

INTERACTIVE WORKBOOK

*Loving
God
with All Your
Mind*

Elizabeth George



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SESSION I

Thinking on the Truth

Finally, brethren,
whatever things are true,
whatever things are noble,
whatever things are just,
whatever things are pure,
whatever things are lovely,
whatever things are of good report,
if there is any virtue and
if there is anything praiseworthy—
meditate on these things.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Session 1

Day 1—How Your Thoughts Affect You



Have you ever noticed how much your thoughts can affect the way you feel? You've probably had the experience of greeting a dear friend at church, only to get a curt response. Puzzled, you may have thought, *She must be angry with me*. Or, *What did I do to offend her?* And as you pondered your friend's reply, your mind may have imagined all sorts of negative possibilities. Though you didn't know why your friend reacted as she did, you began to assume something was wrong...with *you*.

When these kinds of negative thoughts take hold in your mind, they can easily lead you to feel discouraged, defeated, or angry. But what if your friend isn't upset with you at all? What if she was simply in a rush? Or her children had given her a hard time as she prepared them for church? Or she'd had a particularly difficult week at work?

That's just one example of how mere speculation in the mind can cause very real negative feelings. We imagine that we're the problem, when that's not the case at all! And we let our imaginations pull us down.

I confess I have been guilty of this. Whenever I dwelled on what I perceived as my failures and shortcomings, I would succumb to depression.

It was during one of my heavy moods that the apostle Paul's words in Philippians 4:8 caught my attention as never before: "Whatsoever things are true...think on these things."

Suddenly I realized my negative feelings were based on thoughts that weren't true or real. I had let my imagination second-guess God and the people around me.

I was encouraged—and excited!—about my discovery. I began to evaluate my daily thoughts in light of Philippians 4:8. And as the weeks went by, I realized just how many of my thoughts were based on imagined outcomes instead of truth. I learned Philippians 4:8 was God's solution for my struggles with worry and fear.

Truly, this is a life-changing verse. Together we're going to learn how to apply it. We'll find out how we can replace our anxieties with peace of mind, our fears with confidence, and our despair with hope.

Interacting with God's Word

“Whatsoever things are true...think on these things” is a command. It's not a suggestion or tip. And where can we find truth? In God's Word. Scripture provides for us the “curbs” that help keep our thoughts on the right path.

1. According to the following verses, in what ways does God's Word help us?

Psalm 119:11—

Psalm 119:105—

Psalm 119:165—

2 Timothy 3:16-17—

1 Peter 2:2—

2. How are you doing in terms of letting God's Word shape your thoughts? What are some ways you can improve in this area?

Stepping Toward New Growth

Paul said we are to think on whatever is true. What are some examples of untrue thoughts you've had?

What are the dangers of thinking untrue thoughts?

What are the benefits of focusing our thoughts on the things that are true and real?

When a thought first arises in your mind, what should you do?

Loving God with All Your Mind

Read Psalm 77:1-15, then answer the following questions:

How would you characterize the psalmist's thoughts and feelings (verses 1-4)?

What kinds of questions did the psalmist ask during his struggle (verses 5-10)?

What did the psalmist realize he needed to do (verses 11-12)?

How would you describe the “change in perspective” the psalmist expressed in verses 13-15?

At the beginning of Psalm 77, the psalmist was focused on his troubles. By the end, he had turned his attention to God. The psalmist went from gazing inward to looking upward. From doubting God to trusting Him. From feeling troubled to expressing praise.

So the next time negative thoughts arise in your mind and you get down on yourself, or you question God’s love and care for you, check your focus. Are you looking down at your problem or up to God? Are you dwelling on things that aren’t true or real? Are you letting the truths of Scripture act as curbs that restrain your thoughts?