

Chapter06

Think God's Thoughts to Overcome Fear and Anxiety

Did you know this? You and I can think God's thoughts!

"You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You because he trusts in You."

(Isaiah 26:3)

Just look at that verse: when your thoughts line up with God's thoughts; when you have not just memorized His Word but internalized it by allowing God to work it into your heart, God gives you His peace, perfect peace!

Jesus said: *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."* (John 14:27)

The world may give you peace--maybe--when your circumstances are flying high. But when you've surrendered your life to Jesus, He gives you *"peace that surpasses all understanding"*

Here's an example from the Book of Acts of what a totally trusting and surrendered life looks like:

Paul and Silas did something good, but rather than being thanked, they were severely punished and put into prison. Notice how they responded. The lesson for us today is that we, too, should respond as they did:

Acts 16:16-40 English Standard Version (ESV)

Paul and Silas in Prison

As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

The Philippian jailer converted:

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."

And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said,

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, “Let those men go.” And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace.” But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.”

The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

Acts 16:16-40 English Standard Version (ESV)

After casting a demon out of a woman who was harassing them, Paul and Silas were thrown into prison. They had every reason to believe they would be executed the next day.

So, what were they doing that night? Were they freaking out?

No way! They were singing to the Lord!

They set a powerful example for the other prisoners and the jailer, and for us.

That's how I want to be able to respond to adversity!! Anyone who has been troubled longs for perfect peace.

And where does peace come from? Paul says in Galatians 5:22 that the fruit of my relationship with God is: "...love, joy, peace,..." there it is! So peace is a fruit of--a result of--closeness with Him.

But again, the offer is conditional. God offers perfect peace to those whose mind is stayed on [focused on or fixed on] Him."

How to apply the principle: Here are several things I've found to be very beneficial. I urge you to do the same:

Choose to keep God near the forefront of your mind throughout each day. To say it another way: "think God's thoughts". When you do this, it quickly becomes a habit.

Choose to begin the practice of praise. Praise God for your life; praise Him for the food in your kitchen; praise Him for your car; praise Him for the money in your bank account; praise him for your health, etc. (That's just a "starter list". Add your own praises throughout the day.)

Choose to make God your top priority. One way I do this is by going to bed early so I can get up early and spend time doing my own Scripture memory. One might say I'm "tithing" my time, giving God the "first-fruits" of each day.

Choose to preach His Word to yourself regularly throughout the day. It's amazing how, once you've done even a small amount of Scripture memory, God will bring to your mind passages He wants you to apply in a particular situation.

Choose to read through Scripture memory verses out loud. Romans 10:17 says, "faith comes by hearing... the Word of God."

Choose to respond to life's situations with praise to God at all times. Again, it amazes me how, when I do that, the "weight" of my problem gets smaller and smaller.

Choose to trust God by going to the Truth of Scripture every time you hear a "what if" question or a lie from Satan. God does not deal in "what-if's" in our lives. He knows exactly what's going to happen. Therefore...

Choose to believe that God is trustworthy, that He is good, and that He can handle whatever comes up. Personally, I've found that trusting in myself has not given me much peace.

Every verse in the Bible began in the eternity past as a thought in the Mind of God.

So, when you put His thoughts into your mind, you are literally thinking God's thoughts! Then, when the devil tries to push his lies into your mind, the superior power of God's thoughts helps you to overcome those wicked lies!

When you saturate your mind with Bible verses; when you think God's thoughts; the devil cannot get a word in edgewise!

I don't know what the future holds...

But I know Who holds the future!