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THE BATTLE OF THE MIND

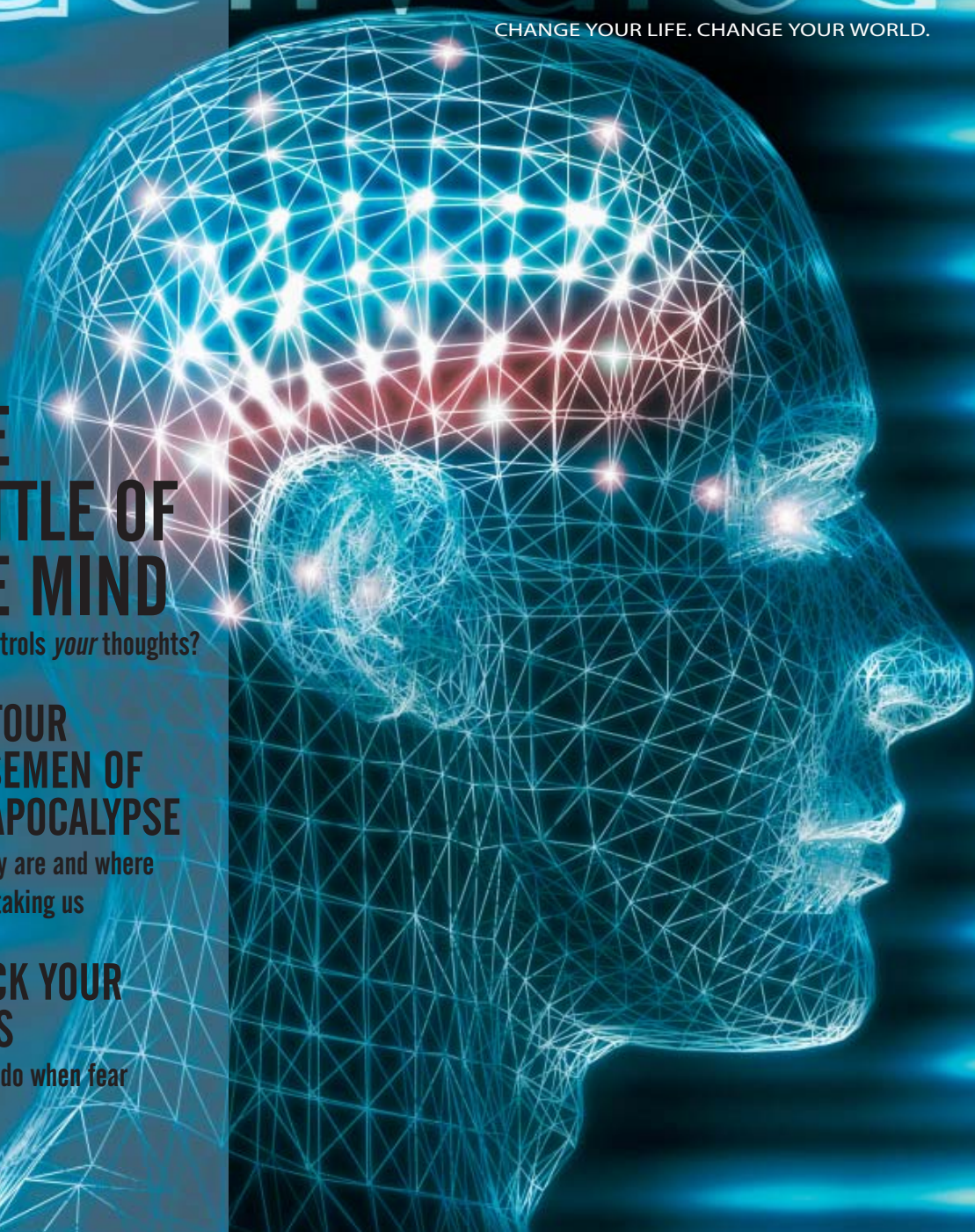
Who controls *your* thoughts?

THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Who they are and where
they're taking us

ATTACK YOUR FEARS

What to do when fear
strikes



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personally speaking



We've all seen cartoons of a person at a point of decision, with a guardian angel on one shoulder and a little devil on the other, each trying to persuade the person to do or not do this or that. The message is simple, clear, and often amusing, but what few people seem to realize is that there is also a lot of truth to those cartoons.

