

*week*  
**ONE**



# WHAT'S IN YOUR THOUGHT CLOSET?

Let the words of my mouth,  
and the meditation of my heart,  
be acceptable in thy sight,  
O LORD, my strength,  
and my redeemer.

**PSALM 19: 14, KJV**



Have you ever considered that what you say to yourself is important? Hi, this is Jennifer Rothschild, and I'm so glad you're joining me for this study. Often the words we speak to ourselves while lying in bed or looking into the mirror are not even close to the words God wants us to speak to our souls.

We tell ourselves lies like "You're so stupid" or "You're never going to change." That just won't do! So, let's learn how to speak truth to our souls. Here's a hint about what we will do over the next few weeks: we'll recognize what we say to ourselves, begin to refuse the lies we speak to ourselves, and replace that old destructive self-talk with powerful, life-changing soul talk that comes straight from the pages of Scripture.

It's what I call a thought closet makeover! Hmmm ... don't know what a thought closet is? You will after starting this study! So, let's go!

My friend, I know God led you here. I've prayed for you and can't wait to hear how God teaches and guides you into truth—I know He will. I'd love for you to introduce yourself to me at my blog [www.selftalksoultalk.com](http://www.selftalksoultalk.com).

## Day 1

# NOT SO WELL WITH MY SOUL

"It is well with my soul." If you've done my *Walking by Faith* Bible study, you know that's my theme ... it doesn't have to be well with your circumstances to be well with your soul. Since God planted that truth in my heart many years ago, it continues to blossom and grow. I speak on the theme "It is well with my soul" often, either in a small group in my church or in front of thousands. I really mean it—it *is* well with my soul.

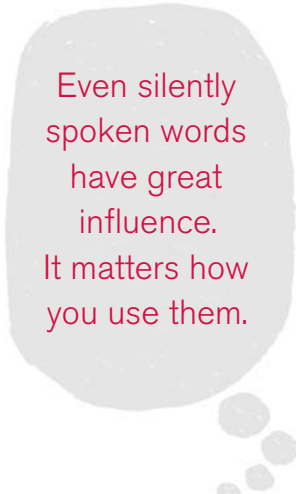
But here's the deal. Every time I sing that beloved song, the chorus demands I boldly proclaim "it is well" no less than three times—whether I feel that way or not!

I couldn't count how many times I've sung those words after speaking, only to sit back down and feel a complete lack of wellness with my soul. You should hear some of the unkind words I've said to myself. *You should have done a better job.*

*Listen to that speaker. She's so much smarter than you.*

Oh, my friend, I could go on and on. My steady flow of disapproving thoughts and self-talk once formed a constant stream running through my mind. I badgered, devalued, and said cutting words to myself. Does this sound familiar to you?

Harsh words can feel like a raging river, tossing us until we feel we're drowning in our own self-condemnation. But sometimes our destructive self-talk is more like a steady drip-dripping—an unrelenting trickle of poison, creating a wash of pessimism. The words you speak to your own soul really can make it “well” or “not so well” with your soul. Why? Because words have great influence ... even the ones you silently speak to yourself. That's why it matters how you use them.



Even silently  
spoken words  
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**What do Genesis 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24 reveal about how God uses words?**

God used His words to create. He spoke things into being. Our words have influence, but only God's words have power. Our words don't create or destroy, but they do promote life as they build up or death as they tear down our emotions and disturb our spiritual growth.

I gave you a glimpse of the influence of my own words. How about you? Think about what your words are doing. Just think; don't write them down.

**Proverbs 18:21 describes two distinct outcomes of our words. What are they?**

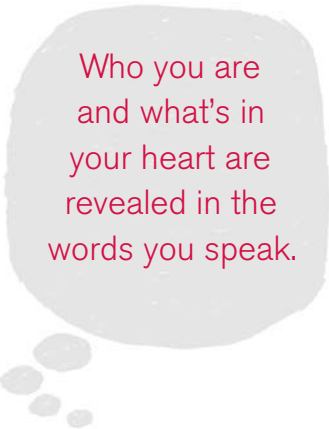
**What are some words that breathe life into you?**

**What words throw a shroud of death over you?**

**Use forms of these words to complete these statements:**

**My words can bring (life words) \_\_\_\_\_**

**My words can lead to (death words) \_\_\_\_\_**



Who you are  
and what's in  
your heart are  
revealed in the  
words you speak.

Don't assume only the words you speak aloud either bring life or invite death. The silent words you speak to your own soul are just as important.

Words convey thoughts. Words frame thoughts; thoughts consist of words. We can't even think without words, and you can't talk to yourself without using words! That's why we're first going to pay attention to how we use words.

Matthew 12:34 says, "The mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart" (HCSB). According to this verse, who you are and what's in your heart are revealed in the words you speak. Think again about the words you use.

