



MY FIRST SERMON EVER



PREACHED AT CHURCH

Changing Your Thoughts

HOW TO CHANGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS
IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT GOD WANTS YOU
TO BELIEVE ABOUT YOURSELF



ORIGINALLY PREACHED

August 24, 2022



"I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will
carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

Before You Read the Original Sermon

What follows is the original sermon I wrote on August 24, 2022, and later preached at church in September 2022. I have chosen to leave this sermon as I originally wrote it rather than rewrite it based on what I know and understand today.

At the time, I was still very early in my journey of seriously studying God's Word. Only a little over a year had passed since July 30, 2021, when I prayed and asked God to show me who He really is. I was learning, growing, and beginning to understand what it meant to follow Jesus rather than simply attend church. In this sermon, I shared some of what God had been teaching me about my thoughts, His Word, my identity, and the transformation that was beginning to take place in my life. The original sermon itself explains how that journey began and how studying Scripture started changing the way I understood God and my relationship with Him.

Looking back from 2026, there are things in this sermon that I would explain differently today. My understanding of Scripture, theology, spiritual formation, suffering, identity in Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit has grown considerably since 2022. Some statements reflect what I understood at that particular point in my journey rather than what I would teach today.

I have intentionally chosen not to go back and make the woman who wrote this sermon sound as though she knew then what God would teach her over the next four years. Doing that would remove an important part of the story.

This sermon represents where I actually was.

You will see someone who loved God and wanted to obey Him, but who still had much to learn. You will see Scripture alongside ideas I had received from books and teachers I was listening to at the time. You will see places where my understanding was beginning to form and other places where it still needed to grow. Most importantly, you will see a woman who was discovering God's Word for herself and wanted what God was teaching her to help someone else.

That is why I am preserving this sermon.

It is not included because I believe everything I said in 2022 should be taught exactly as I expressed it then. It is included because it is part of the journey. God was still teaching me, shaping me, correcting me, and drawing me closer to Himself—and He still is today.

My hope is that as you read these original words, you will not simply see where I started. I hope you will also be reminded that none of us begins our walk with Christ already knowing everything we will eventually learn. Spiritual growth takes place as

we continue seeking God, studying His Word, listening to the Holy Spirit, obeying what He teaches us, and allowing Him to transform us.

This is where I was in 2022.

This is **my first sermon**, preserved as part of the story of what God has done and continues to do in my life.

After reading the original sermon, continue to **Paper 3 — *What I Was Beginning to Understand: Identity, God's Word, and Transformation***, where I look back from 2026 at what I understood then, what God has taught me since, and what I now understand more deeply.

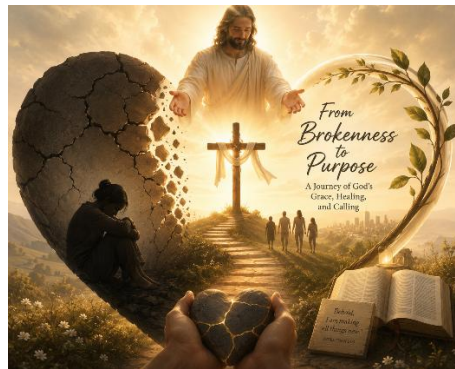
Prayerfully prepared by

Christie Johnson

Christie Johnson

Servant of God

“Pointing people to the hope, healing, and transformation found in Jesus Christ.”



My name is Christie Johnson. Today, I am going to talk about how to change your thoughts from negative to positive in the light of what God wants you to believe about yourself. But before I do that, I would like to share some verses from a song that I love to listen to.

The name of the song is “Make Room” by Casting Crowns. My daughter got their CD back in December of 2021. She lent me the CD one day and I heard this song and fell in love with it. The song talks about making room for God to write His story. Some of the verses are “Is there room in your heart, For God to write His story, You can come as you are, But it may set you apart, When you make room in your heart.” (Casting Crowns, 2017). I am glad that we are able to come to God as we are, that we don’t have to have it already together. I am glad that Jesus came to save us sinner and not the ones who think they are righteous. As it says in scripture, Matthew 9:13, says “...For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinner.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Matthew 9:13).

I am happy that He sets us apart from the world once we make room in our hearts for Him to write His story. I am asking you today if you are willing to make room in your heart for God to write His story. I am asking you to have an open heart to listen to the word I am about to give.