Even a lot of people who believe in God don't realize how real the spirit world is or what a major part it plays in their daily lives. Numerous verses and passages in the Bible make it clear that the Lord and His angels on one hand and the Devil and his agents on the other are constantly trying to influence us—and they do it through our thoughts from the unseen spiritual realm. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12 KJV).

To use a modern analogy, God's Spirit is like a radio station and our minds are like radios. God's broadcasts inspire faith, hope, love, wisdom, truth, instruction, and other positive thoughts that inspire positive actions. The Devil is like another station. He deliberately tries to flood the spiritual airwaves with his lies and propaganda and time-wasters—anything to occupy our minds and distract us from receiving and following God's messages.

Whose voice are you tuned in to? Who guides your thoughts and thereby controls your time and actions? This issue of *Activated* could change the way you look at your thoughts, which guide your life.

Keith Phillips
Keith Phillips
For the *Activated* Family

“Use your greatest skill to paint a mask that looks kind and pleasant and handsome.”

THE LEGEND OF THE MAGIC MASK

THERE WAS ONCE A KING of a vast domain. He was shrewd and powerful and feared by all, but no one loved him. Each year, as he became more severe, he became lonelier. His face reflected the bitterness in his soul. There were deep, ugly lines around his mouth, and deep, permanent furrows on his forehead.

But it so happened that in his realm there lived a beautiful girl whom everyone seemed to love. The king wanted to make her his wife, and finally he decided to speak to her of this love. He dressed in his finest robes, but when he looked in the mirror, he saw a cruel, hard face, even when he tried to smile.

Then a thought came to him. He sent for his magician. “Use your greatest skill to paint a mask that looks kind and pleasant and handsome. I will pay any price you ask.”

“This I can do,” said the magician, “on one condition. You must keep your own face in the same lines that I paint. One angry frown, and the mask will be ruined forever and I cannot replace it. You must think only kindly thoughts and do kindly deeds. You must be gracious to all men.”

So the magic mask was made, and it looked so natural that no one guessed it was not the true face of the king. Months passed, the beautiful lady became his bride, and the king fought hard to keep the mask from breaking. His subjects attributed the miraculous change in the king to his lovely wife, who, they said, had made him like herself.

Eventually the king regretted having deceived his beautiful wife and summoned his magician. “Take away this deceiving mask!” he cried. “It is not my true self!”

“If I do,” said the magician, “I can never make another. You will have to wear your own face as long as you live.”

“Better so,” said the king, “than to continue to deceive one whose love and trust I have won dishonorably. Take it off, I say!”

The magician did as he was commanded.

In anguish, the king turned to see his reflection in his mirror. Suddenly his eyes brightened and his lips curved into a radiant smile. The ugly lines were gone. His face was the exact likeness of the mask he had worn so long. When he returned to his beloved wife, she saw only the familiar features of the man she loved.

Yes, this is only a legend, but it teaches a truth: A man’s face portrays what is inside, what he thinks and feels. The wise and true Scripture tells us, “As [a man] thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

>> AUTHOR UNKNOWN



The mind is the great battlefield where **relentless** spiritual **war** is waged—the war for the control of people’s **thoughts** and, through their thoughts, their **actions**.



MOST OF THE THINGS THAT BRING PEOPLE DOWN start in the mind: pride, jealousy, selfishness, hatred, covetousness, bitterness, worldliness, self-righteousness, unbelief, etc. They begin in the mind, take root in the mind, and fester in the mind—all through putting on the mind of man and the mind of the world instead of the mind of God.

The Bible has much to say about the need to guard our thoughts, about finding and putting God’s will above our own will, and about putting on the mind of Christ:

- “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).
- “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2).
- “Do not be conformed to this

world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).

- “To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6).
- “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” (Philippians 4:8).

It is through the mind that Satan gains entrance, through the mind that he tries to influence people, through the mind that he works to recruit the lost of the world to his side, and it is through the mind that he controls and manipulates his own.



***It is through
the mind
that Satan
gains
entrance.***

And the Devil doesn't stop with his own, of course. He also attacks God's children, trying to hinder their happiness and well-being and usefulness to God by interjecting his negative thoughts into their own. But when they choose the Lord's light over the Devil's darkness, when they allow Jesus to control them by asking Him to give them His thoughts, anything good is possible.

How close we stay to the Lord and how much He is able to bless us as a result is determined in our mind, because this is where our will is set. This is where we choose Him and His ways, where we choose to believe His word above the Devil's, where we are able to put on the mind of Christ.

