



Satan's War on the Mind

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Part 2

Resisting evil thoughts

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. EPHESIANS 6:11

Evil thoughts

As we continue to look at Satan's war on our minds, we consider the battle with evil thoughts. Now, there are certainly times when evil thoughts arise from our own sinful hearts; however, evil thoughts can also come from the devil.

For example, have you ever been praying and suddenly had your mind assaulted by blasphemous thoughts? *How could I think that?* you wonder. Well, there's a good chance it wasn't your thought—that it was the enemy throwing that in. Or maybe right in the middle of you worshipping and praising God, suddenly pornographic images flash across your mind. You think, *Oh God, forgive me!* Then the enemy's right there, condemning you for being perverted, telling you that you don't belong in church. These are like lightning bolts, suddenly flashing out of nowhere. That's often how it is when the devil is behind the evil thought.

You are not alone in this struggle. Many of God's servants throughout history have gone through similar things. It's part of our spiritual battle.

Charles Spurgeon, one of the greatest Gospel preachers of all time, confessed to having prolonged periods of being assaulted by blasphemous thoughts. He even began to question his salvation. Sometimes, when we're assaulted with these thoughts, that's what we do. And that's exactly what the devil wants you to do. He throws these wicked thoughts in your mind, then stands back, points an accusing finger, and says, "How can you be a Christian and think that?" That's why he is called in Scripture the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10).

During his struggle, Spurgeon confided in an older, godly man. The man asked him one simple question: "Do you hate these thoughts?" Young Spurgeon's reply was,

"Yes, I detest them." The man said, "Then they're not yours. Send them on to the devil to whom they belong." That's what we need to do with these blasphemous, evil, or perverted thoughts. Send them on to the devil to whom they belong. They're not yours.

This happens today, even to pastors as they stand up to preach. I have heard others

Third, turn them into occasions to praise and to pray. This is where we can turn the enemy's weapons back on him. When blasphemous thoughts come through your mind, take that opportunity to praise God even more—more devotedly, more sincerely. If somebody comes to your mind—maybe in a perverted or hateful sense—turn those thoughts into prayer; pray for blessings on their life. And here's the reality. There will

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describe it, and I've experienced it myself. It was a feeling almost like somebody was forcing me in that direction. Another time, when I was a young pastor, I was walking toward this family and suddenly had this overwhelming thought: *Punch the guy right in the face as hard as you can.* I was shocked: *No! I'm not going to do that!* Of course I didn't, but I remember thinking, *What? Punch him? This is crazy!*

We may laugh at these outrageous things after the fact, but when they're happening, they can really catch us off guard: *What's going on?* Just know that this is satanic and demonic; it is part of the devil's assault. So how do we overcome this kind of attack?

Overcoming Evil Thoughts

Three things are helpful in resisting evil thoughts. First, refuse to own them. Just as the man said to Spurgeon, "Send them back to the devil." You just say, *That's not my thought. I'm not going to own it.* As 2 Corinthians 10:5b says, ***bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ***—just kick those blasphemous thoughts out of your mind.

Second, refuse to act upon those thoughts. The devil puts thoughts in your mind so he can hurt or destroy you. So we can't own these thoughts, and we must refuse to act upon them.

come a point where the devil will just move on. ***Resist the devil and he will flee from you*** (James 4:7b). We can turn the flaming arrows of the devil into praise and prayer and defeat his attempts to overthrow us.

In closing, the Bible tells us that the devil comes in different ways. In 1 Peter 5, we are told, ***be sober, be vigilant; ... your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*** (v. 8). At times he comes ferociously and viciously. But Paul tells us that he also comes subtly. Paul said to the Corinthians, ***But I fear ... as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*** (2 Corinthians 11:3). So there are times when he's very subtle, hiding behind something; he doesn't want you to know that it's him. He wants you to think that it's God telling you that He's finished with you. Or that it's you thinking these thoughts.

Whatever the case, Peter tells us to be sober and vigilant—clear-minded and watchful. We need a clear picture of what's going on—we are under attack. This is a spiritual battle, and we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

May the Lord help us to be alert, to resist, and to stand firm in our faith. May we not be swayed by our feelings, but rather stand upon the eternal truth of God's Word. ✚