Matthew 12 records words between Jesus and the Pharisees. The Pharisees spewed ugly words because their hearts were ugly; our Master voiced beautiful words because His heart was beautiful. Jesus used the Pharisee's confrontation to contrast the influence of words and their origin.

"A good man produces good things from his storeroom of good, and an evil man produces evil things from his storeroom of evil" (v. 35). The Greek word for *storeroom* is *thesauros*. The term *thesaurus*, used to describe a storeroom (collection) of words, is derived from this word. *Thesauros* also refers to the magi's chests of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matt. 2:11).

A *thesauros*, like a storeroom or the magi's chests, is a container. Your heart and mind are also containers. They are full of words, many of which you've said to yourself over the years. When people used words in Scripture, it reflected what was in their *thesauros*.

We use all sorts of words to express who we are. These words in our treasure chest consist of roles, nationalities, positions, personality traits, opinions, emotional conditions, physical traits, and even spiritual conditions.

**Compile a thesaurus for the various biblical characters in these passages. Notice that most of the identifying contents begin with "I am."**

**Genesis 24:24—I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**Genesis 24:34—I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**Genesis 27:2—I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**Genesis 29:33—I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exodus 4:10—I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**Song of Songs 1:5—I am** \_\_\_\_\_

We also use *I am* to identify ourselves. But consider the “why” behind the “who.” Let’s park here with Moses for a minute.

**Why do you think Moses chose that “I am” (Ex. 4:10)?**

Moses identified himself by his stutter, his struggle. Ponder that for a moment.

**What else do you know about Moses that could have identified him?**

We often choose our “I am” based on what we do and our struggles.

**Now, peek into the psalmist’s *thesauros* and fill in the “I am’s” to see if he did the same.**

**Psalm 86:2—I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**Psalm 139:14—I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**Did the psalmist’s *thesauros* reflect what he might have felt was true or what actually was true?**

So what’s in your *thesauros*? If you could think of your heart and mind as a book containing lots of words—list below some of the words that would fill the pages. Remember, most begin with the words *I am*. For example, open my *thesauros*, and here are the words that fly off the page: *I am ... wife, blind, sincere, loyal, insecure.* (Yes, *I am!* I’ll tell you more later!)

**In the blanks below, name some nouns that describe you—wife, daughter, and so forth:**

***I am ...*** \_\_\_\_\_

**Now list adjectives that characterize you—fun, smart, impatient, and so forth:**

***I am ...*** \_\_\_\_\_

You just showed yourself what is in your *thesauros*. Aside from objective words like *mother* and *friend*, look at what you wrote.

**Circle the categories below that best represent the types of words you use to identify yourself.**

<b>positive</b>	<b>truthful</b>	<b>condemning</b>	<b>impatient</b>
<b>prideful</b>	<b>destructive</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>harsh</b>
<b>scolding</b>	<b>realistic</b>	<b>kind</b>	<b>cheerful</b>

If your heart has been made new through Christ's gift of salvation, your *thesauros* should be teeming with treasure. Review your list. Are you overflowing with words of truth, kindness, and hope? Or does your *thesauros* need some major editing? Don't be discouraged if you are disappointed with your list.

**What does 1 Corinthians 15:10 say about your identity?**

Before you go on, rest in His grace.

**In the margin write a prayer of gratefulness for God's grace that makes you who you are. Ask Him for the grace to refine your *thesauros* so it looks more like a treasure chest than a junk yard!**

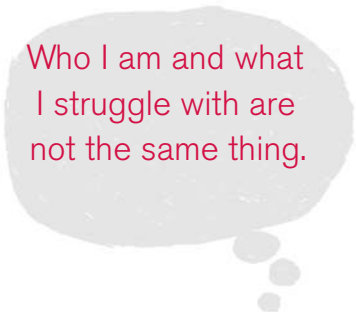
The magi's treasure chest existed to have something to give Jesus. As we begin to speak wise words to our souls, we do so to ultimately have fitting treasure to offer our King. He deserves our finest thoughts, best words, and a *thesauros* full of truth.

The Enemy of your soul would love to stifle you with self-condemnation, lies, and ill-fitting words so your thoughts become a jumbled mess that controls you. He would love for you to keep listing the same old negative, untruthful stuff you've always listed. He would love to keep throwing junk into that potential treasure chest so there's no room for truth.

Girl, no more. We are going to start digging into our *thesauros* and discerning what is true about us. In fact, I like to think of our *thesauros* as a thought closet! We'll talk about that tomorrow. In the meantime, ponder this statement: *Who I am and what I struggle with are not the same thing.*

As you go through the rest of this day, ask God to show you if you have filled your *thesauros* based on who you truly are or if you have confused your identity with your struggles.

Ponder and pray about that, and we'll deal more with it in the coming weeks.



Who I am and what I struggle with are not the same thing.

