

**What People Are Saying About Carol Burton McLeod and  
*Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue***

Carol McLeod has developed a writing style that penetrates the core of issues that so often hinder our walk with the Lord. She presents a clear case for the examination of our mind, heart, and mouth. Carol begins with, “This book may not be for you,” but within a few pages, readers will quickly identify her words as a message from heaven. Her new book is fresh manna and profitable for our soul. It is beautifully written, encouraging, convicting, and, above all, helpful. I think the apostle Paul would read this book and smile at her understanding of the importance of healing our thought life. Buy several copies of this book and share it with friends and family.

—Dr. Steve Greene

Publisher and Executive Vice President, Media Group, Charisma Media

Carol McLeod brings readers into a space that affects us all but is rarely given serious consideration—the ability to connect our thought life and emotions with our outward expressions. In today’s society of social media and unmonitored responses, she leads the reader through a journey of aligning our mind, heart, and tongue with our call to live a God-honoring life.

—Dr. Deana L. Porterfield

President, Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern Seminary

Carol McLeod is an important voice in the church today. A great communicator? Yes! A convicting voice for truth? Yes! Carol is the real, genuine, and authentic deal. Not only has she survived some of life’s biggest challenges—she’s thriving! *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue* gives us insight into how she’s done it and is doing it!

—John Hull

Former host and CEO, 100 Huntley Street  
Lead Pastor, Eastside Baptist Church, Marietta, Georgia

I need this book, and you probably do, too. Our thoughts, our emotions, and our words have the capacity for great good—and great evil. Using both humor and hard-hitting facts, Carol McLeod shows us how to allow God’s truth from the Bible to shape these parts of ourselves for the greatest good. Best of all, Carol comes alongside us as a sister in the struggle. This book is already causing me to change how I think, feel, and speak—I imagine my family and friends will be quite grateful!

—Sarah Sundin  
Award-winning writer and author, *The Sea Before Us*

In the most distracted culture in the history of the world, Carol McLeod’s new book, *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue*, could not be more timely. The ability to manage our thoughts, what we say, and how we impact others is the great struggle of our moment in history. This book is your guide to thinking right thoughts, saying right things, and making a difference in the world. Don’t miss this opportunity to discover what really makes an impact.

—Phil Cooke, Ph.D.  
Filmmaker, media consultant, and author,  
*One Big Thing: Discovering What You Were Born to Do*

*Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue* is a practical and help-filled guide for how to take the Word of God into every emotion we experience. Carol shares her life of wisdom and insight in a way that makes you laugh and then apply the truth she reveals. This book is terrific counsel for any stage of life.

—Lorna Dueck  
CEO, Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. and YES TV

You will not have to read far into the introduction of *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue* to realize that Carol's new book has you locked firmly in its crosshairs. Target acquired. What then...? Solutions! Practical, anointed, encouraging, and insightful solutions. Carol, like you and me, has not lived an ethereal life paved with petunia petals. Her perspective is not from the pinnacle but from the streets, homes, and families where we all live. Carol has a gift for helping people, so don't be surprised when this book truly helps you.

—Chris Busch  
President and CEO, LightQuest Media

Carol McLeod's latest book, *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue*, is a must-read for everyone. A timely message in today's broken world, this book will speak to your heart like no other. Filled with Scripture, humor, candidness, and her incredible wisdom and experience, it will impact everyone who reads it. Carol is a gifted speaker, writer, and encourager, and it is easy to see how her blog is in the Top 50 Faith Blogs for Women around the globe. Thank you, Carol, for blessing us all with your wisdom, experience, and giftedness.

—Robbie Raugh, RN  
Integrative Health and Nutrition Practitioner  
Host, *The Raw Truth Health and Fitness*  
Speaker and author, *The Raw Truth Recharge:  
7 Truths to Health and Fitness*

This latest release from Carol McLeod is perhaps the most important one. We are guided daily by our hearts and minds, and so often we speak too soon with our mouths. Only under the guidance of the Holy Spirit can our heart, mind, and tongue be submitted to the will of God. In this book, Carol provides daily practical disciplines to help us live godly lives, fulfilling His destiny for us.

—Donna Russo  
Festival Director and CFO of Kingdom Bound Ministries  
[www.kingdombound.org](http://www.kingdombound.org)

In this powerful book, Carol drives you inch by inch through the battlefield of your mind to absolute victory. While she teaches with authority, she lets us in on the secrets behind it—life lessons she has learned. This book is not just about Carol’s ideas. It is about how to get the Bible into the nitty-gritty of our everyday lives. *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue* will leave rubber marks on the road of your life.

—Kathryn M. Graves  
Author, *Chasing Beautiful*  
[www.KathrynGraves.com](http://www.KathrynGraves.com)

Struggling with negativity? In *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue*, Carol McLeod reminds us of the power of the words we speak to ourselves and to others. Her book offers valuable strategies to help us deal with our negative self-talk, which can contaminate our hearts, minds, and souls, while jeopardizing our most important relationships. And as we begin to speak God’s truth to our souls, we can experience peace in our hearts, our minds, and our relationships.

—Karen Jordan  
Speaker and author, *Words That Change Everything*

Sometimes we need a friend who will tell us what we *need* to hear—not just what we *want* to hear. Carol McLeod is that friend, and she imparts those important truths with love that is backed by biblical principles. In *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue*, she shares with great transparency the mistakes she has made and the lessons God has taught her. And then she equips us with the tools to become women with hearts and minds that have been transformed by Him, and tongues that have been tamed by grace. Don’t miss this book!

—Michelle Cox  
Author, *When God Calls the Heart: Devotions from Hope Valley* and *Just 18 Summers*

In *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue*, Carol McLeod leads us out of bondage and into freedom—real freedom. This book exposes the things that keep us from being all we were made for and releases us to transform our lives.

—Anita Agers Brooks

Award-winning author

Inspirational speaker and international business/life coach

Carol McLeod is a breath of fresh truth! As a Christ-follower, I am constantly battling the inner voices of gossip, pride, and emotion. *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue* gently reminds me to replace these voices with God's truth and character. Thank you, Carol, for your transparency and wisdom. This must-read book is from one of the best!

