

**Keep seeking the things above
Set your mind on things above**

**1 Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.
2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.**

Now in verse 2 we have perhaps the greatest challenge to every Christian: not how you live but **your thinking!!!** If you know how to play poker, no one knows what you are thinking...except you and God and your savior-friend Jesus Christ.

2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

Set your mind Present Active Imperative — [present tense] everyday, all day long. The Greek verb comes from the root word: ‘mind.’

Therefore, to think, to have a mindset, to judge, to decide even to seek after.

If we understand the imperatives of verses 1 and 2 we would have a blueprint for the life that pleases God. The command in the 2nd verse is closely related to the command of the 1st verse.

1st command: **Keep seeking the things above**

How do you do this – by:

2nd command **Set your thinking---on the things above**

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One thing that most people are in denial concerning is that they choose what goes on in their minds. You get to choose whether the flesh or the Holy Spirit is going to control your thinking.

Lets take a look at what goes on in our minds— in our souls

Biblical teaching on ‘Thinking’

1. You are what you think, not what you eat!

You are not what you appear to be, you are what you think.

**Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinks within himself
so he is**

2. During the course of man’s history in the Angelic Conflict there are **only two** antithetical mental attitudes. They are described in the Old Testament in:

**Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
And let him return to the LORD,
And He will have compassion on him, And to
our God, For He will abundantly pardon.**

God makes it clear here that we have control over our thought process. We choose what to think.

Isaiah 55:8 (Here are the two antithetical mental attitudes) “For My thoughts (given to us in the Word of God) are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.

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The thoughts of man are a multitude of philosophies while the thoughts of God are all righteous.

Isaiah 55:9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

We are to set our thoughts on those higher things of heaven.

Paul expresses it this way in

Romans 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Spend your time thinking in the flesh – then the flesh wins.

Spend your time thinking in the Holy Spirit and the New Spiritual Creature wins.

There is a great battle going on inside of you, an inner struggle.

3. This conflict of mental attitudes causes great conflict inside of the believer’s inner struggles of the soul.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire (mindset) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these (God’s thoughts or Bible Doctrine versus man’s thoughts) are in opposition to one another, (inside the soul of

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the believer) **so that you may not do the things
that you please.**

Since the Holy Spirit is the Mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16 compared with Isa. 40:13), it stands to reason that we must set our mindset on the Holy Spirit and the things He directs us toward. Jesus Christ is in the Third Heaven, but we have the Holy Spirit here inside us. Therefore, we are to be like Christ, think like Christ, Love like Christ. We must allow the Holy Spirit to control our thinking. It is amazing how many Christians turn to alcohol, drugs, psychiatry etc. when there is a battle going on inside them. It is really very simple. Just forget the thinking of the flesh, on things of this earth, and devote all your thinking to things above. Or, forget the things above and live in your drugs and alcohol or pay out a lot of money to some shrink. You have to make the choice.

4. A powerful passage that we studied in detail in our study of SAD (Stress, Anxiety, Depression) or “living who you are in Christ” was

**2 Cor. 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we
do not war according to the flesh,**

Literally:

In flesh, we walk-live.

Not according to flesh we war.

We are in a spiritual war—want to know why you experience daily struggles? You are in a war—an invisible but real!

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Remember how you came to believe in Jesus Christ?

Helpless,

Hopeless

Unable to perform—not as some soldier ready for combat.

Well, you are in a war, and you fight in it, just the way you entered it.

Simply by trusting Him...*'battle is the Lord's'*

What is so vital here is that you realize that we are in a **war**, not a conventional war, but a **spiritual war** – a war!

So do not try to enter this war with flesh weapons or wisdom.

In flesh, we walk-live

Not according to flesh we war

That is we are not to battle in human strength, human wisdom. We have to live in this fleshly body, but it is not in the fleshly body that we struggle daily.

2 Corinthians 10:4 for the weapons of our warfare (daily spiritual struggles in our lives) **are not of the flesh**, (not of human strength or human wisdom) **but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses – of the mind** (notice progress of Paul's thinking: war – weapons – fortresses)

For our study in Col. 3:1-2

You are in a spiritual warfare.

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There are fortresses, strongholds, in your soul---in your mind, to keep you in Satan's Lie. Satan uses these strongholds to bring SAD in your life. He has lots of strongholds.

Question: What weapons are you going to use to destroy these strongholds? What weapons are you going to use to end SAD in your life?

Change circumstances?

Drugs?

Alcohol?

Self-discipline of flesh?

In contrast to weapons of the flesh, the weapons we fight with are not worldly or weapons of flesh, but **as God** empowers – and then these fortresses of our minds fall.

What are some of the weapons we use in the flesh? Fear, anger, hate, jealousy, arrogance –all the defense mechanisms of self.

**2 Corinthians 10:4 ...but divinely powerful for
the destruction of fortresses (of the mind)**

The Greek word for destruction is beautiful, along with the English word that comes from it:

Kath ai-resis to cast down, or cast or take away; destruction of a fortress. So this is the tearing down of these fortresses in your soul—in your mind, in your thinking.

