

SPIRIT SOUL AND BODY (part 5)
The Mind a Battlefield
(Watchman Nee)

God never interferes with the operation of man's natural ability; He never abruptly mixes His thought with man's nor does He abruptly restrict or destroy the functioning of man's intellect. The lightning cessation of all thoughts as though the brain has become a vacuum, the flashing interjection of thought at complete variance with the trend then current in the mind, the hasty severance of memory as if a wire had snapped leaving the mind paralyzed: all these are the results of the operation of the enemy. Because the evil spirit has seized hold of the organ of thought, he is able either to force it to cease functioning or by loosening his grip to let it work again.

We must recognize that natural causes can produce only natural symptoms. Flash thoughts or loss of memory are entirely beyond the ability or control of our will and are contrary to natural cause and effect: they must therefore be inspired by supernatural evil forces.

In his letter to Ephesians Paul is found writing about "the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (2.2). It is very important to know that the powers of darkness work not only outside but inside the man as well. When men work they can at most do so with their words, gestures or bodily movements; the evil spirits, however, can work with all three but even more. They can act from the outside in the same way as man acts, but they can work additionally from the inside. This means that they can squeeze themselves into man's thought life and work therein. Man is not capable of doing this: he is unable to enter another man's brain, subtly making many suggestions and confusing this matter of the source of the thoughts; but the evil spirits can. They possess an ability in communication which man does not have. They work initially in man's mind and then reach to his emotion, for mind and emotion are closely knit; they operate first in the mind and from there they arrive at man's will, because mind and will are intimately joined too.

The Bible distinctly indicates that the powers of darkness are able both to impart ideas to man and to steal them from him. "The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him" (John 13:2). This shows that Satan can put his thought into man's mind. "Then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts" (Luke 8:12). This attests that Satan removes whatever word man ought to remember and causes him to forget everything.

THE CAUSES OF THE ATTACK OF THE EVIL SPIRITS

Why is the Christian's mental life so beset by evil spirits? This can be answered in one sentence: **believers afford (advance) the evil spirits (or the devil) the opportunity to attack.** Let everyone clearly understand that it is possible for one's mind to be assaulted by the devil. This is confirmed by the experience of many saints. And the area primarily assailed by him is the thinking faculty, for it has a special affinity towards evil spirits. It either partially or totally has

slipped out from under man's sovereignty and has come under their dictate. Accordingly, these powers can switch one's thoughts on or off according to their wishes, completely disregarding the victim's ideas. Whenever anyone offers opportunity to wicked spirits, he cannot follow his own will anymore but must be obedient to another's. When he gives ground to them in his mind he immediately forfeits his sovereignty over it. **Let us be aware of this: that man's mind belongs to man; without his permission the enemy would be powerless to use it.** Unless man voluntarily delivers (knowingly or unknowingly) his mind to the evil spirits they have no right to encroach on man's freedom.

These teachings of Watchman Nee are very deep and carry a weight of consideration for every believer. The mind is truly a battlefield for the evil one to control the believer, if he allows him to do so. For all starts in the mind and is carried by the emotion to the will, as Watchman Nee mentioned. We must understand why it is so very important for the believer to renew his mind every day! In this battlefield, when Satan wins, the believer becomes depressed, anxious, worried, obsessed, fearful and handicapped to perform any duty before him, because his mind is now under the control of his enemy; he is then where Satan wants him to be. When Paul advised Timothy to fight the good fight of faith, it meant to fight the evil spirits with faith closing the door to them keeping them from entering the mind. The mind, the organ of thought, is the most important and vital organ of man; it is also the most vulnerable organ, because it is through it that Satan takes control of man.

The believer must understand that even though evil spirits cannot enter his spirit, they can enter the mind and control his emotions and will, when he is not submissive to the mind of Christ. He can be tormented in the level of the soul with confusion of the mind, not being able to think straight, not being able to make decisions, with fear to go forward, with depression, etc. Let no one deceive you concerning this, for these are the symptoms of a mind controlled by the evil spirits, although many, because of Ignorance and lack of understanding, cannot accept this reality. The reality of this is evidenced in many experiences we have had and continue to have. Without the organ of the mind and its faculties of thinking, emotions and will, Satan would not have a door to tempt man and he would be without sin. The mind of the born again person can experience the results of his new birth, peace, joy, confidence, hope, etc. in his obedience and application of YAHSHUA'S words when Satan comes against him. And by girding his mind with the helmet of salvation, by girding his loins with the shield of faith, with which he will quench all the attacks from the evil one, he will experience the victory that comes from faith.

When thoughts of anger and bitterness come to your mind, learn to hold them captive under the authority of YAHWEH'S Word; when thoughts of jealousy invade your mind, take your position of a child of YAHWEH; when thought of unworthiness interferes with your worthiness in Christ, and in your ability to fulfill His calling, embrace your position in YAHSHUA – sitting at the right hand of the Father, before your mind is taken by discouragement and doubt and depression. You and I need to be aware of the deceits of the evil one trying to enter the mind. The mind will always be a battlefield, but it does not have to be the battlefield of defeat for your soul.

Allowing Satan to plant his seed in your mind will result in the fruits you would not want to deal with, for every fruit carries many evil seeds in multiplication quantity. The Word of YAHWEH has given us instructions how to be victorious against the devil: surrender your will to YAHWEH (2) submit to His will (3) renew your mind (4) hold every thought captive that that invades your mind (5) direct your mind to thoughts that are of good report (6) take the humble attitude of YAHSHUA into your mind (7) undress of self-pity (8) live for others (9) direct your mind to acknowledge the mind of Christ in every thought, action, (10) embrace the peace of YAHWEH. For the rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of reverence and is honorable and seemly, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely and lovable, whatever is kind and winsome and gracious, if there is any virtue and excellence, if there is anything worthy of praises, think on and weigh and take account of these things (Phil. 4:8).