Here is a little about me. Most of my life I was depressed and suicidal. I thought negatively about myself. I never felt loved or wanted. But all that changed when I turned my life over to God. I was saved back on April 9, 2006, but I did not fully understand what that meant. I started attending church back then and I continue to go to church now. But for the 15 years following being saved, I was just attending church not fully understanding what it meant. I would listen to the pastor, but did not really apply what he was teaching.

But on July 30, 2021, I prayed to God to show me who He really is, because I was tired of my life. Well, let’s just say He answered me. Because for the past year, I have truly been living for the Lord and now have a great understanding of who He is. Two days after praying that, I went to church and listen intensively to Pastor Joseph Pedroza who presented the Word that Sunday.

At the end of his sermon, he challenged us to read the New Testament in 30 days. I did not know at that time how much my life would change from doing that challenge. So, I did the challenge in 28 days and have been studying the whole bible since every day. As I studied the Bible, I started to realize what Jesus did for me and how amazing it was. My eyes were opened up. I began to get a closer relationship with God through His son Jesus Christ and listening to the Holy Spirit.

By getting to know God, I have begun to follow His son example of how to walk in this lifetime. Throughout the past year God has had me working on my thoughts. I have read several books that has helped me through changing my thoughts. One book that I have read is called “Winning the War in your Mind” by Craig Groeschel. This book has helped me tremendously. So, today I will be referring to this book, others, and the Bible as I talk about changing your thought from negative to positive on how God wants you to see yourself.

In this book, he talks about “Our lives are always moving in the direction of our strongest thoughts. What we think shapes who we are.” (Groeschel, 2021 pg. 1) Boy is that so true. I am going to get a little personal right now. Most of my life I felt that I was not a worthy person. That I am not loveable. That I was better off dead. Several times I made plans to take my life, but God always intervened. Thank you, God. Those were some of the thoughts about which I would think. In this book, he has you take a look at what are your negative thoughts are about yourself. He called them lies. Here are some of the lies that I believed for the longest time.

- God doesn't love me
- No one loves me
- That I am not worthy of love
- That I am not important enough to be someone that can be value to anyone.
- That I am not a beautiful person.
- That I am always going to be fat and unhealthy
- Never going to be able to change my ways

Enough of negativity. So, with me believing these lies about myself. I was depressed, angry, hopeless person. But thanks to God, I do not believe these things anymore.

Now, let me explain how to change these negative thoughts to positive thoughts that God wants you to believe. After Craig has you list your lies that you believe, he has you take those lies and turn them into new truths. He says “If Satan's primary weapon is lies, then our greatest counter-weapon is the truth of God's Word. Not just reading the Bible, but learning to wield Scripture as a divine weapon.” (Groeschel, 2021 pg. 45) If you are not sure of what wield means, it means according to Oxford Dictionary, it says “to have and use power, authority, etc. to hold something, ready to use it as a weapon or tool.” (Oxford Dictionary, 2022, Online). An example of this is someone using a gun as a weapon.

He is saying that we need to study the Bible and allow God to show us how to change those thoughts. When the lies arise in your mind, then you can say to the lie that you don't believe it because God says this about you. God wants us to use His word to change our lives. It says in the Bible in 2 Corinthians 5:17 New Living Translation (NLT) version “This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The

old life is gone; a new life has begun.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 2 Corin. 5:17). Galatian 2:20 says “My old self has been crucified with Christ. I no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Galatians 2:20). I have now become a new creation in God because I now believe in the crucifixion of Christ. Also in Philippians 4:13 “For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 Philippians 4:13)

For me this gives me comfort to know that since I believe in Jesus my old ways are gone and I am a new person and that by relying on Jesus, He gives me the strength to change. In scripture Isaiah 40:31, it says “But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Isaiah 40:31) I am so glad that God gives me this kind of strength. Gives me encouragement that I can do anything with God’s help. Once you give your life over to the Lord by confessing that His son, Jesus Christ, is your Lord and Savior. You change. The old man dies and a new one arises. I am not saying that you won’t falter some, but you just have to believe that you are a new person.

In the book, “Alter Ego,” by Craig Groeschel, he says on page 21 that “No matter what others have said or what you’ve believed about yourself, even if the negative labels are true, God can give you a new view of yourself.” (Groeschel.2013 Pg.21) I had to erase all the negative thoughts I had about myself, like that I am not worthy of love. But when I choose to get to know God and rely on Him to change me, I realized that I am not a slave to those negative thoughts anymore since I have chosen to believe what God says about me. I was able through Him to change how I think about myself. As I got to know God, I began to see that I needed to treat others the way God does because He says to love others as you love me according to what John 13:34 says “So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, John 13:34). By knowing this, I have begun to love others the way God loves me.

