

# Renew Series Week 1 Devotions

In Week 1 of the Renew Series we learnt that our thoughts matter and that they create mindsets which determine how we think and act in life. Each day this week you will read a devotion adapted from a YouVersion Reading Plan entitled *The Mind Connection* by Joyce Meyer.

## Day 1: The Key To Transformation

**Scripture:** *“Do not copy the behaviour and customs of this world but let God transform you to a new person by changing the way you think.”* (Romans 12:2)

Before renewing the way that your mind works, you have to be willing to go through transformation - it's a choice that you make. Transformation means, 'a thorough change' and it's offered to us through Jesus' death and resurrection. When we accept Him as our Lord, He offers us not only a new way of living but also a new way of thinking. Right thinking plus the right attitudes are roadmaps that allow us to reach our full potential and live as champions.

The verse at the beginning tells us that:

1. God has a perfect plan for us.
2. We can achieve this plan by not thinking like the world.
3. But we have to renew our minds by His word, and think the way that God thinks.

The thoughts that go through your mind influence and energize what you do. What goes through your mind shows by what comes through your mouth, moods, attitudes and behaviour. Just like the common phrase says, “An idle mind is the devil's workshop,” he will try to get to your thoughts early in the day.

When you have negative thoughts about yourself or the situations you are in, you have the authority to stop these thoughts. You can think of positive thoughts to replace them. Make the decision to think and say the right things.

I encourage you to jump-start your day by thinking and speaking good things from God's Word. Speak out things like: *“Today, I am creative and energetic. I am thankful for all God has done for me, and I enjoy being a blessing to others. This is the day God has made, and I can handle whatever comes my way because Christ is my strength.”*

Though it's hard to control the negative thoughts that come into our mind, don't forget to use the exercises that can help you keep track of your thoughts and eliminate negative thoughts.

**Exercise:** Pull your rubber band that's around your wrist every time you have a negative thought. This will stop you thinking negatively because you don't want to be hurt.

**Practise:** End each day by doing the 3-2-1 Exercise:

What 3 things went well today?

What 2 things do I need to do better?

What 1 thing have I learnt about myself today?

**Make The Mind Connection:** Thinking godly thoughts will influence your words, moods and attitudes and bring transformation to every area of your life.

**Prayer:** Ask God to help you change the way you think so your whole life will be transformed!

Devotion written by Joyce Meyer and adapted by Grace Ravengai.

## Day 2: How To Think About Yourself

**Scripture:** *"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."* (Psalms 139:14)

On Sunday we focused on the ten things you hate about yourself and the ten things you love about yourself. For most people it was easier to list the negative than the positive, right?

Well, here's something you should know: God thinks you are wonderful, and it's important that you learn to think about yourself the same way God does. You were made in His image!

People generally tend to think about all their faults more than they do their strengths, but we need to consider both. We can't ignore our weaknesses and pretend that they don't exist, but we can become easily discouraged, and perhaps even depressed, if we don't also consider the good things about us.

Romans 12:3 says: *"Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us."* Paul warns us not to think more highly of ourselves than we should but he didn't say we are to think "lowly" of ourselves.

Challenge yourself to think positively about yourself. Say out loud: *"I have talents, gifts and abilities that God has given me, and I am thankful for them. I intend to use them for His glory. I also have weaknesses, but I trust God to show His strength through them. Jesus came for weak people, for those who need Him, and I definitely need Him. I am nothing without Christ, and I can do nothing without Him, but I can also do all things through Him."*

I'm sure you've reached a point where you don't like yourself. All you see is your faults and you constantly compare yourself to others. You might want to be like the coolest teen on the block or have all the designer shoes and clothes like your neighbour. However God did not create you to be like them. He created you to be you. When we learn to love and value ourselves the way God does, it changes everything!

**Challenge for the week:** Focus on what God thinks about you.

**Exercise:** Every time a negative thought about yourself crosses your mind, don't forget to pull the elastic band around your wrist.

**Practise:** End each day by doing the 3-2-1 Exercise:

What 3 things went well today?

What 2 things do I need to do better tomorrow?

What 1 thing have I learnt about myself today?

**Make the Mind Connection:** How you think about yourself is vitally important to your self-image and affects every area of your life.

**Prayer:** Ask God to help you avoid negative thinking and think positively about who you are.

Devotion written by Joyce Meyer and adapted by Grace Ravengai.

### Day 3: Enjoying Life Begins With A Choice

**Scripture:** *"This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."* (Deuteronomy 30:19)

We don't always have the power to change every unpleasant circumstance in our life but we have power to change our outlook on unpleasant circumstances. Troubling or painful circumstances are not fun but if you look at it in a hopeful, faith-filled way, we can watch God work all things out for our good. (See Romans 8:28)

Enjoying life begins with the thoughts you choose to think. Yes, it's that simple! No matter what is going on in your life, if you make the choice to be happy, hope-filled based on God's word, you will feel better.

Nehemiah 8:10b states, *"The joy of the Lord is my strength."*

Did you know that our thoughts are directly linked to our feelings? So if you want to feel better, you need to think better. When you choose your thoughts carefully, your quality of life will improve in amazing ways.

