

- Huh, here we go again. Another sermon, and I never feel ready. You'd think after 25 years, I feel confident, but I'm always nervous, always insecure, I know God's Word is powerful. I feel so weak. Pathetic is more accurate. No matter how much I work, no matter how hard I've try, I just never feel like I have what it takes. Okay Groeschel. Game on, smile, don't suck. Let's roll. So I'm curious. Does anyone else have an ongoing war in your mind? I don't know about you, but so often I battle in my mind between thoughts of faith, and thoughts of fear. I so often want to trust God, and yet I also want to control. Maybe you're like this. Maybe you can walk in one moment and you feel full of spiritual confidence, that God is with you, and He's for you, and He's called you, in the next moment, you have this crippling insecurity that paralyzes you, and holds you back. What I discovered is that the mind is a battlefield. And most of life's battles are won or lost in your minds. The more I've studied scripture, and the more I've even looked at what neuroscience would say, most of life's battles are won or lost in the minds. The good news is, who's ready for some good news? The good news is that God's Word is powerful, not just to help you, but to transform, and to renew your mind with truth. And because His word is powerful, I would love it if you would today at all of our Life.Church locations, if you're watching in your kitchen, you could even stand to your feet in honor, of the reading of God's Word. Today we're gonna be looking from 2nd Corinthians 10. And over the next few weeks, we're gonna try to get into the mind of the Apostle Paul. Is interesting to look at him. Have you ever heard of the ultimate warrior before? In many ways, Paul was what I'd call the ultimate thought warrior. When you look at his life, you'll notice early on we see him become a follower of Jesus. And then we watch as Jesus renews his mind over time. Romans 7, we looked at that a couple of weeks ago, and you see the battle in his mind. He says, the things that I wanna do, I don't do. You can probably relate. He says the things I don't wanna do, I ended up doing, the things I wanna do I can't seem to do, and he almost sounds crazy with the thoughts in his mind. We're gonna watch him progress throughout his life in ministry, as he learns to wage war against the lies that attack his mind. We're gonna see him capture wrong thoughts, and replace them with truth and win the war in his mind. This is what the Apostle Paul says. He says, "For though we live in the world, "we do not wage war as the world does. "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power." The Greek word translate it as power, it's the word dunamis. It means the explosive, miraculous power of God. We get our word dynamite from this. "The weapons that we fight with, "they have divine power to demolish, "to destroy strongholds." You may not use the word stronghold in your everyday life. What is a stronghold? It comes from the Greek word ochuroma, and it's a military stronghold. It was like a fortress that was often built in the middle of a city. This fortress could be surrounded by a wall that would literally be 20 feet deep. And it's where the military officials might be kept during battle to keep them safe, or where prisoners were kept to guard them from the enemy attacking. The devil, our spiritual enemy wants to attack your mind, and create strongholds of deception. So you believe something that's untrue, and takes you away from God's healing, and calling for your life. What is the devil do? The devil tries to shape your thinking. One lie at a time, until you're a prisoner of deception. What does the devil tell you? You can't trust people. You'll never succeed. You're always gonna be broke. You're never gonna have a good marriage. God doesn't hear your prayers. God doesn't care about you. You're never gonna make a difference. You're never gonna amount to anything. How do we do battle in our mind? Well, scripture tells us this. "That we demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge God." And what do we do? With God's help, "we take captive every thought and we make it obedient to Christ." The title of today's message is, "Winning the War in Your Mind." Would you pray with me. Father we ask, that by the

power of Your living word, You would renew our minds with truth. Set us free God from believing the lies that rob us, joy, peace and calling. And God may Your truth set us free. We pray this in Jesus' name. And everybody say, Amen.

- Amen.

