

Fresh Start

Emotional—Few things shape us like what we think about our thoughts. Our thoughts might be true or false, healthy or destructive, demonic or Holy Spiritual, which means we need to think carefully about our thoughts! Paul made the same point to his friends in Philippi, urging them to take their thoughts captive and align them with God’s Word. By that same practice, we put our frantic minds at ease and fix our thoughts on Jesus.

As your **thoughts** go, so goes your **life**.

- Philippians 4:6a - *Do not be anxious about anything...*
- Philippians 4:6-7 - *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
- Philippians 4:8-9 - *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

Your **thoughts** flow from where your **eyes** go.

- Hebrews 12:1,2 - *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

IVA —> Fresh Start Emotionally

1. **Identify** your thoughts.
 2. **Validate** your emotions.
 3. **Align** your behavior.
- John 8:31,32 - *Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

Points To Ponder

1. Which step of the “IVA” would you say you struggle with the most? Why? What benefits do you believe you will see in your behavior if you align it with God’s Will and Word?
2. Which of the following is the first thought you might have when unexpected or difficult life events happen (and be real)...a) turn to your friends, b) rely on yourself, c) have a personal pity party, d) post it on social media, e) question God, f) self-medicate, g) turn to God? Why is that the case?
3. What is the first thing you need to do when it comes to your emotional resiliency to get a fresh start? Why? What benefits do you believe you will see in your behavior when you change it? What are the obstacles that have held you back in the past...what with God’s help will you do to overcome them?
4. Homework: Produce a list of go-to passages (5-7...this week’s sermon has some good ideas) so that when life’s events come, commit them to memory, and rely on them the minute something happens so that your thoughts, feelings, and behavior are in line. Share your list with your life group, a close friend, your spouse, or family members.