In the book by Joel Osteen called “Next Level Thinking,” Joel says this “The Good News is that people don’t determine your destiny; God does.” (Osteen, 2018, pg.6) I am so glad to know that God is the one who is determining my destiny and that I should not allow others to control my destiny. I have started to focus on God and not on others on determining who I am. It is difficult at times to do this, but I just have to remind myself that God’s opinion is the only one that truly matters. That I can change how I see myself by focusing on God than on man’s opinion. This begins the process of changing your negative thought into positive thoughts about yourself.

I am saying that you need to realize that once you belong to Jesus, you become a new person, but you must be willing to change. Once you let the Holy Spirit work inside you, you become a new person. You start to see yourself as God see you. You have to put the work in to change your ways and views of yourself, but the good news is that you have God on your side, and He gives you the strength to do that very thing. Since your sins were forgiven and you have God on your side, you have no choice but to become a new creation. You start to live your life for Jesus and obeying Him.

In "Alter Ego," Craig says that "The same is true for you and me. If you are in Christ, if you are a Christian, if you've turned from your sins and met the risen Christ, then you are a new creation. All your sins have been forgiven, you're a new creation." (Groeschel, 2013 pg. 68) Hallelujah! Thank you, Jesus! My sins are forgiven. I can't believe that all I have to do is believe in Jesus Christ and what He did, then my sins are forgiven, and I will have eternal life. I don't know about you, but I chose to believe in Jesus. I want to have eternal life and to live the life that God has for me.

Since my sins are forgiven and I'm a new person, I need to do my part and start living for Christ. I need to think the way He thinks. We should think of ourselves as God's prince or princess. In the book, "Your Best Life Now, 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential" by Joel Osteen, he says, on page 57, "God wants us to have healthy, positive self-image to see ourselves as priceless treasures." (Osteen, 2004, pg. 57). I have started to do this; I now see myself as God's princess as His priceless treasure. I don't allow myself to see myself, the way I use to see myself. As I do this, I have started to be blessed, tremendously because I now see myself as God does and live my life accordingly.

All we have to do is to belief in Jesus and call on him to fight our battles. This includes the thoughts that we have in our minds. We need to allow Jesus to help us combat these negative thoughts about ourselves. We do this by reading His word, so that we can know what God thinks about us. Then, when the thoughts come, we can defeat them by calling on what God says about us. This takes practice. For me, when the negative thoughts come, I just remember what God says and fight them with scripture of what God says.

Satan mainly attacks us in our mind, which is his playground. He loves to get us to think negatively. He knows that if he can get us to think that way, then he is able to control us. We have to remember that our thoughts control us. How we act. How we feel. How we live our lives. According to Joel Osteen, in the book, "Your Best Life Now" he states this "Simply because the enemy plants a negative, discouraging thought in your brain doesn't mean you have to "water" it, nurture it, coddle it, and help it to grow" (Osteen, 2004, pg. 102). You can throw that seed/negative thought out of your

mind. How, you ask? You use God words on it. You do not have to submit to it. You have a choice. You can either believe it or believe what God says. Your choice.

I say don't allow Satan to control your thoughts because what you think and say will happen. We must remember that those negative words are like a seed. Once you think it and say it, it begins to grow in your life, and you become what you say. In Proverbs 23:7, says in the King James Version, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (King James Version, 2022, Proverbs 23:7)

When I start to think negativity, I choose to tell Satan that I am a child of God, and God says that I am not what he says I am. I had to change the I am that I thought about myself. I had to go from saying I am unworthy to I am worthy. I am blessed. I am lovable. In the book, "The Power of I am," by Joel Osteen, it says on page 2, "The good news is you get to choose what follows the "I am". When you go through the day saying, "I am blessed," blessing come looking for you." (Osteen, 2015, pg. 2).

We have to combat Satan with theses I am when he says that we are not. I have to constantly be watching the I am that Satan says to me and begin to change them to God's I am about me. It takes practice. You will not necessarily believe what you are saying at first but if you just keep saying it you will believe, and it will come true. Once you start saying that you are blessed then the blessing start to chase you.