## Day 2

# YOUR THOUGHT CLOSET

I remember the morning I discovered how influential my words can be. I awoke to a deluge of unexpected and unsolicited quandaries. Before my feet hit the floor, I had scolded myself about my poor parenting job with my teenage son and questioned whether my toddler was getting enough attention.

"I'm not a good mom!" "I'm such a failure." Ugh. Does that ever happen to you? Of course it does!

**Write down the "I am" statements you say when you're beating yourself up.**

**I am** \_\_\_\_\_.

**I am** \_\_\_\_\_.

**I am** \_\_\_\_\_.

If you beat yourself up with words, you know how I felt that morning. *GUILTY. Hopeless. Frustrated.*

**What words best describe how you feel when you beat yourself up?**

I lugged myself into the kitchen, clothed in despair with gloomy clouds hovering overhead. I sank into a chair at the table, sipped hot tea, and tried to unknot my tangled emotions.

Was my brain simply an involuntary muscle, twitching and cramping, causing me to think on things that were not my choosing? Why couldn't I control the gray matter beneath my color-treated hair and between my own pierced ears?

You've probably felt that way too. Pull up a chair and join me in a sip of tea. Let's try to unknot this mess! Think about it. Is it really possible to control our thoughts?

**How in control are you over your thoughts?**

- ☐ **completely**      ☐ **most of the time**  
☐ **infrequently**      ☐ **My thoughts control me.**

**Are you satisfied with your answer? \_\_\_\_\_**

**Why or why not?**

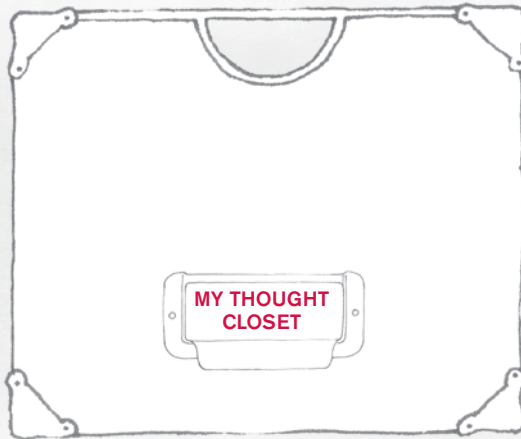
Yesterday we considered the thesaurus of words and thoughts tucked away in our hearts and minds. Our collection becomes our souls' vocabulary, so when our thoughts are out of control, it feels like our storerooms are bursting with a tangled mess of emotions. This thesaurus is much like a secret closet in your mind—a *thought closet*. (It's more fun to call it a closet, and it's easier to pronounce than *thesaurus*!) All those "I am's" we say to ourselves take up residence like old prom dresses, and we clothe ourselves every day with whatever we store there.

That morning I was wearing all the destructive "I am's" and untruths hidden in there, whether I wanted to or not. The shelves were jam-packed with bins full of hidden thoughts, secret insecurities, lies, and reminders of former failures.

The boxes in my thought closet had labels such as: *I'm not good enough. I'm not the wife I should be. I should have done a better job.* One unsightly shelf was stacked with bins brimming with destructive deliberations, such as: *It's all about me. I can't do it; it's impossible. I'll always be this way.*



**Describe your thought closet bins. Write the phrases you most often speak to your soul in the box at right.**



We'll examine three closets: yours, humans' in general, and God's. You've already designed yours. Now let's check out a human thought closet when God hasn't been invited in.

**On the bins below, describe what each verse says about the potential of human thought.**

### **HUMAN THOUGHT CLOSET**

<b>1.</b> <b>Psalm 10:4</b>	<b>2.</b> <b>Psalm 56:5</b>	
<b>3.</b> <b>Isaiah 59:7</b>	<b>4.</b> <b>Isaiah 65:2</b>	<b>5.</b> <b>Romans 1:21</b>

These bins reveal how damaging human thought can be without God's control.

**Place an X next to the box you relate to most and then use its Scripture to answer the following questions.**

**Psalm 40:5**

"Many, O LORD my God,  
are the wonders which  
You have done, And Your  
thoughts toward us; There  
is none to compare with  
You. If I would declare and  
speak of them, They would  
be too numerous to count."

**What does this verse say about the tendency of human thoughts?**

**Describe a time when this kind of thinking showed up in your life and how it felt.**

**Psalm 92:5, NKJV**

"O LORD, how great are  
Your works! Your thoughts  
are very deep."

**Have you ever pulled from the human thought closet?  
How did your thoughts affect others?**

**Psalm 139:17, NKJV**

"How precious also are Your  
thoughts to me, O God!  
How great is the sum of  
them!"

We're capable of having a very dark thought closet without the light of Christ illuminating our minds. Now contrast the potential of human thoughts with the reality of God's thoughts.

**Isaiah 55:9**

"As the heavens are higher  
than the earth, So are My  
ways higher than your ways  
And My thoughts than your  
thoughts."

