

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

June 9, 2024. "Soundtracks: The Surprising Solution to Overthinking. Turning down old soundtracks. And cultivating positive ones."

I Intro.

We're into our summer series. It's more teaching and relaxed. So, welcome to our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey. We don't want you to miss out on anything. So, make sure you stay connected to keep informed. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC. We consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know.

II Recap.

We're in our second Sunday of our series "**Soundtracks**" by Jon Acuff. Jon is a Christian writer, speaker, preaches at his home church, explores the power of being transformed by changing negative repeating stories into positive, life-giving thinking. It follows the scriptural truth that we have power and agency over the things we think. We're learning to take some truths from this book and digging in scriptural answering the call to be transformed by the renewal of our mind. Changing our mindset is both a practical and spiritual way in finding the peace and contentment we're looking for. Last week we defined what soundtracks are and how to uncover them. Today; how to turn down the volume on the old ones and what we need to do to cultivate new ones.

III Sunday.

We continue to look at specific things we can incorporate into our regular lives to help us turn down the influence old soundtracks have. Sidenote; it's tough to rid yourself of them completely. There will be some 'soundtracks' that have a staying power and oversized impact. And...we'll learn how to actively change the way we think to disempower our soundtracks. Let's poke around the edges first.

Where do you find yourself fighting negative limiting thoughts?

Can you trace them back to their source?

Have you ever been able to overcome any of these negative soundtracks?

There were two scriptures used in this message. We'll read them both, and then unpack them separately. The first passage is **Romans 12:2**. The second is **Philippians 4:8-9**. Read each one of these, answer the first set of questions. And then we'll dig a little deeper.

What jumped out from these passages that can help us deal with negative soundtracks?

What tools or control do you feel each one of them gave you in addressing soundtracks?

Some of this will sound similar to last week's look at understanding and identifying negative soundtracks. This week is about specific things you can do to take control of negative soundtracks.

1. Romans 12:2.

There are two truths here.

1. Overcoming old 'soundtracks' running in the background comes out of BEING transformed.

Dealing with negative soundtracks is real work. It requires a new way to live. But this new way is done within you, and also from outside of you...of course God. This can be a confusing truth. Dealing with our soundtracks, stories that keep playing, in many cases are actually holding onto, we have to admit we cannot do this work to change them on our own. We cannot grit ourselves to demolish and take captive old soundtracks. We just aren't strong enough. We have to get to the end of ourselves. This is why I believe Paul listed being transformed before this second truth of changing our minds.

2. BEING transformed only happens when we change the way we think.

Being transformed is the goal of undoing the power of old soundtracks. This is actually the first step of the process. We have to change the way we think. "*Renew our mind.*" The work of undoing old soundtracks happens within us. We don't have the will or power to do it on our own. But we can't just sit around and wait for it to happen. We have to both want to turn down, stop letting old soundtracks influence us. And incorporate new practices to help lessen their power. This comes through the intentional work of changing the way we think. It all starts in our mind, how we think. That's what we need to change first.

2. Philippians 4:8-9. (Several key words in this passage)

1. FIX YOUR THOUGHTS AND THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS- This means "*meditate*". Let these types of thoughts dictate what your mind rests on. Let all of your other thoughts orbit the gravitational center of better thoughts. We permanently work to attach ourselves to better ways of thinking. What do we permanently attach...our thoughts to? We need to do the work of figuring out what that takes, FOR EACH OF US. For example, think about something big that was coming up for you. A trip, an event, some really cool thing. That's all you could think about. Now what was the effect that thing had on all your other thoughts? Everything was filtered or controlled by that primary thought. You need to do the work of figuring out what you should attach your thoughts to that are true, honorable, lovely... Doing this, fixing our thoughts on better things, is the work of taking our thoughts captive. Taking control about what we think about, making those thoughts the center, will then have an influence on everything we think about. Don't let our mind wander all over the place, or get drawn into lesser things. We are to focus on what we want our life to be about. This is the power of meditating on things that are excellent and worthy of praise. They open the gateway to let God transform us.

2. KEEP PUTTING INTO PRACTICE- I had to do a callback to **Allen Iverson**. "*PRACTICE!!! WHO'S*

TALKING ABOUT PRACTICE?!" We are!! We practice because we recognize and admit, we're not good at thinking about praiseworthy and excellent things, and need to practice thinking about better things. Malcolm Gladwell says it takes 10,000 hours of doing a task to achieve mastery. Practicing means recognizing we always have more to learn even when we do become somewhat accomplished. We never stop putting the work of "*fixing our thoughts*" and "*thinking about things*" into practice. It's these disciplines that help us gain control over unhealthy soundtracks.

We are being transformed. But it's not a passive endeavor. WHEN we FIX OUR THOUGHTS, THINK ABOUT EXCELLENT THINGS, and KEEP PUTTING INTO PRACTICE, our old 'soundtracks' will be transformed. But we have to put practices in place. And those practices, because they're sacred, powered by the Holy Spirit, will do the work of transformation. THIS is how old, unhelpful, 'soundtracks' lose their power.

III Challenge.

We each need to find specific ways we can turn down the dial on the old soundtracks we let control who we are. We do this by doing these two things.

1. Make a commitment to change the way you think. Talk to yourself when you hear those old soundtracks. **Is this really true, helpful, inspiring, necessary, kind?** Talked about this last week.

2. Immerse yourself in focusing on the more beautiful things. We have to admit, we're addicted to negative. We love news, social media that leans negative more than we do those that lean positive. Negative and positive posts after a certain period of time are about equal in the number of times they're shared. Here is an interesting fact. Negative posts spread faster, but don't keep spreading as long. Positive posts spread more slowly but have a longer lasting impact.

Can you see the spiritual truth this highlights? This is the power of beautiful things.

Transformation takes time. But it has a much more powerful impact over the long run. Negative posts are a quick adrenaline hit. But don't have a lasting impact. Therefore you need to keep feeding ourselves with more beautiful and excellent things. Positive, beautiful thoughts take longer to have an impact, but their staying power is much greater than negative posts.

Which means when we condition ourselves to turn down the negative soundtracks, change the way we think, there's going to be this loss of the hit we get from listening to those negative soundtracks. We have to push against our biological wiring to turn down those negative soundtracks. But when we change the way we think. Start listening to, thinking about, things that are; ***"true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise"***, we will begin to see ourselves being transformed. Defining what these things are will be different for each of us. It will take some time for us to figure out what they will be. But over time, we will begin to see and feel this change happening inside of us. THIS is how we cultivate new ways of thinking. This is Paul's description of turning down outdated negative soundtracks and cultivating new ones. So, do the two step work.

1. Commit to the process, cultivate the desire, to want to be transformed.

2. Begin the practice of focusing your attention, fixing your thoughts, thinking about better things.

In committing to this work you will begin to take control over the 'soundtracks' that play like a too loud radio while you're trying to find your way. It's in your control.