- Look at somebody next to you, air five them and say, get your mind right. Just tell them, get your mind right. Put that in the chat. I'm getting my mind, right. Just type it in the chat. I'm getting my mind right. Today, we are launching into a new message series. And the message series is the same title as my new book, "Winning the War in Your Mind: "Change Your Thinking, "Change Your Life." And this book and this message is incredibly personal to me because I've been on honestly, a several-year journey, asking God, begging God, pleading with God, to renew my mind. And by the power of His word, I've made so much progress that I thank God for it. I wanna share with you through God's Word the journey that He's taken me on. And as I've studied the mind, both in scripture and just through science, what I've discovered is this. That our lives, are always moving in the direction of our strongest thoughts. Our lives are always moving in the direction of our strongest thoughts. What we tend to think comes out in our life, and both science and scripture agree. In fact, I've done a lot of research on cognitive behavior psychology, which shows that a lot of problems, are actually related to wrong thought processes. Some relational challenges. Some eating disorders. Addictions, some forms of anxiety are actually a direct result of toxic thinking. That's what science says. God's Word is true, and it says it this way. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinks in his heart, as a person thinks, "so is he." What do we know? That the life we have so often is a reflection of the thoughts that we think. What we think determines who we become. In other words, if you tend to think I can't do something, I'll never be able to do something. I don't have what it takes. If you think you can't, you probably won't. If you think you can, by the grace of God, you probably will. If you dwell on your problems, the world is bad, it's getting worse, your problems are gonna overwhelm you. But instead, if you look for some solutions, if you believe you can have faith, you'll find some solutions and you'll see faith arise. If you always feel like you're a victim, you will likely become a victim. If instead, you believe that you can overcome, by the power of Christ within you, you can overcome. In so many cases, the life we have is a reflection of the thoughts we think. And what I wanna do today, is I wanna encourage you for a moment, just to stop and think about what you think about. We're gonna pause, and just kind of go through our minds, and I'm gonna encourage you to do what I call a thought audit. We're going to audit our thoughts, and think about what we think about. I'm gonna show you three different categories to try to determine where you actually would fall on this list. The first scale I wanna look at is contrasting your mindset. Are you characterized by worried thoughts, panic, anxiety, fear, or would you say, that your thoughts are typically characterized by being full of peace? We'll start on the left side. Do you tend to wake up and have your mind drift toward fear? What could go wrong? I'm worried about my kids. I'm worried about my health. I'm worried about the economy. I'm worried about the state of the world and the direction that our world is heading and our countries out of control. Do you find yourself more typified and characterized your mind by worried thoughts or even if things are bad, and complicated, do you find yourself casting your cares upon God, and recognizing there is a peace that goes beyond all human ability to understand. And you sense His presence, and His goodness, and His spirit with you, even when things aren't the way you want. What would you say if you're auditing your thoughts? Are you more characterized by worry or by peaceful thoughts? A second category would be this. Do your thoughts