English word: Webster's 10th edition:

“Ca-thar-sis purification, that brings about spiritual renewal or release from tension

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Elimination of a complex (fortress) by bringing it to consciousness and affording it expression”

Think about this. Think about what is going on inside you:

Purification or elimination – destruction, tearing down

Of a complex -- fortress in your soul, stronghold that keeps you down

Next Webster gives part of the process:

“...by bringing to consciousness and affording it expression”

What does this mean for us? This means we bring to light Satan’s Lie. We bring to truth all the lies you have believed about yourself that crushed your soul, and made you feel like a loser! And in the light of God’s truth, you see these things are a lie, things that happened in your childhood, home, marriage, etc.

These are NOT who you are. You are who you are in Jesus Christ, by His doing!

One other thing that Webster does: he gives **two** results of this **catharsis**:
that brings about spiritual renewal or release from tension

First, a spiritual renewal; in 2 Corinthians Paul talks about being renewed:

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore, we do not lose heart, (weaken your thinking) but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

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Ephesians 4:23 and that you be renewed in the
spirit of your mind,

Colossians 3:10 and have put on the new self
who is being renewed to a true knowledge
according to the image of the One who
created him

And this true knowledge tears down strongholds and causes you to see
who you are in Jesus Christ, NOT as others try to make you see or feel
about your self-worth.

Then Webster gives another result that fits right in with our study:

release from tension

Notice the word: ‘*release.*’ What a beautiful word! You are released from
these strongholds in your soul, in your mind, in your thinking so that now
you can enjoy life.

Released, set free from these strongholds of your mind, *By the power of
God*

But, the only way we are going to tear down these strongholds is by
divinely-provided power, not by weapons of our flesh nature.

But divinely powerful: God is powerful; power from God.

A la a strong contrast between weapons of flesh and weapons from God.

Plus dative of *dunatos* (dynamite) power!

Plus dative of *theos* God

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What is this Divinely supplied power?

Shield of Faith, sword of the Holy Spirit – which is the Word of God

And there you have how to control your thinking on things above: By faith in the Holy Spirit who will direct you to the Word of God.

What are these “strongholds” of the mind that keep us from setting our thinking on things above?

1. A stronghold here is an immaterial structure built in the mind/the soul through persuasive arguments by false teachers (Col. 2:4) in order to divert the mind from thinking on things above!
2. These fortresses are strongholds - in your mind, - in your thought patterns that actually govern how you think – how you deal with the things that happen in your life.
3. Strongholds that must be torn down are the fortresses that protect and defend your flesh nature. From these fortresses comes oppression in your life that prevents you from setting your mind on the things above.
4. Strongholds are those fortresses inside your mind where the power of Satan hides and is protected and seeks to control you and keep you thinking that you are unworthy, inadequate, loser, wasted life, and you deserve God not giving you any real blessing. This is why we must set our minds on things above, because dear people, this is who you are in Christ.

Thoughts precede whatever happens in your mind.

We choose to be under stress, anxiety or depressed. These are not involuntary—what you think is what you are at that moment. Set your

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mind, your thinking on things above—and that is who you are at that time.

Now we come to:

2 Corinthians 10:5 We are destroying speculations or arguments and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, or that are opposed to the knowledge of God and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

There you have what happens when you set your mind on the things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.

We are destroying Present Participle: this will not happen overnight. This will not happen quickly in your life. I know, you want them down quickly. Most Christians always seek the quick way. But this takes time, therefore the importance of “hope” – confidence in what the Word of God instructs us.

speculations and every lofty thing Well, this does not sound too bad!! Well, it is these that keep us from setting our minds on things above.

speculations: *Greek Word logismos* is a system of thinking, to reckon, to calculate. In Classical Greek this word referred to “*arguments considerations & reflections preceding & determining conduct*”

Think about this. These fortresses belong to the realm of your ***will, intellect, and therefore emotions and actions.*** *Wrapped up in these*

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fortresses is all that you are in the flesh. They belong to the spirit of man in opposition to the Spirit of God.

There are fortresses inside you. Out from these strongholds emerge considerations, thoughts that precede what you do, how you react or handle a situation in your life. And then they determine what you do or say.

*Again, this is why stress, anxiety and depression seem involuntary. But in truth, they are thoughts that emerge from inside you, from these **speculations** or considerations – reflections.*

And here is the great news. The good news is, the gospel news is, you don't have to tear these strongholds down, **GOD WILL DO IT FOR YOU**, if you will let Him by trusting Him!

Next:

And every lofty thing First of all, don't speed read past the word **every**. Greek: all, any, every. We are going to see quite a list here, including some items that will surprise you.

**every lofty thing raised up against the
knowledge of God**

I want to comment on “the knowledge of God.” Please don't think about this ‘theologically’ but experientially:

What is your view of God?

What is your view of God in your daily life?

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When I say *view of God* I am not referring to what you could write down as your theological view of God. I am talking about your view of God in your daily life.

I'll give you an example: many Christians know theologically that Job's three friends were wrong in judging Job, since bad things were happening to him, *he must have been doing bad things*.

