**Reboot Your Life: Mentally
Pastor Jerry Varner
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**Week 5 – Reboot mentally – Sought through understanding**

Only the power of God will open our minds to new understanding and guard our thinking with peace. Will we allow the work of God to open our minds to new insights needed to impact families to transform our world.

**Luke 24:45 (NIV)** 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. (ex: disciples had to be in proximity to the resurrected Jesus to allows the upgrade to happen their life – prayer study  seeking to be in proximity and discipline to shape your thinking allowed this to happen)

**Philippians 4:7 (NIV)** 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Take Away: In what ways are you loving the Lord with all your mind to receive the upgrade of understanding?**

We’re wrapping up the “Rebooting Your Life” series today and we’re digging into the mental reboot. So I want to thank Pastor Wynne for giving me the week on mental health; the simplest, easiest topic to dive into.

2nd Century Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius said “We become what we think about.”

Everything you do starts as a thought. Wiggle your fingers. Quit your job. It all started right up here. God is intimately interested in the condition of your mind.

Where your thoughts go is indicative of where your heart is. When left to wander, to where does your mind wander?

What are the things that you are investing the most mental energy into? And more importantly, what is the return on investment?

We can spend an exorbitant amount of time and mental energy on things that give us no return. We can conjure up all kinds of *what ifs* that in all likelihood will never happen.

We can wind ourselves up with anxiety, turmoil, and striving and find that we are ultimately spinning our wheels. It would be nice to just step out of that hamster wheel. But we all know it’s not always that easy.

If you’ve got your bible or bible app, open it up to

**SLIDE 1** Luke 24:45: *“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.”*

Luke is saying here that Jesus caused the disciples to understand the scriptures by opening their minds.

That’s our cue to pray and ask God to give us understanding of His Word today.

The word for “opened” is dianoigo and it means to open up completely. The word for mind is nous and it is speaking of the ruling faculty, the understanding, and reason.

So this verse gives us the truth that Jesus was and is willing to impart deeper understanding to us. That’s great news because let’s be honest...all of us have read the scriptures, scratched our head, and closed the scriptures.

I’d dare say that’s likely one of the leading reasons for biblical illiteracy. We struggle in our minds to grasp the practical meaning and therefore we see no point.

We can say that we’ve read our bible today, but without transformation we’re simply checking the box of religious activity.

And I’m going to go out on a limb and say that no one listening has that as their goal when it comes to our relationship with Christ.

**SLIDE 2** (Remind folks of the NT in a Year bible reading plan they can join on YouVersion.) If you struggle with biblical understanding, I’ve found the Bible Project videos on YouTube to be a great tool.

The disciples received this understanding because of their proximity to Jesus. How close you get to Christ has a direct correlation to the condition of your mind and your thoughts.

So, I want to get back to the mind/mental part of faith.

I take issue with those who think that Christianity equals blind faith in an unprovable being. I take issue with those who would set faith and science on opposite ends of the same spectrum.

The convictions we hold are not based in some age-old flimsy “pie in the sky” fairy tale. There is incredible evidence of every sort that aligns with the claims of scripture. If you don’t see that, you likely haven’t looked with open eyes.

**SLIDE 3** The faith you hold is supernatural, but it is also rational.

We can absolutely engage our mental faculties as we walk by faith. These are not diametrically opposed. I don’t think it's any accident that as God taught us through the Apostle Paul about the armor of God, that he assigned salvation to the helmet.

What does the helmet hold? Your brain! Now, I’m not saying that your salvation is a completely mental transaction; certainly not.

But somewhere along the line, someone spoke the truth of the gospel to you--maybe it's happening right now—

That Jesus Christ, who was born 2000 years ago and lived, worked, taught, served, healed, was crucified, dead, and buried and rose again three days later to defeat the penalty of sin and the power of death on your behalf and to reconcile you to God

And invites you into a love relationship right now today--and your mind receives those words and you begin to wrestle with that truth

And you look at your own sin, your own need for forgiveness, and you look at the grace that God is offering to you fully and freely and you rectify those two things with an act of your will.

You make a decision. Your mind is engaged in the salvation of your soul. Is it any wonder then, that the battle of the mind is a battle our adversary, Satan is constantly waging?

Let’s look at Phil. 4:7 to see what happens to those who are willing to put their faith in God:

**SLIDE 4** *“And the peace of God--which transcends all understanding--will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* *Phil. 4:7*

Oh, do we need God’s peace today. And let’s not kid ourselves. The absence of violence is not the presence of peace.

The absence of protest is not the presence of peace. The absence of rioting is not the presence of peace.

Even if we had the absence of these things and all other societal ills, we still can’t claim to have the kind of peace being spoken of and offered to us today. Let’s better understand this kind of peace that guards us mentally.

This verse starts with “And”. And is a conjunction. Some of you may remember School House Rock where you learned about “Conjunction Junction, what’s your function?”

The fact that we start here with “And” means we’re connecting to a previous thought. Now, let me simply summarize what Paul was just saying previous to the “And”.

Its important because it builds the recipe that when stirred together in our hearts gets us the peace God promises….

