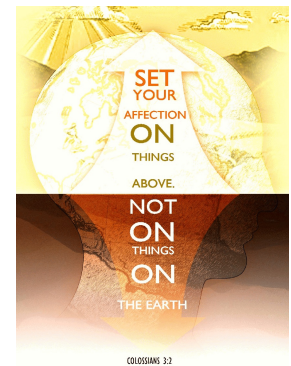


# Church of God Sunday School

## WHOLE-LIFE STEWARDSHIP #7 – MIND



### DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Beware of vain or evil imaginations (Genesis 6:5-6; Proverbs 6:16-19; Romans 1:20-21).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Consider the dangers of man's inventions (Psalm 106:29; Ecclesiastes 7:29).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** Are you feeding on trash or wicked things (Proverbs 15:14; Psalm 101:3)?
- ❑ **Thursday:** What does the Bible tell you to think about (Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:2)?
- ❑ **Friday:** What does the Bible say about fear and worry (Matthew 6:25-34)?
- ❑ **Saturday:** What is God's plan for your mind (Philippians 2:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:7)?

**MEMORY VERSE:** ". . . whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."  
–Philippians 4:8

### The Battle for Your Mind

There is an old saying: "Your mind is a garden. Your thoughts are the seeds. You can grow flowers, or you can grow weeds." No doubt, you often hear of the importance of spending time and money wisely and of taking good care of the body, but how often have you heard the importance of taking good care of your mind? Whole-life stewardship of your mind includes physical care (eating foods good for brain development and function, getting physical exercise, and getting enough sleep) and also being careful of the thoughts you allow to shape your thinking. Your thought life deeply affects your feelings, self worth, beliefs, confidence, and attitudes.

The enemy is fighting for control of your mind. Today's culture, the media, and even the education system are often trying to strongly influence your mindset against the principles of the Bible. One study showed that as many as 61 percent of young people have lost their Christian faith while attending college (Barna Studies 2006). Other ways the enemy battles for your mind are through addictions, depression, anxiety, wrong attitudes, time wasters, and low self image. Too many young people have not learned how to be a good steward of their minds.

### Mind Pollution

Would you deliberately eat food or drink water that has been contaminated? What about breathing air filled with poisonous gases? Of course not! Many people are working hard to make sure your food, water, and air are not polluted with harmful substances. However, what about things that are polluting the mind? Proverbs 6:27 asks, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" The devil is doing his best to fill your mind with garbage, or pollution. If you allow these thoughts to stay in your mind, they will be like an unwanted fire (thoughts that will torment you, change you, and mold you into whom the devil wants you to be). What are some examples of mind pollution?



**Wrong Imaginations:** there is a song that says, "Don't let your mind go a wandering." It is very easy to jump to the wrong conclusions or evil thoughts. Genesis 6:5 tells of people whose "every imagination . . . was only evil continually." Romans 1:21 speaks of "vain . . . imaginations." These can include imagined conversations and actions of getting even, dreams for the future that are not in God's will, prideful thoughts, and human reasoning.

**Many Inventions:** Ecclesiastes 7:29 reads, ". . . God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." While technology can be wonderful,

it can also fill your mind with pollution and turn you away from God. Cell phones, the internet, music, and social media are all inventions that could be used for good. However, too often they are used to view or send inappropriate photos and messages or listen to songs with profanity, rebellion, violence, and immoral living. These images and words are extremely difficult to get out of your mind once you have allowed them in.



**Time Wasters:** Ephesians 4:17 warns against "the vanity of their mind." In other words, we need to beware of pointless thinking or worthless thoughts. It might not always be sinful things, just anything he can get you to read, watch, or think about that prevents you from being a good steward of your mind. The devil is working hard to get a foothold in your mind through time wasters.

## Dark Places of the Mind

Another way the devil works to get control of your mind is through negative thoughts. These might come about because of difficult situations, abuse, or neglect. Continual worry and anxiety about money, school, relationships, your future, or situations out of your control can work against your mental health. For many, this way of thinking becomes a way of life, and they cannot cope with it. The devil has an answer for them. He has convinced many people that addictions, such as alcohol and drug abuse, are the only way to dull these painful thoughts. He also tempts young people with thoughts of self harm as a way to cope when life becomes difficult, overwhelming, and painful. Some examples of this are eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, and binging) and self injury (cutting, burning, and other physical harming). These behaviors may seem to help youth to deal with all the negative feelings and emotions that have been building up, but in reality, they actually make these problems worse. Sadly, when some youth feel like life is completely hopeless and unbearable, thoughts of suicide can begin to work. There is a way out of this darkness.