—Keri Cardinale

Worship leader and speaker

Radio host, WDCX, Buffalo, NY



GUIDE YOUR  
**MIND**  
GUARD YOUR  
**HEART**  
GRACE YOUR  
**TONGUE**

*Carol Burton McLeod*



WHITAKER  
HOUSE

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## GUIDE YOUR MIND, GUARD YOUR HEART, GRACE YOUR TONGUE

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## FOREWORD

**O**ne of my friends told me about an eye-catching sign she came across at the entrance to a country road in the early springtime. The sign read: “Choose your rut carefully; you’ll be in it for the next thirty miles.” My mind swirled when I heard this story because I’ve known people who’ve been in a rut for thirty *years*, not just thirty miles. And climbing out is hard.

More often than not, our rut has to do with the faulty way we process what’s happening in our minds and hearts—and what we subsequently allow to come out of our mouths. Then we experience the age-old problem of being sincerely sorry for something we’ve said. Afterward, we may think we’ve learned our lesson, but then something unexpected happens, and we find ourselves once again speaking out of turn—creating hurt or even causing blame to be mistakenly placed on someone else.

I learned that lesson the hard way. After many years of working in ministry leadership, I was asked my opinion about whether or not a certain woman was ready to become the chairperson of a large, growing organization. I spoke up quickly—too quickly—and said, “I wonder if we should consider other people because her children have made some unwise choices, and it makes me question her ability to maintain control of her own home.” I honestly believed what I said, and the committee instantly dropped her name as a candidate and went on to consider other applicants. Eventually, a far less qualified person was asked to take on the leadership position.

That incident caused me to question my motivation, my spiritual heart, my attitude, and my reasoning. Had I responded out of a critical spirit, jealousy, legalistic judgment—or out of a genuine belief that the woman was unqualified? In retrospect, her children were actually pretty normal.

Soon afterward, the bottom dropped out of my life. My husband, Gene, and I had returned home from an out-of-state speaking engagement and had retired for the night. We were sound asleep when the phone rang. Gene answered the call, then pulled the receiver away from his ear. Choking back a sob, he said, “Jason has just been arrested for the murder of his wife’s first husband. He’s in jail in Orlando.” Nausea swept over me, and as I got out of bed, my legs would not hold my weight. Our only child, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, had pulled a trigger in a public parking lot, and a man had died. After two and a half years and seven postponements of his trial, Jason was convicted in the state of Florida of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

In the middle of my grief, I experienced the variety of ways in which the people who received our deeply sorrowful news responded to us. A few individuals merely quoted lots of Bible verses and gave us advice on raising children in a biblical way. Their thoughtless words cut deeply. Some people looked at us with judgment, while others had eyes of compassion. Many wept with us, feeling our grief as their own. Certain people said very little but began helping in tangible ways. Most expected us to immediately drop out of Christian leadership, but some advised us to “stay in the fight, because it’s the only way to defeat this devious attack from the enemy.”

What I learned from that experience was that the people who quickly spoke up and spewed out opinions and suggestions were usually the least helpful. But the people who kept their minds, hearts, and words centered on what God was leading them to think, do, and say were the ones who ministered to us in the most powerful ways. By holding their tongues, guarding their hearts, and asking God for wisdom, they poured healing salve into our troubled souls.

You might not receive a middle-of-the-night phone call like mine, but you will no doubt face other personal challenges. You’ll also have numerous opportunities to respond, offer advice, give counsel, and speak up about people, issues, and causes. In *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace*

*Your Tongue*, Carol McLeod does a masterful job of helping us learn how to think in a renewed way—a biblical way that will forever change how we live, including how we respond to our family members, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. With vulnerable transparency, she shares the mistakes she’s made and the lessons she’s learned. And she explains the best biblical choices each of us can make as we live in this world alongside other people who yearn to be understood, valued, and cared for.

As you read this book, you’ll not only discover a new way to think, but you’ll also learn powerful biblical principles with which you can guard your heart. As you apply these principles, your life will be enriched, and your speech will be rehabilitated, becoming more grace-filled. And everyone around you will benefit from what you’ve learned and put into practice. It’s a transformational way of thinking and living!

Always remember the best advice: “Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life” (Proverbs 4:23 NLT).

—Carol Kent

Speaker and author, *He Holds My Hand:  
Experiencing God’s Presence and Protection*

## PREFACE: THIS BOOK MAY NOT BE FOR YOU

**T**his book may not be for you if..

- ✦ you never think a negative thought.
- ✦ you never spend one second of your life worrying about the people you love.
- ✦ you have never lost your temper.
- ✦ you never allow bitterness to affect a relationship.
- ✦ you are able to completely forgive someone the instant he or she offends you.
- ✦ you are never moody and have never given a family member the silent treatment.
- ✦ you are never cynical about the politics of the day.
- ✦ you refuse to gossip—every minute of every hour of every day.
- ✦ you have never yelled at your children or your dog.
- ✦ you have never talked negatively about your spouse.
- ✦ you have never criticized your parents behind their backs.
- ✦ you have never spoken a word that you regret.

If all these statements are true of you, then you possess a stunningly perfect mind and constantly balanced emotions—and your words are always accurate and uplifting. (Perhaps you are the one who should be writing this book, rather than reading it! You can close it right now.) However,

if you are like me, and you regularly deal with such issues, then you have come to the right place! This book was written by a woman who has been in the trenches of life and is a veteran of mind, heart, and tongue problems. *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue* does not offer pat answers but presents powerful strategies that will reroute pandemic thinking and cure rotten emotions.

Most Christian women have regrets the size of Mount Rushmore: they regret how they have used their time, they regret how they have spent their money, they regret how much chocolate they have eaten—but most of all, they regret the words that they have spoken to the people they love the most and know the best. Every woman with a beating heart has spoken words “under the influence” of slurred thinking and warped feelings. And every woman wishes that she had the magical power to take those lethal words back.

But the tongue may not actually be the fundamental problem in our lives. The true plague is most likely the thoughts we think and the emotions that brew on the backburners of our hearts. Foundationally, we must understand that the tongue is merely the mirror of our thoughts and emotions. In order to speak words that are graced for godly purposes, we must first investigate the DNA of our minds and hearts. This book provides such a way for women to deal with their sometimes out-of-control thought lives, their deceived emotions, and their undisciplined tongues. While various books might discuss one of the three areas—the mind, the emotions, or the tongue—it is vital to consider the influence that each has on the others.