**GOD'S THOUGHT CLOSET**

**Fill in the boxes describing God's thoughts.**

<p><b>1.</b></p> <p><b>God's thoughts toward us:</b></p> <p><b>Psalm 40:5</b></p>		<p><b>2.</b></p> <p><b>God's thoughts are:</b></p> <p><b>Psalm 92:5, NKJV</b></p>
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>God's thoughts are</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>to</b></p> <p>_____:</p> <p><b>Psalm 139:17, NKJV</b></p>	<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>God's thoughts are</b></p> <p>_____:</p> <p><b>Isaiah 55:9</b></p>	<p><b>5.</b></p> <p><b>God's thoughts are</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p>_____:</p> <p><b>Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV</b></p>

God's thoughts are not like our thoughts. Man's thought closet can be crammed with dark words; God's can only be full of light because He is Light.

**Since you clothe your life with the contents of your thought closet, what would your life look like if you were clothed with the contents of God's thoughts?**

**Look back at how you filled in "My Thought Closet."  
Do the contents look like they draw most from...**

☐ human thought   ☐ God's thoughts?

**In what ways does your thought closet need to look more like God's?**

My friend, don't be discouraged if your thought closet needs updating. Mine did, and it still requires daily maintenance! God is familiar with your thought closet. He knows what's there. He can transform your thoughts to be more like His.

**Place your name in the blanks below and pray this out loud. Then speak this truth to your soul so it will be placed in your thought closet to begin the makeover.**


**O LORD, you have searched \_\_\_\_\_  
and you know \_\_\_\_\_.  
You know when \_\_\_\_\_ sits and when \_\_\_\_\_ rises;  
you perceive \_\_\_\_\_'s thoughts from afar.  
You discern \_\_\_\_\_'s going out and \_\_\_\_\_'s lying  
down; you are familiar with all \_\_\_\_\_'s ways.  
Before a word is on \_\_\_\_\_'s tongue  
you know it completely, O LORD (Ps. 139:1-4, NIV).**

God knows our thoughts and words, every one of them. He knows even before we do. And He can help your dilapidated thought closet experience a divine makeover!

So how does that happen? How do we fill our thought closets with words and thoughts worth wearing? Answer the following two questions to get started.

**How can you establish godly thinking (Prov. 16:3)?**

**What does Hebrews 4:12 suggest as the true source of discerning your thoughts?**



Commit  
and rely.

It's possible to gain control over your thoughts. God knows your needs, and God's Spirit grants you control. The make-over starts with your awareness and commitment. It's time to update your closet's wardrobe, so commit your way to God and rely on His powerful Word. Circle the words *commit* and *rely*.

That's all I want you to do today. Don't assume it's a small task just because it's only two things! As you talk to yourself today, tell yourself to commit your way to God—one word, one thought at a time—and tell your soul to rely on God's Word more than your words. If one of your Bible study buddies calls and asks, "What's up?" you say, "I'm committing my way to God and relying on His Words, not mine!"

**Day 3**

## THE SOUNDTRACK IN YOUR THOUGHT CLOSET

The older I get, the more I hear the words of my sweet, Southern grandmother echo through my thought closet. "Mama" taught me a lot through her words and her life. I giggle now at one of her stern admonishments. With her Southern drawl, she would say, "Honey, don't ever watch so-poppers."

As a young girl, I vowed I would not—even though I had no earthly idea what they were! I did notice each time my petite Mama preached her anti-so-popper doctrine, she was sipping a Coca-Cola® and watching *Days of Our Lives*! Not until I was a young woman did I realize what she was warning against. As thick as sweet Southern molasses, her Georgia accent had swallowed up the words *soap operas*.

That's great advice from my grandmother, but even greater wisdom comes from her often-quoted favorite psalm.

*Let the words of my mouth,  
and the meditation of my heart,  
be acceptable in thy sight,  
O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer (Ps. 19:14, KJV).*

I love that prayer and the psalmist's two basic assumptions from which he prayed: humans use words and humans meditate.

We've talked about the words we use, and yesterday you thought and prayed about committing your way to God and truly relying on His Word. To put our commitment into practice, we begin today discerning the "meditations of our hearts."

**Do you meditate? Mark the response that best fits you:**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> <b>yes</b>                    | <input type="radio"/> <b>no</b>                  | <input type="radio"/> <b>I don't know how.</b> |
| <input type="radio"/> <b>I think so.</b>            | <input type="radio"/> <b>daily</b>               | <input type="radio"/> <b>seldom</b>            |
| <input type="radio"/> <b>never have; never will</b> | <input type="radio"/> <b>Isn't that New Age?</b> |  |

**Grab a dictionary or thesaurus and write some words that show up next to "meditation" or "meditate."**

We all meditate, but not all of us realize it! Meditation is like our thought closets' soundtrack. We don't just hear it, we sing along.

