

# Thinking About Your Thinking

Proverbs 4:23; 2 Corinthians 10:5

One of the main reasons we often don't carry through with our intentions is our tendency to harbor self-defeating thoughts. By this we mean thoughts that focus on our weaknesses, failures, and limitations. We may have great plans, but if deep-down we are taken up with fears or feelings of inadequacy, we probably won't get very far. Such a mindset is likely to immobilize us.

That's why Scripture tells us: "*Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth*" (Col. 3:2). Self-defeating thoughts are part of the "*things that are on earth*" that should *not* be our focus.

In order to help us move ahead this year and experience God's best, we want to look more closely at the area of our thought life. We want to better understand how our thoughts impact our lives; and then we want to look for a solution for self-defeating thoughts.

## 1. Our Thoughts Shape Our Lives

- Proverbs 4:23. What does it mean to "guard your heart," and why is it so important?
- What are some negative attitudes that people commonly struggle with in their self-talk?
- The sermon stressed the phrase, "You are what you think." Do you agree? Why, why not?

## 2. Our Thoughts Affect Our Emotions

- Summarize Jeremiah's attitude in Lamentations 3:1-20.
- What causes Jeremiah's attitude to change so dramatically in Lamentations 3:21-24?
- What does Jeremiah's change of attitude tell us about how thoughts and emotions interact?
- Christian psychologist David Stoop has said, "In every situation our responses are based on how we choose to interpret that event. And that choice creates our emotions." How does James 1:2-3 illustrate this principle?

## 3. Our Thoughts Can Be Controlled

- Proverbs 25:29; 1 Corinthians 9:25a, 27a. What do these verses have in common? What is the key to exercising self-control (what part of his body did Paul make his slave)?
- 2 Corinthians 10:5b. How can the exhortation in this verse be carried out specifically, and how can Philippians 4:8 inform our actions?

So, guard your mind! Watch what you think! Every moment! Recall that the Holy Spirit has given you self-control. You can take every thought captive!