

# What's Running Your Life?

By Tracie Miles

*“Be careful what you think, because your thoughts run your life.”*  
Proverbs 4:23 (NCV)

I knew they were there, but I tried to ignore them and deny their existence. They controlled how I felt in the morning, and when I went to sleep. They would often cause my emotions to feel out of control, making me feel out of control, too. They would dictate how I reacted to situations or conversations. They often caused me to feel offended, angry or hurt, whether it was truly justified or not. They never ceased to remind me of my shortcomings and flaws, making me feel inferior and often without value, and they constantly tried to pull me down with discouragement or hopelessness, stealing my peace and joy.

Who are “they,” you ask? My thoughts.

You see, life had been unusually hard for many months due to a painful situation in my marriage, and as a result, my negative thoughts were running my life. I didn't want to feel sad, but my thoughts stayed consumed with all the things that made me sad. I didn't want to feel unhappy, but my thoughts constantly drifted toward focusing on my unhappy circumstances.

I didn't want to feel discouraged or fearful, but my heart was heavy, and my negative thoughts were weighing down not only my emotions, but my outlook on life. In fact, my thoughts often made me feel as if I were sinking mentally, emotionally — and at times, even spiritually.

Our key verse today give us wise advice on dealing with thoughts: “Be careful what you think, because your thoughts run your life” (Proverbs 4:23). This passage was written by King Solomon for the benefit of his own sons.

As I read this chapter, I noticed although Solomon was king, he didn't focus on advising about royal matters like how to handle money, job responsibilities or best tips for leading the kingdom. Instead, he spoke of more important things such as the value of controlling their thoughts, which determine how they felt and how they lived.

Solomon teaches us to be careful how we think, because the quality of our thoughts will always determine the quality of our life. Whatever our minds focus on is what will play out in our lives and eventually shape who we are. Our thoughts turn into feelings that have the power to control our lives, gradually steering us and possibly our faith, in a direction we do not want to go.

King Solomon knew this to be true, and counsels us to be careful about what we think and feel. He knew it's often our thoughts, not our circumstances, which cause us to sink.

Our thoughts have power and can easily begin to run our lives, controlling our words and actions, feelings and emotions — even our peace and happiness. When disappointment crushes our dreams, when people hurt or anger us, or when problems seem overwhelming, it's easy to get caught in the rip-current of negative thoughts. And when we think negative thoughts, we feel negative feelings, leading to believing life is negative overall.

During this season of life when I realized my thoughts were running my life, I bowed my head and admitted to Jesus how I had allowed emotionally-fueled thoughts to sink my joy, my hope and my faith. I embraced His truths that just because my circumstances weren't positive, didn't mean I couldn't be. When I intentionally change my thoughts, my life changes as well. And so can yours.

Prayer: Lord, at times I feel as if I'm sinking — in my attitude and thought patterns, even in my faith. Forgive me for letting negativity have power over how I feel, think and live. Fill me with a fresh breath of optimism today, and help me learn to transform my thoughts, heart and life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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