What you say through your mouth, you will reap. In Proverbs 18:21, it says "The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences" (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Proverbs 18:21). As you can see in this scripture, your mouth can bring life or death. I don't know about you; I would rather speak life into my life than death. In other words, if you speak positively about who you are then you become positive, but if you speak negativity about yourself then that is what you will reap.

Once I realized that and started to believe what Jesus did for me and how God see me. I was able to change those negative thoughts into the positive ones. To me, that is what I feel God wants for all of His children.

Yes, we are God's children when we believe in Jesus. Galatians 3:26, says "For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 Galatians 3:26). Thank God that since I believe in Jesus, I am God's daughter. What a wonderful feeling to know that I have been adopted by God. Now, I have all the same rights as His son, Jesus. When you believe in Jesus Christ, you are righteous in God's eyes which means that you have God's righteousness. In Galatians 4:1-7, it talks about young children getting an inheritance when their father dies and that we are like that before Christ came. It speaks

"And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were like children; we were slaves to the basic spiritual principles of this world. But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his son into our hearts, prompting us to call our, "Abba, Father," Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you, his heir." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 Galatian 4:3-7)

Thank you, God. I am so glad that Jesus came down to do what He did, so that I am no longer a slave to the law but am God's own child. I am able to call Him, Father. Thank you, Jesus, for doing this for me. I can't help but to follow Jesus, now, that I know this. I am so glad that God choose to do this back then for us.

Ephesian 1:4-7 says

"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Ephesian 1:4-7)

Wow! I can't believe that God did this, but He did because He loved us that much. I am so glad that I am adopted by God, and it was a pleasure for Him. Thank you, God for pouring your grace on us who belong to your son, Jesus. I am so grateful that Jesus purchased us with His blood, so God could be our father.

I know of no other love as great as that, not even my husband can love me that much. Take this to heart that God loves you so much that He does not want you suffer death but to have eternal life with Him. God wants the best for you.

Let's look at the negative thoughts I mentioned earlier and show how I have changed them to positive thoughts, so to hopefully help you do the same. Because my goal is to help those who are suffering from negative thoughts about themselves or the lies, they believe about themselves.

The negative thoughts or lies I want to tackle first is God does not love me, no one love me and that I am not worthy of love. Boy is that so untrue. But that what I thought for 48 years of my life, before I rededicated my life back to God this past year. God showed me that I am lovable.

One way He did that was He gave me my husband Joseph Johnson. I met Joseph back in February of 2006, when I was going down the wrong path. I was drinking a lot

and was seeking love in all the wrong places. So, I feel that God chose to send me Joseph at that time to start me on my path of finding out who God is. All my life, I knew that there was a God, but I did not know about Jesus or who God really was. I just was living my life, doing whatever I wanted. Giving no care about myself.

Let me just tell you that God knew what He was doing for me then. Joseph loves me unconditionally. He has never taken his love from me even when I treated him badly, and boy have I at times. It took me this past year to see that God used Joseph to show me His unconditional love for me. God also uses Joseph to show me how to treat others. What a wonderful God, we all have, especially me, that He does that for me. If you need proof of this love God has for us, Paul says about God in scriptures

Roman 8:38-39,

“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow — not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below — indeed nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 Romans 8:38-39)

What a wonderful scripture to read and know. To know that nothing can take me from God when I believe in Jesus. That He loves us so much, that He revealed Jesus to us. I do not know about you, but that just shows me that God loves me.

Other scriptures that show me that God loves me is the most famous one, John 3:16, “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” And also in the next verse, it says “God sent His Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 John 3:16-17) Boy, I don’t know about you, but I thank God daily that He loved me so much even before I was born to send His Son to come die for me and to save me from this world. I am glad that Jesus did not come to judge me, because I don’t think He would have done what He did for me. But Thank God He did.

In John 15:12-13 Jesus says “This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way that I have loved you. There is not greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friend.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 John 15:12-13). I am so grateful Jesus laid down His life for us, so to save us. I do not know of anyone else here on Earth who would do the same.

I took that negative thought and changed it to a positive thought. I now say to myself that God does love me, and He shows me proof everyday through my husband Joseph. I hope everyone gets to see that in their lives, that they get a Joseph in their life.

And because I have Joseph in my life, my three children, and four granddaughters, I get to see that I am loved. So, now I do not believe that lie of no one loves me. Because I get to see it every day that I am genuinely loved especially from my husband, my children, and my granddaughters.

