

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Romans 7:21-25 “I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in *the law of God* according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members (body), warring against *the law of my mind*, and bringing me into cap-tivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? *I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!* So then, with the mind I myself serve the *law of God*, but with the flesh *the law of sin.*”

Quote: Doing right or wrong begins on the battlefield of our mind!

Godly Paul was frustrated over the fact that the evil passions of his flesh were always looking for ways to be satisfied through thoughts or actions. He desired to please God, and yet these passions had a hold on him. Can you relate to that? Be encouraged! Paul learned how to have victory. He taught Timothy to “*Flee* also youthful lusts; but *pursue* righteousness, faith, love, peace *with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*”¹ The great escape from temptation involves rejecting evil desires *and* pursuing godly desires through the enabling of the Holy Spirit and the companionship of likeminded believers. You cannot head in opposite directions at the same time!

On the path to every temptation, God has provided an “exit ramp” to safety. We cannot be made to stay on the road to sin. Taking or ignoring the “way out” is a choice that reflects our spiritual maturity or lack of it. When you learned to drive, you were probably taught a defensive driving system like **I.P.D.E.** Good drivers scan the landscape ahead. They **I**dentify potential problems. They **P**redict how those problems might affect them. They **D**ecide on a course of action. They **E**xecute their plan. We must scan the spiritual landscape ahead. **I**dentify possible hazards to our spiritual health. **P**redict their impact. **D**ecide to take God’s detour around them. **E**xecute the maneuver that may be as simple as clicking a switch, turning a dial or refusing to dwell upon a sinful thought.

Paul challenged believers to “bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”² Here are six keys to victory in the battle for your thoughts—

Remember that victory is possible because God is faithful to provide the means of escape from temptation.³

Recognize temptation as a personalized sparkplug for sinful deeds that always have a later and greater harvest.⁴ You must **I**dentify your weaknesses.

Reject or repent of sinful thoughts. Wrong attitudes and actions are the result of sinful, self-centered desires for anything forbidden, or anything that becomes an idol of the heart.⁵

Revere the Lord throughout the day.⁶ The fear of God is an attitude of awe and adoration by which the child of God guides and guards his/her thoughts, words and actions by the Word of God for the glory of God

Replace evil thoughts with God-honoring thoughts.⁷

Run, remove or reduce evil stimuli.⁸ Run from evil stimuli, remove it if possible, or reduce it to the best of your ability. Joseph did right! He *fled* youthful lusts. David did wrong. He *failed* in the battle with his flesh and reaped heartache for years.

The Battlefield of Your Mind

The Master Resource is God’s Word. “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, *That* I might not sin against You!” “I have *rejoiced* in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches. I will *meditate* on Your precepts, And *contemplate* Your ways. I will *delight* myself in Your statutes; I will *not forget* Your word.”⁹ Take heart in these life-long struggles on the battlefield of your mind! Dead people don’t battle anything! Struggling to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ is an indication of spiritual life and a desire to please the Lord! There is nothing magical about making wise choices that honor God! Do it for His glory as you exercise yourself unto godliness!¹¹

1 II Tim.2:22 2 II Cor.10:5 3 I Cor. 10:13 4 James 1:14-15 5 Matt.5:28; Col.3:8-10; Isa. 55:7 6 Prov.3:5-7 7 Phil.4:8; Rom. 12:1-2 8 Gen.39:7-12; II Sam.11-12 9 Psa.119:9-11, 14-16 11 Psa.101:2-3