The Lord created your mind, your heart, and your mouth for specific and God-honoring purposes. When your thoughts, your emotions, and your words are working together for a sacred objective, your life can be transformed and make a glorious impact on your family, on others in your sphere of influence—and on people for generations to come!

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*Elizabeth Joy:* I love your spunky ways, your little-girl opinions, and your joyful chatter. You were made for greatness, dear one; don't ever forget it! I love being your Marmee.

*Jack:* Always remember that when you are on God's team, nothing is impossible for you, my Jack! Obey your mom and dad and enjoy being a boy! Thanks for loving Christmas with me. I love being your Marmee.

*Mom and Leo:* Thanks for loving me and for believing in me. My heart just aches to be with you, but know that I can always feel your prayers.

*Nanny:* Your example of godly living has inspired our entire family! Keep praying for all of us!

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And to *Jesus, my Lord and Savior!* Thank You for calling me, equipping me, anointing me, and choosing me for Your grand purposes. I live to make hell smaller and heaven bigger! I live to honor You with every breath, with every word, and with every minute of my life!

## INTRODUCTION: WHAT ARE YOUR ISSUES?

**T**he way our minds, emotions, and tongues function is perhaps the greatest indicator of our spiritual health and psychological strength. If our minds are clean and clear, they will undoubtedly influence both our emotions and our tongues in a positive way. When our thoughts are motivated by positive purposes, our thought life will be fruitful, and when our emotions are well-ordered, our words will be a blessing to others. As a matter of fact, the tongue does not influence either our thought life or our emotions; rather, it is controlled by the ideas and perspectives we allow to exist in our brains and by the emotions we embrace. Thus, if our minds are cluttered with unproductive or damaging thoughts, and if our emotions are unsettled, we can find ourselves facing any one of the following issues.

### **ISSUE #1: MIND GAMES**

*Tell the truth...* Has your mind ever taken you in the wrong direction? Perhaps you have been bombarded by worry or other destructive thought patterns, so that you often find yourself thinking self-defeating, critical, or angry thoughts. Maybe you are the type of person who is always vehemently convinced that something horrible is waiting for you around the next corner; Yet, when you turn that particular dreaded corner of life, you are surprised to find that no hideous event is waiting for you. Ashamedly, you realize that you invested countless days of emotional energy anticipating the worst-case scenario, when, in fact, all you ended up experiencing was a fairly good day.

*Tell the truth...* Have you ever convinced yourself that someone hated you? Perhaps *hate* is too strong a word, but, at the very least, you persuaded your extremely gullible self to believe that someone was offended by your despicable personhood, and therefore you began to double-check the effectiveness of your deodorant every time you approached his or her frigid presence! And then, when your self-esteem was at an all-time low, and you were sure that there was absolutely nothing likable about yourself, this apparently aloof acquaintance was, inexplicably, as welcoming and kind to you as a long-lost friend! You wondered if you had totally misinterpreted that individual's view of you.

*Tell the truth...* Are you held in bondage by fearful and appalling thoughts, in which, for example, your husband loses his job, your children are kidnapped, or you receive a doctor's report with the big "C" stamped on it?

*Tell the truth...* Have you ever found yourself tormented by horrific, dark thoughts and wondered if you were distantly related to Edgar Allen Poe or Stephen King? Perhaps your mental processes go something like this:

*I am going to fall down these stairs.*

*Someone I love is going to disappear.*

*My purse will be stolen, and my credit card and all of my bank accounts will be compromised.*

*Life is going too well, so I am sure that something bad is going to happen to me!*

It could be that your mind never travels down those dark, worrisome routes, but your imagination is absorbed by something else: you fantasize! Are you the type of person who has spent your entire life spinning mental golden threads of fiction about your first love, or that guy in the gym with whom you made eye contact yesterday, or some unattainable hottie on television? Perhaps you imagine yourself as mistreated and forlorn, when, suddenly, on the big screen of your mind, that rugged and ravishing new movie star (at least his on-screen version) comes to your rescue and whisks you away! Have these imaginary scenarios—or something similar—become a recurring thought pattern for you? *Tell the truth!*

## **ISSUE #2: EMOTIONAL ROLLER-COASTER RIDES**

Let's move next to some issues of the heart, or emotions. Perhaps you think that your mind is filled with positive thoughts and your tongue is well-regulated, but you admit that your emotions are out of control, and they have been directing the course of your life. Your constantly fluctuating emotions often lead you on a roller-coaster ride—climbing, dipping, spinning, and curving—from the thrill of the mountaintop to the valley of despair.

For example, if your teenager is ten minutes overdue from an activity, you begin to break out in a cold sweat and have even been known to call the local police station to see if an accident has been reported. Or, perhaps, every year on the anniversary of your beloved father's death, rather than being grateful for his long and productive life, you find yourself crying, eating all the carbs in sight, and mournfully moping around the house. Or maybe your emotional story is more like these scenarios: When you come home from a long day at work, if the house is picked up and the laundry is folded, you are cheerful and easy to live with. But if the house looks like a tornado roared through it, you become the Wicked Witch of the West!

## **ISSUE #3: SPEECH ERUPTIONS**

You might feel that your thought life is in order and your emotions are in check, but you sorrowfully admit that your tongue is unruly. As you frequently lash out at your children, vilify your spouse, or scream at your poor dog, the words roar and echo through the caverns of your soul, and you wonder, *Who is that person, and why does she hate her family so much?*

Perhaps you even verbally accost strangers from time to time. For example, when you have waited too long in the grocery store line, your tongue becomes a hot poker of blame aimed at the poor girl who is making minimum wage and, quite frankly, could not find another job if she tried. Instead of exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit, you feel compelled to vent, telling her why you will never come back to this "sorry place," in what specific ways she has absolutely ruined your day, and why she had better hope she never meets you in a dark alley!

Similarly, when the single mother who works at the fast-food drive-through mistakenly gives you the wrong change, you sweetly ask, "May

I please speak to your manager?” Although your voice is controlled, your words are not, and by the end of your five-minute diatribe, the cashier who flunked consumer math is in tears and has lost her job. But you spoke your mind...and isn't that the important thing?