Because of unpleasant things that have happened in our lives we have learnt to protect ourselves from getting hurt. A common phrase we often hear is: "Expectation is the root of all disappointment," so if you stop yourself from having expectations from people, you won't be disappointed. Think about it, when you set this as your daily 'motto', you are preventing yourself from truly enjoying life and God's plan for you because you build walls, but walls are never good for a relationship with others around you.

Romans 15:13 says, *"May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in believing..."*

When we choose to be positive and expect and believe God to do great things, it releases joy into our lives. Some people are born as optimistic and others as pessimistic but even the optimistic have to make choices about their thoughts and attitudes towards life.

**Reflect:** Be honest with yourself

Think about what you have been mentally focusing on and how you have been feeling emotionally and physically... I hope you will see the connection. Nothing good comes from thinking sour, critical and negative thoughts but something good always comes when we think according to God's plan for our life.

Every time a negative thought about yourself crosses your mind, don't forget to pull the elastic band around your wrist.

**Practise:** The 3-2-1 Exercise. At the end of each day ask yourself these 3 questions:

What 3 things went well today?

What 2 things do I need to do better tomorrow?

What 1 thing have I learnt about myself today?

**Make the Mind Connection:** Enjoying your life begins with the thoughts you choose to think.

**Pray:** Ask God to fill you up with eternal joy and peace.

Devotion written by Joyce Meyer and adapted by Grace Ravengai.

## Day 4: Keep Your Focus

**Scripture:** *"Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong."* (Ecclesiastes 5:1)

Learning to focus is perhaps one of our greatest challenges in the world today. When we do too many things at once, we limit our power and ability and end up doing nothing well.

If you have a goal, something you truly want to accomplish, you will need to focus your thoughts, energies and time toward that thing. It is useless to "wish" you could do something; if you truly desire to do something, you must focus and do it! The world is filled with dissatisfied, unfulfilled people, and some of their dissatisfaction is caused by not focusing on what they were meant to do. God has given each of us gifts and abilities, and we should nourish and develop them.

Paul wrote to the Romans telling them to give themselves to whatever their gift was (Romans 12:6–8). I am gifted as a public speaker, but I am not gifted as a musician. I tried in the earlier years of my life to learn to play guitar, but it was a waste of time. We cannot accomplish a thing merely because we want to do so. God only helps us do what He wants us to do. Find out what that is and give yourself to it.

The writer of Ecclesiastes said we are to give our mind to what we are doing. I don't know about you, but I often find that difficult. My mind has a tendency to wander, and I have to keep calling it back to what is at hand. The more we allow our minds to run wild, the wilder they will be; however they can be trained to focus with some diligent effort.

God has given you an amazing gift - the ability to control your thoughts - the ability to focus. Don't be discouraged if you frequently find that you have lost your focus or allowed your priorities to get out of line. Just refocus and get back on track! Be determined to finish the things you start and give yourself to what you truly want to do and those things God has for you.

When your mind wanders to the negative thoughts yet again, don't forget to pull on the elastic band.

**Practise:** The 3-2-1 Exercise. At the end of each day ask yourself these 3 questions:

What 3 things went well today?

What 2 things do I need to do better tomorrow?

What 1 thing have I learnt about myself today?

**Make the Mind Connection:** To accomplish your goal, you will need to focus your thoughts, energy and time toward that thing.

**Prayer:** Ask God to help you focus, to help you train your mind and to align you with your gift.

Devotion written by Joyce Meyer and adapted by Grace Ravengai.

## Day 5: How To Think When Life Gets Tough

**Scripture:** *"For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning."* (Psalm 30:5)

Have you ever noticed that being upset about your problems never changes them? A bad attitude is like a flat tire. If you don't change it, you won't go anywhere.

It is more difficult to think and speak positively during the "winters" or hard times of our life, but it's helpful to remember that spring always follows winter. A favorite saying in our family is: "This too shall pass." Perhaps you are having a financial difficulty, school problems, relationship problems, or illness. It is not possible to live life trouble-free, but it is possible to look for spring in the middle of it. It is very helpful during difficult times to remember that they won't last forever.

God has equipped and anointed us to do hard things. We all know the saying that goes by, 'God gives His toughest battles to His strongest soldiers.' He would never give you something you cannot handle. He allows us to go through difficulty to bring glory to Him. He shows Himself strong through us. He told Paul that His strength was made perfect in our weakness (see 1 Corinthians 12:9). We may think we can't make it through tough times, but those thoughts are inaccurate according to God's Word. He has promised to never allow more to come on us than we can bear as we rely on Him (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Even when our circumstances don't make us happy, we can choose thoughts that will. When I am in the midst of difficulty, I often turn to Romans 8:35-39, and I remind myself that no matter how difficult life is, God loves me.

During tough times, it's easy to think, I can't do this; it is just too much; it is too hard. Watch out for that type of thinking and when you recognize it, remember that it is a lie. Then replace it with a God-inspired thought, such as: I can do what I need to do because God is with me. This winter season in my life will be over and spring will come.

When a negative thought or feeling passes through your mind during a difficult time, don't forget to pull the elastic band.