drift toward the negative? Or do they drift toward the positive? Do you wake up and find yourself like negative and critical of people? And assuming the worst, instead of believing the best? Do you look at your day and say, Oh it's gonna be hard, and it's gonna be bad, times are tough. And I'm always so busy. There's not enough of me to go around. And the world's going to hell in a hand basket. Or do you wake up with positive faith? And again, even if things are difficult, you say you know what, Christ is with me. He helps me overcome. And things may be difficult in the world, but I'm thankful for a God who is working in all things to bring about good to those who are called according to His purpose. What would typify your thoughts? So let's look at a third category, and ask yourself, when it comes to what you think about, are your thoughts more worldly, toward the things of this world that were just temporary, or do they drift toward that which lasts forever? Your thoughts may be more worldly where you're just concerned with what you have? And what you wear? And what you look like? And who liked your post? And how many followers you have? And about what everybody thinks about you? Or they drift toward more eternal? Which is God has given you a life to steward, and spiritual gifts to use. And what you have is actually to be invested and given to make a difference in the lives of the people around you, so when everything else burns away your life will count eternally. What would you say characterizes your thoughts? What we think about matters more than you can imagine. What comes into your mind, comes out in your life. No matter what you do, or what you have, or who you know, or what you buy, or where you live, or where you travel, you cannot have a positive life, when you have a negative mind. Why? Because your life is always moving in the direction of your strongest thoughts. The question I want you to ask yourself is this. If your life is always moving in the direction of your strongest thoughts, are you excited about the direction your thoughts are taking you? I asked myself that very question several years ago. And my answer was, no. If my thoughts are directing my life, and I looked specifically at my thoughts, I did not like the direction they were taking me in. They were consumed with negativity, and fear, and self-doubt, and my inner dialogue would often be discouraging and talking myself down over and over again. So several years ago, and through this period, my number one top personal spiritual priority was to invite God, to renew my mind with truth. And I've been on a passion for it. So much so that I got consumed with it, and had to get it out in the form of a book, hopefully to help other people the way God's Word has been helping me. God I need your help to renew my mind, to replace all the lies that replay in my mind with Your spiritual truth. And so over the next few weeks, we're gonna go on a journey. And we're gonna look at the Apostle Paul, and we're gonna ask God to renew our minds with truth. And today we're gonna lay a foundation, that we'll build upon in the weeks to come. So we can win the war in our mind and change our thinking, so God can change our life. Are you ready for it? If you're ready to say I'm ready. Are you ready? Type it in the chat if you want to, I'm ready. Two foundational thoughts that we're gonna build upon. The first one is this. What I wanna do is just encourage you to identify the biggest stronghold, this holding you back. Remember the stronghold, it's you're your prisoner locked by a lie. What is the biggest mental stronghold that's holding you back? You might think over and over again. I'm not good enough. Or my past is too bad for God to use me. Or I can't trust the people around me. Or I'm always gonna battle with my weight. Or I'm never gonna be good with money. Or I can never be close God. Or I'll never be in a job that is fulfilling with something that I love. Or all of my relationships are always gonna breakdown. I only date psychos, whatever it is. Okay. If you find yourself identifying your negative thoughts, what I want you to do is embrace the reality that your negative thoughts, they are changing the chemical makeup of your brain. The reason is because every thought creates a neurochemical change in your body. When you think a positive thought, you

get a surge of rewarding neuro-transmitters releasing a very legal and exciting drug called dopamine. It's legal and it's powerful. And every time your brain drops some dopamine, you get this hit, this buzz, this thrill. Someone you like and respect comments on your latest Instagram posts. You get some dopamine. Someone says, Ooh, girl, your hair looks so good. Dopamine. Amy texts me and says, thinking about you, come home soon. Dopamine. Okay. It's that positive surge of release in your brain. And what's so interesting is the more often you think a thought, science tells us it's easier to think that thought again. Once you think a thought, you're creating neural pathways in your brain. And literally we have billions of neural pathways in our brain. The more often we think that thought, the more the connection is there, and it's easier to think that thought again, and before long, whatever we have been thinking becomes our default thought. Stronghold. If you believe a lie for long enough, you start to be impacted as if that lie were true. You get stuck in a rut. Imagine this. If I walked out in my front yard, and I walked across the lawn for a 100 days straight. If I walked across that, what would I do? I would create a path in my yard. In my mind if for a 100 days straight, I think on a lie, I start to believe the lie, and I create a neural pathway through my brain. With God's help, what we're gonna do is renew our minds. We're gonna stay off that old path. And if I stay off that path for a 100 days, what happens? The grass grows back. There's more resistance. It's not as easy to walk. And I forge a new pathway in my brain toward the truth, and the truth ultimately sets me free. This is science and is Godly, because God created science. Romans 12:2, Paul said it this way. He said, don't be conformed to the patterns of this world. We could maybe say it's like, don't be conformed to the wrong ways of thinking. He said, but be transformed. How? By the renewing of your mind. We're staying off the destructive, negative paths and we're creating new paths of truth. I don't know how this will play out in your life. But maybe your path is this. It's a frustrating day at work, and you come home, and it's been crazy at home, because it's always crazy when you homeschool, is a spiritual principle, and all of your homeschooling and you have some degree of that, and you walk in and your old path says, yell at your spouse. And what you do is you stay off that path. You capture that thought, and you might count to three, or 10, or 110 in your case. And you say a prayer, and instead you walk a different road, and you come up and say, I'm sorry, it's been a difficult day. And you hug and you change the tone by changing the path. Or maybe you feel bad about yourself. And so when you feel bad about yourself, there's a very direct path to the freezer. And you eat ice cream when you feel bad, and then you feel worse because you ate the whole thing. What you're gonna do is create a new path. Instead of walking to the freezer, you walk to the front yard, and you take a little walk, and you exercise. And when you exercise, you get some dopamine, and some adrenaline, and you feel better about yourself and you create a new path. When you're bored, what do you do? You pick up your phone, you look at Instagram, you scroll through it all your friends, and you hate them. Because their life seems better than yours. And you're not there. Why weren't you there? And you feel like a loser. And so what you might do is create a new path. You open up the YouVersion Bible App, and you put something different in your brain that renews your mind. To think in a different way, we're gonna forge a new path in our brain because the more you walk that path, the easier it becomes to travel, and the more you stay off the old one, the more it weakens, and it's harder to think those same thoughts again. Here's your assignment. Identify the biggest stronghold that's holding you back. Just one. Just one. We're not gonna attack all 73. What we're gonna do is we're gonna start with one. What is it for you? You might battle with identity and you might feel like I'm just not lovable. That's your one. Or you might wrongly believe because you've set it for 1,000s of days, I'll just never be good enough. Or I don't deserve anything good. Or I'll always be broke.