## MARIONETTE ON A STRING

Which of the above is your primary issue? Is it the negative state of your thought life? Is it your out-of-control emotions? Or is it your unrestrained tongue? Perhaps you have some experience grappling with all three. Maybe you felt you had finally taken control of your tongue, but you became painfully aware that the town dump was still alive and well between your two ears. Then, when you eradicated all the “stinking thinking” from your brain, your raw emotions reared their ugly heads again, and you hung on, white-knuckled, for the ride of your life! Personally, too often, I have been forced to watch myself with great incredulity as my tongue became the marionette of my swamp-like brain and of my unbalanced emotional soul. My slippery tongue often comes to life by the pull of an emotional switch or by the manipulation of an errant thought.

## CRANIAL-CARDIO-ORAL SURGERY

If you sadly nod your head in agreement because you are dealing with any of the mind, heart, or tongue maladies I have mentioned, I believe you are an excellent candidate for a miraculous procedure known as *internal biblical laser surgery*, which is performed only by the Great Physician. Here's the good news: no matter what our issue(s), God is just itching to roll up His sleeves and perform a radical, cleansing, healing work in us! When God cleanses His dear children, He eliminates the foul odors and germs that have lingered around the hallways of our lives for much too long.

*Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue* is filled to overflowing with pertinent and powerful Scripture passages because, truthfully, the Bible is the only remedy that can heal our universal human maladies. Contrary to popular perception, the Bible does not merely address issues like evil serpents, miracles, floods, giants, fiery furnaces, visions, and heaven. I can guarantee you, God's Word has a voluminous amount of practical encouragement—applicable for believers of any time and culture—that will enable us to live abundantly and victoriously this side of heaven.

You will be able to guide your mind, guard your heart, and grace your tongue when you allow the Bible to laser its way through all of the ugly “stuff” in your life. Stored within the Scriptures is a vast treasure that will enable you to think the right thoughts, to control your emotional extravagance, and to never again regret another word that you speak.

*The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.* (Proverbs 15:28 ESV)

The Bible does, indeed, give instructions concerning our thought life; the Bible does, indeed, coach us in how to maintain a healthy emotional makeup; the Bible does, indeed, have much to say about the power that the tongue holds. Reading, studying, and memorizing the Bible is the miracle cure for which we have been longing in order to heal our disorderly thought life, our emotional instability, and our “mouth disease.”

A truly wise person is someone who no longer believes the lies of Satan but actually thinks like God thinks, based on His thoughts and will, expressed in His Word. Wisdom will become an intrinsic part of your mental makeup when you have taken every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (see 2 Corinthians 10:5), and when you have been transformed by the renewing of your mind (see Romans 12:2). You will receive an extraordinary ability to guard your out-of-control emotions, and you will be empowered to speak words of grace, wisdom, and patience.

Yes, there is only one possible cure for any mental infection that exists in the recesses of that gray matter between our two ears, or for any clog in the arteries of our spiritual hearts, or for any bitter words that want to escape from the opening that lies right underneath our nose—and that miraculous remedy is the Word of God. In this book, I endeavor to teach you how to access that potent remedy.

## **IN RHYTHM WITH GOD’S HEART**

With this promise of healing through God’s Word, we are confronted with a difficult but significant choice: will we allow God’s Holy Spirit to teach us to guide our thoughts, to guard our heartfelt emotions, and to grace our tongues? If so, we will need to allow Him to address all three areas in our lives, since it is virtually impossible to control one member

of that powerful triumvirate without dealing with the other two in the process. All three are intimately and inseparably connected. If you long to live the abundant life that Christ died to give you, then you must agree to receive peace and order for an unchecked mind, to allow the renewal of a heart that has been diseased, and to learn to govern a tongue that has careened out of control.

That is why *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue* is divided into three specific sections. The first section, entitled “Guide Your Mind!” deals with issues related to your thinking habits and patterns. It will help you examine exactly what you have allowed to take up space in your vital gray matter and how you can replace negative thoughts with positive, uplifting ones. The second section, called “Guard Your Heart!” will assist you in controlling your emotional responses to life, while offering a healthy emotional prescription that will enable you to live the way God intended you to. The last section, “Grace Your Tongue!” will explain how to clean up your “verbal vomit,” such as that which you have spewed on unsuspecting people in your world. Each chapter contains vivid references to the spiritual cure found on the sacred pages of the Bible; additionally, each chapter closes with a Scripture verse that places an exclamation point on that chapter’s theme.

When you have developed a wise mind-set due to being saturated with the Word of God, it will be impossible for you to continually embrace a foolish heart. Why? Your heart takes its cues from your thought life, which is the nerve center of your existence. As the internal biblical laser surgery takes place, and as wisdom rules and reigns in your brain, then your mind and heart will work together in complete harmony. Your heart will look into the mirror of your mind, and your emotions will reflect the thoughts your mind is thinking. The process may take a while...but it *will* happen! You will find that, when your heart and mind are in sync, your tongue will become a shadow-dancer for this dynamic duo. Your lips will speak the wisdom that flows from your renewed and reconstructed mind and heart.

This laser surgery is not an outpatient procedure—it will require a life-time commitment to receiving the miraculous healing power of God’s presence and Word. As you read this book, my prayer is that your mind will be

guided by Christ's thoughts, your heart will be guarded and transformed by His heart, and your tongue will be graced for His high purposes.

You have the capacity to actually think the thoughts of God, to experience the joy of your heart beating in rhythm with His heart, and to speak His words of encouragement to others. Let's get to it!

*The heart of the wise instructs his mouth and adds persuasiveness to his lips.* (Proverbs 16:23)

PART ONE  
**GUIDE YOUR MIND!**



## A BRAND-NEW BRAIN!

I am not the neatest person in the world, are you? The sad truth is that I did not receive the “cleaning gene” that most women do. More often than not, there are dishes in my sink, clothes on my bedroom floor, and yesterday’s towels strewn across my bathroom. (I am blushing right now.) Some days, my bed is haphazardly made, but most often, it is left askew from my postmenopausal sleeping patterns. Additionally, my kitchen floor perpetually needs sweeping, and my laundry is a never-decreasing mountain on the laundry room floor.

