

# Overcoming Stress: Healthy Thinking

03 - Overcoming Stress: The Biblical Way  
Sun, 29 SEP 2013 | Church on the Park

**Text:** Phil. 4:8-9

**Theme:** Your thought life will determine how much stress affects you. Healthy thinking, even under pressure, leads to healthy living.

**Intro:** The last couple of weeks we've been focusing on **overcoming stress the Biblical way**. The world offers many different ways to cope with stress, but we are specifically looking at what God says about the issue. **Acts 16:25** sums up the last two weeks. Paul and Silas were in a very dark and painful place, but "About midnight Paul and Silas were **praying and singing hymns to God**, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open." Here we see there is great power in both **prayer and praise**. This week we will look at the power of **healthy thinking** to overcome stress.

**3 Facts About Stress:** 1) Everyone experiences stress and sometimes it's overwhelming, 2) If stress is not handled correctly it will damage you and may even kill you, and 3) Stress can strengthen you if you handle it God's way.

## 1) Good thinking produces good living and good living brings God's peace.

- Phil. 4:8-9 (Also the context of Phil 4:6-7)
- Stress can cause our thinking to become **self-destructive**. We may pray about a situation, but our thinking afterwards may not be in agreement with faith.
- Paul makes it clear that your **thinking** must be **right** if you are going to walk in God's **peace**.
- Specifically, the Scripture tells us to think on what is **true, noble, right, pure, lovely** and **admirable**. All these things can be summed up with two words: **excellent and praiseworthy**.
  - We were made in **God's image**. Consequently, God wants our thoughts to **reflect** his. In this passage, we see a **picture** of God's thoughts.
  - In Genesis, God destroyed the majority of mankind in a **flood** because every **thought** of their heart was intent on evil (Gen. 6:5).
  - God knows our thoughts are **evil**. (Matt. 15:18-20)
- **How** can our thoughts become excellent and praiseworthy?
  - We need God to give us a **new heart** (Eze. 36:25-28)
  - This is what the Bible calls **salvation**.
  - The type of thinking that God wants us to have (thinking that reflects his thoughts) cannot happen until we are **saved**. Salvation is the **beginning of thinking anew**.

## 2) The renewal of our minds is a process that takes a lifetime.

- It starts at salvation, but it progresses throughout our journey. “Be transformed through the **renewing of your mind**” (Rom. 12:1-2)
  - The renewal of our minds is the process of our thoughts becoming like God’s.
- We only discover **God’s thoughts** through his **Word**.
  - God’s thoughts need to be **given** to us and they are given to us through **Scripture**.
- There is **nothing** on earth that **matches** the description of wholesome thinking outlined in Philippians 4:8-9 than God’s Word.
  - This week I cleaned out my **air conditioning** filters. Air Conditioning makes our living environment less painful—it conditions the place we dwell so that it’s not too hot and not too cold. But to do this it needs filters because air is filled with dirt. Well, my AC filters were caked with dust and dirt. I had to use the hose to clean them out.
  - We need a **filter** on our minds—the filter of God’s Word. Just like my air conditioner unit, our minds need to have a filter and we need to continually **wash** ourselves in the **water** of God’s word. If you don’t, your insides will become dirty and clogged—your life will become overly stressful.
- **Deu. 6:4-9** - The most important passage in the Old Testament. Jesus quoted this when he told us the greatest command.
  - Our whole lives are to be **surrounded** by and **saturated** by God’s Word
    - [We are not to flaunt our devotion to God to the world, but in the hidden places and in our homes we are to be holy. (Sermon on the Mount)
    - We are to be both a light and careful about how we communicate]

### 3) Right thinking takes effort but it will change your life

- The Bible gives us beautiful **illustrations** to inspire us to renew our minds.
- **Zechariah 3** - The High Priest’s clothes, especially his **turban** is symbolic of our thought-lives.
  - Satan was **accusing** the High Priest who represented God’s people, Israel.
    - That’s what Satan does, he accuses (Rev. 12:9-12)
    - One of the ways he wants to corrupt your thinking is accuse you and fill you with **shame and guilt**.
      - The importance of guilt and forgiveness (psychos have no guilt)
  - But God rebukes Satan saying, “I have saved Joshua!” Specifically, “Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?” (v. 3)
  - After **salvation**, it’s time to let God give you **new clothes**, fine garments.
  - It **begins** with the **turban**.
    - When I wrote down this revelation about the turban, I looked up out my **window** and a man with a turban walked by. That’s quite rare in Brisbane and Boondall.
    - You’re **sins** are washed away, so **think** in a new way.
    - “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind”
    - Think about **yourself** as **God thinks** about you. Loved. Forgiven. Valued. Renewed. Righteous. Holy. A Child of God.
- The Example of the Woman with the **Issue of Blood**
  - Matt. 9:18-26

- “She said to herself...”
- Mark 5:24-34
  - “Because she thought...”
  - Her thinking and self-talk connected her with **Jesus’ power**.
  - This is an example of **faith thinking**. She didn’t think, “there’s no use in trying, I’m forsaken by God, I should just lay in bed and die.”
  - Your thoughts have the ability to **connect** you with Jesus’ power or keep you **disconnected**.
- The Psalmist gives us an example of **healthy self-talk**. (Psalm 103:1-6)
  - Notice he is commanding his soul
  - Your mind (in some ways) is like the **captain** of your ship. You need to **command** the ship of your life through your thinking.
  - Notice how he **recounts** all of God’s benefits: forgiveness, healing, redemption, honor, satisfaction and renewal.
  - You need to change your frame of mind before your life is changed.
  - Romans 8:6: “The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.”

#### 4) How to Have Healthy Thinking—God’s Way

- 1) Start your day with **Scripture**. Realign yourself with his Word at Midday. End your day with the Bible.
- 2) Be the **police officer** of your mind. Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Like a horse rider, steer your thoughts in the right direction.
  - 2 Cor. 10:3-5 - “...we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”
  - We need to be the police officer of our mind.
  - We need to search for bad thoughts, put them under arrest and tell them that they have the “right to remain silent.”
- 3) **Surround** yourself with uplifting songs, especially praise and worship.
- 4) Constantly remind yourself of what **God thinks** of you. Remember his **benefits** and **promises**.

**Conclusion:** You will rise or fall on the quality of your thought. As you continually meditate on God’s Word and take captive every thought, your thinking will help you overcome the stresses of life.

#### END NOTES

The reason why there was a global flood: “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the **thoughts** of his heart was only evil continually.” (Gen 6:5)

“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent

of the **thoughts**. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.” (1 Chron. 18:9)

“When my **anxious thoughts** multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul.” (Ps 94:19)

“But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come **evil thoughts**, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.” (Matt. 15:18-20)