

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## GIG251 – Take Every Thought Captive

The following podcast is unique, because it was recorded in a recent service in Brazil and is being translated live simultaneously into Portuguese. This may be unique to some, or different, but I felt like the content was important and that people really would enjoy hearing what the Lord was speaking on a recent trip to Brazil. I hope it is a blessing.

It is wonderful to be here and part of this service, and again, thank you for having us. I just want to take a little bit of time and be in the Word together with you. How many of you believe that we are in the last days, or the end-time events? Yes, I think most believers today, Christians and Jews alike, feel and recognize that when we look at what is taking place around us in this world, we very likely are watching the unfolding of events that we read about in the Scriptures. So I think it is very important that we prepare our hearts and our minds for what we may be facing in the days ahead. I am hoping that this tonight will help each and every one of us to have a perception about things that are taking place and what we need to believe for.

I am going to begin in Second Corinthians the tenth chapter, at verses 3-4. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.” These are important verses where Paul is teaching us as believers how to face spiritual warfare. I hope that you believe there is such a thing as spiritual warfare, because it is very real, and we find ourselves surrounded by it. Now we could go into a teaching tonight just about spiritual warfare, but I do not plan to do that. I just want to pull one verse out of here and look at it very carefully. That is verse 5. It says, “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”

We need to look at these words very carefully, because we tend to kind of skip over what he is really saying here. He is saying we are destroying speculations. If we look at the world around us today, whether we talk about the political realm, the financial realm, or the government of nations, much of what is taking place is driven by speculation. We live in a world of advertising. We live in a world of “news spots”; and much of what we hear and see are lies. They are speculations. They are speculations about people, places, and things. Isn’t it interesting that Paul, so many years ago, was really confronting what we live in today? He says, “Our spiritual warfare is about destroying speculation, and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.” Again, all of these things that we hear, the things that we are told to believe, they are speculations.

We live in a world that is so devoid of truth. Christ said, “I am the truth.” There is one truth – He is the truth. He is the way, the truth, and the life. So you can understand how the moving of Satan in this age seeks to remove or cover over the truth. When we read about people in the news or on the Internet, how do we know what to believe? Who is saying those things? Are they truths, or are they speculations? Is it something somebody just made up? And they made them up with a reason behind it, because they are trying to control your way of thinking about those people, places, and things. So Paul is talking about

our spiritual warfare, and he is saying that we live in the flesh, but we cannot fight or war in the flesh. Our weapons are not of the flesh. We may be facing the flesh in this age that surrounds us, but we cannot fight back in the flesh. We have to have the spiritual ability.

Paul goes on to say that these things are coming directly against the knowledge of God. We, as the body of Christ, we need to know the truth and the knowledge of God. So how do we get there? He says, "We are taking every thought captive" – every thought. We are taking our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. That is an amazing statement. In the Greek, when you take that word *captive*, it is the term used for a prisoner of war. We have to take our minds and our thoughts captive. We cannot allow our thoughts to be controlled; we take our thoughts captive.

Now we know that we are talking about our mind. Our mind is what thinks, and we have many thoughts. All day long, many things are going through our minds, and he is addressing this. We have to take those thoughts captive. It can seem like a difficult thing to do, but first you must understand that you are not your mind. You have the ability to do what Paul is saying. He is saying that we take our thoughts captive. So, our brain starts thinking something – we have the ability to say, "Stop. I am not going to think that thought. You, brain, do not have the ability to think that thought. I am stopping that thought. Right now I am stopping it. I am taking that thought captive, and I am not going to think that way anymore," because we know that when we think something, it is the prelude to acting. It precedes the action.

We see it in addiction today. The mind says, "Oh, you need a drink. You need another hit of drugs." What follows that? Getting the drink, taking the drugs. So it starts with the thought. If we are going to win the war of this age, it starts with us. It starts with us taking dominion and captive every thought to the obedience of Christ. You say, "How do I know what is the obedience of Christ?" One comment that Paul made was, "We have the mind of Christ." There is a way for us as believers to come into the mind of Christ. Christ was the Word made flesh; and when we look at this Word, much of what it does is that it tells us how to think. I guarantee you, it is not Jesus saying, "Take that drug." You have to take that thought captive into obedience. All of our actions are that way. We get mad and angry with a brother or sister; is that Christ? I think He said, "Love one another." We take captive those thoughts of anger that bring about actions that we do not want to live.