It’s not that I am opposed to cleaning, I just always have more important things to do, like answer e-mails or read a book or talk to one of my children on the phone! I know...I know...I know.... If I would just spend a little bit of time every day on my home, I might be able to keep it in order. I get that; I do! I have a friend who has tried to train me from the earliest days of my marriage that if I would just spend one hour a day first thing in the morning on cleaning and straightening, my house would never get disgustingly out of control. I did try that strategy for a day or two, but within about fifteen minutes of my first attempt, I was distracted by a magazine article or by a piano piece that was calling my name.

As much as I find absolutely no enjoyment in cleaning my home, I do, indeed, enjoy the results when I discipline myself to roll up my sleeves and get to work. I love it when my blue bathroom towels are all folded and put away neatly and in order. I love looking into my bedroom and seeing a bed that is made with precision—with no wrinkles to be found! And oh, the

rapture that fills my soul when my kitchen floor is swept and there are no dishes lingering in my sink! And did I mention that I love the smell of a sparkling-clean bathroom, of freshly washed laundry, and of dusting polish?

Why do I love the results but absolutely hate the process? Why, indeed? It is, quite simply, because of the daily effort and focus required.

Our minds are much like the homes in which we live: we must daily keep up with the process of organizing our mental clutter and cleaning up the cerebral dirt and grime that accumulates in our thought patterns, not to mention scrubbing the dark and dusty corners of our brains; otherwise, spiritual havoc will quickly ensue. If we take even one day off from the intensive process of keeping a pure mind, we will be in danger of losing the battle altogether. But while the process of sanitizing our brain may be exacting and frustrating, the results will be absolutely fabulous!

## **ALL THINGS NEW**

Not only does Jesus desire to remove junk from your brain, but He also longs to add goodness and peace to the fabric of your mind. He wants His very presence to be the motivating force within your thought processes. If you will allow Jesus to fill your mind with His power and presence, you will be a living, breathing demonstration of His knowledge and wisdom while you live on planet earth.

The foundational Scripture that we will apply to the renewing of our minds is this: “As [a person] *thinks within himself, so is he*” (Proverbs 23:7). If you are thinking the thoughts of Christ Himself, then you will demonstrate His character and purposes every day of your life this side of heaven. You will be Jesus’s show-and-tell, and He will reveal Himself through your life. Jesus will tell His story through you—what a divine promise and possibility!

If you have asked Jesus Christ to come into your heart and to forgive you of your sins, then you have become a Christian, or a Christ-follower. You are in agreement with God and with His Word that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, the Savior, and that He died on the cross of Calvary to reconcile you to the Father. You also realize that when Jesus died on the cross, it was to ensure that you would be able to live with Him forever. As a believer in Jesus Christ, you know that you are certainly not perfect, but that He is indeed perfect.

When you surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, you also surrendered your mind to Him. On that day of new birth, spiritually speaking, your mind was born again, restored, and renewed. From that momentous time forward, even your thought processes should have changed. Yet, although we are given the undeniable gift of eternal life the instant we are saved, we unfortunately don't automatically begin to think *all* of the right thoughts or embrace *all* of the right heart attitudes at the onset of this new life. This is because our minds are still susceptible to fleshly desires and motivations.

Thus, as Christians, we have an understanding of salvation and of the price Jesus paid to ensure forgiveness of sin for all who would come to Him. We also have an understanding of our future life in eternity with God—a future secured for us in our salvation. But what about right now? What about today? How do we appropriate salvation in the present tense of life? In what way does our salvation relate to a renewed mind?

Let me share with you an amazing piece of theology that might help all of this make sense: eternal life does not begin at death; it begins the instant you accept Jesus into your heart. And, if you can be victorious in the battle over your brain, you will experience life abundantly before you even arrive at heaven's shore!

## A FUTILE WALK

*So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind....*

(Ephesians 4:17)

In the above verse, Paul uses bold and significant language, declaring that he has heard from God Himself about this topic. The particular matter that Paul addresses concerns the believer's "walk" in life. The Greek word translated "walk" means to conduct oneself or to pass one's life; it can also mean to be occupied.

Paul is talking to you when he says that you were never intended to spend your life according to the futility of your mind, like the "Gentiles" do. If you choose to conduct yourself in this worthless manner, your mind will be devoid of truth and of appropriate thinking. The verse strongly implies that your mind will be a place of perverse thoughts and depravity. A futile

mind is one that is in a weakened condition, thinking frail thoughts and lacking vigor.

Thus, if your mind is occupied with lies and other inappropriate thoughts, this is a futile and destitute way of living. If you have given your mind over to perversity, you will quickly become a frail Christian who lacks both vigor and purpose. I have an inkling that when we get to heaven, we will sadly realize that we settled for so much less than God's best in this area of our minds. Therefore, if your mind is guilty of any of the descriptions that the word *futility* encompasses, you need to enter fully into the mind of Jesus Christ. You need to change your thought patterns and enthusiastically embrace His thoughts.

*...being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way....* (Ephesians 4:18–20)

Your life starts in your mind! If you want to live a vibrant, joyful life that smacks of the nature of God, it will always begin in your brain. I would do absolutely anything at all *not* to be excluded from the life of God! I long to live out God's dreams for my life, and therefore I must order my thinking according to His plan and boundaries. I must walk away from depraved and perverse thinking; I must think only true thoughts that honor God, so that I am able to live an energized and zealous life in tandem with the Father.

If we keep listening to God and continue to feed on His Word, we will be renewed in our minds day by day. If we commit ourselves to worship and prayer, our minds will perpetually become stronger and more vibrant. If we proactively choose to attend a life-changing Bible study and are committed to a body of believers, our minds will begin to change for the better.

*...if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind.*  
(Ephesians 4:21–23)

Again, what a divine possibility! We have the human potential of being renewed in the spirit of our minds when we listen to the Lord with undivided attention and then allow ourselves to be taught by Him. We must predetermine to listen to Him when He speaks, to educate ourselves according to His teachings, and to remind ourselves daily that truth is found only in Christ Jesus. Sincere renewal inevitably begins in Jesus Christ and is unequivocally sealed in Him. There is no other way to discover the secret of living a transformed and powerful life than to discover it in Jesus.

