

The Way of the Lord

34. The Lordship of Jesus: Mutually Becoming More Like Him (Part 2)

We hope you've demolished your strongholds so that there are NO demonic influences in your mind, will and emotions. In this segment and the next we're going to use illustrations to take you inside your brain. Our first illustration will show you how God intended your brain to work. Next, we'll illustrate how strongholds and toxic memories have hindered you from loving and knowing Jesus as LORD of your life. Strongholds and toxic memories prevent many from keeping the greatest commandment: "*LOVE the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your MIND and with all your strength*" (Mark 12:30). If you've had difficulty loving your Lord this way, in our next segment we'll show you the path to renewing your mind.

Let's take a look now at what goes on inside your head *if* you're processing your thoughts the way God intended. The thought-processes of a healthy brain: Your five senses send signals to your brain through its "doorway," the amygdala. These signals then proceed through the hypothalamus and thalamus, where either *positive or negative chemicals* get attached. When any new thought enters your brain, a positive or negative chemical corresponding to the emotions connected with that thought attach to it here. That thought next travels to the cortex, where it seeks to join similar memories, called "memory trees."

In your cortex this new thought may be stored as a *healthy* memory, which has *positive* chemicals attached to it. Or, it will be stored as a *toxic* memory with *negative* chemicals attached to it. In our next segment we'll show that *all* toxic memories can be changed into healthy ones when people close to you *expose* them, and when you trust in the power of Jesus to *heal* them.

If a thought passes through your cortex and finds only *healthy* memories, it goes on to your frontal lobe. Here that thought encounters your *free will*. This is where your mind discerns whether something is right or wrong. The free will area of your brain interacts with a 40,000-neuron *conscience* that's located in your heart. Your heart acts like a checkpoint to make sure the information is accurate. It's here that you make the decision to do what Jesus would do if HE were you. "*The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good CONSCIENCE and a sincere faith*" (1 Timothy 1:5). Your conscience sends a small voice back to your brain. Maybe you've heard it before...

Now this is important. To become more like Jesus and live with Him as LORD of your life, each thought must reach your free will area and your heart. That's where you *fix your thoughts* on how Jesus would have you respond (see Hebrews 3:1). Can you see how wonderfully our Lord has created us? (See Psalm 139:13,14.) And, the ever-advancing technology that lets us look inside the brain only substantiates what the *Bible* has been telling us.

Again, if an incoming thought *doesn't* have a toxic chemical attached to it by the hypothalamus, and *doesn't* get trapped by any toxic memories in the cortex, it will arrive at the *free will* area of your brain, and interact with the *conscience* in your heart. That's the good news! But let's see what happens if a new thought entering your brain is *negative* or encounters a *toxic memory*.

As before, the thought enters your brain through the amygdala. If that thought is negative or painful, and it arouses a bad feeling, the hypothalamus attaches a *negative* chemical. As that negative-chemical thought enters your cortex, it seeks out similar toxic memories. Now here's an important point. Any demonic strongholds you *haven't* demolished are wrapped around a toxic memory in your cortex. Even if the strongholds *are* demolished, as long as *toxic memories* remain, all emotionally painful thoughts that enter your brain will seek out and attach themselves to the toxic memory. In fact, the memory tree will *expand* with each new thought attached to it. And, toxic memories are the force behind any passive/aggressive symptoms you may exhibit.

You manifest passive aggressive behavior by your:

- *habitual resistance* to receiving input from other people,
- and/or your *unwillingness to follow through* on responsibilities,
- and/or your *acute insensitivity* to problems in a relationship.

Any of these are a sign that *you* want to be in control, and the Lord Jesus is not. And to make matters worse, your sin nature thrives on your toxic memories. As the psalmist laments, "*Keep your servant from willful sins; may they not rule over me*" (Psalm 19:13). Any strongholds or toxic memories will *stop* your thoughts from reaching your free will area and the conscience in your heart. If the thought *doesn't* arrive there, you can't respond as Jesus would. Therefore He won't be truly LORD of your life.

As you can see, any symptoms of passive aggression reveal that strongholds or toxic memories are still influencing or controlling you. These most likely developed very early in your life to guard you from further emotional pain. And, later in life your passive aggression blinds you to the *ongoing apprehension* you cause others through your resistance, unwillingness and insensitivity.

In other words, your *motives and actions* will produce ongoing apprehension in your close relationships. You'll resist those close to you when they point out your unChrist-like motives or actions. And, you may find yourself recruiting others to take your side. This only complicates your situation by involving others in slander and gossip.

Let's be clear on this. The toxic memories that were formed due to strongholds have been with you for *a long time*. They're such a part of your identity that you probably don't see the hurt you're causing others through their influence. That's why it's so important that you have someone who cares about you and whom you trust who can put up a *stop sign* to point out any UNChrist-like response. You need to humbly draw closer to whoever cares enough to help you see your toxic motivations or actions so you can become more like Jesus.

If you *mutually* intend for Jesus to be LORD of your lives, you have a key responsibility to each other. That's to lovingly expose toxic memories and motivations so you can repent and look to Jesus for the healing only He can do.

For Further Study

- Book: *Demolishing Strongholds*
- Hebraic Article: *Mutually Growing Christ-like Relationships*
- Lifebyte 73: *Stop Toxic Thoughts—Replace Toxic Memories*

Each is a free download on our website: <restorationministries.org>