

Thought Starter Worksheet

Adapted from Spirit, Soul and Body of the Ishshah Bible study series
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One of the most dangerous conditions for a Christian is having an unrenewed mind. An unrenewed mind is an ignorant mind, and Satan can easily confuse and gain an advantage over someone whose mind has not yet been renewed.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6 KJV).

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11 KJV).

The word devices in the above verse can be translated as devise of the mind. Satan cannot take advantage of us once we understand and can spot his mind devices, or mind games! We need to learn to discern his tactics.

Do you spend undue amounts of time imagining all kinds of negative things? Satan might have tossed an initial thought into your mind, such as, “She doesn’t like me.” But you choose to dwell on that thought. In fact, you did more than think on it; you developed a four-page inner conversation around that negative thought.

When you begin living in a disciplined and renewed mind, you can catch these little “thought starters,” cast them down, and bring your mind back under the lordship of the knowledge of God (see 2 Corinthians 10:3-6).

Here is a way I have found to be effective in developing the disciplined, renewed mind:

Exercise

Choose one negative situation from your life last week and chart it according to the five instructions below. This practice will help you to identify wrong thought starters and learn how to replace them with the mind of Christ. An example has been done for you.

1. Describe the Situation

My husband forgot AGAIN to deposit his paycheck and I found out that 5 checks had bounced. Large expense. He didn't seem to think it was any big deal.

2. Describe the actions I took in response to the problem

I got angry and depressed and gave my husband the “silent treatment” for two days.

3. Describe the “thought starters” that preceded my actions

My thought starter was: “It will never end. It will always be this way.”

4. What I should have thought and done (use biblical references)

What I should have thought: I need to pray before I react...and I am reacting! I must remember that if I call on the Lord, go to Him in prayer and seek Him with all my heart, then I will find Him and He will bring me out of this frustration. He has plans to prosper me and give me hope. He has a future designed for me. This is not a hopeless situation! (My self-talk for this situation is based on Jeremiah 29:11-14).

What I should have done: I should have prayed and given Him my negative heart attitude (according to Jer. 29:11-14). I should have used my anger in a godly way to promote change by speaking the truth in love to my husband (according to Eph. 4:15).

5. Describe the steps that I must take, if needed, to resolve matters.

I need to tell him that we have a problem and that I did not handle it well. I need to ask forgiveness for giving him the “silent treatment” and not addressing the problem in a godly way. I can volunteer to take care of depositing his paychecks, paying the bills and keeping a budget. If that is not going to work, then we need to sit down together and come up with a plan that will work for both of us. Another option might be for him to get financial counseling and accountability from someone other than me! Bottom line—we’ve got to talk and come up with a plan that is mutually satisfying to both of us.