I must concur with the principle found in John 3:30: *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”* Every day of my journey upon earth’s shore, I must declare, *“More of His wisdom and less of my foolishness! More of His truth and less of my fantasies! More of His power and less of my weaknesses!”*

## **A MIRACLE IN THE MAKING**

The regeneration of our mind will build an entirely new and improved way of thinking for us. We will begin to bless others when they wrong us and forgive those who affront us. We will commence to love those who are cruel to us, and we will choose to bless offenders rather than criticize them. The renewal that is taking place in our minds is much more impactful than mere positive thinking because our regenerated thinking patterns have roots in Christ and not in self. It is not just an act of commitment but a lifestyle of surrender.

*For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.*

(Romans 8:5–6)

As your mind is being gloriously renewed, it is time for you to take yet another step of maturity in Christ—to make a decision to stop thinking about self and to start thinking Spirit thoughts. This step will require an act of your will that might cause you to sweat and groan as you labor to change what you think about, but it will deliver glorious joy and peace to your everyday life.

Realize that there is a price to pay if you long to partner with God in completing the transforming work of Christ in your life. That price is

called “desire.” You must “want” your mind to be set on the Spirit more than to be set on the flesh. You must have a moment of complete surrender when you painfully but powerfully assert, “I want You, God! I am sick and tired of my faulty mind and thoughts! Give me Your brain, Father! Help me to set my mind on the Holy Spirit of power!”

## **YOUR MIND-SET**

*But the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.* (Romans 8:6)

When a person holds to a certain set of beliefs, it is known as a *mind-set*. A mind-set determines how a person acts, and it also shapes their value system; a mind-set motivates an individual and influences who or what they choose as their sources of knowledge and authority. A mind-set can affect a person’s view of all their experiences, and it often dominates both their private and public life.

My father had a Depression-era mind-set, and it influenced everything he did. He ferociously saved money, refused to spend a penny on even some of the necessities of life, and would reuse things over and over and over again. Because of my dad’s particular way of thinking, we were required to use our teabags no less than three times before they were thrown away. How did we accomplish this? My dad would place a clean towel on top of the refrigerator every Sunday night, and it was there that we were required to place the once-used or twice-used teabags to dry out and then be used again. Clearly, my father lived by that Depression-era mind-set!

Perhaps you might possess what is considered a traditional Southern mind-set, and be known for extending hospitality and for a darling sweetness in your personality that is as syrupy as the sweetest of teas. Most likely, you liberally sprinkle your conversations with expressions such as “Bless your heart,” “I’m fixin’ to do somethin’,” and “y’all.”

Similarly, if our mind is set on the Holy Spirit, our actions and our speech will reflect that distinct outlook. The more we enter into the mind of Christ, the more we will expand our capacity to demonstrate His life to our world. Do you long to live life as it was truly meant to be lived, as purposed by the One who created you? If you desire to experience overwhelming peace in your heart, in your home, and in your relationships, you must

set your mind on the Spirit! There is no other way to encounter peace than to emphatically choose to set your mind on Him.

You must be more impacted by the Word of God than you are by anything else, if you long for your mind-set to reflect only Christ and His lovingkindness. Your past should not have the same degree of influence, the culture should not sway you, and your current living conditions should not hold the ability to influence your mind, as does the Word of God.

## **ALL WE HAVE TO OFFER**

*Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

(Romans 12:1–2)

The body to which Paul is referring in Romans 12 represents the total person. The stark reality is that our bodies, including all of our bodily systems and abilities, are all that we actually have to offer to the Lord. We must willingly and cheerfully give to Him our minds, our emotions, our tongues, our plans, our hearts, our potential, and all of our discipline. The four most important words that we will ever speak to the Savior are: “I am Yours, Lord!”

The greatest challenge when dealing with a living sacrifice is that it can walk off the altar! Since you are that living sacrifice, you must be prepared to say those four important words more than once in a lifetime. Every time your flesh tries to take back control of your mind, declare, “I am Yours, Lord!”

We must daily lay aside our own desires, in complete and utter submission to God, and then we must give to Him all of our energy and the entirety of our resources. This is the only reasonable way to respond to God, and it is an act of high and holy worship. If you believe that worship is merely choosing to sing a song on a Sunday morning with the other members of your church, you have it all wrong. If you equate worship with the copycat act of raising your hands just to impress the person next to you, you have it all wrong. Worship, at its beautiful and sacred core, is giving all of you to all of God. Worship is consecrating even the thoughts that you think to Him, and to Him alone.

In the ancient Hebrew sacrificial system, the animal sacrifices generally entailed the death of the animal, such as a sheep or an ox. When we become a “living and holy sacrifice” to God, that sacrifice involves dying to anything that does not reflect the mind of the Spirit, including our faulty thought life. Pleasing Christ is more than prohibiting ourselves from participating in behavior that is inappropriate for a believer; honoring Christ is deeper than determining that we won’t, for example, do drugs, cheat on our taxes, or participate in adulterous living. The desire to glorify Christ includes the desire to renew our minds by choosing the mind-set of the Holy Spirit. It is not mere actions that have the power to transform us into the likeness of Christ, but rather it is the renewal that takes place in our minds when the Holy Spirit is allowed to take control of them.

## **THE POWER OF RENEWAL**

Karen was an active young mother who had been raised in the church and who had memorized many Bible verses as a child. As she grew to adulthood, Bible memorization became less important to her, although her fervent walk with the Lord continued. Karen was a loving wife to her husband and a devoted mother to her three active children. She worked a part-time job at an insurance agency, was PTA president, taught Sunday school, and played the organ at church. Eventually, all of these responsibilities combined to place extreme pressures on her life; the busyness of her daily activities began to consume her—to choke the very life out of her. When she was no longer mentally and physically capable of juggling all her activities, she suffered a complete nervous breakdown and spent three weeks in the hospital trying to regain her vitality and mental stability.

