Romans 12:2; Philippians 4:8

We live in a world where negative thoughts and negative influences impact our attitudes and emotions. Maintaining a positive mindset for any length of time is challenging, with all the negativity floating through the air. I believe incorporating Romans 12:2 and Philippians 4:8 into our lives would help us combat the negativity that intrudes our minds and, eventually, our lives through our behavior.

These two scriptures make it very clear that Paul was concerned about what we think. Society can be a positive or a negative influence on someone's life. People are susceptible to what goes out over the airwaves. In the era of Trump, we see age is not a factor when it comes to embracing and identifying with negativity.

Philippians 4:8 further expands on this concept by providing a blueprint for the thoughts we should focus on. It urges individuals to think about true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy things. By directing our minds towards these positive and uplifting thoughts, we can replace negativity with that which is positive.

We must not underestimate the power our thoughts can have on and over us. When we begin to identify with our thoughts, our behavior can harm ourselves and others. By identity, I mean when we believe our thoughts are true or we cannot separate our thoughts from ourselves. We have become our thoughts. You become the anger, and you become the pain and suffering. When we think, our thoughts are facts. When we believe they are the truth and there is no other alternative or way to view something. We have become the thought; we have internalized the thought.

We must not fail to realize how our emotions profoundly impact our thoughts. They color our perception; they color the way we look at something. Our emotions influence our judgment and shape our decision-making. When we are in a heightened emotional state, our thoughts can become distorted, leading us to make impulsive or irrational choices.

When we are angry, our thoughts are dominated by feelings of revenge or hostility. This emotion can cloud our judgment and lead us to do things we may regret later. Similarly, when we are afraid, our thoughts may be dominated by worst-case scenarios, causing unnecessary worry and anxiety.

Recognizing the influence of emotions on our thoughts is crucial for maintaining a clear and rational mindset. Acknowledging and managing our feelings can prevent them from hijacking our thinking process and distorting our perception of reality.

In Romans 12:2, Paul says to be careful what you listen to on the airwaves. Be careful what you listen to on television. Be careful that you don't fall for the lie. Be careful what you read on the internet. Be careful. Do not be conformed by this world. Don't let this world shape your mind. The world we live in wants us to live in fear. To be frightened and afraid of everything. We allow the news to influence our thinking. The news makes us fearful of what could happen to us. We watch movies and become angry because they bring back certain memories.

Renewing our minds is essential for combating thoughts of fear and doubt, and we cannot afford to allow thoughts filled with negativity to shape or control our thoughts.

The combination of Romans 12:2 and Philippians 4:8 provides a practical framework for applying these powerful verses daily. We can counteract the negativity surrounding us by consciously focusing on what is true, what is noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy thoughts. One way to apply these verses is by rewiring our minds and replacing negative thoughts with uplifting ones.

Destroying negative thoughts and influences requires consistent effort and intentional action. Here are some practical steps to help you combat negativity and renew your mind:

1. **Identify negative thought patterns:** Become aware of the negative thoughts that frequently enter your mind. Become conscious of situations or the people you are around that trigger negative thoughts or behavior.
2. **Challenge negative thoughts:** When negative thoughts arise, question their validity. Ask yourself if there is evidence to support these thoughts or if they are merely assumptions or distortions. Ex. You just broke up with someone you love. Is the thought "You can't live without them" true? No, it isn't. Then, if the thought is not true, change your thinking; start thinking about what you will do next. Is it easy, no? But it is necessary.
3. **Replace negative thoughts with positive ones:** Once you have identified negative thoughts, actively replace them with positive and uplifting thoughts. Force yourself to look at this situation not as a problem but as an opportunity to do and be something different and better. Refer to the principles outlined in Philippians 4:8 as a guide.
4. **Surround yourself with positive influences:** Evaluate the things that affect your life and make intentional choices to surround yourself with positive people and things. Seek out supportive relationships, uplifting media content, and inspiring resources.
5. **Practice gratitude:** Cultivate a grateful mindset by regularly expressing gratitude for the blessings in your life. A thankful attitude can help shift your focus from negativity to appreciation and abundance.
6. **Don't be afraid to reach out for support when needed:** Surround yourself with a community of like-minded individuals who can provide encouragement and accountability.

The combination of Romans 12:2 and Philippians 4:8 offers a powerful strategy for combating negative thoughts and influences. Renew your minds with Romans 12:2 and Philippians 4:8.

Blessings,
Pastor Gool