



SATAN'S WAR ON THE MIND

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Part 3

As believers, we are engaged in a spiritual battle, and Satan's primary target is our mind. As I discussed previously, Scripture reveals that the enemy can influence our thinking process: He plants lies and doubts about God's Word, and he can hurl blasphemous, perverse, evil thoughts into our minds. Today I want to talk about how he uses self-destructive thoughts and fear.

Self-Destructive Thoughts

Destructive thoughts press us toward self-destructive behavior or lifestyles. Interestingly, the enemy often tries to convince us that we have no choice. As I have counseled people over the past 30 years, there has often been a pattern: *This is who you are, this is what you're about, and there's no escaping it. This is how you must behave.*

There are several prevalent, self-destructive trends today in which I see a definite satanic connection: eating disorders, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and aberrant sexual behaviors—such as homosexuality. While there are certainly external events and factors that can influence these things—such as trauma or abuse—I believe the enemy can take advantage of one's vulnerabilities to push them toward self-destruction.

First, look at eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia. Young ladies are literally starving themselves to death because they're petrified about gaining weight and being perceived as obese. These kinds of suggestions plague them: *You're fat. You're obese.* These come from the enemy. Self-mutilation is another destructive trend. Young people are cutting themselves, driven by these relentless thought patterns—*You're stupid, ugly, worthless. You're a loser.*

For those who struggle with homosexuality, it's often a constant mental battle where the enemy is trying to push them in that direction to convince them: *This is who you are, this is your identity, this is how you were born. You need to live this out.* Contrary to popular opinion today, that is a self-destructive lifestyle. And it's a spiritual attack.

All of these behaviors have this commonality of destructive thought patterns. Secular psychology can't really tell you where these

patterns come from or do much about it. But to me, it's quite obvious that these things are satanic.

Revelation 9:11 refers to Satan as "Apollyon," or "destroyer." This is who he is and what he does: he destroys you spiritually, emotionally, relationally, physically. He comes with these relentless thoughts—continually insisting and hammering away, seeking to drive people into these destructive lifestyles. Those who want to destroy others are also driven by the lies of Satan, whom Jesus describes as "**a murderer from the beginning ... a liar and the father of it**" (John 8:44b). So we know that these destructive thoughts are demonic. How do we combat this work of the devil?

Resist Destruction with Truth

Paul tells us that we are to "**[bring] every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ**" (2 Corinthians 10:5b). We must reject these thoughts as lies from the devil and stand on the truths of God's Word. If you struggle with thoughts about your weight or appearance, you need to know that God loves you just the way you are. He's not going to love you any more if you lose weight. His love for you is unconditional. Hold on to that. If you think that you are stupid or worthless, remember that God made you in His own image, and He loves you; He wants to bless you and work in your life. Also, rather than trying to find our identity in sexuality, we need to find our identity in the God who made us.

How do we bring these thoughts into captivity to Christ? We replace them with God's thoughts, with God's truth. Jesus said, "**And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**" (John 8:32). His Word sets us free from these lies and these behaviors. We need to meditate on His truth.

The Fear Tactic

Fear is another of the devil's wiles. Often, he threatens evil consequences to those who

would trust and obey the Lord: *If you do this, something bad will happen to you.*

We see this tactic vividly in the story of Leopold Cohn, a Hungarian Jewish rabbi who came to believe in the early 1900s that Jesus was the Messiah. On the morning of his baptism, he described sudden fears that

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he would be cut off from his wife and children: *How can you be so cruel to your own flesh and blood?*

At the same time he had decided to cancel his baptism, a pastor named Dr. Andrew Bonar felt prompted to pray with his congregation in Scotland for Leopold. The rabbi related: "As they began to pray, suddenly the oppression lifted." He was baptized and made his public confession of Christ. Interestingly, Leopold later founded the American Board of Missions to the Jews.

Another example from church history: Back in England during the 18th Century Revival, John Wesley was asked to continue the revival work but immediately felt that it would mean certain death. In fear, he refused but finally conceded to preach. Tens of thousands of people came to know Christ as their Savior, the course of British history was altered, and he died about 45 years later as an elderly man.

Brothers and sisters, remember: "**... God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind**" (2 Timothy 1:7). In those times when you have an opportunity to serve God and you're suddenly hit with fear, remember this verse. Resist the enemy and keep pressing on with the Lord. 🗝️