**Practise:** The 3-2-1 Exercise. At the end of each day ask yourself these 3 questions:

What 3 things went well today?

What 2 things do I need to do better tomorrow?

What 1 thing have I learnt about myself today?

**Make the Mind Connection:** During difficult times, avoid thinking the worst and start thinking about what God says.

**Prayer:** Ask God to lead you and guide during difficult times, to give you peace and help you overcome doubt.

Devotion written by Joyce Meyer and adapted by Grace Ravengai.

## Day 6: The Power of Perspective

**Scripture:** *"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."* (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

Each of us has a perspective on life; we see and think about things in a specific way. Some people are quick to see all the problems and magnify them, while others make a choice to minimize them and look for the good in life. In these verses, it doesn't sound like Paul's circumstances could have been much worse, yet in the midst of them, we see a glimmer of hope and an attitude that refused to quit!

Anyone who refuses to give up, no matter how challenging life may be, is far better off than someone who is without challenges. Why? Because a positive attitude will allow us to have joy even in the midst of a trying time.

Our perspective involves our thoughts, which also affect our moods. If I am in a bad mood, perhaps I am looking too much at what I don't have and not enough at what I do have. Or I may be looking at what people don't do for me, instead of what they do for me.

This applies to events of the past. When I learned to think of the abuse in my childhood as something that could be used by God for good, the pain began to lessen and I began to heal emotionally. As long as I resented my father for abusing me and my mother for not protecting me, I had a wound in my soul that could not heal. But when I decided to try to understand the way my father was raised, and my mother's fear, I actually started feeling more sorry for them than I did for me.

I encourage you to begin viewing life's challenges in a positive, faith-filled way. The good thing about faith is that it keeps you joyful and energized while you are trusting God to change the current reality. No one escapes difficult times, but with the right perspective, we can let God use them to make us stronger.

We all have pasts that might be holding us back and still very hurtful, be it abuse (mentally, physically, emotionally or sexual), being hurt by friends or having a parent walking out on you. Look at it from a different perspective, see the positive in it (I know it's hard) but nothing just happens and God allows everything to happen for a greater plan in the near future.

When negative thoughts (even from the past) cross your mind, don't forget to pull the elastic band.

**Practise:** The 3-2-1 Exercise. At the end of each day ask yourself these 3 questions:

What 3 things went well today?

What 2 things do I need to do better tomorrow?

What 1 thing have I learnt about myself today?

**Make the Mind Connection:** Choosing the right perspective can help make difficult times easier and fill your life with joy.

**Prayer:** Ask God to heal the wounds from the past and help you to forgive the wrong doers. Ask God to help you have the right perspective every time.

Devotion written by Joyce Meyer and adapted by Grace Ravengai.

## Day 7: Mind, Mouth, Moods & Attitudes

**Scripture:** *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."* (Ephesians 4:22-24)

Would you like to be in a good mood every day? You are probably thinking, Yes, of course I would. Who wouldn't? I spent a lot of years being controlled by a variety of moods and believing I had no choice in how I felt. I envied all the "happy people." I used to wonder, What is their secret? Why them and not me?

Sure, some people are born with more of a natural ability to look on the bright side. However, any person, no matter how naturally inclined they are toward good moods, can have sour, negative thoughts if they don't choose differently.

Your mind, mouth, moods, and attitudes are all directly connected. First you think, and then your thoughts turn into words that you speak, and the two of them together affect you emotionally and turn into moods and attitudes. If you truly want to be in a good mood on a regular basis, you can start by choosing to think positive, faith-filled thoughts from God's Word...thoughts that will generate good emotions instead of bad ones.

Consistently thinking good and godly thoughts, speaking beneficial words, and enjoying stability in mood and attitude are not necessarily easy things to do, but it is possible as you continue to seek God for His help and strength in this area. I have personally been working toward this goal for almost 40 years, and although I have not arrived at perfection, I have made amazing progress. I have successful days, and I also have days when I feel that I failed miserably! But I believe that with God's help I can keep growing.

If you desire greater emotional stability, and the ability to maintain a consistent good attitude no matter what your circumstances are, then make it a goal and don't give up until you have reached it. With God's help, you too can become one of those "happy" people...and it all begins with the thoughts you choose to think.

During the week we have been (hopefully) pulling the elastic band to try and eliminate all negative thoughts. We have been replacing these negative thoughts with positive thoughts. Trying to keep our focus, and not letting our thoughts wander to the negative. I hope that during this week you have managed to shape your thoughts

It takes 21 days to turn something into a habit, keep at it, and you'll find how easy it is to control the thoughts that enter your mind.

**Practise:** The 3-2-1 Exercise. At the end of each day ask yourself these 3 questions:  
What 3 things went well today?  
What 2 things do I need to do better tomorrow?  
What 1 thing have I learnt about myself today?

**Make the Mind Connection:** A transformed mind leads to transformed words, moods and attitudes.

**Prayers:** Ask God to help you control the thoughts that enter your mind and to help you stay in a good mood everyday.

Devotion written by Joyce Meyer and adapted by Grace Ravengai.