There's the haves and have nots, and I'm just a have not, okay. You feel helpless, hopeless, worthless. Like life is pointless. Identify that one stronghold, name it. Because you can not defeat what you don't define. Identify, that biggest stronghold. And then the second part of your assignment is this. Name the truth that demolishes that stronghold. Name the truth that demolishes that stronghold. Why does the truth matter? Jesus said this. Jesus said, you'll know the truth, John 8:32. He said, you'll know the truth. And what does the truth do? The truth, it sets you free. The lie puts you into spiritual bondage. And some of you you're living a life based on a lie. And you'll know the truth, and the truth will set you free. I'll illustrate it with one of my favorite stories from the history of our church, staff, family, I'll show you an old photograph. These are the directional leaders of our church that have been together for years. This an old photograph back when we had style. We're not as stylish today, but you've got 'em on the left, Pastor Jerry Hurley who's been with me for about 23 years. Pastor Bobby created the YouVersion Bible app over 20 years. There's me. There's Pastor Sam, over 20 years. He's over all the campus. There's Pastor Kevin. Pastor Kevin, didn't get the memo of how you're supposed to hold your hands on that day. He was always a little rebellious, and Kevin was with us for 20 years before retiring. We used to play a game years ago, called capture the flag. And it was a violent game. We had lots of injuries and such. So we had to come up with some rules for safety. One of the rules was you couldn't go attack an enemies flag until 8:00 a.m., because there was just wasn't fair. And so one day I came into our offices about 7:00 a.m., and my spiritual spidey senses, told me something was amiss. And it was captured the flag gaming. And so I just thought, I'm gonna go, where is it? I'm gonna go look in the closet. And that's what I did. I opened up the closet, and sure enough Pastor Kevin had been waiting in the closet, who knows since 4:00 a.m., waiting for the eight o'clock bell to sound so he could go and capture my flag. And so I thought, well God prompted me to lock you in here all day long, and I immediately just slammed the door, and put my foot up against the door, and grabbed an office chair, and slammed it under the door, to make him pay, because you reap what you sow. And there are spiritual consequences, and God is the one who brings justice. He just chose me to bring justice on that day. So I tried to lock him in, but the chair didn't fit. So in love and war, everything is fair, so I just lied. And confess my sin to God, and God forgave my sin. And I said, Kevin, you're locked in by a chair. It wasn't true. The chair didn't fit. But I told him with all pastoral confidence, you're locked in, and you'll spend the day locked in this closet. God is my witness. Pastor Kevin never tried to open the door. He just started whining. Let me out. This is unfair. And I sat there and laughed. For several minutes. While he tried to open the door. Eight o'clock came around, I had a premarital counseling appointment. I was sitting in my desk, while Kevin was in an unlocked door. And 20 minutes or so later, God is my witness, I heard something in the ceiling tile above me. Pastor Kevin had scaled the shelves in the closet, gotten up in the ceiling tile, and was trying to make his escape, because he believed a lie that an unlocked door held in prisoner. Some of you right now, do not have what God wants you to have, and are not living the life that God wants you to live, because you're stuck behind an unlocked door. And you'll know the truth that Jesus has set you free. Scripture says this, and I'm gonna look at it again. This is what the Apostle Paul says. Whatever that stronghold is, that's holding you prisoner in your mind, what do we do? We demolish it. "We demolish arguments "and every pretension that sets itself up "against the knowledge of God." And here's what we do. "We take captive." We are not prisoner to our thoughts. "We take our thoughts captive "and we make them obedient to Christ." We take our thoughts captive. Whatever it is, we take it captive. In fact, the Greek term that's translated as take captive, it's a term that means to attack with a sword or with a spear. And I love this. When you talk about the