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thesalonians 5:17), the Bible tells us, and one of the best prayers we could continually pray is for the Lord to direct our thoughts and rid our minds of the Devil's input, because for the Lord to bless and use us as much as He would like, He needs full control.

His thoughts cannot coexist with our natural minds, which are at odds with His mind. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). Our natural minds are easy prey for the Devil's doubts and lies and propaganda, and can stifle the Lord's Spirit.

This is the crux of the matter: If we're going to be the kind of Christians the Lord wants us to be, we must be wholly His, and in order to be wholly His, we must put on His mind; we must more fully think His thoughts. How do we do this?—By

putting *off* the mind of man, the mind of the world, the thoughts of Satan, the propaganda of Satan, the vanity of the carnal mind.

We must "gird up the loins of our minds" (1 Peter 1:13). That means to put up barricades to shield us from the Devil's attacks through our thoughts. It means to allow Jesus full control. When we do, He is able to live in us and work through us like never before! □

HUDDERSFIELD

THERE WAS ONCE A RICH LAND-OWNER who decided to buy the entire village of Huddersfield, and over time he bought every piece of land in the area—every piece, that is, except one little plot. One stubborn old farmer refused to sell his tiny piece of land, and nothing would change his mind. The landowner even offered the farmer much more money than his property was actually worth, but the farmer was so fond of his land that he absolutely refused to sell. When the landowner finally gave up, he tried to encourage himself by saying, "What difference does just one little plot of land make? I've bought everything else, so Huddersfield is *mine*. It belongs to me!"

But the stubborn old farmer overheard him and said, "Oh, no it doesn't! *We* own Huddersfield. It belongs to you and *me*!"

Don't let the Devil be able to say that of you to God! "Aha! Look, God! Even though he belongs mostly to You, a little bit still belongs to me!"

>> DAVID BRANDT BERG (D.B.B.)

JAM TO REMEMBER

PARENTING FROM THE HEART

I USED TO STRUGGLE MORE OFTEN than I wanted to admit to really *enjoy* my children. Sure, many little unexpected happenings turned to happy thoughts later—the sorts of things that fond memories are made of—but just as often I seemed to spoil the fun for my children before it had a chance to *become* a fond memory. But then something happened to help change that.

It started one Monday morning. No sooner had my husband gone to work, leaving me home with our two young children, than I found myself counting the hours till he would come home. By then it would almost be the kids' bedtime and things would be easier two-on-two.

Morning inched past, and finally it was afternoon. I had hoped to get some work done while the kids took their afternoon naps, but that hope vanished when my youngest, Ella, stayed awake, eager for attention and lively play.

When she finally fell asleep, I plopped myself in a nearby chair, but not a moment had passed before my two-and-a-half-year-old son bounced out of bed and up into my lap.

"I woke up, Mommy!" he announced as

though that were a great accomplishment.

"You sure did!" I tried my best to sound positive, while thinking, *There goes my afternoon. I guess I really won't be getting anything done today.* I looked at my watch. "Two more hours till Daddy's home," I said out loud. "Let's go and get you a snack."

Evan stood on a kitchen chair and leaned against the counter as he helped pour milk into his cup. I would have rather done it without his help, but remembered something my mother had recently said. "At this age he wants to do everything *himself*."

"But that's so frustrating for me," I had complained to her. "Even simple things get complicated and take so much longer."

"It's for the best," Mom had told me. "Just think of it as education—all the things you go through with the kids that are part of daily life, like brushing teeth, washing hands, dressing, making snacks—it's all brand new to them, something new to learn and experience. Those little things teach them self-sufficiency, character, and style. Remember, you're the teacher and your kids are eager young pupils in the school of life."

So I had let Evan help me pour the milk. "There you are," I said as we finished.

*Claire Nichols with
her son, Evan*



“And I’d like some bread, please—with jam on it.” He knew I couldn’t refuse when he asked so politely and cheerfully.

I started toward the fridge, but Evan had beaten me there and was already pulling the jam from the fridge shelf.

I hope that jar doesn’t slip through his little fingers and break, I thought, just as it did!

The jam managed to stay in a fairly neat red splatter on the floor, but the broken glass was a different story. It was *everywhere*, in a hundred pieces. I covered my mouth with my hands to keep the tiredness and frustration from spilling out.

“Never do *that* again!” Evan offered in a sorry and slightly worried tone.

