

## Our Journey -- The Season of Formation

Romans 8:29 -- Mirror Translation

For those He foreknew -- He also predestined to be conformed to the exact image of His Son.

## Continuing Our Ascent -- The Awakening

May 31, 2026

**Sermon Title -- You Are the Gatekeeper of your Soul**

**Anchor Text -- Romans 12:2 -- Mirror Translation**

Do not allow the current age to mold you into its pattern – but be transformed by the renewing of your mind – so that you may prove what the will of God is – that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

### **Introduction**

Last week – I gave you a 30,000-foot view – of one of the most powerful kingdom realities in all of Scripture ... **“As a man thinks in his heart – so is he”** ... We established that your thought life is not the byproduct of your life – but your life is the byproduct of your thought life ... I left you with a practical exercise I hope you engaged with throughout this past week ... To stop every now and then and ask yourself – “Why did I just think that?”

Let me drop this mystical nugget here as an admonition ... Know what I have come to understand over decades of ministry? ... People are lazy ... People don't want to work ... People expect things to change in their life without making any effort – to bring about said change ... Do yourself a favor – don't be one of those people ... Remember - - Faith without works is dead – and a man reaps what he sows ... If you want change in your life – you cannot simply wish for it – pray for it – or just talk about it ... You must put your faith into action and sow the seeds that produce the harvest you seek.

So, this morning – I want us to go a bit deeper in this principle ... Now that you know – your thought life – is the most powerful force shaping your environment – what are you going to do about it? ... Here is the sobering reality that nobody likes to hear ... Nobody is coming to manage your mind for you ... Not your pastor – not your spouse – not a conference – not a prayer line – not a prophetic word ... The responsibility of what occupies and governs your mind – belongs entirely to you ... This reality will become either the most sobering or the most liberating truth on this leg of our journey ... And that will depend completely on you ... I want to share with you three sobering truths about your thought life.

## **Your Mind is Always Listening**

### **Proverbs 4:23 -- Passion Translation**

So above all ... Guard the affections of your heart ... For they affect all that you truly are ... Pay attention to the welfare of your innermost being ... For from there flows the wellspring of life.

Before we talk about our cognitive responsibility – we need to understand – what we are actually dealing with ... Here is something most people in the church were never told ... Your mind is always listening ... Every thought you consistently repeat – every belief you consistently hold – every fear you consistently entertain ... Is being recorded and reinforced in the physical structure of your brain ... Neuroscientists call these neural pathways – and here is how they work.

Every time you think a thought – a signal travels through a specific pathway in your brain ... The first time you think it – the pathway is faint ... But every time you repeat that thought – the pathway gets a little deeper – a little wider – a little more automatic ... Until eventually that thought no longer requires any conscious engagement at all ... It simply runs on its own ... What started as a conscious choice – became a habit ... And what became a habit – eventually became a highway ... A deeply grooved – automatic response – that fires without your permission ... You never even question it – as you simply believe – that is just the way you are.

This is why so many believers have consistently prayed – attended church – heard the Word preached faithfully for years ... Yet they still find themselves thinking those same defeated thoughts ... Struggling with the same fears – and living far below the kingdom reality they have been taught ... Now catch this ... This issue has nothing to do with a faith problem ... It has nothing to do with a character flaw ... It all has to do with a neuropathway problem ... The old pathways of thinking are so deeply grooved – so completely automated – that any new truth that comes along get re-routed back onto the old pathway ... This is why nothing changes in your life.

Paul clearly addressed this issue in Romans 12:2 ... He said – “Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it - - without even thinking” ... Over time – what you consistently think about – creates neuropathways – which allows you to function without even thinking ... And the longer this goes on – the deeper those pathways become – the harder it becomes to guard your heart and protect your inner man ... So, what can we do?

## **You Are the Gatekeeper**

### **2 Corinthians 10:3-6 – The Message**

The world is unprincipled ... It’s dog-eat-dog out there! ... The world doesn’t fight fair ... But we don’t live or fight our battles that way—never have and never will ... The tools of our trade aren’t for marketing or manipulation – but they are for demolishing that entire massively corrupt culture ... We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies – tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God – fitting every loose thought – and emotion – and impulse – into the structure of life – shaped by Christ ... Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity.