The doctors treated Karen’s mental condition by administering strong doses of calming drugs, but due to the side effects of these drugs, she was nearly comatose for the entire three weeks. Her husband eventually asked the doctors to wean her off of the drugs so that she could once again engage in life. As Karen started to regain consciousness, she began to repeat the Bible verses that she had memorized as a child. The words of faith that had laid a solid spiritual foundation in her life now began to heal her mind. Over and over and over again, Karen would repeat these life-giving words of Scripture:

*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

(2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV)

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

(Philippians 4:13 NKJV)

*But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the One who lifts my head.*

(Psalm 3:3)

*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

(Hebrews 4:12)

Karen discovered that a renewed mind had the power to heal her, strengthen her, and enable her to continue living with strength and joy. When she was released from the hospital, she possessed a new vibrancy. She altered her schedule and chose to eliminate several optional activities to keep from becoming overcommitted again. The new joy in Karen's life was clearly apparent. Even her children were aware that they had a brand new mom!

## **MORE THAN A VITAMIN**

You can experience the power of a renewed mind, as well. The most important and potent spiritual vitamin that you can ingest in order to maintain a healthy brain is the Word of God. The Bible has miraculous and supernatural power to keep your mind on the right thought pathways and to provide stability where there has been confusion. God's Word is the truth that your brain has been desperately seeking! As you meditate on and memorize the Word of God, your way of thinking will actually change. As we will discuss in more detail later, you don't primarily read the Bible for *information* but for *transformation*. You will certainly be informed as you read the Bible, and you will access historical facts as well as great theological truths in it, but the foremost way that your life will be impacted is by the transformation that will take place in your mind, soul, and spirit.

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

(Romans 12:2)

This verse encourages us that, when our mind is transformed, we will begin to become experts at knowing what the will of God is. The Greek word translated “transformed” means “the change of moral character for the better.” As this mental transformation takes place, you will have an assurance of what the plans and purposes of God are for your particular life, enabling you to follow them. As others observe this rebirth of your brain, they will begin to come to you for spiritual insights and encouragement. When the Holy Spirit has remodeled your brain, you will then be able to impact the lives of others as they listen to the wisdom that has been given to you by the mind of Christ Himself.

Thus, while the goal is a transformed mind, the benefit package includes knowing God’s will. Your mind comes into agreement with the will of God, which the Bible says is “good and acceptable and perfect.” God has plans for you that are always good, that are acceptable to Him, and that are a perfect fit for you! And it all starts in your brand spanking new mind!

## **A MIND AND A MOUTHPIECE**

*For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.*  
(1 Corinthians 2:11)

In this fundamental verse, Paul once again addresses the purpose and intent of the mind. He reminds even those of us who are living in the twenty-first century that the only One who knows the thoughts of God is the Spirit of God. When you know the Holy Spirit and have allowed Him to take over your life, this incredible Teacher will give you first-hand knowledge of what is in the mind of God! The Holy Spirit is longing to share with you the thoughts of the Father, but He is able to do so only when you are in daily communion with Him. Perhaps it is time for you to stop talking incessantly throughout your prayer times and to simply listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God....*  
(1 Corinthians 2:12)

God's thoughts are not hidden, nor are they a riddle; our loving Father is the greatest Communicator in all of eternity. He enthusiastically and generously yearns for His children to know exactly what He is thinking. God doesn't play hide-and-seek with us, nor does He play hard to get. He is easier to understand and more accessible to know than you have ever imagined! He simply desires that you desire Him. He wants to hang out with you every day of your earthly existence. He wants you to be in close friendship with the Holy Spirit, who is an expert at knowing the mind of God.

We understand that relationships with friends and family members flourish when we definitively commit to spending time together. When I make a lunch date with a friend, it communicates to her that she is important and valuable to me. When I look at my husband's face and listen as he talks, it tells him that I love him and can't wait to hear what he is going to say next. When I put away my cell phone and simply have a cup of tea with my mom as we laugh and share memories, she feels loved and appreciated by me, her daughter.

A relationship with the Father takes much the same commitment of undivided attention, and it also requires the priority of spending quality time together. Again, God wants to hear you say, "Father, I choose *You!*" When you choose God before you choose social media, extracurricular interests, hobbies, or even necessary commitments in life, He will freely give you His thoughts, opinions, and wisdom.

*...which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.*  
(1 Corinthians 2:13)

This verse distinctly points to what should be our primary goal when dealing with our minds and our mouths. Our ambition should be to think spiritual thoughts that are birthed in the mind of God and are delivered to us by the divine communication skills of the Holy Spirit. Then, it is our human responsibility to make sure that those sacred and wise thoughts freely come out of our mouths in various situations in life. We no longer speak our own minds or our own hearts, but we become a mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit.

When we have cleaned our brains completely and made room for the thoughts of God, then our words become tools of wisdom and comfort.

They no longer criticize or condemn or even present a human perspective but are miraculously able to teach people God's truth, to comfort those in pain, and to heal those who are emotionally wounded, because that is exactly what the Holy Spirit does. And you, my friend, have been hanging out with Him! The Holy Spirit has rubbed off on you, and you have become like Him. The Holy Spirit is a contagious Spirit, and He wants you to catch everything that He has! That's a wonderful possibility, indeed!

*But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.* (1 Corinthians 2:14)

It has been all good news so far in our study of 1 Corinthians 2! We have learned that the Spirit of God knows the mind of God and that He can't wait to share all of it with us. We have discovered that when our mind comes into communion with the Holy Spirit, not only is our mind renewed but our words are transformed, as well. We actually begin to speak concepts that were birthed in the mind of God. However, now we are in for some sobering news.

If you are not connected to the mind of God through the channel of the Holy Spirit, you will never understand the spiritual words of God. If you ignore the function of the Holy Spirit, you will be unable to achieve a good connection with heaven and the mind of God. You will be left frustrated because there will be too much static on your direct line to the Father. Charles Finney wrote, "The unspiritual are deaf men judging music."

The good news is that the bad news doesn't last for long. Paul next presents a one-two punch when it comes to our ability to think the very thoughts of God Himself:

*But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that He will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.* (1 Corinthians 2:15-16)

The powerful, heavenly implications of this verse are nothing less than astonishing. We have the potential to think like God the Father thinks! When we partner with the Holy Spirit in our mental processing, we are

able to understand situations, people, and events just as Jesus does. We have the miraculous ability to receive the wisdom of the ages. As mere mortals, we have been bequeathed the glorious discernment of the Holy Spirit. We can have God-sized dreams and divine creativity in our pea-sized brains!

