

January 8th, 2023

The Battlefield - The Mind

- Our church focuses on disciple making.
- Our goal is to help people become mature in Christ.
- Mental health emphasis is a relational emphasis.
- Maturity is to follow Jesus (*head*), being changed by Jesus (*heart*), and be committed to the mission of Jesus (*hands*).
- In relationship, we become mature—our real relationships reveal how mature we really are.
- The focus on right thinking that leads to relationships and effectiveness.
- Craig Groeschel's "*Winning the War in Your Mind*" is a resource we will be using for this series.

Colossians 1:28 (NIV) — *²⁸ He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.*

1. A mature disciple understands the world they live in—the problem—the battle.

- The truth about our beginning and condition.
- Created according to a good design, with relationship and balanced mental health.
- Sin broke relationship with the Light and this affected every part of our lives.
- The curse impacts our life – sinful nature –broken way of thinking.
- Darkened in our understanding.
- We are all doing it.
- Left to ourselves we deal with cognitive distortion.

Proverbs 16:25 (NIV) — *²⁵ There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.*

Romans 1:20–23 (NIV); Ephesians 4:17–19 (NIV); John 8:44 (NIV); 2 Timothy 2:24–26 (NIV)

2. The problem with wrong thinking: Your life goes in the direction of your strongest thoughts – your destiny is being formed today.

Proverbs 23:7 (KJV 1900); Jeremiah 2:5 (NIV); James 1:13–15 (NIV)

Neuroplasticity: Psychology Today

- Neuroplasticity is the brain's capacity to continue growing and evolving in response to life experiences. Plasticity is the capacity to be shaped, molded, or altered; neuroplasticity, then, is the ability for the brain to adapt or change over time, by creating new neurons and building new networks.
- Historically, scientists believed that the brain stopped growing after childhood. But current research shows that the brain is able to continue growing and changing throughout the lifespan, refining its architecture, or shifting functions to different regions of the brain.
- The importance of neuroplasticity can't be overstated: *It means that it is possible to change dysfunctional patterns of thinking and behaving and to develop new mindsets, new memories, new skills, and new abilities.*

3. A mature believer embraces the problem and pursues the solution.

- God's answer: a renewed mind—trenches vs. ruts.
- God's Spirit—God's Word—God's people.

Ephesians 4:20-25 (NIV); Romans 12:1–5 (NIV)

Gods part - My part - Others part:

Left to ourselves, we flow towards low places—towards the ruts.

- We are saved and filled at salvation—salvation from hell and our own leadership.
- We are able to with God's help—dig ditches of truth.
- It takes effort fueled by the Holy Spirit.
- It takes help from other believers.

A. Accept the truth about your thinking.

- There is a truth about truth and it's not in our human mind – revelation –light comes from God.
- We have all believed things that are not true – living out those lies has wired your brain and set in motion the destination in your life.
- Examine your thoughts.
- What do you believe that isn't true (*interesting question*)?

B. Decide to continually trust Gods Word – (properly understood, it is truth).

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NLT) — *⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. ⁶Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.*

Psalms 119:105 (NIV); Isaiah 8:19–20 (NIV); 1 John 1:5–7 (NIV)

C. Decide to be a part of a Christian community that helps you learn to rewire your brain—to renew your thinking.

- With this series, together we will begin the journey toward winning the battle for the mind.

Small Group Discussion:

Scriptures to consider:

- **John 8:42-44; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:7; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Psalms 139:23-24.**

- 1. Consider how your mind processes the world around you. How would you rate your thought life?**
 - Mostly healthy
 - Pretty unhealthy
 - I have my ups and downs
 - Not much going on up there
- 2. What lies could you be tempted to believe about God?**
- 3. What lies could you be tempted to believe about yourself or others?**
- 4. Have you ever identified a lie that you believed? What was it and how did you discover it was a lie?**
- 5. How do you respond to negative thoughts that come into your mind? Read **Romans 12:1-3** and **Philippians 4:8-9**.**
- 6. What is one practice you would like to implement in your thought life this week?**

Homework

- Read **Philippians 1** and **2**.
- Consider doing a thought audit.