

## The Garden of Your Mind - Cultivating Peace in a World of Chaos

**Prov. 25:11 (NKJV)** *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver*

Our thoughts create either Peace or Chaos. We choose a large amount of our outcomes based on our thoughts.

**Philippians 4:8 (NIV)** *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

Introduction: Today, as we celebrate new members joining our family and we conclude our month on "Actionable Thoughts." We've learned that thoughts aren't just passive whispers; they are the seeds that sprout into the very environment we live in. Our thoughts create the landscape of our lives – either a garden of peace or a wilderness of chaos.

**Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)** *Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*

### 1. Thoughts Sow the Seeds (They Determine the Crop)

Our thoughts are the initial seeds planted in the soil of our hearts. What we dwell on will eventually sprout.

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. **Luke 6**

Your core thoughts define your perceived identity and reality. If you think "failure," you act like one. If you think "successful" or "righteous in Christ," you stand tall in that truth.

**Romans 12:2 (NLT)** *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

Transformation starts with renewed thinking.

Worldly chaos patterns are replaced by God's peace patterns through thought renewal.

If all you think about is negativity, all you will experience is negativity. Positive experiences don't just happen. They are cultivated, first in our thoughts.

Examples:

- How you perceive you'll do on an exam, a tryout, or in an interview affects your performance.
- How you perceive your overall health informs your daily decisions on diet, exercise, mobility.

**II Corinthians 10:5 (NIV)** *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Thoughts aren't neutral passengers; they must be actively managed, captured, and aligned with the truth: God's Word.

Pharaoh (Exodus)... His heart was repeatedly hardened (Exodus 7:13, 22; 8:19, etc.). While God ultimately confirmed his stubbornness, Pharaoh's own proud, resistant thoughts ("Who is the Lord?" Ex 5:2) cultivated the chaos that led to Egypt's downfall. His thoughts preceded his actions and decrees.

Practical Takeaway: Become a Thought Gardener. Start noticing your dominant thoughts throughout the day. Ask: "Is this seed from God's truth, or from fear, accusation, or the world?" When a condemning thought arises ("You messed up again, you always mess up!"), counter it with the truth: "I am righteous, paid for by the blood of Jesus. This thought is a lie."

### 2. Thoughts Shape Identity & Action (They Fuel the Growth)

What we consistently think about shapes who we believe we are and what we do. Our actions flow directly from the wellspring of our thoughts.

**Proverbs 4:20-22 (TPT)** *Fill your thoughts with my Word until they penetrate deep into your spirit. Then, as you unwrap my words, they will impart true life and radiant health into the very core of your being.*

What fills our thoughts (God's Word vs. lies) shapes our inner being and outward vitality.

**Luke 6:45 (NIV)** *A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. - Our words and actions are direct overflow of the thoughts ("stored up" things) in our hearts.*

**Romans 8:6 (NASB)** *For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.*

The focus of your mind determines the fruit: chaos and death (flesh-mind) or life and peace (Spirit-mind).

Peter: Remember his bold declaration ("Even if all fall away, I will not!" Mark 14:29 NIV) fueled by thoughts of self-reliance? It led to brash action (cutting off Malchus' ear, John 18:10) and devastating failure (denial of Jesus). Later, filled with the Holy Spirit and thoughts anchored in Christ's forgiveness and power (Acts 2), his thoughts led to bold, life-giving proclamations and actions.

Feed Your Identity in Christ, Starve Your Fears. Consciously replace thoughts rooted in fear, shame, or inadequacy with truths about your new identity in Christ (righteous, loved, empowered, forgiven).

When faced with a challenge, ask: "How would someone who knows they are righteous in Christ think and act here?" Let that guide your response.

### **3. Thoughts Create Your Environment (They Harvest the Fruit)**

The cumulative effect of our thoughts, leading to actions, ultimately creates the atmosphere we live in – peace or chaos – personally, relationally, and communally.

**Philippians 4:7 (NIV)** *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

God's peace actively guards the very source of our thoughts (mind) and emotions (heart) when we focus rightly.

**Philippians 4:8-9 (VOICE)** *Finally, brothers and sisters, fill your minds with beauty and truth. Meditate on whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is good, whatever is virtuous and praiseworthy. **Keep to the script:** whatever you learned and received and heard and saw in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will walk with you.*

Actionable Decision: Fill your mind intentionally. Practice these things. The result? The God of peace walks with you – He inhabits the environment your thoughts.

**Proverbs 14:30 (NIV)** *A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.*

Your internal thought environment (peace vs. envy/strife) directly impacts your physical, emotional, and relational health.

Cultivate Your Peace Garden Daily.

#### **The T.H.I.N.K. Filter / Acronym:**

Before dwelling on a thought or speaking, ask:

Is it: T - True?    H - Helpful?    I - Inspiring?    N - Necessary?    K - Kind?

(Aligns with Phil 4:8).

#### **The Peace Practice:**

Dedicate 5 minutes morning and evening to consciously fill your mind. Read a Psalm aloud. Meditate on one aspect of your righteousness in Christ (e.g., "I am completely forgiven. Col 1:14"). Breathe in "Peace of Christ," breathe out "Chaos and fear."

#### **The Environment Shift:**

When chaos arises (internally or externally), pause. Capture the chaotic thought (II Cor 10:5). Replace it with a truth from scripture or your identity in Christ. Then, act from that place of renewed peace.

#### **Conclusion:**

Guard your mind like the precious garden it is (Prov 4:23).

Renew your mind daily with God's truth, especially your righteous identity (Rom 12:2).

Capture every chaotic thought and replace it with Christ's peace and truth (II Cor 10:5).

Fill your mind with what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable (Phil 4:8).

Practice this daily! The God of peace will walk with you (Phil 4:9).

**II Thessalonians 3:16 (NIV)** *Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.*