

The captivity of every thought  
2 Cor 10:5 . . . we are taking every thought captive to the  
obedience of Christ,

**SUBJECT:** Christian Growth

**TOPIC:** The captivity of every thought

**PROPOSITION:** I propose to talk about the progression of  
thought captivity as we grow in Christ.

**OBJECTIVE:** My objective is that we come to see where  
we are and where we should be in our growth in Christ by seeing  
just how successful we are at captivating thoughts and turning  
them over to Jesus.

**INTRODUCITON:**

1. One morning, as I listened to National Public Radio's morning addition, there was a report on the new museum dedicated to Woodstock. They interviewed people, and reviewed the goings on at the Woodstock concert in the summer of '68.
2. The conclusion seemed to be: the changes which had happened to America as a direct result of Woodstock and the goings on there were, for the most part, changes for the better.
3. Then they played a clip of someone stating that it was the worst thing that had happened to the USA – maybe in the history of the country.
4. When the news reports came in, Woodstock showed the country a group of people enjoying an alternative lifestyle. It looked fun. It seemed freeing, empowering, wonderful. People were enjoying each others' company, each others body, drugs and alcohol flowed freely, people danced, laughed, ran and played.
5. But it turned out to be the beginning of the exploding drug subculture and the "Free Love" movement. It was a beginning of the acceptance of homosexuality. It gave

millions of kids permission to **disobey** their parents, **disregard** the law and **disrespect** the government. Woodstock said “Sex, drugs and Rock and Roll are all OK.”.

6. I’ve never hidden the fact that I was a wild-eyed, foul-mouthed, sex-addled, drug user before I became a Christian. I repented long ago and feel no guilt about it, but I was surprised at my emotions. When they started talking about Woodstock, I started to feel nostalgia! NOSTALGA! For vile, sinful, evil practices – and occasionally I wish I could again – just one last time – involve myself in.
7. When that commentator said it was the worst time in America, I wondered why I didn’t feel that way – and maybe I should.
8. With these thoughts in mind, I’d like to look at the **subject** of Christian Growth. **Specifically**, let’s look at the captivity of every thought. Why would I do this: I **propose** to talk about the progression of thought captivity as we grow in Christ. My **objective** is that we come to see where we are and where we should be in our growth in Christ by seeing just how successful we are at captivating thoughts and turning them over to Jesus.

**DISCUSSION:** Just what does it mean to take every thought captive?

- I. When I first became a Christian.
  1. When I first became a Christian, I knew what I needed to do. I needed to repent. I needed to stop the “Sex, drugs and rock and roll” lifestyle. I needed to put that behind me and I did. It took some time to get there, but I made it. People who knew me before my conversion and met me afterwards, had no doubt that some great change had taken place in my life.

2. If we compared this to the parable of the soils in Matt 13, I had sprung up. You could see a plant where there had been none before. But as of yet, there was no depth of root.
3. There is a story told of the first time I was taken to Brown Trail when I decided I wanted to train to preach. I walked into the administrators office (Eddie Whitten) with hair below my shoulders, bell-bottom jeans with a paisley print sewed into the seam, a tie-died tee-shirt and bare feet. By the time I came to school, six or eight months later, I had a suit and shoes. That was a pretty major change.
4. During my two years at Brown Trail and the year following at Randol Mill Road, I grew a great deal. More than I ever expected.
5. But, even with the growth I experienced, it was still only the growth of a beginner. I had roots, but they were only little tendrils stretching out, just below the surface.

## II. As I grew to a middle aged Christian.

1. I can't tell you when I became a middle aged Christian, but I can tell you that if it happened, it happened while I was worshiping at Cedarloo. People who knew me during this time may not have see the changes as dramatically as when I first became a Christian, but if they saw me and then several years later saw me again, I would hope they saw changes for the better.
2. I'm not going to list the litany of experiences of my life in the last few years, but I will talk in generalities. As we grow in Christ, we find ourselves faced with more severe and serious challenges than we ever expected. The hardest part of the whole thing is Satan knows exactly what it will take to

shake your faith, and that's what he will hit you with. Usually, it isn't a simple hit, or tap, it's a full body slam. He will grab you by the ankles, swing you around his head and slam you against a rock. Your response is what will show your growth.

3. In my time with this church I've seen brothers and sisters abandon their faith for reasons that seem to me to be trivial. To them it was an earthquake, a tsunami, a wild fire. It destroyed their lives, wrecked their hopes, and tore their anchor loose. Why? Look back at Matt 13 again. A plant can grow and look healthy and strong while its roots are only just below the surface and spread out.
4. As you grow in Christ, you should grow like a tree. My favorite psalm is Ps 1:1-3 **How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.**
5. It is possible to appear to your brothers and sisters as if you are growing, while you are stagnating or even slipping. Growth is your responsibility – our responsibility is to know you well enough to see growth or non-growth.
6. But if, as an infant Christian, a beginner, you haven't grown and put down your roots, you haven't started to put down a tap root, a big, growing, hefty root straight down into the soil, seeking for the deep things of God in the hard parts of the word, you will never be able to survive the storms that come upon you later. 1 Cor 10:13 **No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is**

faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

7. But just because He won't push you beyond what you are able to bear doesn't mean he won't push you right to the very edge. You may end up hanging on by your very last fingernail. But you are still hanging on. Grow stronger fingernails. Scratch a hand hold, a foot hold. Find something to clamp your teeth onto. 2 Peter 2:9 the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation. Count on God to force you to grow or quit. You decide which to do. This is where you need brothers and sisters as a support system. Those you can turn to who will reach out and help you hang on. They will help you put down that tap root.
8. Those who weren't able to hang on are those who had not put down roots. They didn't force themselves to crack the rocks found in the Bible and feed on the sweet meat found within and beneath them.

### III. When I become a mature Christian.

1. Now we finally come to the place where I started out. That Woodstock museum. I want you to look over your views on things. I want you to be honest. What is there that is questionable, but you are still hanging on to it? Is there something in your past that you know good and well you would never do again; you know it's a sin, yet you still think about it with nostalgia? You look back and wish you had done it

- one more time? You have considered becoming involved, even though you know you never will?
2. If I understand my Bible correctly, finally discarding this thing just may just be the beginning of maturity. It is the time when you actually figure out how to I Cor. 5:7 “walk by faith not by sight.” How to look at things through the eyes of God rather than through the eyes you have. These changes may again be large enough for people to be surprised at the change. You might change political parties or contribute to different organizations in different amounts. You may find yourself involved with a different group of people than you ever have before.
  3. Your change doesn't have to be dramatic and majestic. What you change your views on doesn't have to be evil or even just questionable. I know people who have wished they got drunk one more time, or wish they had driven way beyond the speed limit one more time, or wish they had shop-lifted just one more thing. People who wish they had pushed their brother/sister in the pool one more time or cursed out the boss when the chance arose. Who wished they had become sexually involved with one more person.
  4. Regrets are normal, but save your regrets for the evils you do, even if they are little evils. Nostalgia is wonderful, but save your nostalgia for the joys and wonders God gives us, not the pleasures and temptations Satan does.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Today we have looked at taking every thought captive. Every thought, what a concept.

But we have seen that when we first become a Christian, we take the obvious thoughts captive and change our life.

As we grow to middle age, we take more and more thoughts captive, usually making the minor adjustments in our lives which are nearly invisible to all but your closest companions.

When we reach maturity, we need to examine our core beliefs, the prejudices and bigotry we have ignored or refused to examine as we grew.

I encourage us to all grow those roots, grow those leaves and become fruit bearers for Jesus.