weapons we fight with are not the weapons of this world. Ephesians 6 tells us that we have spiritual armor. What do we have? We have the helmet of salvation. The breastplate of righteous. The shield of the faith. The belt of truth. The shoes prepared with the gospel. And the readiness of peace. All of those are defensive weapons. We have one offensive weapon and you know what the weapon of offenses is? It is the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. It is the word of God that sets us free. It's his powerful living word of God that is sharper than any double edged sword. And it cuts away the lies of the enemy. We let God's Word take captive any lies that have held us hostage. What's your stronghold? What's the dominant lie that your spiritual enemy has tried to use to destroy your faith? Kill your relationships? Robbed you of the intimacy that God wants you to have with Him? What's your stronghold? Mine, the one I've been attacking with God's Word is the one that's haunted me since I was a little kid. The lie that I've always believed is that, I am never enough. I'm never enough. I'll never preach a good enough sermon. I'll never be righteous enough to lead the church. If I give my best to the church, I fail Amy, and my six kids, and 43 grandkids or however many we have now, I don't... You know, or if I bring my best at home, then I fail in leading the church that God has entrusted me. I can't live up to your expectation. There ain't no way. I mean, I can't meet with everybody, and I can't deliver, and I can't, I can't get it all done. I am not enough. And the challenge with that lie is that there is some truth in it. I mean, there's some truth, which makes it easy to believe. Because of my sinfulness, and because of my limitations, there's a lot of me that never will be enough. But thankfully I don't have to rely only on what's inside of me. But there is a power greater than me that absolutely and completely is more than enough. So here's my truth. And it's from the word of God. 2nd Peter 1:3 says, that God's divine power, "His divine power has given us everything we need "for a godly life." I'm gonna personalize it. God's divine power has given me everything I need to do. He's given me the time to do what He's called me to do. He's given me the strength to do what He's called me to do. When I'm weak, His strength is made perfect in me. I've got the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwelling inside of me. His living word doesn't work that I cannot do. His power is there for me when I don't have what it takes. He has given me everything I need for life and godliness. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. What's the driving lie that has held you back? And what's the truth that will set you free? Maybe you think I can't get it all done. I never can get it all done. And your truth is, I can do all things through my Savior Jesus Christ, who gives me strength when I'm weak. He makes me strong. Maybe you feel like I'm never gonna be attractive enough. I don't like the way I look. No, no, no. You are fearfully and wonderfully made by the grace of God. He's given you gifts to make a difference in this world. Maybe you feel like I'm always gonna be miserable. I'm always gonna be depressed. Know the joy of the Lord is your strength. The moment the lie tells you you're gonna always be alone, No, my God is with me. He's never gonna leave me. He's never gonna forsake me. Oh, but you're just nothing but a victim. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. God's Word tells me. I am an overcomer by the blood of the Lamb, and by the words of my testimony. I am not who others say that I am. I'm not even who the lies in my own mind say that I am. I am who God says that I am, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Your life in so many ways is moving in the direction of your strongest thoughts. What comes into your mind comes out in your life. You cannot have a positive faith-filled life, when you have a negative fear-filled mind. So what are we gonna do? We're gonna capture those lies, name it. We're gonna replace it with truth. And by the power of God, you will not stay locked in a prison. when Jesus holds the key that sets you free. You will know the truth. And truth isn't just a concept, truth is a person. His name is Jesus. He'll set you free. So Father today, we ask it by the power of Your word, You would renew