Our meditation is made up of words, words compose thoughts, and thoughts gravitate to themes that string together, making a constant stream. It's a subconscious way of keeping our thought closets well-stocked, and it's important to tune in to the lyrics, melody, and style of our meditations.

The Hebrew word *siyach* appears several times translated as "meditate." It means "to ponder, to converse with oneself." Find the word *meditate* in the following verses.

**What did the psalmist talk to himself about (Ps. 119)?**

**Verse 27: I will (meditate) talk to myself about**

**Verse 48: I will talk to myself about**

**Verse 78: I will talk to myself about**

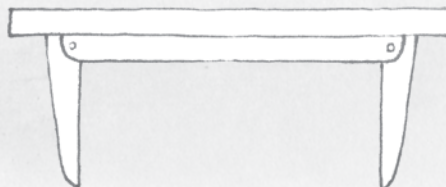
**Verse 148: I will talk to myself about**

Most of us really want to meditate, or talk to ourselves, about God's wonders and Word, but we fight the urge to meditate on

Our meditations  
reflect whatever  
we focus our  
minds on.

other things. Here are some of my frequent meditations: “I hope I can get my needs met.” “I wonder what will happen?” “I don’t know if I can get everything done!” “I am overwhelmed.” and “I wish I hadn’t said that stupid thing.” Our meditations reflect whatever we focus our minds on.

**Write on the shelf of your thought closet what you most meditate on.**



Most of our meditations are swimming around in our thought closet. If you observe them, you can determine they fall into some categories—like bins in our thought closets.

**Circle the labeled bins at left that best characterize your most frequent meditations.**



You’ve got bins. I’ve got bins. All God’s children got bins! We meditate on many things, and that reveals where our thoughts are focused. That’s why you circled the labeled bins.

If we are to commit our way to God so we can begin godly thinking, we must know exactly what fills our thought closets. To make our thought closets look like God’s, we engage in godly meditation. First, we must focus our minds.

**Colossians 3:2 tells us where to fix our minds. Read the verse and circle the words that best describe where our minds are to be focused:**

**Positive things—Optimism**

**Earthly events below**

**Heavenly truths above**

Yesterday, we saw that God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9).

**How did God describe His thoughts (v. 9)?**

Did you notice that Paul told us to focus our minds on things *above* and God described His thoughts as *above*?

We tend to be conversant about things beneath, while God dwells and meditates on things above. To begin to have a thought closet that looks like God's, we must have a sound-track playing within that is written in the highest key possible! Meditation is based on things above, not on things below.

As you commit your way to God and rely on His Word, you begin to supply the content of your meditation with that which the Israelite psalmist did in Psalm 119—God's wonders and God's Word. This will focus your mind on things above.

**Stop and ask God to help you focus.**

**Jot down in the two columns below some things  
you can begin to focus on:**

**GOD'S WONDERS**

**GOD'S WORD**

In Luke 2:19, Mary showed us how to focus our minds and meditate on God's wonders and His Word. After receiving the life-changing (and world-changing!) truth she would bear the Son of God, Mary treasured and pondered all these things in her heart. The original Greek denotes that she conferred with herself and brought all her experiences and God's wonders together in her mind. Wow. That's what godly meditation looks like. Can you imagine the music in her thought closet?

Mary not only thought about the events she'd just experienced, she also made sure she remembered them. Meditation involves not only "storing" our thoughts (*kept and treasured*) like Mary did, but also "studying" them (*pondered*).

Mary stored away and studied God's wonders and Word. How about you?

**Describe one thing you stored away in your thought closet that reminds you of God's wonders or His Word:**

Now before you go on, take a moment to study what you wrote. Meditate on what God did. Ponder His goodness.

**As you pondered God's goodness, were you able to meditate on anything else at the same time (like your plans, your worries, your insecurities)?**

☐ **yes**   ☐ **no**

When we meditate on God's wonders and Word, we have little room in our thought closet for anything else! We enjoy a thought closet stocked with truth. My friend, what you tuck into your thought closet will become the wardrobe of your life.

**Read Psalm 119:99. What is one of the results of meditating on God's Word?**

Meditating on God's wonders and His Word elevates your thoughts. It sets your mind on things above. You are not bound to earthly wisdom, but have the music of majesty and the lyric of our Lord filling your thought closet! When you find your mind wandering toward earthly things that distract you from God's wonders and Word, fix your mind on things above!

This doesn't mean helping your kids with homework, solving a daily-life dilemma, or taking a sales call is ungodly. It just means you start paying attention to where your thoughts wander during an idle moment. We will deal with this more tomorrow. Oh, your thought closet is gonna be looking good!



## Day 4

# SOMETHING ELSE TO THINK ABOUT

Yesterday when you tuned in to your thoughts, what did you discover? Is your thought closet full of God's Word and wonders? Did you meditate in a way that surprised you?

