

Cultivating Daily Reflection

How to Elevate My Thinking May 30 & 31, 2020

If you missed this weekend's messages, watch at cultivate.sc/discussion

The reality is all good things require work. What we really need when life gets challenging is a new way to look at ourselves, our relationships and the world around us. Join us for our weekday reflections as we respond and get REAL, so that Jesus can elevate our lives.

Day 1 – Cultivate Wholeness: We may not be able to control the world around us, but we can control the world within us. The wholeness of our lives – physically, spiritually, relationally and emotionally – is impacted by the health of our thought life. If our thoughts are out of control, it's time for a change.

“Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.” Romans 12:2 MSG

Reflect on your thought life. If you're a visual person, write these things down SO THAT you can be REAL about where you are, where you want to be and how God can elevate your thinking:

- Be REAL with self, taking inventory of what you're thinking about. How are those thoughts impacting your life – work, family, health, relationships, etc. Are your thoughts leaving you healthier and wiser or anxious and worried? What thoughts do you want to give up, let go of or change – these may be thoughts that are consuming most of your time and energy but leaving you depleted and dragged down.
- Be REAL with God, inviting Him to search your mind. Hold up your thought life before Him and ask Him to show you what is true vs. the lies, false assumptions, even sinful thoughts. Ask Him what He wants *from you* and *for you*. Surrender the thoughts you need to let go of, asking God to turn your thoughts toward Him (Philippians 4:8-9) SO THAT He can change you from the inside out.
- Be REAL with others you trust, sharing the thoughts you're struggling with and those you want to change. Tell them how they can encourage you and hold you accountable to a healthy thought life.

Day 2: If our thoughts are constantly negative, destructive and unproductive, our spiritual life cannot be pure, honorable and commendable. Positive thinking is a spiritual goal that takes practice, purpose and intention. Do your present thoughts align with your goals for spiritual growth? Are your thoughts leading to a life that reflects what Jesus has done for you? Pray, asking God what needs to shift in your mindset so that what you think matches who you want to be as a follower of Jesus.

Day 3: It may feel like the world is full of ugliness, but we are called to be full of the Spirit of God. Pastor Matt challenged us to make a list of the good things in our life SO THAT when life gets tough, we remember the times we've been encouraged, invested in, prayed over and inspired. Make a list of your blessings and don't forget the people who brought them. When negativity comes calling, allow gratitude to change your attitude!

Day 4: Read Matthew 12:34, Ephesians 4:29, Proverbs 12:18 and Proverbs 18:21. What do these verses tell you about the ability of your thoughts to affect your words? What if you used these verses as the “gold standard” when you choose the words you speak? What would you say less? What would you say more? Be the gatekeeper of your words this week - check yourself, control yourself and change yourself!

Day 5: Who is someone you respect for the way they walk with Christ? What about them do you most admire? To honor them, choose one characteristic and one practical way you can show someone what you've learned this week – maybe through an act of kindness, sharing an encouraging word or taking a step toward discipling them. If you don't have a spiritual role model, be the person you wish you had for someone else!