The next negative thought or lie is that I am not important enough to be someone that can be value to anyone. God says that we are created for a purpose, that we have value. Look at scripture, Matthew 28:19 when Jesus was talking to the disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Matthew 28:19) Also, in scripture, John 15:16, "You did not choose me, I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, John 15:16). Yet, in another scripture, it says in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 2 Corinthians 5:20) In these three scriptures, it shows me that God chose me to be a disciple of His. To go out a witness to others to help them to come to Him. All I have to do is ask for His help and He will help me to achieve what He has called me to do. I need to bear my fruits that God has given me.

Yet, again in scripture, Acts 26:16, " But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 Acts 26:16) Nonetheless, I am appointed as His servant to do His will and not my will. I am to get up and show the world how to do God's will and to have a relationship with Him. I have to continue to deny my will daily, so to do God's will.

In scripture from Old Testament, Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Jeremiah 29:11). I like this scripture; I had not really noticed this scripture until I started studying for this word I am giving. But I am so glad that I did find it because I like that God wants to give me a future and a hope. I am glad that God knows the plans of my life. I now can rest in the fact that since I have believed in Jesus and made right with God that He wants to give me a future and hope. I can rest assured that God will fulfill His purpose through me once I surrender my will to do His will.

In Romans 8:28, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose," (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Romans 8:28). Thank you, God for calling me for your purpose. Ephesians 2:10 says "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ

Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Ephesians 2:10) I know that was a lot of scripture, but they are needed to show you God has a purpose for you.

I now can take that negative thought and change it to a positive thought of God has chosen me for His purpose to go out and show the world who He is and about His Son, Jesus Christ. I love that fact that God can take anything in my life and make it work for His good. Ephesians 1:11 says “Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Ephesians 1:11) Thank God that whatever I may go through---good or bad---it is according to God’s plan. I like that he uses me that way. So, no matter how bad my life my seems, I can rest assured that God will turn it into goodness for His sake. I just have to rest in Him while He does the work. God says to rest in him when you are weary and heavy burdened according to scripture Matthew 11:28-30 which says

“Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, Because I am humble and gently at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Matthew 11:28-31)

I do not know about anyone else; I would like to rest in the Lord knowing that He will make my burdens light. That whatever I am going through He will make it easy for me. I know that God made what I went through mentally in changing my thoughts much easier, because I rested in Him. Each time I went through, it got easier because I rested in the God and relied on Him. This does not mean that I did not struggle when they happened, but they were much easier. Please give me that all day long.

Back in the book, “Alter Ego,” Craig makes this statement,

“When you know who you are, you will know what to do; and you are, if you’re a Christians, an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, not elected by people, but called and appointed by God. You never represent yourself, but always represent him.... You represent the king from the kingdom that sent you, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, and that makes your role on earth very important.” (Groeschel, 2013, pg. 79)

To me this is telling me that I am an ambassador of God, that I must represent Him on this Earth. I do have a purpose here on Earth and that is to represent the King of Kings our Lord Jesus Christ. I do this every day be obeying what God says to me through the Holy Spirit. I continue to be a willing vessel of His, to do what He wants me to do.

In scripture 2 Timothy 1:7-8, says "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, 2 Timothy 1:7-8). I say to you to not go in fear but in power, love, and self-discipline when you are doing what God purpose is for you. Be in power, love, and self-discipline when you are changing your thoughts from negative to positive. That is what I had to do, once I realized it. I now walk in power, love, and self-discipline. The self-discipline I had to do was to constantly keep my focus on God in all I do. I had to continually repeat things over and over until it became a habit. Each time I would repeat it, it gets much easier, and I started to change those thoughts.

The next negative thought or lie is that I am not a beautiful person. Boy is that a true lie, because I was made in the image of God, and He is the most beautiful person I know. It goes all the way back to Genesis 1:27, "So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 Genesis 1:27) So that tells me that I am beautiful, regardless of what others say about me. I was made in his image, so regardless of my outer appearance looks I am beautiful according to scripture. In scripture 1 Samuel 16:7 God said to Samuel that He does not see "the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Samuel 16:7). It shows me that God see my heart not my body. I must continue to do His will and align my heart with his heart. God created us as he saw fit to, and what he did is wonderful and complete no matter what we see in the mirror. Because as you are in Christ and obey Him, God only sees you as His beautiful, beloved child.

