

# SESSION 4

## NEGATIVE THINKING

### Session #4 Teaching: Overcoming Negative Thoughts

**Do YOU struggle with negative thinking?** We ALL do at times! Chronic negative thinking, depression, anxiety, and similar disorders are on the rise all over the world and keep us from living out our identity in Christ. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 40 million adults in the U.S. are affected, which is nearly 20 percent of the population. Of that number, many are professing Christians.

Fear is a root cause of many of these problems. It's no wonder people are fearful in a world where it appears nothing is reliable. It can be quite disturbing for a person to realize almost everything in life is ultimately out of his control—from the weather to his bank account balance. All the things people rely on for their security will sooner or later fail them. But the Christian who confesses the sovereignty of our Father God who works all things for his good (**Romans 8:28**) has the antidote to negative thinking.

When a Christian's thinking is primarily negative, anxious, or doubtful, faith in God will be depleted. According to **Proverbs 29:25**, fear is a trap but trust in the Lord keeps a man safe. Those who struggle with negative thinking should do the same thing they would do with any other sin—**confess it** (agree with God that negative thinking is wrong because it reveals a lack of trust) and make every effort to replace your thinking with God's Truth and how He sees you as HIS precious child!

**How do we do this?** Prayer is a key part of overcoming negativity. As we pray "with thanksgiving" (**Philippians 4:6**), we focus on the blessings we have received and leave no room for negative thoughts. The Holy Spirit will be faithful to help the repentant believer overcome negative thinking (see **Matthew 7:7-11**). Your LIFE Starter Bible reading is also a great help in overcoming negative thinking. It's helpful to remember that, no matter how dismal the present circumstances, Christians have been promised God's love and victory in Christ (**Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 2:14**).

### ***Discuss or Ponder and Review Scripture:***

The struggle against negative thinking is a battle for the mind. In Philippians 4:8, the apostle Paul tells believers what to think about: ***things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy!*** Christians must think about what they're thinking about and not allow their minds to have free rein.

***•Do you allow negative thinking and speaking to control you? Discuss taking control of who and what you listen to.***

As long as Christians live in a fearful, stressful world, negative thoughts will come. We have the option of either stamping out those thoughts or nurturing them. The good news is, negative thoughts can be replaced with positive ones, and the more that Godly substitution takes place, the more peace and joy we can experience. ***2 Corinthians 10:5*** tells us, "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."

***•Discuss any lies that may have been spoken over you in the past, including lies you tell about yourself. Where did you receive negative input about your identity? What can YOU choose to do to think differently?***

***Pray with your group about arresting your negative thoughts, to make sure what comes out of your mouth will be positive in the future. Also ask for God to reveal to you who else in your life you need to discuss this with. Now commit to the group about having discussions over the next week with those people.***