I forced my thoughts into a short prayer. *Jesus, help! I don’t want to lose my patience. I know it wasn’t his fault.*

Suddenly Mom’s words rushed back into my mind—“*something new to learn and experience.*”

I swooped up Evan to the safety of my arms. “First we had better get some shoes on your bare feet, then I’m going to show you how to clean up a broken jar of jam.”

Moments later, as I swept up the mess

and Evan held the dustpan ready, I explained to my little pupil the dynamics of glass: how easily it shatters, and the best way to clean it up when it does.

Mom’s advice was wise. By treating the mishap as a new learning experience for my little one, I felt calm and controlled. Instead of scolding my son and promising myself I’d never make the mistake of letting him get something from the fridge by himself again, I had taught him how to deal with accidents in a positive way.

We got another jar of jam from the cupboard, and went on to butter bread and spread jam together, make coffee for mom, and set it all out neatly on the table to enjoy together. That’s when I caught myself actually *enjoying* the moment!

“You’re such a good cook, Evan!” His little eyes shone. “Mommy is so proud of you!”

“Evan is so proud of *you*, Mommy!” he replied without hesitation. I smiled. Come to think of it, I was proud of myself too.

“I think I’ll buy another jar of jam and make it a permanent fixture on the kitchen counter,” I told Evan, “because enjoying you at this moment is something I want to *always* remember!” □

THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

BY JOSEPH CANDEL

Endtime Bible Prophecy



*The four
horsemen
of the
Apocalypse
set the stage
for what is
soon to come.*



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY WE HAVE WAR, or why there is such a disparity of wealth—why some people and whole nations are rich and overfed while others are starving and deprived of other basic necessities? Why do governments spend billions on wars that kill and maim while the poor continue to suffer?

I used to wonder why the world is the way it is, why there couldn't be more love and peace and cooperation among people and nations to make the world a better place. I found the answer to that in the Bible, beginning with Revelation chapter 6, about the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.

In Revelation chapter 6, Jesus opens the book of the future, the book of prophecy, which is sealed with seven seals, and shows the apostle John the future of the world from that time (about 90 AD) to the last days (the time in which we are now living) and beyond.

Another name for the book of Revelation is the Apocalypse, which means "a revelation concerning the future." The four horsemen of the Apocalypse reveal the truth about religion, war, and economics, and set the stage for what is soon to come.

The first seal

And I saw when the Lamb [Jesus] opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, "Come and see." And I saw, and behold, a white horse: and He that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto Him: and He went forth conquering, and to conquer. (Revelation 6:1–2 KJV.)

The first horseman, who wears a crown and goes forth to conquer, is obviously Jesus. What was happening at this time in world history, in about 90 AD?—From the spiritual realm, the resur-

rected Jesus was going forth to "conquer" the world with the Gospel through His apostles and the early Christians—and they would eventually conquer the mighty Roman Empire. Jesus' message of the love and forgiveness of God would prove more powerful than all the legions of Rome! Jesus is this mighty Conqueror on the white horse.

We find another picture of a white horse in Revelation chapter 19: "And behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. ... His name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:11,13 KJV).

We know from John 1:14 that "The Word of God" is Jesus: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

And following Jesus are the armies of Heaven, the resurrected saints who are also riding white horses as they come down from Heaven to defeat the forces of the Antichrist and take over the world at the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:14).

The second seal

And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, "Come and see." And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. (Revelation 6:3–4 KJV.)

What takes "peace from the earth"?—War! This red horse symbolizes war, the military and their war machines.

The horse's color, red, is appropriate because it represents all the blood shed in man's hellish wars—wars for which God is not responsible, but which come from the pride, prejudices, and avarice of

man's heart. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (James 4:1 KJV).

The "great sword" given to the rider of the red horse seems to suggest the great "improvements" in weapons of war and the vastly greater devastation bought on by war since this prophecy was given in John's day.

The third seal

And when He had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, "Come and see." And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, "A measure of wheat for a penny; and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." (Revelation 6:5–6 KJV.)

This black horse's rider with the pair of balances in his hand symbolizes the rich capitalists that have a major impact on world conditions through their manipulation of national economies. Only one other verse in the Bible pictures a man with balances, or scales: "The merchant uses dishonest scales; he loves to defraud" (Hosea 12:7 NIV).