The negative thought or lie I hear is that I am always going to be fat and unhealthy. I have struggled with this lie for a long time, but since June 2022, I have decided to go to a gym every day to work out so in hope of losing at least 100 pounds, so to get myself to a healthy weight. I also have been changing my diet to a healthier diet. I know God does not look at our physical bodies per say but he wants us to take care of ourselves. I know to do that I must obey God in all that He says.

I have taken that negative thought and made it positive by telling myself that with hard work I can become healthy. I do that by working out Monday through Friday twice a day and once on Saturday. I take Sunday off. I also watch what I eat. I only allow myself to eat so many calories a day. This was hard at first, but it now has become a habit. I am not saying that you have to follow what I am doing to change your weight, I am just saying to do something different in weight loss to help you get healthy. It just takes practice. Yes, it was hard at first, but now it is second nature to me. I miss it if I miss a day.

The last negative thought or lie I am going to discuss is the lie is that I am never going to change my ways. Boy is that a lie. God has shown me over the past year that I am able to change my ways. With God help, you can change your life. I just had to rest in the Lord and rely on him to help me change. I have done a 180-degree change in my life in the past year. I used to be a depressed, angry, unhappy person. But now, I am a happy, God-fearing woman following after God.

Over the last 15 years while attending church and learning about Jesus and God, I just sat there just being lazy, knowing that I needed to change but didn't. That all changed on July 30, 2021, when I asked God to show me who He is. I did not know when I asked him that I would change my life so dramatically. I went from someone just listening about God to actually being a servant of God. I never want to go back to how my life was before I changed my life around. I have to thank God for showing me this past year, how much better my life is since I choose to believe in His Son, Jesus and started obeying Him. I can honestly say that since I now am living my life to obey God and do as He say, I have found true joy.

God had me over the past years, reading His word, going to church faithfully, attending Bible study, and listening to my Pastor, so that I would get the revelations that I needed to change. Not only did I do this, but I read several books that helped me get my life back on track with God while maintaining my duties as a wife, mother, and grandmother. Let's just say I was busy. Not busy in doing what Satan wanted me to do or believe, but busy in what God wanted me to do and by doing His will.

I would not change anything that I endured in the past year, I have enjoyed all the good along with the bad. I know that God had me suffer a lot this past year to help me get me where I am today. In Romans 5:3-4, I take this to heart, "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 Romans 5:3-4) I, now, rejoice in all that I have endured because I know I am going to be a better person after it and closer to God. All I went through was worth it, because I am now a true servant of the Lord and doing His will. Because once you come out from under it, you will become a better person. I know that I have. When you stand up in God, you can manage whatever is coming against you. God gives you the strength to combat what is coming against you.

I did all this changing last year because I believed in what God said and had faith that He would do what He says. I really had to rely on my faith. Faith, they say is believing that something has already happened even before it does. Believing in something you don't see. In the book, "Lead Me, Holy Spirit" by Stormie Omartian, she says on page 213, that "Faith means turning from everything else you have trusted in

and putting your trust in God.” (Omartian, 2012, pg. 213), Boy, I had to do that. It was difficult at times, but I just rely on the faith that God was with me. I had peace when I did this when I was going through my hardships because I was obeying God.

When those negative thoughts come in, just remember what God says about you and use that against Satan’s attack. Never be afraid to use God words. If you do this, you come out a better person. In the book “You are Stronger Than You Think” by Joel Osteen, he says on page 32,

“When you come out of that difficulty, the only things that are going to be gone are limitations that were holding you back. The fire is going to burn off the fear, burn off the intimidation, burn off negative mindsets. You’re going to come out free, bold, confident, healthy, promoted, victorious, and ready to fulfill your destiny.” (Osteen, 2021, pg. 32)

WOW! I now, know that I am a free, bold, confident, and victorious person because of what I have gone through this past year. I am so thankful to God that He was with me through difficult times, when the fire was burning off the crud, and making me a better person. I am now living the destiny God has for me.

In the book, “Lead Me, Holy Ghost,” by Omartian, she says “Our difficult times perfect us, and that’s why we can never lose faith in God to do something great, no matter what is happening.” (Omartian, 2012, pg 213). When I read that, I am now able to see what I went through in my life—the good and bad—God was turning for His greatness. Even when it didn’t seem like it was. Sometimes, when things are not going well in your life, it can be an encouragement for someone else. So, just remember that God does everything for His greatness.