Now let’s unpack this text a bit:

Now this is the point I want you to grasp ... You must take personal responsibility for your thought life ... Notice Paul didn’t say – God will take every thought captive – that is your job ... The language in this text is deliberate and active ... It requires a decision – “take every

thought captive” ... It requires a sustained effort – “until it obeys Christ” ... As a gatekeeper of your soul – you must be willing to stand in the gap of worldly culture and kingdom culture ... And refuse to allow anything in your mind that does not align completely with kingdom reality.

What is truly sad – is most believers never fully accept this responsibility ... They believe some magical – sovereign move of God – will rewire their stink-in think-in ... And while they have been waiting – those old pathways have gotten deeper ... Those old patterns have gotten stronger ... And the gap between what they believe theologically – and what they actually experience in daily life – has gotten further apart ... Transformation was never meant to be something that happens to you – while you remain passive ... Romans 12:2 makes that unmistakably clear ... Be transformed by the renewing of your mind ... The renewing is an active ongoing process – that you must actively engage in – and are completely responsible for.

Here is the honest reality of what being a gatekeeper actually means in daily life ... It means you stop allowing every thought that surfaces to simply pass through your mind unchallenged ... It means you take seriously what you are constantly thinking about ... You take note of where those thoughts are coming from ... You make a deliberate decision about whether it gets to stay ... A thought about your identity that contradicts what God says – does not get to roam freely around in your mind ... A fear-based thought that rehearses the worst possible outcome – does not get to take up residence ... A religious thought that reinforces separation from God – gets challenged immediately ... Now let’s address the work needed.

## **Rewiring your Mind is Possible – but it Requires Intention**

### **Romans 12:2 -- Passion Translation**

Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you -- but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think. This will empower you to discern God's will as you live a beautiful life -- satisfying and perfect in his eyes.

Here is the most liberating truth – we have looks at thus far ... Our brains can be rewired ... Neuroscientists call this neuroplasticity ... And what this simply means is – the brain can be

fixed ... You can actually get rid of your stink-in think-in you have been living with for years ... New pathways can be built – while old pathways can be destroyed ... Those old automatic responses that have been running your life can be changed ... But it will require one thing that most people are not willing to be consistent with – Intention.

Renewing your mind doesn't happen accidentally ... It does not happen by attending more services ... Listening to more sermons ... Nor constantly repeating a prayer asking God to renew your mind ... It will only happen through consistent – deliberate – and repeated exposure to new truth ... Every time you choose a kingdom truth over natural realities – you are laying down a new groove in your neuropathway ... Every time you stop a fear-based thought at the gate and replace it with what God actually says – the old highway gets a little quieter and the new one gets a little stronger ... Every time you meditate on Scripture – you are deliberately rewiring and changing the physical structure of your brain ... This is not something that is mystical but is actually biological ... This is exactly what Paul was describing – without the benefit of science – when he said – be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

This is why the formation journey we are on cannot be rushed ... This is where the real awakening truly happens ... When you sit with the Word ... When you intentionally meditate upon it and chew on it ... When you get quiet and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work ... You will be laying new pathways that will radically change your life ... How do I know? ... For as a man thinks – so is he ... You have what you have because of the way you think ... Everything that is created around you is influenced by the way you think ... Rewiring of your brain directly relates to the effort you put into it ... Every choice you make this week will either strengthen the old pathway – or build a new one.

### **Takeaway**

Let me leave you with practical application you can do this week ... Identify one consistent thought pattern in your life that you know is not kingdom related ... Just one ... Identify that one thought that keeps surfacing – whatever it may be ... Name it ... Write it down if you need

to ... And then begin to intentionally replacing it ... Every single time that thought surfaces – capture it – say I will no longer think that thought – then replace it with what the Spirit says is actually true ... That is how rewiring begins ... One intentional choice – repeated consistently – building a new pathway one thought at a time.