



E-Encouragement #3a

After Thought: *Tips on holding your thoughts captive*

“...and we are to take every thought captive to obey Christ...” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

South Shore just completed a sermon series on *Worry* and began a new one entitled *Change of Heart*. Sandwiched in between these two series was the third Living Out of the Center E-Encouragement titled *Set Your Heart*. These all have a common thread: Our thoughts. The *Worry* series dealt with everything from obsessive thoughts that dwell on troubling events in our lives to fretting over the less important details of our lives. Either spectrum of worry tends to fixate on aspects of our lives that are out of our control. The *Set Your Heart* E-Encouragement dealt with the distraction of our thoughts when trying to spend focused time on God. This past weekend’s sermon revealed how our heart influences our thought life.

With so much focus on our thought life, a specific word on how to handle what comes after the thoughts is particularly appropriate. Here are a few suggestions for helping you “hold your thoughts captive,” an “after” thought process. Read through the suggestions and pick one to try. If it doesn’t work, try another until you find something that works for you. Remember, praying and asking the Holy Spirit to help you “hold your thoughts captive” is the first place to start. He knows you best and what will work for you. Also, we are to focus our thoughts on heavenly things (see Philippians 4:8). So, once the thought has been held captive, replace the thought with a praise to Jesus, a word of thanksgiving, pick a name of God or a “heavenly” word that is your go-to word.

- ❖ Draw an invisible circle around yourself, invite Jesus into the circle. Try to focus your thoughts on Him alone. When the thoughts come into your mind, invite the thoughts to step outside of the circle, knowing you will come back to them later.
- ❖ Look at the annoying, worrisome thought as a bothersome barking dog. Tell the dog to be quiet, to get in its bed, to go outside, or to lie down. Then turn your mind to heavenly things.
- ❖ Visualize taking the thought and blowing it into a balloon. Let the balloon go up to the sky, releasing it to Jesus. Then turn your mind to heavenly things.
- ❖ Visualize putting your thought into a drawer and closing it shut or putting the thought outside and closing the door on it. Lock the door, if necessary. Then turn your mind to heavenly things.

- ❖ Visualize putting your thought on a leaf and watching it float down the stream until you can't see it anymore. Then turn your mind to heavenly things.
- ❖ Shush your thoughts. Then turn your mind to heavenly things.
- ❖ Visualize an altar, and take your thought and lay it on the altar. Step away from the altar and watch God's consuming fire come down and engulf your thought. Then turn your mind to heavenly things.
- ❖ This is my personal favorite when it comes to thoughts that involve other people. In a traditional wedding, the bride's father places the bride's hand into the hand of the groom signifying the transference of responsibility of love from one to the other. Visualize taking the person's hand you are concerned with and placing their hand into the hand of Jesus. Watch Jesus take their hand and walk with them away from you. They are in better hands! Then turn your mind to heavenly things.

Let the Wagon Wheel Roll:

- Get to the heart of the matter of your thought life by listening for the first time or again to this past week's sermon (June 5 & 6) on *Change of Heart* at www.southshorechurch.com.
- Does worry dominate your thought life? Listen for the first time or again to the sermon series on *Don't Worry, Be Happy* at www.southshorechurch.com.
- Read and meditate on the following verses and consider picking out one verse and memorizing it. This can be your focus when you need to get your mind off of other things. Psalm 1:1-3 or Philippians 4:4-13.

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