**SLIDE 5** V. 4: *“****Rejoice*** *in the Lord always.”*

**SLIDE 6** V. 5: *“Let your* ***gentleness*** *be evident to all.”*

**SLIDE 7** V. 6: *“Do not be* ***anxious*** *about anything, but in every situation, by* ***prayer*** *and petition, with* ***thanksgiving****,* ***present*** *your requests to God.”*

These are the prerequisites to the peace that verse 7 talks about. Sometimes we want peace without considering the ingredients necessary to live in it.

I want a cake, but I only have a spatula and some pepper. Paul is saying invest your mind in these things, these ingredients, and here is the return on your investment:

**SLIDE 8** *“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

If you need a mental reboot for the good of your spiritual health, let me suggest to you the steps presented in these verses:

1. Rejoice/Praise/Adore/Worship
2. Embrace gentleness as a way of interaction.
3. Turn away anxiety at the door. Let worry trigger worship. Let’s problems trigger praise. Let anxiety trigger adoration of God. Not because you don’t have problems but because you have God and He’s far greater, stronger, wiser, closer, than anything or anyone!

If you will, the promise unfolds: that *“the peace of God, which transcends all understanding…”*

You’ll have peace when you have no right to have peace. When you have no human or earthly reason to be at peace, you’ll stand strong.
Your mind will settle into the overriding reality that the God who made you loves you, knows you, and knows the situation even better than you do, and that by faith, trust, and obedience, you can watch Him work in your favor!

And I know we love to talk about the unconditional love of God and we should, and that’s true and that’s right but we can see God presenting us with an “if/then” proposition in these verses.

He’s calling us, inviting us in so that we are actively invested in the promise of His peace.

Okay, as we round the corner and head home, I want to make a bit of a hard shift. I want to ask you where you mind is right now.

Where have you been lately? Many times we let the culture, popular opinion, news reporters, politics, and social media to be the tour guide of our minds.

*\*We’ll be traveling at an altitude of 6 ft. If you look to your right, you’ll see someone at Walmart wearing their mask under their chin. Go ahead and judge them for obviously hating all of humanity and actively killing those around them. If you look to your left, you’ll see that co-worker you secretly wish you were with. Go ahead and let your eyes linger, your imagination go wild, and your hand stay a couple more seconds on their shoulder. If you look like directly in front of you, you’ll see the screen of your phone. This will occupy your mind for the duration of our flight. As you scroll, be sure to engage in damaging comparisons, unfair judgements, and fruitless arguments with strangers.\**

These things take us places that might be temporarily entertaining, but are ultimately detrimental. They introduce poison disguised as candy.

Now let me say a word about professional counseling. I am not a professional counselor. There are people who have that as their calling, their passion, and their giftedness.

**SLIDE 9** Our partner ministry Footsteps Counseling Center has been inundated with phone calls from people who are seeking support, help, and a listening ear.

Ultimately they’re seeking peace and please hear me say that honestly I think every person would benefit from having someone to help navigate their thoughts, struggles, and difficulties, because we’ve all got them.

I’m a huge proponent of professional counseling. I believe in it and I believe in the amazing good that places like Footsteps does in our community and culture.

As we wrap up, let’s look at the words of Jesus when someone asked Him what the greatest command is:

**SLIDE 10** Matt. 22:36-37…“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

* Heart: “kardia”: “the center or inmost part of a person; it is the place that identifies the condition of his life”
* Soul: “psuche”: “of a person’s will, desires, and affections.”
* Mind: “dianoia”: “the understanding”

So, when Jesus clearly says that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, He’s saying we love Him with our entire identity, through the surrender of our personal will, and as we grow in our understanding of His nature, character, and love for us.

When we do, the peace of God “GUARDS our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

The word “guard” (phroureo) gives us the picture of a sentinel, a guard that is protecting our hearts and minds as we live in relationship with Jesus.

So if you need a mental reboot today, let me encourage you to:

**SLIDE 11 – Praise, speak honestly, Love God**

1. **Praise**. There is nothing that will recalibrate your mind and orientate it to who God is than when you simply praise Him.
2. That you **speak honestly** with God on a consistent basis about the thing(s) that seek to rob you of peace. That you keep that as a constant prayer.
3. That you **love Him** with all you’ve got. As you’ve listened to His Word today, He’s likely prompted you about some area that you’re keeping for yourself. Can I ask with all the love I can: Why on earth would you do such a thing? I know it’s difficult to release what you’ve held onto, I know sometimes it feels like a tug of war. I know that you’ll likely have to give it to him again tomorrow, or in an hour, or in five minutes. But the most important thing right now is that you hand that over to His care.

God cares so deeply for you and what you’re dealing with. I’ve heard it said that God has bigger things to worry about than your hangnail, your job loss, your bank account, your friction with your parents, and the day to day stuff.

But let me say that God has proven to me time and again that he cares deeply about what’s on my mind. God cares about the things you care about and He is doing that to set an example for you.

He cares about what you care about because He wants you to care about what he cares about. So don’t think for one second what’s weighing you down mentally isn’t near to the heart of God. He’s a good father and He has all you need to reboot mentally.

Prayer