

# BATTLEFIELD MIND

## Introduction

*The mind today is in profound trouble, perhaps more than ever before. How to order the mind on sound Christian principles, at the heart of where it is formed and informed, is one of the greatest themes that can be considered. Charles Malik*

There are many spiritual battlefields in the world today. There is the battlefield of the media, and the battlefield of education to name just two, but the battlefield on which the most crucial and desperate battles are fought is the battlefield of the mind.

## The facts

### 1. Your mind is very active

Several years ago, the National Science Foundation put out some very interesting statistics. The average person thinks about 1000 thoughts per hour, about 12,000 thoughts per day. A deeper thinker thinks about 50,000 thoughts daily.

### 2. Your mind has three enemies

Many Christians think that only the Devil is against them, when in reality they have three enemies...

- **The World** (the world's system of thought and influence)

*<sup>18</sup>We know that those who have become part of God's family do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot get his hands on them. <sup>19</sup>We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the power and control of the evil one. <sup>20</sup>And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we are in God because we are in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life. <sup>21</sup>Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts. **1 John 5:18-21 (NLT)***

*<sup>4</sup>You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with this world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again, that if your aim is to enjoy this world, you can't be a friend of God. **James 4:4 (NLT)***

- **The Flesh** (every person's inherited sinful nature)

*<sup>16</sup>So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. <sup>17</sup>The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict. **Galatians 5:16-17 (NLT)***

- **The Devil** (Satan, his fallen angels, demons and their influence)

*<sup>10</sup>A final word: Be strong with the Lord's mighty power. <sup>11</sup>Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil. <sup>12</sup>For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms. **Ephesians 6:10-12 (NLT)***

### 3. The fall of man started with one thought

*<sup>1</sup>Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the LORD God had made. "Really?" he*

asked the woman. "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?"

<sup>2</sup>"Of course we may eat it," the woman told him. <sup>3</sup>"It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die."

<sup>4</sup>"You won't die!" the serpent hissed. <sup>5</sup>"God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."

<sup>6</sup>The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too. **Genesis 3:1 (NLT)**

The fall of man, with all its consequences – sin, sickness, death and destruction, all began with one thought: "Did God really say?..." We must never underestimate the powerful potential of the single thought.

## 4. Your thoughts dictate your actions and life

Why is the mind the most crucial battlefield? Because if Satan can take (and hold) territory in your mind, he can ultimately become the dictator of your life.

*"Sow a thought, and you reap an act; Sow an act, and you reap a habit; Sow a habit, and you reap a character; Sow a character, and you reap a destiny"* **Charles Reade**

<sup>7</sup>*As a man thinks in his heart, so he becomes.* **Proverbs 23:7**

## The attacks

This study will focus on how we are attacked in our minds and what to do about those attacks, what strategies and counter-measures we can put in place to be the conquerors not the captives.

Satan's mind weapons	Defensive strategies and counterattacks
Flaming arrows	Take every thought captive (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)
Amplified memories	Renew your mind... with the Word of God (Romans 12:2, Ephesians 5:25-26)
Thought onslaught	Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7)
Stronghold of wrong thinking	Cry out to God... to change the way you think (Jonah 2:7, Romans 12:2)

## Satan's mind weapons

### 1. Flaming arrows

<sup>16</sup>*In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan.* **Ephesians 6:16 (NLT)**

In old times, warriors invading villages would fire flame-tipped arrows at rooftops. Fire would spread quickly and out of control, from rooftop to rooftop until the entire village was engulfed in flames.

The enemy's initial plan of attack is to hit you with sinful thoughts that come into your mind from out of nowhere, when you least expect it, just like a flaming arrow. If you don't get rid of the thought quickly, if you begin to dwell on the thought, it can quickly become a fire that can consume your mind.

It is not a sin to be hit with a flaming arrow. It is sin however, when we choose to dwell on the thought, when we know we shouldn't. We all know when we cross that line. It is easy to think that flaming arrows are confined to lustful thoughts, but flaming arrows are any thought that is planted by Satan that is not right.

Flaming arrows are usually cleverly disguised as your own thought. Satan will make you think that you thought the thought, where in reality, it is a thought planted in your mind by him. Don't be fooled. Remember Satan is the Father of Lies, and he never plays fair.

### 2. Amplified memories

We have all done and seen things that we are ashamed of. Sins committed perhaps decades ago before we

were saved. God forgives our sin, but we usually have to live with the consequences. The consequences include the memories of our sinful actions that will never go away.