**What did your mind's "soundtrack" consist of yesterday (or just now)?**

Are you surprised at your self-talk or by the substance of what you say to yourself? I was surprised when I first tuned in to my thoughts because I used to think I didn't meditate until I realized I did it unconsciously all the time—I worried. The soundtrack in my thought closet wasn't a running "Top 20" of God's wonders and Word; it was my worries. You know, worries like: *What if I can't get a ride to my appointment? What if I fail? What if something happens to my kids?*

**What do worrying and meditating have in common?**

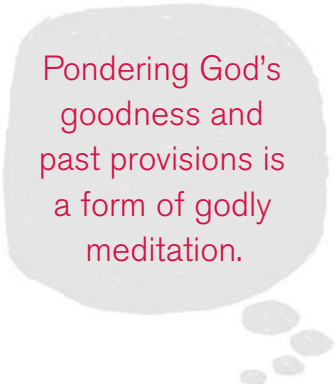
**In your own words, describe worry:**

Worry is fixating or meditating on *what if* rather than *what is*. Our English word *worry* comes from the Old English *wyrgan* and the Old High German *würgen*. Both mean "to strangle." When we worry, we choke out the life-giving truth that should be filling our thought closets.

The psalmist Asaph was a celebrated musician in David's time and a leader of the temple music (1 Chron. 16:5,7). He was definitely a singer and most likely a writer of several psalms that reveal what was in his thought closet.

**On what did Asaph meditate (Ps. 77:11-12)?**

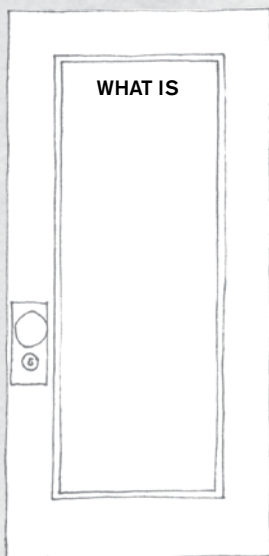
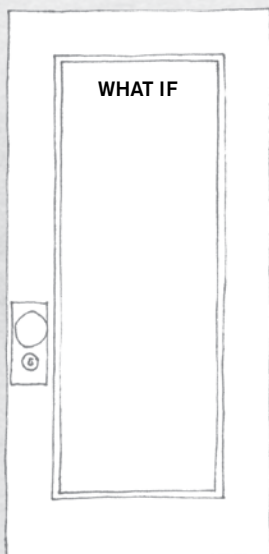
Pondering the goodness of God and His past provisions, like Asaph did, is a form of godly meditation. Focusing your mind



Pondering God's goodness and past provisions is a form of godly meditation.

Jesus reveals  
*what is* and  
therefore tells  
us not to worry.

## YOUR THOUGHT CLOSET



on God's current provision, promises, and presence, as Mary did, is also a way to meditate. These focus our minds on truth.

Ruminating on the "what if's" is an unhealthy way of meditating that invites fear. When we do this, there's no room left in our thought closets for truth. Most worry thoughts begin with the words *what if*. Meditation on truth begins with *what is*. Jesus reveals *what is* and therefore tells us not to worry.

**According to Jesus' words, what are the reasons we shouldn't worry (Matt. 6:25-32)?**

What you wrote are just some of the *what is* that you should be meditating on.

**On the thought closet doors at left, write your "what if" temptations to worry. Then write the corresponding "what is"—the truth from God's Word—that can fill your meditation instead.**

Worry-filled meditation never leads to liberty. It turns your thought closet into a prison filled with life-choking weeds. That's why God warns against dwelling on anxious thoughts.

**Turn to Philippians 4:8 to help focus your meditation. Write the categories within which we should meditate:**

**If it is \_\_\_\_\_, I will meditate on it.**

**If it is \_\_\_\_\_, I will think about it today.**

**If it is \_\_\_\_\_, I will dwell on it today.**

**If it is \_\_\_\_\_, I will fix my thoughts on it.**

**If it is \_\_\_\_\_, I will give it shelf space in my thought closet.**

**If it is \_\_\_\_\_, I will meditate on it today.**

**If it is \_\_\_\_\_, I will let it be the soundtrack in my thought closet.**

**If it is \_\_\_\_\_, I will deliberate on it today.**

**Compare your thought closet containing the what if's with the eight categories of meditation in Philippians 4:8. How do your anxious thoughts line up with them?**

☐ They fit.   ☐ They don't fit.

**Do the "what if's" belong in your thought closet?**

☐ yes   ☐ no   **Why or why not?**

**Look at the "what is" section of your closet. How do those truths line up with Philippians 4:8?**

☐ They fit.   ☐ They don't fit.