Another prophet, Amos, also said that the merchants—the wealthy capitalists of his day who were robbing the poor instead of helping them—"set forth wheat, making the ephah [unit of measure] small, and the shekel [price] great, and falsifying the balances by deceit ... that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail" (Amos 8:4–6 KJV).

The black horse, then, represents famine and poverty perpetrated by the rich who refuse to share with those in need. This horse is largely responsible for today's economic situation. Oil and wine,

throughout the Scriptures, symbolize abundance or luxury. The fact that the oil and wine were "hurt not" indicates a situation where wealth and luxury exist alongside famine and poverty—and the gulf between rich and poor is only growing.

The fourth seal

And when He had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, "Come and see." And I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6:7–8 KJV.)

The fourth and final horseman of the Apocalypse is death itself—death not only from war, but also from beasts and plagues and famine and death in every other conceivable form.

Death has always been with us, of course, but death by famine, natural disasters, new plagues such as AIDS, and new pestilences such as the Ebola virus have reached unprecedented levels, just like Jesus said they would immediately prior to His return: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places" (Matthew 24:7).

The fifth seal

And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was

said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. (Revelation 6:9–11 KJV.)

First comes the white horse, the proclamation of its rider's message, and the "conquest" of many souls. Then comes the open rejection of that message by the unbelievers, those in league with the other three horsemen on the red, black, and pale horses, which crystallizes into persecution and the martyrdom of "them that were slain for the Word of God." This is the way it's been all throughout history. These martyrs, though, are actually the exception. Most of Jesus' followers have usually escaped martyrdom and lived on to help carry on His work.

War, greed, and death—the characters that were revealed when the second, third, and fourth seals were opened—are almost as old as the world itself, but the Biblical picture both here and elsewhere is that each of these forces has taken on greater power since the time of this revelation.

Again, Jesus predicted this in His famous Endtime discourse, Matthew chapter 24, and said that it would culminate in "great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:7, 21–22).

In other words, Jesus was saying, one day man would reach such an impasse that if God were to let him continue unchecked, he would annihilate himself. However, when man finally reaches that suicidal point, Jesus said that God would step in and stop man. And the way God will stop him is by Jesus' Second Coming,

when He returns to punish the evildoers, take over the world, and set up His righteous rule (Matthew 24:29–30; Isaiah 9:7; Jeremiah 23:5; Revelation 19:11–21).

Only within the last 50 or 60 years has the human race developed the potential to destroy itself. The military (red horse) now have their nuclear bombs, intercontinental missiles, chemical and biological weapons, and other lethal technologies.

The rich, on their black horse, were complicit in the last century's great wars, and their hoarding and misuse of their riches is threatening another one. The rich also, in their relentless pursuit of greater wealth, are finally succeeding in polluting the entire earth—a byproduct of modern technology.

And following the others comes the fourth horseman, on the pale horse—death in every form.

So there you have the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. They will continue to ride until the End, when Jesus returns to take us to heavenly places with Him, before pouring out His judgments on the perpetrators of the hell on earth below. Then He will come back once more—He and all the saints of God—to wipe out the Antichrist and all of his forces at the Battle of Armageddon. God will then cleanse and purify the earth and set up His eternal kingdom, ruled by Jesus Christ.

*

Which horse are you putting your money on? Bet on the sure winner—receive Jesus now! Then you will be sure to follow Him on a white horse of your own one day when He returns to right all wrongs. Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Follow Him, and "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). □

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ATTACK YOUR FEARS!



what to do when fear strikes

>> BY DAVID BRANDT BERG

FEAR!—WE DON'T REALIZE HOW MUCH OF IT IS SUBCONSCIOUS until we analyze it and try to put it into words, yet we're often afraid to talk about our fears or even confess to ourselves that we're afraid because that would expose our innermost selves.

The fear of failure is probably one of the greatest fears people have—the fear of failure in life, love, labor, and—for Christians—failing the Lord. For the Christian, the fear of failing God is perhaps second only to the fear of failing others, because we know that God will forgive us, but others sometimes find it hard to forgive. The fear of hurting others because of our failure, the fear of letting them down, disappointing them, disillusioning them, discouraging them—the fear that because of our failure, others will also fail—this is hardest to bear.

But whatever your fears are, it pays to face them and to draw a line of distinction between the truth and the lie, between reality and the imaginary, between fact and fear.

