

Thought Audit

DO YOU EVER FIND YOURSELF THINKING THINGS LIKE:

- I just can't change. Even if I try, I'll always be stuck.
- I can never get out of debt. No matter what I do, I'll always struggle financially.
- No one really loves me. And if they knew the real me, they'd definitely not want to be in my life.
- I'm not good at relationships. When we start to grow closer, I always do something to mess things up.
- People in my family struggle with their weight. I'll never like my body.
- I can't get close to God. I'm sure it's my fault. There must be something about me that keeps me from experiencing God like others do.
- When I look at what others post on social media, I feel like my life sucks.

If you think you can't do something, you probably won't. If on the other hand, you think you can, odds are you will. The same is true with your problems. If you dwell on them, they will overwhelm you. But, if you look for solutions, you will find some.

If you feel like a victim, you'll think like a victim, and the direction of your life could be one of misery. But if you believe that by the power of Christ you can overcome, then, with his help you can. Consider this:

- Who you are today is a result of your thoughts in the past.
- Who you become in the future will reflect what you think about today.

Whether it's self-doubts or worrying or responding poorly to a bad day or a tough season in life, we all wrestle with negative thoughts that try to hijack our emotions and decisions.

The goal of this exercise is to give you the opportunity to think about what you think about.

Let's conduct a thought audit. Hit pause for a moment and prepare your mind. Focus on your honest answers. This could begin the process of you changing your mind. There are two parts to this exercise.

PART 1: INVENTORY

As you go through a normal day, take stock of your thoughts. Write them down, type them into the notes on your phone, or record them in your voice memo app to transcribe later. Trust me, if you really want to change, you need to invest the time to figure out what you are regularly thinking. Be honest. Don't lie to yourself about the lies you tell yourself.

Evaluate the factors consistent in your day. Are you more negative in the morning but usually level out by the end of your workday? Or the opposite? Do you tend to bring negative thinking home with you? Or do you manage to leave it at work? Consider all the dynamics and patterns of your day. Pray and ask God to reveal anything he wants you to see and understand in how you think.

Once you see your thoughts in black and white, you can begin to work on your thought life. Jesus said the truth sets us free, but first we must reveal the truth.

PART 2: AUDIT

Here are 20 questions to help you analyze what you regularly think. I've broken down the questions into two categories: defense (protection from the Enemy) and offense (growth toward God). Write down your honest answers. When you're done, compare your defense and offense. This evaluation will help you see your thoughts and work on real change.

On a typical day:

DEFENSE:

- ➔ Are my thoughts tearing me down?
- ➔ Do I think worried thoughts?
- ➔ Does my self-talk cause me to shrink back in fear?
- ➔ Do my thoughts cause me to keep people at a distance?
- ➔ Are my unhealthy thoughts keeping me from a life I want?
- ➔ Are my unhealthy thoughts keeping me from the life God wants for me?
- ➔ Are my thoughts negative, toxic, or self-deprecating?
- ➔ Does my inner voice tell me I’m helpless or that life is hopeless?
- ➔ Do I find myself skeptical of others?
- ➔ Do I lean toward imagining worst-case scenarios?

OFFENSE:

- ➔ Are my thoughts building me up?
- ➔ Do I think peaceful thoughts?
- ➔ Does my self-talk inspire me to take faith risks?
- ➔ Do my thoughts help me get closer to others?
- ➔ Do my thoughts reflect my faith?
- ➔ Are my thoughts God-honoring?
- ➔ Do my thoughts reflect my hope in Christ?
- ➔ Do they inspire me to believe I can make a difference in the world?

- ➔ Do they equip me to become more like Jesus?
- ➔ Do my thoughts connect to the vision God has for my life?

Remember, the goal is to think about what you think about. You can use this information as we move forward, to help you take practical steps in winning the battle in your mind. As we continue, we will get to some answers that deal with the truth you have revealed in this exercise. Be encouraged. You are one step closer to changing your thinking and believing what God says about you.

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