When the channels are open between you and heaven, you are invited to tap into the infinite mental powers of the God who created such glorious demonstrations as diamonds, giraffes, and stars. You have been given the wisdom of the Father who invented the water cycle and electricity. Your creative Partner is a Genius who paints sunsets and renews the seasons every year. You have the mind of Jesus Christ.

This benefit is only one prayer away: “Oh, Lord, give me Your mind! I deeply desire Your thoughts and Your wisdom. Holy Spirit, guide me into all truth.”

## **A BOY AND HIS MOM**

It is impossible to compartmentalize the effect of having the mind of Christ to one area of our lives because it seeps over into every area, including academics. When my husband, Craig, was the youth pastor of a church in the Deep South at the beginning of our ministry together, we became close friends with one of the families who attended that church. The father, Harold, was an engineer and served as a church elder. The mother, Sarah, was a stay-at-home mom. Harold and Sarah’s family was built around Mary, their teenage daughter; Michael, their middle-school-age son; and Ricky, their ten-year-old son. Sarah also found great delight in being a foster mom to many, many babies who just needed extra love.

When their son Ricky was in the fourth grade, Harold and Sarah were called in for a conference with his teacher. The teacher made them feel comfortable but wasted little time with small talk. She quickly let them know that Ricky was not doing well in school. Furthermore, she informed the shocked parents that Ricky was showing symptoms of some serious learning disabilities and that he likely would never graduate from high school. The compassionate yet truthful teacher had great concerns about Ricky’s future ability to succeed in middle school and suggested that they look into a special school for their delightful, lively child.

As Harold and Sarah processed this diagnosis, they decided that, to succeed in his studies, what Ricky needed was the mind of Christ. So Ricky and his determined mother began to memorize Scripture together. Sarah placed Scripture verses on every kitchen cabinet and on the bathroom mirror in their home. Thus, while Ricky was eating breakfast, he was looking around at the Word of God. While Ricky was facing the bathroom mirror, brushing his teeth, he saw only Bible verses.

Sarah was so focused on helping her son to be able to process information in a normal way that she even climbed up a ladder and attached Bible verses to the ceiling over Ricky's bed so that, every night before he fell asleep, he would see the Word of God, and every morning, when this little man woke up, his first sight would be the truth of God's Word.

When Ricky entered fifth grade, his parents began to see a miracle in the making. His grades slowly began to improve, and he was able to pay attention in class, in spite of the usual distractions. Ricky began to repeat at the kitchen table what he had learned in class, and he developed a voracious appetite for learning. His improvement continued, and he eventually graduated in the top ten of his high school graduating class of nearly five hundred students! He later graduated magna cum laude from a private university and earned his MBA from one of the most prestigious universities in the nation. Today, Ricky is the CEO of a major pharmaceutical company, all because he had parents who believed in the importance of tapping into the mind of Christ.

*I have more insight than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation.*  
(Psalm 119:99)

## **THE BEST FOR LAST**

Although we have already studied the principles found in verses 11–16 of 2 Corinthians 2, let's go back in that chapter and read verses 9–10. I wanted to save the very best for last!

*But just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." For to us God revealed them*

*through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.*  
(1 Corinthians 2:9–10)

God reveals to us—His beloved children—all that He has for us through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is intimately acquainted with the deepest parts of God, and so He is more than able to teach what is in the heart of the Father. But what this type of relationship requires is constant communion. We must choose to stay in continual contact with the Holy Spirit, who is in continual contact with the Father.

If you have a genuine desire to know a person well and intimately, then you will be eager to spend time with them and will do so whenever possible. When I first met Craig McLeod during my college years, he was all that I could think about and talk about! I couldn't get enough of him, and I communicated with him in any way possible. I loved being in his presence, I took every phone call from him that came into my dorm room, and I adored the letters he sent me. It was through deep communication that I got to know the man that Craig McLeod was. I became acquainted with his plans, his desires, his heart, and his wisdom.

In contrast, I know a lot about Abraham Lincoln as a role model and as a president; however, I have never had the pleasure of spending time in the company of the Great Emancipator. I know Abraham Lincoln only through the writings of historians and from the way he is depicted in movies. Due to the fact that I will never meet this incredible man in person, I will never hear his voice or know him personally. However, you and I have a daily opportunity to get to know our loving heavenly Father, the Creator of the universe. So, if you want to get to know God, spend time with His Holy Spirit. The connection will be glorious!

## **OUR GOAL**

*In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*  
(Romans 8:26–27)

In this passage, we see that we have the added gift of knowing that the Holy Spirit is praying for each one of us! When the Holy Spirit prays, He prays according to the will, the heart, and the mind of God Himself. Our goal is to do warfare and win the battle over our minds, so let us determine to destroy the lies and attacks of the enemy. Our focused objective is not to settle for mere positive thinking but to be in moment-by-moment communion with the Holy Spirit, with His wisdom and power. The cry of our hearts should be, “Holy Spirit, fill my mind with the thoughts of God Himself!”

*Those who seek the LORD understand all things.* (Proverbs 28:5)

## **GUIDE YOUR MIND: PERSONAL APPLICATION**

1. Imagine that you are a professional organizer, and that your mind is your client. Do a walk-through and evaluate how cluttered your mind is with thoughts that are unaligned with God’s thoughts. What are some of the erroneous ideas that have been allowed to gather dust there? After considering these questions, begin to devise a decluttering plan. Decide which false thought you will help your “client” to remove *today*.
2. What Bible verse can you use to help you declutter your mind and keep it in sync with the mind of the Father?
3. Willingly offer to the Lord your mind, your emotions, your plans, your heart, your desires, your tongue, your potential, and all of your discipline. Say with a sincere heart, “Lord, I am fully Yours!”
4. We have learned that the Holy Spirit longs to share with us the thoughts of our heavenly Father, but He can do so only when we are in continual communion with Him. Choose to spend more quality time with God. Additionally, during your prayer times, begin to incorporate periods of listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit.
5. When was the last time you clearly heard the voice of the Holy Spirit? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?