*Epinephrine is a chemical which is secreted into the bloodstream by the adrenal gland when the person indulges in watching activity of a sexual nature. Epinephrine goes to the brain and locks in the visual stimulus present at the time. The mind is then polluted with sexually explicit images. Furthermore, the person will remember these images without trying, and he will see them regardless of his desire to forget them.*

The enemy will occasionally take our memories and amplify them, causing us to dwell on images, experiences or emotions that have not troubled us for years. An electric guitar when strummed is extremely quiet but when it is plugged into an amplifier with the volume turned up, the sound can be deafening. Satan does that to our unwanted memories.

### 3. Wrong thought onslaught

If you dwell on the flaming arrows, it won't be long before they start a fire of bad thinking in your mind that will become an onslaught. If the arrows are not repelled instantly, more will come. If you dwell too long on those thoughts, they will become an irresistible force, affecting not only your mind, but your will and emotions also. Sometimes these thought onslaughts can continue over an extended period of time.

Research shows that the human mind is like terrain and our thought processes make tracks in the terrain. Once we have allowed our thoughts to progress down one direction, the next time the same thought is triggered they will travel down the same track. These tracks or pathways of thinking become so imbedded in our minds that they never go away, and we will always struggle with habitual thought processes unless we learn to divert the thought at the very beginning and make new, healthy tracks of thinking in our minds. We must deliberately create new tracks and over time the old ones will become overgrown, and almost indistinguishable.

The 'Valiant Man' course by Alan Meyer covers this in depth and I recommend every man (16 and up) to take the course if the opportunity arises.

### 4. Stronghold of wrong thinking

If you do not take flaming arrows seriously, are passive when memories are amplified and are overwhelmed by sinful thought processes... sooner or later the enemy will take territory and will set up strongholds of wrong thinking in our minds.

Why do some people go through life with a victim mentality, aimlessly wandering from one abusive relationship to another? A stronghold of wrong thinking. Why do some people continuously struggle with thinking that God is harsh, standing over them with a stick, ready and willing to punish them for every wrong move they make? A stronghold of wrong thinking. The examples are almost endless. These strongholds can be very deep tracks in our minds, or demonic habitations. The danger of strongholds in our mind is that they are incredibly hard to overcome.

<sup>27</sup>*And do not give the devil a foothold. Ephesians 4:27 (NIV)*

The Greek word 'foothold' can mean real-estate, or 'an inhabited place'. Each time a person deliberately dwells on sinful thoughts and allows them to permeate in their mind, they put another brick in the wall of a satanic fortress in their life. It is only a matter of time before these strongholds become inhabited by a demonic force. To be free, one must truly repent, cry out to God for deliverance, take back the ground and retrain their thinking.

## Defensive measures and counterattacks

### 1. Take your thoughts captive

Many Christians have never learned to take their thoughts captive, and as a result live lives of defeat and condemnation, trying to live the overcoming Christian life with a cesspool for a mind.

<sup>4</sup>*The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.* <sup>5</sup>*We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.* **2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NKJV)**

We must learn the art of commanding our thoughts. No one else can do this for us, and on the raging battlefield of our mind, with three enemies working in unison to overcome us, we are left with no choice. Take your thoughts captive, or be taken captive by your thoughts.

If you catch a bird and put it in a cage, it will starve to death if it isn't fed. We must do that with sinful thoughts. It doesn't come naturally, but if you are disciplined, and with God's help, it will become a natural response when you are hit with flaming arrows.

When a sinful thought hits my mind, I usually imagine that I pluck out the arrow from my head and throw it away. Sometimes I imagine scrunching up the thought with my hands (like a piece of paper) and throwing it away. Many times, just 'thinking' a response to the flaming arrow isn't enough. Sometimes we must be creative and determined to break the thought process somehow, and replace the thought.

Don't get sad if you are struggling with flaming arrows... get mad at the enemy! Fight back when the next flaming arrow or arrows are fired. You will find that Satan will usually back off. The next time a flaming arrow hits you...

- **Interrupt the process**

Wear a watch and say the time out loud. This simple action and other similar ones can be effective in breaking the thought process.

- **Praise God**

Start thanking God for all the blessings you have received, and worship Him for who He is. Praise and worship is a very powerful weapon against the enemy.

- **Pray for someone**

Start praying for the salvation of a friend or family member. Prayer is powerful and Satan won't attack if his arrows trigger you to become a prayer warrior.

