A close up of a sign

Description automatically generated

**Part 4**

**2 Corinthians 10:4–5 “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”**

Can you believe it? Today, we’re finishing the Mind Games series.

Mind games are those negative thoughts we all battle that feed our insecurities, worries, and fears; the thoughts that lead us to irrational anger or undefined depression.

But during this series I’ve given you good news: with Jesus’ help, mind games can be won! And it isn’t just up to you or me to win these games on our own. Jesus wants us to partner with Him to overcome the negative mind invaders. That means He’s asking us to take an active role in recognizing, rejecting, and replacing negative thoughts. And then to retrain our minds to keep them from returning.

Remember: **It’s impossible to live a positive life with a negative mind.**

Negative thoughts bombard us all. Sparing none, they come uninvited, sometimes triggered by the smallest things. For many, a word, a look, or encountering a familiar situation can start off a chain of dark thoughts that can escalate out of control and bring them to a fearful, lonely place.

* You may be a husband or wife who’s given to thinking, My spouse and children don’t respect me. I’m a total failure.
* Or maybe the thought of going to school or to work in the morning fills you with dread because you think, People just don’t like me. Everything I do seems to be wrong. I should just kill myself.
* There are many people who stay away from church because of thoughts like, God’s against me. He doesn’t love me. I keep messing up.

I know firsthand what it’s like to be tormented by negative thoughts. As a kid, who grew up in religion, I always believed that I’d committed the “unpardonable sin” and lost my salvation. I had all kinds of dark thoughts about my life and destiny. I believed that I was going to hell. I even had blasphemous thoughts about God and was compulsively obsessive about confessing my sins to Him. I was so oppressed in my mind that I was on the brink of losing it. By the time I was in my late 30’s, the thought of my mind snapping at any time really freaked me out!

But God in His grace set me free. He revealed the gospel of grace to me—how all my sins were already forgiven through Jesus’ perfect sacrifice and how I’m righteous by faith and not my works. I received an assurance of my salvation. I still remember the moment I was set free—December 2012—it was like the tight metal bands around my head just broke and fell off, and I experienced His amazing peace, joy, and freedom! That’s what going to happen to many of you today!

If you’re struggling with negative thoughts today to whatever degree, here’s the most powerful thing about you, YOU’RE STILL HERE! The devil’s given it his best shot…and failed. The Lord knows the mental and emotional struggles you’re going through and He really wants to set you free from discouragement, depression, despair, and defeat.

**Isaiah 53:5 “But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.”**

He wore the crown of thorns on His head so that you can have a mind that’s free from oppression. He bore the chastisement for your peace so that you can enjoy His divine wholeness and peace. The fact that you’re here today shows that He cares deeply about you and is already working to free your mind. The reality is, for many, the same grace that saved them isn’t translating into daily peace of mind.

So that’s why I’m closing this series by picking three of the most powerful truths we’ve discussed over the past few weeks to review. Then we’re going to take communion together and I’m going to pray for those of you who want to be set free from discouragement, depression, despair, and defeat.

**1-The battle takes place in your mind.**

**Colossians 2:15 “He disarmedthe spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.”**

**Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”**

**3 John 1:2 “I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in good health, even as your soul prospers.”**

**2-Think on the obedience of Christ, not your own obedience.**

**2 Corinthians 10:4–5 “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”**

**Romans 5:19 “For as by one man’s [Adam’s] disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s [Jesus’] obedience many will be made righteous.”**

**3-Know who you are in Christ.**

**Philippians 4:8 Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”**

**Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest for your souls. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.”**