

MIND GAMES

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**Strategies
to Win
the War**

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Introduction

Be aware, stand firm in your faith and make every thought obedient to Christ.

Often, we think that the big bad devil has the power to cause all kinds of trauma and tragedy in our lives, but it's not true. He's simply not that powerful. **What he actually does is try to plant thoughts in our minds, hoping to start a destructive pattern of thinking.**

When we haven't learned how to control our thoughts, by default we turn to the negative and begin to dwell on thoughts that come from the enemy. If we allow our thoughts to go uncensored, it gives the enemy access to our mind, causing it to become a battlefield.

Be sober [well-balanced and self-disciplined], be alert and cautious at all times. That enemy of yours, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion [fiercely hungry], seeking someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8 (AMP)

For example, before a marriage is destroyed, thoughts and fantasies about leaving must be entertained. All this doesn't happen overnight. The thought process has been allowed to continue for months, or maybe years, until this flawed dream seems to be the only way. The enemy knows how to feed these dreams—how to keep bringing them to mind, causing them to grow until we feel compelled to act on them.

So how do we fight these mental attacks? According to 1 Peter 5:8-9 and 2 Corinthians 10:5, the **antidote is found in being aware, standing firm in our faith and making every thought obedient to Christ.**

So let's dig into the Word and discover five strategies to win the war against your mind. You'll learn to protect your heart and mind by focusing on, believing and declaring the truth. Then you'll be battle-ready, and you can kick these thoughts to the curb before they ever take root!

1. Cast Your Cares

Our minds are precious, so we must continually reprogram them!

Ever wondered *how* to cast your cares on God?

As believers, we want to, but often we simply don't know how. While we often apply 1 Peter 5:7 exclusively to our prayer life, it actually refers to an entire teaching about how to have the mind of Christ!

Casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully].

1 Peter 5:7 (AMP)

Now, Satan loves to try to get into our heads to play mind games with us. So how do we battle his deception and lies that cause us to have these cares, anxieties and worries? We **focus on the Word of God**.

Our minds are precious, so we must continually reprogram them with the phenomenal teachings from the Word. We need to get the Word deep into our hearts so that we as believers are not only mature, but also aware of and mentally strong against the enemy's attacks. Then, when the enemy tries to get us focused on things that worry or scare us, his lies are ineffective.

When we pray, we might think that God is simply going to look after things, but there's something we need to do as well. The Bible says we are to study to show ourselves approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15). Why? Because the Bible contains the most incredible teaching and wisdom. And Satan's tactics can't work on believers who've learned how to **develop the skill of casting their cares by focusing on Jesus instead of their worries**.

Next time worry rises up, stop and give that issue to Jesus. Focus on the promises in God's Word, and thank Him for always watching over you.

2. Submit

When you know God's truth, there's freedom!

What does it mean to submit to God? And how does that help us resist the devil?

So submit to [the authority of] God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him] and he will flee from you.

James 4:7 (AMP)

That's interesting—notice this verse says to submit to God *first*, and resisting the devil is *second*.

One definition of “submit” is to accept or yield to a superior force or authority. We submit to God *first* by reading His Word, growing in knowledge about who we are in Him and accepting what *He* says about us. In doing that *first*, it repels the enemy's attempts at getting into our mind with ridiculous thoughts. It stops him from messing with us!

Holding a firm grip on the truths in God's Word works like water against fire. When Satan tries his tactics and throws fiery darts of deceit at our minds, they get instantly extinguished.

As you continually focus your thinking on God's wisdom, teaching and plans for you, you'll begin to understand demonic strongholds. You'll begin to clearly recognize the enemy's attacks and understand when he's trying to plant arguments, theories and reasonings in your mind. **The truth sets you free from those mind games.** When you know God's truth, there's freedom!

Let's not give the devil an inch to manipulate or twist us with his falsehoods and deceptive mind games. Instead, let's enjoy the incredible ability God has given us to walk through life with the mind of Christ. Seek out God's truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth—and send the enemy running!

3. Resist Intentionally

We resist by growing in God's Word until we stand firm!

In the last point, we looked at James 4:7, which says we need to submit to God first, then resist the devil. But what does resisting look like?

Everything starts in the mind—from how we handle money and view leadership, to our emotions and relationships. It all starts with a thought, so it's no mystery why Satan constantly works to tie up our minds with misbeliefs and deception. It's how he tries to control us. In fact, this process is what 1 Peter 5:9 is talking about.

But resist him, be firm in your faith [against his attack—rooted, established, immovable], knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being experienced by your brothers and sisters throughout the world.

