



## CELL GUIDE

**TOPIC** Developing Biblical Thinking

**SPEAKER**

SP Chua Seng Lee

**THEME** Developing Your Inner Life

**DATE**

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# MESSAGE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

1 Thessalonians 5:23 tells us that in preparation for the second coming of Jesus Christ, we need to be blameless and allow our spirit, soul and body to be sanctified. Our spirit, soul and body constitute our inner life and SP shared that we need to develop our inner life to grow in our love of God.

A big part of sanctifying our souls includes sanctifying our minds. This is very important in today's context, given that the number one health concern in Singapore is mental health. The Government has said that a "whole of society approach" is necessary to tackle the multifaceted nature of mental health by destigmatizing mental health conditions, building resilience and encouraging early help. The Church is undeniably a critical player in such an approach.

## THREE IMPORTANT REVELATIONS FROM PRAYER

### 1) What is Mental Health

Mental health includes our emotional wellbeing, our psychological wellbeing, our social wellbeing. It affects how we think, how we act, how we handle stress, how we relate to others, and how we make choices. The factors that contribute to mental health challenges could be biological or could be due to life experiences, and these challenges cut across all age groups. Over the course of our lives, some of us will experience some mental health challenges and they can affect our thinking, our emotions and our behaviours. The good news is that people with mental health conditions can get better and even recover completely.

Where mental health issues concern the mind, SP shared that developing biblical thinking will help us to build resilience in the face of mental health issues.

### 2) Destigmatising Mental Health

There is a lack of understanding of mental health issues and that is why many of us including Christians, continue to perpetuate the stigma surrounding mental health issues. Some Christians even go as far as saying that people with mental health problems are weak in their faith. However, as mentioned above, this is inaccurate.

In fact, some biblical heroes also show symptoms and signs of mental health challenges. In 1 King 19, we see that Elijah exhibited signs of depression and developed suicidal ideations when he was in the

wilderness, even though just before that in 1 King 18, he had secured a grand victory in demonstrating the power and presence of God to unbelievers. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 18:8, when Paul said, “we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life”, we are also able to get a glimpse of his stressed, burdened and fatigue mental state.

Yet, we also see that God has used these men despite their mental conditions, and that their mental setbacks did not define their faith. Like Paul and Elijah, how can we be resilient in the face of mental health challenges, remain strong in our faith and continue to be used by God?

### 3) Renewing Our Minds

SP shared that this can be done through the renewing of our minds, which will help us to overcome the Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs) that we have.

This references Romans 12:1-2, which states that “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not conform to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Some common ANTS include:

- (1) Over generalisation: Drawing a conclusion based on a single event
- (2) All or nothing: Adopting a black and white way of looking at life with no in-between
- (3) Personalising: Taking responsibility for things that we are not responsible for
- (4) Mind reading: Making assumptions about someone’s thoughts or feelings without evidence
- (5) Should statements: Operating by rigid rules and not allowing for flexibility.

SP then shared three steps we can take to renew our minds: First, to identify what is wrong with us – that is to correctly identify our ANTs as we cannot fight an invisible enemy. Second, to evaluate the ANTs by being cognisant of its harms. We need to be sufficiently irritated by the pain that the ANTs is causing us to be motivated to get rid of it. Third, to replace the ANTs with something reasonable and biblical that is rooted in God’s Word. To do this, we need to meditate on scripture (Psalm 1:2), speak God’s Word to ourselves (Psalm 43:5), and let the Holy Spirit move the Word from head to heart (John 16:13).

## CONCLUSION

It is by holding on to biblical thoughts, that we can renew our minds, and prove the will of God to be good, acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2).

Philippians 4:8 tells us to dwell on whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, and things that excellent and worthy of praise. It is through dwelling (staying) on these that we will experience a process of renewal and transformation, which will allow us to ultimately be able to know and say that we serve a good God.

# QUESTIONS

1. What is your understanding of mental health? How do you currently care for your mental health?

2. What are some current thought patterns you recognise as ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts) in your life? How do these thoughts affect your behaviour or relationships?

3. With regards to the above question, how can you replace that ANTs with biblical thinking and God's Word? What can you start dwelling on this week that aligns with what is true, honourable, pure, and lovely (Phil 4:8)?