I had been listening to Satan for the past 48 years, but then when I turned 49 years old, I decided I needed to change. So, I choose to use God’s words when Satan attacks my mind. In scripture John 10:10, it says, “The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, John 10:10). I do not know about you, but I rather believe in Jesus than what Satan has to say. Jesus said that He came to give us this satisfying life, and He does once you believe in Him. He has defeated Satan, so we have also defeated Satan. Just believe that. We are victorious over Satan, and we don’t have to listen to him. Satan just wants us to not have the life that God has promised us. But if you just change your mindset to focus on God and not Satan, you will have that life God wants you to have.

Roman 8:5-6 says “...but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.” (New Living

Translation, 1988/2019, Romans 8:5-6). I do not know about you, but I want life and peace. I say to myself daily to follow what the Holy Spirit says, and when I do I have peace in my life. I also, have the desire to please God. I have no choice but to listen.

Pastor Mark Culver, from Word of Truth, said on August 21, 2022, during a sermon, “God works on the inside of you.” (Culver, Sermon, August 21, 2022) This is so true. God comes inside you with the Holy Spirit and starts to work on you. He uses the Holy Spirit to talk to us. We as His children need to just listen.

I know you may be saying, I do not know if I am able to do what Christie has done. Let me tell you, I could have not done any changing if it had not been for God. Once I realized that all I have to do is rest in God and ask for His help because He gives me the strength in my weaknesses. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 2 Corinthians 12:9) then Paul continues to say, “So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 2 Corinthians 12:10)

I am now able to see my weaknesses as a strength for me because I know that God is giving me strength in my weakness. I took these verses to heart during my tough times which gave me hope that I was going to come through it. And I knew that my relationship with God was going to be stronger.

I want to tell you that during these times of changing my negative thoughts to positive thoughts of how God see me, I had to realize that it is a spiritual battle that I am in. I had to rely on God to show me how to change. I had to use what the Holy Spirit told me, what I was reading in the Bible, and from my Pastor. I had to use the spiritual weapons to fight Satan who had control over my mind. According to scripture, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, it says

“We are human, but we don’t wage war as humans do. We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.” (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Once I realized that Satan had me believing those negative thought or lies, I was able to use God’s words to defeat those thoughts and change them into the positive truths. Those negative thoughts or lies are called strongholds and the only way to defeat them is to battle in the spirit.

Now what do I do when those pesty thoughts come in, I realize that I am doing good in God and Satan is just angry and wants me back. But Satan cannot have me I am a child of God. I want you to know that it is not necessary an easy road to change but it

is so worth it. Romans 8:31 says "What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?" (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 Romans 8:31). Please take this to heart to know that God is for us, so who can be against us. To me this assures me that as I am changing my ways to his ways that I have God on my side.

If you are wanting to change your ways, you need to confess that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, and He died for your sins. When this happens, the Holy Spirit come in to help change you to a new person. When you believe in Jesus, He is willing to change/heal you. Like when Jesus healed the Leprosy, in Mark 1:40-42,

"A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed, "If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean," he said. Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him, "I am willing," he said. "Be healed." Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 Mark 1:40-42).

As you can see in these verses, that Jesus is willing to heal you. You just have to willing to change, also. Once you have decided in your mind that you want to change your life, then God will come in and change you. But you have to truly want it, you just can't lip service it, you must mean it. The change will come once you do that, but you have to truly mean it. That what happened to me.

I finally got tired of how my life was, so I asked God to show me Him. He will do it. Just have to ask Him and have faith. Mark chapter 11, Jesus tells us to have faith in God, we can move any mountain in our lives. Mark 11:23-24 says "...But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Mark 11:23-24) I say to you, just pray to God for change in your life and have faith and believe, it will happen. Be ready for the changing because it will come.

As a final note, in verse Joshua 1:9, "This is my command —be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord, your God is with you wherever you go." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019 Joshua 1:9). Please do as this verse says, don't be afraid of change but to be strong and courageous in it because you have God with you. In Romans 12:2, it says "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. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Romans 12:3) And finally one last scripture to take to heart, Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." (New Living Translation, 1988/2019, Proverbs 3:5-6) To recap, I

want to tell you to ask God for help in changing and be ready for the changing. Remember to rely on the Holy Ghost through your journey. Please be obedient to God, do what He says and have faith that He will do what He says. Holy Spirit is here to help us navigate through this world, so that we can follow the path that God has for us. Hope I have helped someone today. Thank you, God for using me. Thank to you all for listening.

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