**Do they belong in your thought closet?   ☐ yes   ☐ no**  
**Why or why not?**

**God made a way to manage the meditation of your heart. From Psalm 19:14 see if you can discern:**

**1. The standard we should meet with our words and meditation—**

**2. The source from whom our words and meditation should depend—**

The standard for our words and meditation is not merely what is acceptable to us; rather, it is what is acceptable to God. In our own sight, our self-talk and meditation may appear fine, but imagine God listening to you talk to yourself.

Consider God your passenger as you drive and meditate on anxious thoughts stored in your thought closet. See Him as you look in the mirror and think on old destructive thoughts. Simply put, He stands in the center of your thought closet. Imagine everything you say to yourself is spoken in His sight.

**Would you still say the same things to yourself and carry on the same meditation?**

### **What do Psalm 55:17 and 94:9 assure us God does?**



God cares  
about what  
you say  
to yourself  
because He  
cares about you.

My friend, God cares about your meditations. He cares about what you say to yourself because He cares about you. He is your Father, the One who made you. To focus on “what if” and never meditate on “what is” imprisons you. To dwell on untruths is to hold His truth in low regard. May it never be!

**Ask God to show you if the contents and soundtracks of your thought closet are acceptable to Him. What do you believe God is showing you about this?**

Scripture shows what God does for us when our meditation is worry-filled.

### **What does God do for us in our worries (Ps. 94:19)?**

God’s comfort can delight us when we are tempted to worry. The Hebrew for delight is *sha’a* and means “to look upon fondly or please oneself by looking upon something.” What your soul focuses on, what you set your mind on, is what will form the bulk of your meditation. When anxious thoughts start to crowd you, shift your gaze. Expect God’s consolation (comfort, relief, support, solace) to give your soul something better to focus on.

**My sister, God will console and delight you when you are worried, but what does Philippians 4:6 also tell you you can do when the “what if’s” begin to crowd you?**

If I were sitting at your kitchen table with you right now, I would take your hand and ask, “What are you worrying about/meditating on today?” Let’s tune up the soundtracks in our thought closets. Let’s put them in a higher key.

**Pause and form those anxious thoughts into a prayer:**

**Dear Father,**

**Today, these “what if’s” are filling my thought closet:**

**I will now focus my meditation on You and Your provision:**

**Because You are all I wrote and so much more, I will now focus on “what is.” Please make Your comfort my soul’s delight. Assure me of Your promises and presence. Be big in my thought closet today. Amen.**

As you close the book today, open your mind to these deliberations: Is your meditation choking you? What does God hear in your thought closet? Is it acceptable to Him? How can God’s comforts delight your soul right now?

If you start to play the soundtrack of worry today in your thought closet, push the pause button and notice that the song isn’t played in the key of truth. So turn your worry into a prayer. That will focus your mind on things above and invite God’s comfort to delight your soul.

## **Day 5**

# **WHAT DOES TRUTH SOUND LIKE?**

My Bible is the size of a deck of cards, and it talks! By pressing a series of buttons, I can navigate Scripture and have “Precise Pete,” my favorite digital voice, read the passage. Because it’s so portable, I can truly say “Thy Word have I hid in my ... purse!” Having my Bible at my fingertips makes meditation on truth easier and helps me rely on Scripture to influence my soul talk. I can carry a lot more of God’s Word in my purse than I can carry in my heart, because I don’t have the whole Bible memorized! And let’s face it, few of us (if any) do!

If we don't have every word from all 66 books stored in our thought closets, how will we know the truths to tell ourselves, and how will we know on what to meditate? The best way, of course, is to commit as much of God's Word to memory as possible. But we don't speak to ourselves with Scripture quotes all day long. We don't supply our meditations with "thus saith the Lord" and nothing else. Let's be practical. Try to memorize Scripture. You can start with the Soul Talk Soundbites each week. But you can also become acquainted with the "sound" of truth ... let's find out today what truth sounds like so you will be better equipped to recognize it.

Jesus showed us what truth sounds like as He stood in the synagogue on the Sabbath to teach.

**How did the crowd respond to Jesus' message and describe His words (Luke 4:22)? Circle the words below that best describe ...**

**their response: complimentary, amazed, angry, curious, apathetic, astonished**

**His words: boring, interesting, gracious, fitting, inaccurate, kind**

**What was their response to Jesus in a Capernaum synagogue (v. 32)?**

My friend, our Master's words were gracious and authoritative. People were astonished when they heard His Words.

**Think of the words you speak to your soul.  
Are they typically gracious?**

☐ **yes**   ☐ **no**   ☐ **sometimes**   ☐ **rarely**

**Do they carry the authority of truth?**

☐ **yes**   ☐ **no**   ☐ **sometimes**   ☐ **rarely**

Truth is always authoritative and gracious. Authoritative words should never be harsh, and gracious words should never be without power.

