



# *Take Your Thoughts Captive*

## *Renewed by Faith*

*How to take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ...*

*“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 10:5 (NIV)*

Our input affects our output. Let's consider what happens to our bodies when we consistently ingest foods without nutritional value. When we eat food that is not what God intended (unnatural, processed, chemical-laden foods), our bodies react with illness, fatigue, and inflammation. The same occurs with our minds. When our minds are consistently subject to negative input (abuse, neglect, maltreatment, negative thoughts, images, words, songs, etc.), the effect is mental illness, anxiety, and fear. If we make the choice to change our way of eating and feed our bodies nutritious food, fresh food from nature that God provided, our bodies can heal and be renewed. The same is true for our minds. When we make the choice to feed our minds nutritional information (such as the Word of God, positive images, words, songs, etc.), our minds can be healed and renewed.

*“Jesus answered, **“It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”** Matthew 4:4 (NIV)*

Sometimes we cannot control what sort of input we receive, such as during childhood, and sadly we don't always have control over what we witness, fall victim to, or are subject to. We may experience adverse childhood experiences (trauma) that can alter and physically damage our brains, which can result in PTSD, depression, borderline personality disorder, and even obesity or diabetes<sup>1</sup>. But as we age, we have much more control over our environments, and one of the greatest gifts God created us with is the ability to renew our minds! Both through Christ and biologically.



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*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you can test and approve what God’s will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2 (NIV)*

God created our brains with the ability to reformat (think in terms of a computer hard drive), which science calls neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity is the ability of the brain to reformat neural pathways, connections, and functions.<sup>2</sup> This is the brain’s ability to restructure itself after training and practice, thereby creating new neural pathways in our brains. Our minds are the hard drives of our bodies. Just like you can wipe out and reformat a computer hard drive, you can do the same with your mind! We can do this by learning new skills and replacing negative thoughts, memories, and experiences with positive thoughts, memories, and experiences.

*“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:21 (NIV)*

Back to the verse quoted at the beginning where Paul is addressing the Church of Corinth, and says, “we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”. Paul is defending himself, as there were critics among them who questioned his authority as an apostle of Christ Jesus. The battlefield in which the war he references is in the hearts and minds of the Corinthians. Paul says he fights not with physical weapons but spiritual ones. Weapons such as prayer and Scripture, built upon Christ as the foundation. His goal is to capture the thoughts of the people using the tools of God to motivate them to obey Christ.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, **by using prayer and Scripture, we too can take our thoughts captive to be obedient to Christ.**

*“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV)*

Modern research in psychology has shown that acts of gratitude can be used as a therapeutic complement for treating anxiety and depression and can increase positive feelings and emotions.<sup>4</sup> Coincidentally, according to



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OpenBible.com, there are 100 verses in the Bible about gratitude. All expressing the importance of giving thanks in all circumstances.

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)*

God and science both say gratitude, positive words and experiences, prayer (meditation), and uplifting songs can renew our minds. This is how we take our thoughts captive to Christ and renew our minds by faith. When we change our patterns by not conforming to the patterns of this world but by renewing our minds, we will find freedom from the bondage of trauma, depression, anxiety, and fear.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2 (NIV)

So then, it’s clear that in order to take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ and overcome trauma, anxiety, and fear, we must make the choice to do the following:

- 1) Pray, in the Spirit, giving thanks in all things, for without God there would be nothing.
- 2) Meditate on and memorize God’s Word, reprogramming our minds to the grace and peace of God’s Word.
- 3) Input positive words and experiences such as words of affirmation (see Who I Am in Christ - Renewed by Faith), community with positive and affirming people to create healthy and positive experiences and relationships, and listening to and singing songs of praise and worship to the Lord.

*“Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said:*

*“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their*



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*cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." Mark 8:34-38 (NIV)*

Make the choice has been underlined in this article to emphasize the fact that through the free will God gave us, we have to make the choice to change and heal our minds. No one, including God, can make the changes for us. No pill, therapist, or spirit can make the choice, only you. We must not only make the choice to change our lives for the better, but as it says in Matthew 16:24, we must also make the choice to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ. God is Lord over the universe, but in John 16:11, Jesus says Satan is the prince of this condemned world. In John, Chapter 17, Jesus talks about the fact that we are not to be "of this world", meaning following the unbelieving world's values, beliefs, and conduct, but we are called to follow Christ's Word and mirror his Word and actions by being an ambassador for Christ. This means we are to make the choice to do the will of God and follow Christ's example.

*"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:15-19 (NIV)*

I pray this article blesses you and you find freedom from your past as a new creation in Christ Jesus. *"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace." Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)*

Melissa Turner - 31 May 2024



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- <sup>1</sup>Julia, Herzog, and Schmahl Christian. "Adverse Childhood Experiences and the Consequences on Neurobiological, Psychosocial, and Somatic Conditions Across the Lifespan." *National Library of Medicine*, PMC PubMed Central, 4 Sept. 2018, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6131660/>. Accessed 31 May 2024.
- <sup>2</sup>Simpkins, C. Alexander, and Annellen Simpkins. "Neuroplasticity and Neurogenesis: Changing Moment-by-Moment." *Springer Link*, Private Practice, 1 Jan. 2012, [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4614-4842-6\\_13](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4614-4842-6_13). Accessed 31 May 2024.
- <sup>3</sup>"2 Corinthians 10:5." *BibleRef.Com*, Got Questions Ministries, 2002, [www.bibleref.com/2-Corinthians/10/2-Corinthians-10-5.html](http://www.bibleref.com/2-Corinthians/10/2-Corinthians-10-5.html).
- <sup>4</sup>Einstein, Sao Paulo. "The Effects of Gratitude Interventions: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *National Library of Medicine*, PMC PubMed Central, 23 July 2023, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10393216/>. Accessed 31 May 2024.