We must come to a recognition that we are growing up into Christ, growing up into the mind of Christ, until our thoughts are His thoughts. In the Hebrew Scriptures it says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts." That scares me. "My ways are not your ways." And our ways will never become the ways of God until our thoughts become God's thoughts. Think how many problems would be solved in this world right now if the Body of Christ did think the thoughts of God. I think it is something we can believe for. I think it is something we can work at. Salvation is necessary and it is one thing, but we do not stop at a salvation experience. We must grow up into the fullness of the Son of God; and I believe we can do that. Now I did not say it would be easy. I think one of the most difficult things we can do is bring our thoughts into obedience to Christ. But I think we can do it; and I think that we will see results from it, especially in and throughout the Body of Christ.

A huge change is going to take place. I believe that in this end-time, we are going to see tremendous outpourings and people coming to salvation in Christ. Do you believe that? But I believe more than that. I believe also that we are going to see a great multitude of Christians beginning to mature in Christ, until we come to the measure of the statute of the fullness of Christ, as Paul talked about.

I want to read another Scripture in Romans chapter 12, verse 1. “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” Now, listen to verse 2. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” How many times do we say as believers, “I just want to know what the will of God is. I am facing this situation, I need to know the will of God”? No, we need to walk in a way that proves the will of God. How do we get there? We refuse to be conformed any longer to this world, but we are going to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. See, as we take these thoughts captive under the authority of Christ, then according to the Word of God, it says we will be transformed. I do not want to just be a Christian and be saved, I want to be transformed. Transformed into His image. Transformed into the mind of Christ, into the thoughts of God, where God no longer has to say, “Your thoughts are not My thoughts.” Where does it start? We begin by not being conformed to this world.

I really bless us in this generation. We are bombarded day and night with the thoughts and the ways and the concerns and the lusts of this world. Television, radio, music, everything that is coming; the words, the vibrations, all of this conforms our thoughts to the world around us. I come to Brazil and I realize how conformed I am to America; because everything around me, in American context, tells me how to think: what to do, what to eat, how to talk. Everything. We are conformed. All of the senses that we have in our bodies are constantly reading the world around us: What is going on? What is happening? What was that noise? It conditions us, it conforms us to this world. We need to be conformed to the Spirit, to the world of spirit. We need to develop an awareness of the world of spirit.

The Holy Spirit was given to teach us, to guide us; but if we do not spend time with Him, if we do not know how to talk to Him, if we cannot understand Him because He is speaking one language and we are speaking another language, He is doing one thing, we are doing something else.... It takes a lot to be conformed to the Spirit; because we literally have to stop all that is going on around us that is conforming us to this age, and we have to find a way to be conformed in our minds to the Word of God, to the Holy Spirit. It takes time, because the world is screaming so loud, and all of our senses are tuned to this world and this age, and we are being constantly conformed.

I think we should be done with it. I think we should recognize that we have the ability in God to be conformed to His image by the Holy Spirit, and stop being conformed to this world. You think about how conformed that we are as believers; place yourself in the middle of the morning traffic, walking the sidewalks. Go down to the <sup>1</sup>Barca and stand there while people are loading onto the Barca, and I want you to point out every Christian. Shouldn't we be able to recognize ourselves? See, we are conformed. So much of Christianity acts just like the rest of the world! That is not to condemn us, but we better realize the truth of it and say, “We should not be conformed. We should not just look like and act like everybody else.” We need to be a testimony to this age, but to do that, we must be transformed.

When we use that word *transformed*, do you remember Christ's experience of being transformed? Remember when He went up on the mountain with the disciples to pray and He was transformed, it says, before their eyes? Now, when we read that story, is there any question about the fact that at that moment, Jesus looked very different than everybody else that was there? Nobody could have missed Him! He was as brilliant as the sun. He was transformed. Now, I do not know if you are going to look like

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<sup>1</sup> Barca refers to a ferry boat, particularly those that operate across Guanabara Bay connecting Rio de Janeiro with cities like Niterói.

the sun when you get transformed. You may lose a lot of friends because it is too bright to be around you. But He was different, because He was transformed.

I think there is a transformation that is for us. In Ephesians 4, verses 22-24, it says, "That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." Now I think that when we read Scriptures, we need to take them at face value. Paul was really saying this, and he really meant what he said. He was saying that we can be renewed in the spirit of our mind. We can take every thought captive, and we can put on this new self, this transformation, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. I want us to be more in the likeness of God.

We are surrounded by this age, and we are facing many things. I know a lot of people are worried about the days of tribulation. Do not worry about the tribulations. What we are talking about here tonight, this is the war. This is the greatest tribulation that we will face, the war within us to take every thought captive, and to be transformed by the renewing of our mind and come into the image of the Lord. That is why we should be here in service, as part of the body, reaching into all that we are. We want to be transformed. We want to walk in these words. And we believe in the name of the Lord that we can do it.

Amen.