An incident from my childhood illustrates this principle: As a boy, I delivered papers and handbills door to door, and I frequently encountered big dogs that would chase me and nip at my heels. Occasionally they actually bit me, but most of the time their bark was worse than their bite. I soon discovered that if I turned my back on them and tried to run from them, they were more apt to bite me than if I faced them.

Once when I was about 12 years old, I had gone into a certain yard to deliver a handbill, when out from the back yard came a huge Great Dane, barking and growling furiously. He was coming at me full speed, leaping and bounding, and I thought, *This is it!* I knew I didn't dare turn my back on him or he would bite me for sure! Thank God I remembered to pray for the Lord's help. I suddenly jutted out my hand toward him and yelled, "I rebuke you in Jesus' name!"—And did he put on the brakes! He skidded to a stop and looked absolutely startled, turned tail, and ran!

He was coming at me full speed, leaping and bounding, and I thought, This is it!

***You have to
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between
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and the
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and the lie.***

It not only pays to face your fears, acknowledge and confess them, but to take a positive stand against them, especially in the power and Spirit of the Lord, claiming the promises from His Word. It wouldn't have done me a bit of good to try to take the "positive thinking" approach and say, "Big old dog, you just don't exist, so I'm going to ignore you!" He would have promptly finished me off to prove that he *did* exist!

You have to differentiate between reality and the imaginary, the truth and the lie. It doesn't do any good to just shut your eyes and hope the problem will go away, or hope that when you open your eyes again you'll find out it didn't exist, that it was just your imagination.

That big dog *existed*, and he was coming right for me, and it wouldn't have done a bit of good to shut my eyes and hope he would go away, or to tell myself that he was just a figment of my imagination. He was *there*, as real as you or *me*, and he was headed for me! In that situation, the best thing I could have done was to face him and take action to eliminate the danger, and I did so by launching a counterattack by the power of the Spirit. At first he was on the offensive and I was on the defensive, but the Lord helped me turn the tables. Suddenly he was put on the defensive, and that's when he turned and ran.

As any military strategist knows, it's impossible to win a war as long as you stay on the defensive. Defensive warfare is doomed to defeat. To win a war you have to launch an attack; you have to take the initiative!

So it pays to face your fears, recognize they're there, decide between

the real and the unreal, the truth and the lie, and then to go to the *attack* to dispel the vaporous fiction of the fairytale and to drive away the genuine reality of real threat!

Fear is the exact *opposite* of faith. Just as "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10), fear of Satan is really the beginning of death. The Hebrew word translated as "fear" in this verse is *yirah*, which means "reverence." So to fear God is to give Him the respect He deserves. It's a form of worshipping God. Therefore, to fear Satan and his devices is to give him just the kind of worship that he wants. God's Word says about other kinds of fear that "fear involves torment" (1 John 4:18). Fear of the Devil will wear you down and wear you out. It is damaging and disastrous to your spirit if you harbor it.

So you must rebuke that kind of fear just as Jesus did when the Devil tried to get Him to worship him on the mount of temptation. Jesus put the Devil in his place: "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him *only* shall you serve'" (Luke 4:8).

The Lord promises "perfect peace" to those whose minds are fixed on Him, to those who trust in Him (Isaiah 26:3). So if you are troubled by a spirit of fear, put your trust in the Lord. Just tell Satan, "Be gone Devil! Get out of here! I'm putting my trust in God, in Jesus!" The Bible says that if you submit yourself to God and resist the Devil, he will *flee* from you (James 4:7). □

(The above was excerpted from David Brandt Berg's article by the same title. For the full version and six other articles by David Brandt Berg, order *Greater Victories* from one of the addresses on page 2 of this magazine.)

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

Q: I'VE PRAYED AND EVEN ASKED OTHERS TO PRAY THAT I WOULD OVERCOME A CERTAIN PERSONAL WEAKNESS, BUT I NEVER SEEM TO BE ABLE TO CHANGE. WHY DOESN'T JESUS ANSWER MY PRAYERS AND CHANGE ME?



A: WHENEVER ANY OF US RECOGNIZE A PERSONAL PROBLEM and pray for the needed change, we *are* changed. “This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we *have* the petitions that we have asked of Him” (1 John 5:14–15).

So if you've prayed for a change, you *have* the victory. By the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit and through the promises of God's Word, you become the new person you've asked the Lord to make you (2 Corin-

thians 5:17; 2 Peter 1:4). The cocoon has been opened and the new person has come forth, ready to grow in the spirit. This is the first step—believing in the change.