## 2. Renew your mind

Although you can't change the past, and your memories, you can renew your mind to a point where the memories lose their intensity so much that Satan can't grab hold of them.

<sup>2</sup>*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...* **Romans 12:2a (NIV)**

<sup>25</sup>*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her* <sup>26</sup>*to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word...*  
**Ephesians 5:25-26 (NIV)**

Some Bible scholars combine the two verses together to give some very wise advice on how we can effectively renew our minds... by the cleansing effect the Word of God (Bible) has when we immerse ourselves in it. It's a process, it won't happen overnight but it will happen!

## 3. Submit to God, resist the devil

<sup>7</sup>*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* **James 4:7 (NIV)**

### Definition of submission:

- To yield or surrender (oneself) to the will or authority of another.
- To give in to the authority, power, or desires of another.

### Definition of resisting:

- To strive to fend off and remain firm against the actions, effects or force of something.

James 4:7 is an amazing promise of victory, if we get serious with God, and put the effort into retaliation against the devil.

Firstly you must surrender your life to God. That includes your mind and thought processes. Secondly, you need to aggressively resist the devil. A major reason why Christians don't live the victorious life which is theirs to live is because they simply don't take the Bible's instructions seriously.

The Christian life is not a walk in the park, it's a struggle on the battlefield. Are you determined enough to spend serious time in warfare prayer? Are you desperate enough to go without food (fasting) to see breakthrough? Are you committed to accountable relationships with trusted friends/mentors who will partner with you in winning the battle? This is what it takes to gain the victory on the battlefield of your mind.

## 4. Cry out to God to change the way you think

<sup>7</sup>*"When I had lost all hope, I turned my thoughts once more to the LORD. And my earnest prayer went out to you in your holy Temple. **Jonah 2:7 (NLT)***

<sup>2</sup>*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is. **Romans 12:2 (NIV)***

When we have allowed strongholds of wrong thinking to be erected in our minds, there is little we can do to become free on our own. We must cry out to God in desperation. Just as Jonah cried out to God in true repentance and willingness to be changed, so must we. Our deliverance will come but it will take humility, determination and a fight. Strongholds can be broken, but we must be careful to re-train the patterns of wrong thinking, else the ground may be re-taken, and the enemy emplacements fortified.

## More strategies

- **Set up a defensive perimeter**

<sup>8</sup>*And now, dear brothers and sisters, let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. **Philippians 4:8 (NLT)***

We can't change what we've seen and done in the past, but we can definitely take charge of our future and stop giving the enemy anything which he can amplify in our minds. Make positive boundaries in your life of what you will allow yourself to see, do, speak and hear. Almost all of what you see and hear through your eye and ear gates is your own personal choice.

- **Get accountable**

<sup>8</sup>*Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour. **1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)***

Lionesses will only target weak, young, aloof, or lone animals. They will not attack those animals who are safe and secure within the numbers of the herd. Accountability provides that safety. When we are open, honest and transparent with those we trust and are kept accountable by them, we become like the strong animals in the middle of the group. Those who run from accountability and isolate themselves become easy targets.

*A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment. **Proverbs 18:1 (NKJV)***

Very few people survive lion attacks, because most attacks are on lone people, attacked from behind by a hundred pound killing machine, with no immediate defenses or assistance at hand.

- **Build up your spirit**

<sup>16</sup>*So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.* <sup>17</sup>*The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict.* **Galatians 5:16 (NLT)**

A constant battle rages within us. It is the grudge match between our sinful nature and our spirit. If we build up our spirit by immersing ourselves in God's presence, godly fellowship, prayer, Bible reading etc. we will be the over-comers that the Bible talks about. If we starve our sinful nature, it will be puny and weak, putting up little resistance when times of temptation come.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the Bible says that the fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful (James 5:16). To be the victor in our mind battlefield we would be wise to pray the following verses regularly and genuinely...

<sup>4</sup>*May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.* **Psalms 19:4 (NLT)**

<sup>23</sup>*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.*

<sup>24</sup>*Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

**Psalms 139:23-24 (NLT)**

Peace of mind is a treasure that much of the world desperately seeks but can't find, yet it is easily attainable. It all comes down to re-training our thinking, focussing on the right thoughts, taking captive the wrong thoughts, creating new tracks, and being surrendered to God.

<sup>3</sup>*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, whose thoughts are fixed on you!*  
**Isaiah 26:3 (NLT)**

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