

Overcoming Toxic Thoughts

(This lesson is adapted from Lifechurch.tv's "Toxic" Series.)

A working definition of "toxic" is "anything containing poisonous material capable of causing sickness or even death." In today's world, many people have toxic thoughts on a daily basis – thoughts that are slowly destroying their lives and relationships. The Bible teaches this:

Proverbs 4:23 (CEV) *Carefully guard your thoughts, because they are the source of true life.*

If you struggle with toxic thoughts in your life, try these three simple steps:

Step #1: Identify toxic thoughts.

You can't win over toxic thoughts unless you recognize their presence in your mind. Take some time to identify them. There are three simple categories of toxic thoughts that need to be identified for most people:

- Negative thoughts
- Fearful thoughts
- Destructive thoughts

Step #2: Reject toxic thoughts.

Once you've identified thoughts that are bringing death and destruction in your life, reject them. Don't passively ignore them, but actively fight against them. The Bible's language on this topic is violent:

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NIV) *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds (literally "a prisoner locked by deception"). We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Step #3: Replace toxic thoughts with God's truth.

The final step for dealing with toxic thoughts is to replace them with biblical truth. Simply identifying and rejecting the lie isn't good enough, because over time that lie will return to influence you again. True victory comes when you make a habit of learning and living God's truth.

Philippians 4:7-8 *Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*

Romans 12:2 *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.*

Discussion Questions

1. **Set Up:** Watch the video together or invite someone to [set up the conversation](#).
2. Of the three categories above (negative, fearful, destructive), which kind of toxic thoughts plague you the most? What other categories of toxic thoughts do people battle?
3. Read [2 Corinthians 10:4-5](#). How can you practically apply this to the thoughts you listed above? Be specific.
4. Read [Luke 11:24-26](#). Destroying toxic thoughts is only half the battle; replacing them with truth is the other half. How can you keep from being “worse off than before” when you are trying to overcome toxic thoughts?
5. What truths from the Bible can combat your toxic thoughts? Look some up together.
6. **Takeaway:** Write a [personal action step](#) based on this conversation.