

“I’m trying to control my thoughts, but there are so many temptations. How can I have cleaner thoughts?”

Controlling your thoughts is difficult, but it *is* possible and brings blessings: “As you learn to control your thoughts, you can overcome habits, even degrading personal habits. You can gain courage, conquer fear, and have a happy life.”¹

Also consider these blessings:

- Clean thoughts will help your “confidence wax strong in the presence of God,” and “the Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion” (D&C 121:45–46).
- Clean thoughts will help you recognize inspiration, because the Holy Ghost speaks to your heart and mind (see D&C 8:2–3).
- Clean thoughts will help you obey the first great commandment: to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind (see Matthew 22:37).

There are many things you can do to have cleaner thoughts, as you’ll see from the ideas on these pages. But one of the main things you can do—and it’s a gradual process—is to overcome the “natural man.” The natural man or woman likes unclean thoughts. Here’s how to overcome it: “The natural man is an enemy to God . . . and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love” (Mosiah 3:19).

What is one thing you could do today to invite the Savior’s Atonement to bring about this change in your life?

NOTE

1. Boyd K. Packer, “Worthy Music, Worthy Thoughts,” *New Era*, Apr. 2008, 7.



Media and Friends

A good starting point is to choose uplifting movies, music, and literature. Choose friends in whose

company you can maintain worthy conversation and righteous activities. As you have more good things to think about, you will gradually find it easier to dismiss bad thoughts, and they will come less often.

Amber S., 18, British Columbia, Canada

Prayer

Prayer brings me closer to our Heavenly Father and helps me concentrate on good thoughts. Daily scripture study strengthens my confidence in overcoming temptations; in the scriptures I can see examples of faithful disciples of Christ. Bearing my testimony also helps me keep my thoughts clean.

Dasha M., 17, Kyiv, Ukraine



Scriptures

Reading the scriptures every morning before school helps. As soon as I get a bad thought,

I immediately replace it with something better. Instead of just saying, “No, don’t think that” (which is a good thing to do), replace it with a good thought. Remember, you are in control of your mind, not Satan. We are valiant sons and daughters of Heavenly Father and are on a constant mission to improve ourselves.

Nick C., 16, Arkansas, USA



Good or Right?

You cannot always control whether a thought comes, but you can control whether it stays. You can ask: Will this thought do me any good? Will it help me go in the right direction? When a tempting thought pops up, sing a good song, think of a fond memory, or pray. It's all about replacing the bad thoughts with something good.

Lisa P., 17, Denmark



Lehi's Example

In 1 Nephi 15:27, Nephi tells his siblings that their father, in his vision of the tree

of life, was surrounded by filthiness. But Lehi didn't notice the filthiness because "his mind [was] swallowed up in other things." This holds true for us today. If we desire to be filled with righteousness, pray for it, and focus on righteous things, then our minds will be so full of righteousness and virtue that the unclean thoughts won't have power to remain.

Hattie W., 16, Arizona, USA

Hymns

The hymns can help us have cleaner thoughts. Good music elevates the spirit. When I am able to listen to hymns, they always elevate me to a more calm and celestial sphere. They help me remember the love Heavenly

Father has for each of us, and it becomes easier to avoid temptation.

Amanda A., 18, Amazonas, Brazil

Family Scripture Study

When unclean thoughts come into my mind, I try to remember the scriptures my family and I read in the morning. Every morning at 6:00, my family reads the scriptures together. It's early, but it's a blessing and makes me feel stronger during the day.

Elena W., 16, Switzerland



Sacrament

The sacrament prayer states that if we take upon us the name of Christ, keep His

commandments, and always remember Him, we will always have His Spirit to be with us. By remembering Him, we make the effort to push



THINK ON THESE THINGS

"In this sometimes precarious journey through mortality, may we also

follow that advice from the Apostle Paul which will help to keep us safe and on course: 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things' [Philippians 4:8]."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Looking Back and Moving Forward," *Ensign*, May 2008, 90.

out earthly thoughts and focus on eternal ones. When we remember Him consistently, our thoughts, desires, and actions will change for the better.

McKay M., 18, Utah, USA

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"When my mom was sick, we fasted and prayed for her, but she died anyway. How can I make peace with that?"

Send your answer and photo by November 15, 2014.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Work," enter your LDS Account, and then select "New Era."

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.