our minds with truth. At all of our churches or those of you watching online, who say I need, God's help. There's a war going on in my mind. I wanna name that one stronghold, and I want God's truth to set me free. If that's you, would you just lift up your hand? You can type it in the chat. I need His truth, just type it in the chat. I need His truth. Father I pray right now that You would begin a work of renewing our minds, and God in the same way that it may take years and years to have a lie ingrained in our neural pathways, we recognize it may take some time for You to renew our minds. God give us the faith to walk this journey with You, to stay off the old paths of lies and destruction, and God create a new path of truth. Renew our minds. God, I pray that over the next few weeks, as we look at Your word, and as we discuss in small groups, in our life groups, that You would use Your body and use Your word to help renew our minds. God change our thinking. And change our lives. As to keep praying today at all of our churches, or maybe you're watching online, there's some of you that perhaps the biggest lie that's impacting you right now is a distorted view of who God is. Maybe for years, you've had a wrong view of God. You thought He's angry at you. He's mad at you. He could never love you after what you've done. You've just used up goods. You've been too bad. Lemme try to help you replace those lies with truth. Lemme tell you about who God is and how He sees you. Our God is a loving Heavenly Father. And He loves you more than you could ever imagine. Even if you've done some really shameful things, there's nothing that you could do that would make God love you any less, or even if you're trying your best to be perfect, there's nothing you could do to make God love you even more. He simply loves you. And He loves you so much that He became like you in the person of His Son Jesus. Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus was perfect in every way. Jesus said, I am the way, I am the truth. Jesus is the truth. If you wanna know who God is, look at Jesus, Jesus all around sinners, really pathetic people, and He loved them. And He gave His life as the perfect gift, the innocent sacrifice, and God raised Him from the dead so that all of our sins could be forgiven. That's how much God loves you. That's how much God loves you. No matter what you've done, He loves you. And He wants you to know that love. At all of our churches, or those of you watching online, there's some of you you felt distant from God. And today, guess what? You're creating a new path. It's directly to God. It's one prayer that opens up Heaven and gives you access to a relationship with God. It's getting off that old path, that old sinful path and we're gonna turn toward Jesus and surrender our life to Him. And when you do, God will hear this prayer, He'll forgive every sin you've ever committed. He's gonna open up the heaven and show you His love, And you'll be completely new. Today at all of our churches, those of you online who say, now I wanna get off that old path, I need His love, I need His forgiveness, I want His grace. Today I'm repenting of my sinfulness, I'm turning toward Jesus, and by faith, I'm giving it all to Him. Those who say yes, I want His forgiveness. Today, I surrender my life to You, that's your prayer. Lift your hands high right now all over the place and say, yes, Jesus I surrender my life to You. As we've got hands going up at all of our different churches, those of you online, just type in the chat. I'm giving my life to Jesus. I'm giving my life to Jesus. And I would love it if all of you would pray with those around you. Just pray a loud pray. Heavenly Father,

- Heavenly Father,
- Forgive all of my sins.
- Forgive all of my sins.

- Jesus save me.
- Jesus save me.
- Make me brand new.
- Make me brand new.
- Fill me with Your spirit.
- Fill me with Your spirit.
- And fill my mind with truth.
- And fill my mind with truth.
- Renew my mind.
- Renew my mind.
- So I can follow You.
- So I can follow You.
- And live for You.
- And live for you.
- And all I do,
- And all I do,
- my life is not my own.
- my life is not my own.
- I give it to You.
- I give it to You.
- Thank You for new life.
- Thank You for new life.
- Now You have mine,
- Now You have mine,
- in Jesus name I pray.
- in Jesus name I pray.



- Could somebody celebrate big. Welcome those born into God's family today.