



Core Beliefs

We all have a core set of beliefs, which influences the way we process information, react to life circumstances, and interact in relationships. Our beliefs -- about ourselves, others, God, and general life principles -- are shaped by our experiences, environment, and the influences upon us, especially as a child.

While some of these beliefs are true, in that they are consistent with God's truth (John 17:17), others are lies masquerading in aged-old sayings, pop culture, and spun out from the Father of Lies (John 8:44). When our beliefs don't line up with Scripture, our emotional and spiritual health are compromised. We will find ourselves in inner turmoil and external conflict with unsatisfying pursuits and unhealthy relationships.

Changing our thinking is really the only way to transform our living. We need to inventory our thoughts, uncover core lies and replace them with the truth (2 Corinthians 10:5). It takes discipline and time to form new patterns, but the result is the joy of experiencing life transformed (Romans 12:2).

John 17:17

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

John 8:44

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

2 Corinthians 10:5

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.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Identifying Core Beliefs

Uncover your beliefs by taking this inventory. Mark each statement according to your gut, not your head, ranking (7) Strongly Agree to (1) Strongly Disagree. Avoid using 4 as an answer.

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| _____ If it feels right, than it must be what I should do. | _____ God should always be fair. |
| _____ Do I really need to right a wrong, if it turns out okay? | _____ Relationships should meet my emotional needs. |
| _____ The destination is more important than the journey. | _____ I'd be happier if they acted more like me. |
| _____ I can only feel good about myself if I do it perfectly. | _____ If there is conflict in a relationship, then it isn't meant to be. |
| _____ If I can't win, why bother. | _____ I need to be sure this will work before I... |
| _____ I hate it when everyone isn't happy with me. | _____ It is just so hard to trust anyone. |
| _____ I won't move ahead unless I know they'll like it. | _____ I know exactly how this is going to turn out. |
| _____ If only they would change, I know I would be happier. | _____ People like that will always disappoint me. |
| _____ Based on my past, nothing will change. | _____ All my problems are caused by my sins. |
| _____ I am the way I am. | _____ God should protect me from all pain and suffering. |
| _____ Things never work out for me. | _____ Some people are favored by God over others. |
| _____ I won't be happy unless they do it my way. | _____ God doesn't have time for my problems. |
| _____ I know it is always my fault, even if they don't say so. | _____ I don't feel good enough to go to God on my own. |
| _____ Why doesn't anyone every consider me? | _____ A good Christian doesn't get angry, anxious, or depressed. |
| _____ People never thank me for what I do for them. | _____ I tend to either over-generalize or exaggerate things. |
| _____ If only they would take better care of me. | _____ I either magnify or minimize the importance of things. |
| _____ A person should have it all, no matter what. | _____ Everything is black or white. |
| _____ I don't think you should have to wait for what you want. | |
| _____ How well I do something really determines how good I feel about myself. | |
| _____ God's love must be earned. | |
| _____ Life should be fair. | |
| _____ Life is supposed to be relatively easy. | |
| _____ People are basically good. | |

The more you agree with each statement, the more you are agreeing with a lie. Highlight any over 4. These are lies that you'll need to focus on changing in order to line up with Biblical truth, which are categorized by Thurman as Self Lies, Worldly Lies, Religious Lies, Relational Lies, Distortion Lies.

Comparing Core Lies & Truths

Core Lies are statements that contradict Scripture. The follow is a summary list of the five different categories of core lies and typical illustration of the “lie” thinking.

SELF LIES

1. I must be perfect.
TRUTH: Christ is perfect. Rom 3:22-23, 1 John 1:8, Psalm 18:30, Phil 3:12, Matt 4:8
2. I must have everyone’s love and approval.
TRUTH: I am approved by God. Col 3:23-24; Gal 1:10
3. It is easier to avoid problems then to face them.
TRUTH: God promises that this life will have problems. Phil 3:13-14
4. I can’t be happy unless things go my way.
TRUTH: We can be content in God and find happiness in Him. Acts 20:22-24; Phil 4:11-14; James 1:2-3
5. My unhappiness is someone else’s fault.
TRUTH: You are responsible for how you feel. Pro 23:7