The Word tells us that *faith* is the victory: “This is the victory that has overcome the world”—and all our problems—“even our faith” (1 John 5:4). The Lord *has* given you the victory. You just have to accept it by faith and work to strengthen the “new you.”

You get the victory the instant you confess you need the Lord's help, claim His promises in His Word, and ask for it in prayer. But if you later say, “It must have been

a false victory. The Lord must not have answered, because I'm still the same old mess I was,” then you're surrendering the victory. As long as you hold on to it by faith and keep thanking the Lord for it, it's yours.

That's the key to the victory: believing that you have it because He promised it to you—and then *acting* like you believe it. Your feelings don't have anything to do with it! The victory is yours by *faith*, even when you don't feel like you have it. So keep praising and thanking the Lord for it, and soon you'll see concrete results.

For the Lord to help you

To your health!

There is a saying about health: "You are what you eat," physically. That's just as true of our spirits. We are what our minds take in, spiritually. We cannot fill our minds and hearts with worldly wisdom and the foolishness of man without it affecting our spirits, any more than we can wade through the garbage and the gutter without getting besmirched. So be sure you're getting the right spiritual food—the good, wholesome, nourishing, faith-building, uplifting, encouraging, inspiring truth of the Word of God!

>> D.B.B.

If you haven't yet met the Man who has the power to change any life, forgive any wrong, heal any heart-ache, and give heavenly happiness here and now and in Heaven to come, you can right now by praying the following:

Dear Jesus, I open my life and heart to You now, and accept You as my Savior. Please forgive me for all the wrongs I've done, give me a fresh start, and help me get to know You and Your love. Amen.

change the way you react in certain situations, He has to change your thought patterns. So when you asked the Lord to change you, in effect you asked Him to rewire you. That nearly always takes time and some effort on your part.

The Lord does most of it, of course, but your part is to put into practice what you know you need to do to form the right habits. That starts with resisting your past ways of thinking, and the best way to do that is with the Word. The Word is what bridges the gap and makes the connection with the new set of thought patterns the Lord has for you. That's why it's so

important to read, study, and even memorize the Word.

Then once you are full of the Word, you must take the stand of faith by claiming the Lord's promises and refusing to believe the Devil's doubts—and you must do this over and over and over, every time you catch yourself slipping into your old thought patterns or old ways.

The more times you do this, the stronger your new thought and behavioral patterns will become, the more you will be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2), and the more evident it will be that the Lord *has* changed you! □

FEEDING READING

The cure for negative thinking



For the Lord to help you form more positive thought patterns, you must be willing to change.

Psalms 51:2,7,10

Romans 12:2

Ephesians 4:22–24

Stop yourself at the first negative thought.

2 Corinthians 10:3–5

Ephesians 4:27

James 4:7

Fill your heart and mind with God's Word.

Joshua 1:8

Psalms 1:2

1 Timothy 4:13–16

Take a positive approach to tests and trials by seeing the Lord's hand in them.

Psalms 119:71

Romans 8:28

1 Thessalonians 5:18

James 1:2–4

1 Peter 4:12–13

Cultivate positive attitudes towards others.

Romans 12:10

Ephesians 4:32

Colossians 3:12–14

1 Peter 4:8

Promises and prayers to help overcome negative thinking:

Isaiah 55:7

Psalms 19:14

Psalms 139:23–24

Proverbs 16:3

>> FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

Meet Me in the morning

You do well to take time with Me first thing in the morning, for you are powerless without the strength you draw from Me, you are foolish without the wisdom you learn from Me, and you have no love to share with others unless you first get it from Me. Without Me, you would continue on in your own little world and be limited to your own meager resources. Your human strength would run out before the day had scarcely started, your own thoughts would get in the way, and you wouldn't go far on yesterday's store of love. But when you come to Me, I open the boundless world of My Spirit to you. I am wisdom, I am strength, and I am love.

Haven't I said in My Word that you must labor in order to enter into My rest? It seems easier to carry on in your own energy than to labor to enter into the realm of My Spirit where I would carry you along, but that's not so; you really make it harder for yourself, because you make it harder for Me to help you. So take a little time each morning to hear from Me and enter into My rest. Remind yourself that until you have heard from Me, you don't have the strength or wisdom or love you need to face another day.

Practice makes perfect. As you practice reaching out to Me, it will become easier. Keep taking this time with Me each morning, and I will always be here for you.