

**MCD Just Checking In #40 *Stinkin' Thinkin'* ò A Battle in the Mind *Pilgrim's Process*
Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a "pilgrim" with You..."**

2 Cor 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ

Paul reminds us of the reality of the mental battle we all face as well as the path towards victory. We are called with an urgency to active engagement. Anything less will lead to sure defeat including such things as mistrust, anxiety, disillusionment, anger, self centeredness, stubbornness, ingratitude, loss of vision, loss of hope, and loss of perspective.

This battle was first engaged in a lovely garden ò a battle so subtle and quiet that the participants never knew it was happening until it was lost! This battle is on-going ò 24 hours a day ò on every continent ò in every heart. You and I are in the thick of it. And I òn not just talking about what they believe. I òn not even talking about what we say we believe. I òn talking about *what you and I are believing at this present moment*. Because it is what I am believing *right now* that is the field of battle. It ò so subtle ò . let me illustrate. (1 Kings 18-19)

Elijah had clear evidence of God's presence, power and purpose on Mt. Carmel. But a matter of hours pass and he is in utter despair. He has lost all courage, all perspective, all hope. He is angry at God for not coming through. He feels alone (partly his own fault as he isolated himself ò a common malady of hopeless people ò forfeiting the strength and objectivity of others). He feels mistreated by God, not just Jezebel. God provides and protects and directs his steps all the way to Sinai. Elijah is filled with a hopeless self pity and a poorly concealed bitter accusation against God. His mind is filled with *stinkin' thinkin'* (That's one of Val's favorite phrases ☺) And *stinkin' thinkin'* leads to bad attitudes and poor choices. Elijah may have given up on God, but God hadn't given up on Elijah. Can you picture the narrative after Elijah sings the second verse ò same as the first? (I ò my ò my I òn the only one ò I òn the last one ò and You aren't doing anything!)

<i>Elijah in the dark cave complaining ò</i>	God calls him outside.
<i>Elijah goes outside his cave and stands.</i>	WHOOSH ò a tornado hits and boulders are thrown around like confetti ò
<i>Elijah runs back into his cave ò</i>	RUMBLE AND ROAR ò an earthquake shakes the ground ò not a good time to be in a cave
<i>Elijah runs back outside his cave ò</i>	FLASH AND THUNDER ò fire sweeps all over the mountain ò
<i>Elijah runs back inside his cave ò</i>	little, small whisper ò ..
<i>Elijah sneaks to the cave entrance ò</i>	God speaks ò the <i>stinkin' thinkin'</i> is washed away in the rain ò

God is able and His delays are purposeful.

Elijah is not alone. There are 7,000 faithful followers.

Elijah is not done. He has a lot of things still to accomplish in Israel and even in Syria.

Elijah's work is not finished. He will anoint and train his successor ò Elisha.

So, how's the battle going with you? Have you found yourself in the cave of complaining, the dungeon of disillusionment, the prison of self pity, the jail of jealousy, or in the shackles of fear, doubt, and bitterness. There is a way out. Bunyan's Pilgrim* had the key of promise with him all the time. He kept losing his assurance and his confidence on the journey whenever he neglected to embrace God's word. The mind never stays neutral. We must learn to embrace the truth daily and refuse to believe the lies of *the deceiver*.

Self Check Questions: After you list a lie... write down a scripture and replace the lie with truth!

1. What lies about myself do I struggle with? (i.e. ò *I òn no good, a failure, useless, hopeless*)
2. What lies about God do I struggle with? (i.e. ò *He doesn't care; He won't listen; What's the use?*)
3. What lies about life do I struggle with? (i.e. ò *Life should be fun; Life should be easy; Life is about me*)
4. What lies about ministry do I struggle with? (i.e. ò *Ministry should be fun, easy, constantly productive*)

For Further Study: Ps 25:4-5;43:3;119:30; Prov 23:23 John 8:32;8:44;16:13;17:17; Rom1:25; Eph 6:14; 3 Jn 1:3-4

Lord, You know how easy it is for me to allow the thorns of deceit to cling to my mind. Deliver me from lies and give me Your truth. Help me to recognize lies quickly and actively replace them with Your liberating truth. You said the truth would set me free. You are the truth, O Christ. And in Your name alone I pray. Amen+

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you continually. Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4
Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.

** Pilgrims Progress by John Bunyan – I read it almost every year. Let me encourage you to read it, or read it once again.*