WORLDY LIES

1. You can have it all.
TRUTH: A yes is always a no, and a no always a yes. 1 John 2:15-17
2. My worth is determined by my performance.
TRUTH: Your worth is found in Whose you are. Psalm 139:13-14; Romans 12:3
3. Life should be easy.
TRUTH: We are promised trouble in this world. John 16:33, Matt 6:34
4. Life should be fair.
TRUTH: Life is never fair. Eccl. 8:14; Rom 5:15-18; 2 Cor 8:9
5. You shouldn’t have to wait for what you want.
TRUTH: Waiting is always part of life. Gal 6:7-8; Pro 14:29
6. People are basically good.
TRUTH: No one is good. Not one. Jer 17:9; Matt 15:19; Rom 3:10-12; Gal 5:19-21

RELATIONSHIP LIES

1. All my problems are your fault.
TRUTH: Problems are the result of sin. Romans 2:1
2. This relationship is hard, it must not be meant to be.
TRUTH: Relationships are hard and we are to work together to resolve challenges. 1 Cor 7:28 (marriage), Heb 12:14
3. You can and should meet all my emotional needs.
TRUTH: Only God can meet all our needs. Phil 4:19
4. You owe me...for all I do for you.
TRUTH: We are to work unto God, not others. 1 Peter 5:5
5. You should be like me.
TRUTH: We are each created uniquely to be used in the body of Christ. 1 Cor 12:18-19

RELIGIOUS LIES

1. God's love must be earned.
TRUTH: God's love is free and unconditional. Rom 5:8; Eph 2:8-9; John 3:16
2. God hates the sin AND the sinner.
TRUTH: God hates sin, but loves His children. Rom 5:8; John 8:1-11
3. Because I am a Christian, God will protect me from suffering.
TRUTH: God allows us to experience suffering, trials, and pain. 1 Pet 4:12-13, John 16:33; Phil 1:29
4. All my problems are caused by my sin.
TRUTH: Sin causes problems, but it isn't always my fault. 1 John 9:1-3
5. It is my Christian duty to meet every needs.
TRUTH: We are meant to function in the body, but not fill every need. 1 Cor 12:27-31, Rom 12:6-7
6. A good Christian doesn't feel angry, depressed, or anxious.
TRUTH: We are emotional beings held accountable for our actions. Sometimes we need professional help to work through our emotions are wrong. John 11:33-35; Mark 14:32-34; Mark 11:15-16
7. God can't use me unless I'm spiritually strong.
TRUTH: God loves to use the weak! 2 Cor 13:4; 2 Cor 12:9-10; 1 Cor 1:27; 1 Cor 9:22

DISTORTION LIES

1. Magnification: Making a mountain out of molehill.
TRUTH: Put offenses in perspective by giving them the right value...let dime size problems stay dime size. 2 Cor 4:17-18
2. Personalization: This always happens to me.
TRUTH: What a person does to you is a more a reflection of them than you. Choose to not personalize every incident in life. Mat 12:34; Luke 6:45
3. Polarization: Everything is black and white.
TRUTH: God made grey to give dimension and depth. Find the places of grey and you'll find God's grace. Rom 5:15
4. Selective Abstraction: Can't see the forest through the trees.
TRUTH: Don't focus too hard on one thing. Step back to see the whole picture with an eternal perspective. Phil 3:14
5. Overgeneralization: Always, never, all, nothing.
TRUTH: Better to look at life in the context of sometimes, often, occasionally, with an eternal focus. Jude 1:21
6. Emotional Reasoning: If I feel it, then it must be true.
TRUTH: Truth is not based on feelings but fact. All truth is God's truth. John 17:17

Take the Mental Makeover

A mental makeover requires hard work. First you have to stripped off everything that is not a part of your identity in Christ. Then you have to put on everything that is founded in the truth. Undergoing a mental makeover requires the following steps:

1. **Identify Lies**

Identify specific circumstances, experiences, or relationships that shaped that core beliefs, and journal about the lies that were formed.

2. **Memorize Truth**

Write down the related Scripture truth and new belief on a index card and work on memorizing it.

3. **Personalize It**

Pray through the Scripture, turning it into your personal plea before the Lord.

4. **Work It**

Commit to redefine what you believe and how you'll live from this point forward. Every time a situation arises that causes you to react negatively, consider your core beliefs. Is it a lie? Is it truth?

The wonderful result of a mental makeover is that you will begin to experience life transformed, as your frustrating habits and failing relationships are replaced by healthy boundaries, honest and accurate thinking, and grace-filled relationships in the context of Biblical love and truth. This is what it means to experience life transformed.