

## Small Group Guide: RETHINK HOW YOU'RE THINKING - Think About Thinking

**Opening Question** What's a funny or random thought you've had recently that made you laugh at yourself later?

**Opening Prayer** *Father, thank you for bringing us together tonight. As we talk about our thoughts and our minds, we invite you into this conversation. Help us be honest, help us feel safe, and help us hear what you want to say to each of us. Renew our minds and draw us closer to you as we share. In Jesus' name, amen.*

### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

- My thoughts control my life, but I can control my thoughts.
  - “As he thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7)
  - Your life is shaped and directed by what you consistently think about.
- Any real change starts in my mind, not in my behavior.
  - Romans 12:2 – We're either being conformed by the world or transformed by God, and that change begins with “a complete change of your mind.”
- I can change how I feel by changing how I think.
  - You can't command emotions to stop, but you can “change the channel” in your mind.
  - Think → Feel → Act. If you want to change your actions, you must go upstream to your thoughts.
- There is an unseen war going on in and for my mind.
  - The enemy uses propaganda—lies, half-truths, and worldly values—to conform us to his agenda and destroy what's important to us.
  - Following Jesus is not a cruise ship; it's a battleship.
- To win the battle for my mind, I must have God's Spirit and God's Word inside me.
  - We demolish strongholds by replacing lies with God's truth (2 Corinthians 10:3–5).
  - A stronghold is first a belief, not just a behavior.
- Rethinking my life to match how Jesus thinks is called repentance.
  - Repentance (metanoia) literally means “to change your mind.”
  - Stopping sinful behavior is the fruit of a changed mind, not the definition of repentance itself.

## Discussion Questions

1. **Read Proverbs 4:23** (here are both translations Pastor Dan used):

*“Be careful what you think, because your thoughts run your life.” (NCV)*

*“Your life is shaped by your thoughts.” (TEV)*

- What do you think this verse means in everyday life?
- Can you think of a general example (from life, culture, or someone you know) where thoughts clearly shaped someone’s direction?

2. **Read Romans 12:2.**

- What are some common messages or “patterns” in today’s world that influence how people think?
- What are some practical ways people can renew their minds on a daily basis?

3. **Read Psalm 42:6 and Jonah 2:7.**

- What do you notice about how these writers respond when they’re struggling?
- What are some healthy ways people can turn their attention to God during stressful or emotional moments?

4. **Read Romans 7:21–25.**

- How do you relate to Paul’s description of wanting to do right but doing wrong?
- Why do you think people often struggle to do what they know is right?
- What encouragement do you see in this passage?

5. **Read 2 Corinthians 10:3–5.**

- Pastor Dan defined a stronghold as a belief that goes against God’s truth. What are some common lies people tend to believe today?
- What are some truths from Scripture that can help counter those kinds of lies?

6. Pastor Dan said, “Whatever you resist, persists,” and used the ice cream example.

- Have you ever noticed that the more you try not to think about something, the more it sticks in your mind? Why do you think that happens?
- What are some positive ways to redirect your thoughts (or to “change the channel”) when they’re heading in an unhealthy direction?

7. How does thinking of repentance as “changing your mind” (rather than simply “stopping bad behavior”) expand or change your understanding of what it means to repent?

- Why do you think mindset plays such a key role in spiritual growth?

8. Pastor Dan said we’re not on a cruise ship but on a battleship, and the enemy is “sizing us up.”

- If we really believed that, what are some practical ways we would be more intentional about our thought life?

### **Practical Applications** (Choose one or two.)

1. **Thought Audit** Set an alarm 2–3 times a day for one week. When it goes off, pause and honestly ask:
  - “What am I thinking about right now?”
  - “Do I really want to think about this?”
  - Jot down patterns you notice.
2. **Change the Channel Practice** Identify one recurring negative thought (worry, shame, fear, self-hatred, etc.), then:
  - Select a verse or truth about God to turn to when it comes.
  - Each time the thought appears, consciously “change the channel” by praying that verse or truth out loud.
3. **Stronghold Swap (Lie vs. Truth)**
  - Write one lie you’ve been believing on one side of a card/paper.
  - On the other side, write a specific Scripture that contradicts that lie.
  - Keep it with you and review it daily, asking the Holy Spirit to renew your mind.
4. **Scripture Saturation** Spend 10–15 minutes each day this week reading and meditating on Romans 8 or another passage about life in the Spirit.
  - Ask: “What does this teach me about how God wants me to think?”
5. **Invite Accountability** Share with a trusted friend or someone in the group:
  - the main thought battle you’re facing, and
  - the verse you’re using to fight it.
  - Ask this person to check in with you once this week and pray for your thought life.

### **Memory Verse for This Week**

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

**Closing Prayer** *Lord, thank you for what you’ve shown us tonight. Thank you that we are not slaves to our thoughts, and that you’ve given us your Spirit and your Word to win the battle in our minds. This week, help us notice what we’re thinking, to reject the lies of the enemy, and to change the channel to your truth. Renew our minds so that our lives bring you glory. Protect each person here and continue your work in us. In Jesus’ name, amen.*