**What two qualities characterized Jesus (John 1:14,17)?**

**How have you experienced Jesus' gracious words in your life?**

**Recount a time when Jesus' truth confronted you:**

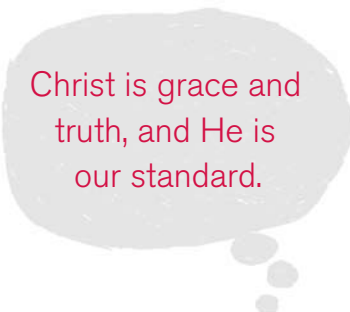
Christ is grace and truth, and He is our standard. That means your soul talk is to be permeated with grace and truth. If it's not gracious, stop talking to yourself that way. Throw those thoughts out of your thought closet. If it's not truth, stop meditating on it.

The standard of grace and truth is to be posted on the door of our thought closets: "Only grace and truth allowed in!" That means if you have the tendency toward name-calling, you might need a sign on the door that reads: "Do Not Enter!"

"Idiot" is the name I most often called myself when I blew it. I'll be honest. If I am really tired, stressed, or just in the Enemy's firing range, "idiot" is still the word that bangs on the door of my thought closet. Lots of us have harsh names we call ourselves. Do you? Loser. Stupid. Fat. Oh, my friend, it hurts to type those words. "Idiot" is not gracious; it is harsh. "Idiot" is also destructive, and it's not true! It is not based on the authority of Scripture. I can't afford to hang that kind of untruth in my closet, and neither can you. It's too easy to retrieve and too hard to relinquish.

When we call ourselves names, it's like getting a big, thick, black marker and writing that name on your least favorite sweater (imagine it's two sizes too small and wool!), then putting that sweater on and wearing it on the hottest day in July! And we wonder why we have bad days! Remember, you will wardrobe your life with what is in your thought closet.

What do you call yourself and how do you feel when you clothe yourself with ill-fitting words that are neither true nor gracious? Remember John 8:32 says the truth will free us. When you wardrobe yourself with one of the names hanging in your thought closet, you feel imprisoned because it isn't true or gracious! Believe me, I've been bound by badly chosen words, and I know how stifling they can be.



Christ is grace and  
truth, and He is  
our standard.

Sister, here's a hard truth. To call yourself an untruthful, harsh name is a sin. It's an insult to God, demeans His workmanship, and devalues His creation. On day 1 I asked you to consider the statement: "Who you are and what you struggle with are not the same thing." When you call yourself a name, it reflects what you struggle with; it is an emotional reaction. It is not a statement of who you are. Seeing the truth of what name-calling really is helps me to control my self-talk when I get frustrated with myself. I don't want to insult or hurt God.

**Confess your sin of name-calling to God.**

**Dear Father,**

**Please forgive me for calling myself \_\_\_\_\_**

**In Your strength, I repent from telling lies to and about myself. Please give me grace to speak truth to my soul about who I am in You. I know the Enemy will tempt me in this area. Make me alert and strong in Your power. Thank You for Your forgiveness and freedom. Amen.**

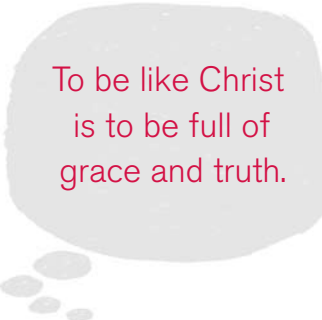
Hey! You finished a whole week of this study. Way to go! I know it's a daunting task to peek into your thought closet and recognize it needs some updating. But take it a word at a time, a thought at a time, a prayer at a time. Next week we will begin to relabel things. Until then, when you talk to yourself, ask: Are my words gracious and truthful?

Ponder this during the day ... to be like Christ is to be full of grace and truth. If you are a name-caller, meditate on these Scriptures:

"Do not let kindness and truth leave you;  
Bind them around your neck,  
Write them on the tablet of your heart" (Prov. 3:3).

"For my mouth will utter truth;  
And wickedness is an abomination to my lips" (Prov. 8:7).

"A truthful witness gives honest testimony,  
but a false witness tells lies" (Prov. 12:17, NIV).



To be like Christ  
is to be full of  
grace and truth.





*session one*

# LISTENING GUIDE

Bricks are used to make a name for ourselves.

Bricks are man-made, but stones are God-made.

When you and I choose to label ourselves,  
we limit ourselves.

We were never designed to be brick-makers; we were designed  
to be living stones.

God desires that our lives be made up of spiritual  
sacrifice that is acceptable to Him.

God labels us as "living stones" with the words "I AM."

God says that we are His workmanship,  
His valued daughters.

## CONVERSATION GUIDE

1. What "I am" thought has been in your Thought Closet the longest? Is it true?
2. Does it belong? Should you keep it?
3. What do most women make their bricks with? What do you use? Status, relationships, talents ...