They know this. You may know this **but**, how many times day in and day out, when something bad happens to someone you know, the first thing that you say in your mind – "*It is because they have sinned—etc.?*"

Lofty thing - Greek: *hups o-ma*

This is an understanding or view that is elevated to a height that is above the true knowledge of God. This means to place an attitude, or understanding to the highest level of your thought pattern...Above the true knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ.

Can you imagine, placing something above who you are in Jesus Christ?

Can you imagine placing who you are in the flesh, above who you are in Jesus Christ?

Well, that is what these fortifications, these strongholds in your mind will do to your thinking.

This is what 'lofty thing' will do.

This is what Satan's Lie will do!

Don't exult any other thinking above the true knowledge of God!, above who Jesus Christ is and where He is right now, sitting at the right hand of God.

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2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,

2 Corinthians 10:4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

(This refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the controlling power of the Holy Spirit by faith in the Holy Spirit. This refers to the Grace of God—that we are in Christ and are identified with Christ at God’s right hand.)

2 Corinthians 10:5 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,

Why are we spending so much time on this passage (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)? Because it contains the heart of why we cannot **keep seeking the things above and setting our minds on things above** (Col. 3:1-2)

2 Corinthians 10:5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God,

The Truth shall set you free. Your thinking about God is at the heart of your thinking about everything else: His Grace, His Love, His Plan for Jesus Christ and His plan for you. Calvinists have a distorted view or

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thinking about God. Legalists have a corrupted view about God. These thoughts about God are raised up against the true knowledge of God.

God is Love.

God loves you.

God has already provided everything you need to tear down these fortresses.

God has created you a new being.

You are not that old person, you are a new being, reconciled to God and worthy to be loved by Him, and worthy to serve Him.

**and we are taking every thought captive to the
obedience of Christ,**

If there is one statement that announces the process of **setting your mind on things above**, this is it.

and we are taking every thought The Greek word for thought comes from the root word for ‘the mind’ and refers to what comes out of the mind, our thoughts, the way we perceive things, the way we understand things. Don’t speed read past that word **every**. People, God desires every thought we have to be related to Jesus Christ. Your thoughts – political, social, economic, sex, friendships, morality etc. need to be **captive to the obedience of Christ**. According to Rom. 8:6 **For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace!** We are to have our thought process from the Holy Spirit not from the flesh.

And Oh, people, it is so simple to **set your mind on things above**, not easy but simple, all you have to do is to change your thinking to Jesus Christ, to where He is, to loving as He loves. Away from things of this

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earth to things related to above, **where Jesus Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.**

Or

Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk (activity in life directed from within—that is) **by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.**

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; (you cannot think by both – you allow your flesh to do the thinking or you allow the Holy Spirit to do your thinking and this by faith. It is up to you) **for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.**

And we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

This is why Peter mandates us in **2 Peter 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** The more you know about Jesus Christ, the more you are able to bring every thought in obedience to Him.

2 Corinthians 10:5 ...to the obedience of Christ

This means that all our thoughts, all our interpretations about ourselves, about our purpose, about our sins/failures, what others say etc., every thought is now submitted to Jesus Christ.

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To who you are in Jesus Christ! to Jesus Christ –where He is right now, sitting at the right hand of God.

OK, we are looking at the Biblical teaching on “Thinking”

Biblical teaching on “Thinking”

1. You are what you think, not what you eat! You are not what you appear to be, you are what you think.

**Prov. 23:7 For as he thinks within himself so
he is**

2. During the course of man’s history in the Angelic Conflict there are **only two** antithetical mental attitudes. They are described in the Old Testament in Isaiah 55:7:

**Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
And let him return to the Lord,
And He will have compassion on him,
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.**

3. This conflict of mental attitudes causes great conflict inside of the believer, inner struggles of the soul Galatians 5:17:

**Galatians 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire
against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the
flesh; for these are in opposition to one
another, so that you may not do the things
that you please.**

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4. Clear the mind so that we can set our thinking on things above where Jesus Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Cor.10:3-5.

2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,

2 Corinthians 10:4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

2 Corinthians 10:5 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,

5. Since the Holy Spirit is the ‘mind of Christ’ (1 Cor. 2:16 & Isa. 40:13) walking in the Holy Spirit will shape the mind to be set on Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 40:13 Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, Or as His counselor has informed Him?

1 Corinthians 2:16 FOR WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

6. To set your mind on things above is to think like Jesus Christ.

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Philippians 2:2 ...make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Glorify Jesus Christ. Our inner happiness depends on being of the same mind as Jesus Christ and this is only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. Stability in life is a mental attitude – a thought process, Philippians 4:7.

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8. Giving is a mental attitude of thought 2 Corinthians 9:7

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

9. Keeping your mindset on Jesus Christ is essential to loving as Jesus Christ loved 1 Corinthians chapter 13

Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth

If you experience SAD, it is because you choose to be depressed. You can actually talk yourself back to the spirit filled life even when in flesh. You simply say to yourself: “Back to faith in the Holy Spirit.”

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Part of you talks; part of you listens! And you choose either to listen or not listen.

You cannot consistently live differently than you consistently think: either of things of the flesh of this world or things above, spiritual things taught in the Word of God.

It is up to you!