world? Explain your answer with scripture making special efforts to tell of the benefit this is **to you**.

15. It seems to me that at times Sin has very little difficulty deceiving us. How do you account for this?

16. Self-condemnation over deceitful thoughts comes many times – from where and how does it come?

17. Use a dictionary and/or a thesaurus to find synonyms for each of the four words beginning with "R" – Recognize, Refuse, Reckon, Rest. List your findings.

18. Think of one of your temptations. Write a paragraph using the words Recognize, Refuse, Reckon, and Rest to the point that you understand how to use these words when faced with this temptation.

19. Using scripture from A Study of the Mind, what is the nature of Satan, what is he like and what are the only kinds of thoughts he is capable of sending to us?

20. What are the "big guns" Satan uses on you?

21. By choosing three or four of the 'big guns' in your own life and using A Study of the Mind, explain in as much detail as necessary how you can have victory in these areas.

22. What does this sentence from page 11 mean to you? "As we claim this victory as ours-and practice it- one day we will actually sense that in some ways we "feel" victory-praise God!"

23. By using the words "if" and "then" discern from *Proverbs 2:1-6* what your responsibility is and what God's responsibility is to you.

24. Paraphrase *Philippians 4:13*, putting special emphasis on the power source mentioned in the passage.

25. Do we need to tremble in fear or anxiety or worry about what Satan might do to us? Explain your answer using *Luke 10:17-19* and *1 John 4:4*.
26. Elaborate on *Romans 6:11* so that the principle of setting your mind comes through clearly. Write this in paragraph form.
27. Look up the word "free" in a dictionary. What does *Romans 8:2* mean to you based upon the definition of "free"?
28. What does it mean to be steadfast of mind? What scripture referenced in **The Study of the Mind** will be helpful?
29. What is faith and how is it helpful to you?
30. *Habakkuk 3:17-19* seems to be suggesting to praise God in difficulty. Why should God want me to praise Him for hardship?
31. Paraphrase *Philippians 4:8*, giving specific examples of each adjective, i.e. "true" (God's Word gospel, God's love for me, my righteousness in Christ etc.). In addition to the above procedure explain how you intend to "let your mind dwell on these things."

SURVIVAL KIT

Here are ten suggestions designed to help you find a way to set your mind on Christ and begin the process of transforming and renewing your mind.

- I. Use an audio device to listen to:
 - A. Bible teachers or preachers.
 - B. The Bible on CD/MP3.
 - C. Biblical subject matter.
- II. Jot down scripture verses on index cards and put them over your sink, on your bathroom mirror, over your desk or station at work, possibly by your telephone, or maybe on the dash of your car. Take cards with you to the doctor's office or any place else where you might have to sit and wait for a while.
- III. Find a good preacher on the radio and listen habitually.
- IV. Take advantage of the good books at your Christian bookstore.
- V. Have a prayer partner...a confidant. This should be someone whom you can trust and who has the desire to put Christ first in his or her life just as you do. Spend time sharing together, reading God's Word, and praying as well as becoming closer friends.
- VI. Learn some scripture choruses (passages of the Bible put to music) or make up your own music to a passage of scripture and sing, hum or whistle these words and tune (through gritted teeth sometimes!).
- VII. Picture yourself already in heaven (*Ephesians 2:6*, *Colossians 3:1*, *II Corinthians 4:18*): crawl up in your Father's lap and sit there, let Him hold you, take Him to your favorite fishing spot or to play tennis.

VIII. Do for your husband/wife what you would like for that person to do for you (*Colossians* 3:23). You may want to refer to the "Victorious Christian Living" CDs available through Lifetime at lifetimeministries.myshopify.com

IX. Take advantage of the wealth of Christian music available. There are many quality artists recording every conceivable style of music from rock to blues, from classical to pop, and country to high church. Ask a Christian bookstore to help you and then let this minister to your mind as you listen.

"FINALLY, BRETHREN, WHATEVER IS TRUE, WHATEVER IS HONORABLE, WHATEVER IS RIGHT, WHATEVER IS PURE, WHATEVER IS LOVELY, WHATEVER IS OF GOOD REPUTE, IF THERE IS ANY EXCELLENCE AND IF ANYTHING WORTHY OF PRAISE, LET YOUR MIND DWELL ON THESE THINGS."

Philippians 4:8

NOTE: These materials were compiled by Preston H. Gillham and Anabel Gillham of Lifetime Ministries, October 1980. All rights reserved.

The Bible speaks often, and with great intensity, concerning the importance of setting your mind on spiritual things. By this you gain victory over renegade emotions. Through your mind, you discern what truth is. Faith resides in your mind acting as a spiritual catalyst toward triumph. Focusing your mind on things above prepares a strong line of defense against Satan's attacks. By setting your mind on spiritual things you will be transformed, experientially, into the person Jesus intends you to be. In these pages you will find practical explanations on how to set your mind on things above, and in so doing, realize the transforming power of God's Word.

Lifetime Ministries has been teaching the essentials of the Christian Life since 1976. Beginning as a counseling ministry, Lifetime now ministers primarily through its website – www.lifetime.org – offering books, audio resources, video resources, articles, and devotionals.

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