1 Peter 5:9 (AMP)

The suffering this verse mentions is the constant barrage on your mind—the relentless mind games that rise up as thoughts in your head. When we are bombarded by negative thoughts, we need to realize that we may very well be under attack.

Now, the enemy doesn't have power. Jesus stripped him of that 2,000 years ago, so all he can do is lie to try to get us to use our own power against ourselves. So, when it says to 'resist him,' it's talking about the devil. And **what are we trying to protect by resisting him? Our hearts and minds.** We do so by growing in God's Word until we stand firm like trees—rooted, established and immovable in our faith against the enemy's mind games!

As born-again believers, we can follow the teachings of Christ by meditating on the Word of God and getting His beliefs into our hearts. When we do, we develop minds so clear—a focus that's so amazing—the enemy can't get past this incredible shield.

Developing the mind of Christ involves fortifying our minds with the truth like a protective armour, and then **no mind games are allowed!**

4. Focus on Truth

Can you be *absolutely* sure it's true? If not, you are not to focus on it.

Do you question your thoughts?

Satan is at work on our minds to try to kill, steal and destroy. How does he do this? By attacking our minds with lies to try to get us focused on something untrue. If we don't ever question our thoughts, we'll believe there's truth to them. Oftentimes we get even farther off track when we take an unsure thought and expect to gain clarity by focusing on it. Because the more we focus on something, the more we believe it!

Instead, when a thought comes to our head, the very first test it needs to pass is this: is it true?

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

Notice it's not whether you *think* something could maybe, possibly be true—but rather, can you be *absolutely* sure it's true? If something is not proven to be true, you are not to focus on it.

Whatever Satan wants to separate you from will always start with a thought, whether it be relationships, church, finances or tithing. Now, if you can't be absolutely sure something is true, then stop talking, focusing and thinking about it, and recognize there's a mind game at work.

You might say, "But what if I'm not *sure* if it's true?" We aren't given that luxury. Imagine how much phenomenal strength we'd enjoy if we didn't waste our time focusing on unknown half-truths!

In order to control your mind, thinking and emotions, follow Jesus' example and filter your thoughts through the judging system He followed in today's verse. Then you will truly know what it's like to live with the mind of Christ.

Let's take a look at the the other tests our thoughts need to pass.

5. Put Your Thoughts to the Test

What you focus on, you give it the reins to your future.

If we want to experience the peace and presence of God, we need to follow Jesus' example.

The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:9 (NKJV)

When the devil comes against us with thoughts to try and steer us off course into ruin, Paul instructs believers in Philippians 4:8 to **put those thoughts to the test**. If they don't pass the test of being true as well as noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy... we are not to focus on them.

Let's say someone's wronged you, and you're convinced and have proven it's true. Does that mean you're allowed to focus on it? No, it doesn't. Even if something is true, it needs to pass the next test after that.

Is it a noble thought? If it's not a noble thought, we're not to focus on it.

Is it righteous thinking? We may think, "Well, this isn't gossip. I know it happened." But guess what? It doesn't matter. We aren't to focus on it.

Is there a pureness about it? Is it something that's lovely, meaning 'friendly towards'? Is it of a good report? Or is the enemy trying to lure you into a place where your words start destroying people, or where the things you're thinking are breaking you down?

Is it virtuous or morally good? It's fine—even important—to be aware of negative situations and people, and you might have to deal with things personally, but **if you focus your life on negativity, you give it the reins to your future.**

Instead, follow Jesus' example: **meditate only on things that pass these tests**, and enjoy the peace of God!

Conclusion

There may be a battle going on for your mind, but with Christ, you're empowered to win the war!

Every day, there are countless voices vying for your attention. By default, many of them are negative. So it's crucial that we develop this skill of guarding our minds, especially since we know the devil would like nothing more than to manipulate our beliefs.

Instead of letting out-of-control thinking cause destruction in our lives, we can begin to question our thoughts. We can put them through the filter of God's Word and choose to focus on only what's true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy. **This is how we live with the mind of Christ!**

But we have the mind of Christ [to be guided by His thoughts and purposes].
1 Corinthians 2:16 (AMP)

The strategies we've covered here are tactics you can put into practice in your everyday life. For example, if you're at work and you hear that layoffs are coming, you can resist the anxious thoughts that try to rise up. Instead, put those thoughts through the Philippians 4:8 test, cast your cares on Jesus and begin to focus on God's promises.

Continue to grow in God's Word and submit to what He says. **As you meditate on and believe the truth, you'll develop a strong mind.** A mind at peace, focused on the truth and guided by the thoughts and purposes of Christ.

You can stand firm in your faith and make every thought obedient to Him.
There may be a battle going on for your mind, but with Christ, you're empowered to win the war!