## Developing a Healthy Mind

When the Apostle Paul wrote about the Christian's armor, he talked about "the helmet" (Ephesians 6:17). The purpose of a literal helmet is to protect the head (and brain) of the soldier. What are some ways you can protect your mind from all the dangerous thoughts the devil is bombarding you with? Paul described the helmet as "salvation." The first step in having a healthy mind is to give your life to Christ and live for Him. God's Word has many tools that can help you protect your mind and keep it healthy.

**Take in Healthy Brain Food:** what are you feeding your brain? Is it garbage? Is it a steady diet of negative thoughts? What are you reading, looking at, listening to, or watching? Proverbs 15:14 says that fools feed on trash. Are you putting wicked things before your eyes (Psalm 101:3)? How is your daily Bible reading? Have you done a Bible study lately? Ask God to help you understand His Word. Be willing to put forth the effort to learn more (Proverbs 18:15). The old saying, "You are what you eat," can also apply to your mind. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." What you choose to think about determines whom you will become.

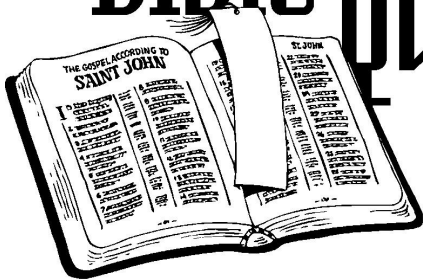
**Beware of Mind Pollution:** the devil will continually try to put something in your mind that is polluting. This can include vain imaginations ("I'm going to get even"), thoughts of rebellion and stubbornness ("don't tell me what to do"), thoughts against God ("if God loved you, that would not have happened"), and excessive worry ("I'll never be able to do this"). You do not have to allow these thoughts to stay in your mind. Remind yourself that the devil is the father of lies (John 8:44), and then bring those thoughts "into captivity" (2 Corinthians 10:5) by taking them to God. Hebrews 4:12 says that "the word of God" is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Bible will help to you examine each thought to see if it is of God. If it is not, ask God to help you to replace that thought with healthy thinking.

**Shine God's Light in Dark Places:** Luke 1:79 tells us that Jesus came "to give light to them that sit in darkness." God wants to shine the light of His Word on the darkness. If you are dealing with any of the dark places mentioned in this lesson, it is important that you talk to a trusted spiritual adult (for instance, your parents, your youth leaders, or your pastor). Do not try to deal with these negative thoughts on your own, but allow God to use the people He has placed in your life to help you. It is not God's will that you stay in this dark place.

There will always be a battle for the control of your mind. It is vital that you practice good stewardship by setting your mind on the things of God, not the things of this world (Colossians 3:2). Do not allow your mind to go just anywhere, but focus your thoughts on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of a good report (Philippians 4:8).



# Bible Quiz



1. What does whole-life stewardship of the mind include?

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2. How are the culture, media, and education system trying to influence people?

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3. What are some of the ways the devil is battling for control of people's minds?

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4. What is the definition of "pollution"?

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5. What are some examples of "vain imaginations"?

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6. What are some examples of today's inventions being used to fill your mind with pollution?

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7. What are some examples of time wasters?

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8. What do continual worry and fear work against?

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9. What are some ways the devil has convinced people will help them cope with pain and difficult situations?

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10. How does the helmet of salvation help you be a good steward of your mind?

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11. How can you develop a healthy mind?

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# What Are You Thinking About?

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Genesis 50:20 – "But as for you, ye thought \_\_\_\_\_ against me."

1 Samuel 18:25 – "Saul thought to make David \_\_\_\_\_ by the hand of the Philistines."

Esther 3:6 – "And he thought \_\_\_\_\_ to lay hands on Mordecai alone."

Nehemiah 6:2 – "Sanballat and Geshem . . . thought to do me \_\_\_\_\_."

Isaiah 26:3 – "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on \_\_\_\_\_:  
because he trusteth in thee."

Daniel 5:20 – "But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in \_\_\_\_\_ . . . ."

Matthew 22:37 – "Thou shalt \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy  
soul, and with all thy mind."

Mark 14:72 – "And Peter called to mind the \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus said unto him . . . ."

Luke 12:29 – "And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of  
\_\_\_\_\_ mind."

Acts 14:2 – "But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds \_\_\_\_\_  
affected against the brethren."

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