

Introducing...



Stinkin' Thinkin'

"Bring every thought into captivity to Christ."

This book is an outgrowth of my own deep depression that turned my happy life into a miserable existence. When our twelve-year-old daughter died in a traffic accident, my world came crashing down. That event shook the foundations of my life. It challenged my belief in a caring and all-controlling God. My emotions crumbled. My mind spiraled out of control in an avalanche of stormy negative thoughts that I never knew were nesting in me. Two years later, I found myself broken and embittered, and someone forced me to go to a Christian counselor. The counselor guided me through my thoughts and emotions and supported me as I climbed out of the pit of despondency I had dug for myself.

Books That Helped

The first book a counselor suggested I read was by [Frank Minirth and Paul Meier](#) titled, *[Happiness is a Choice](#)*. It made me mad. My unhappiness was not a choice. It was thrust upon me. But much later, I discovered happiness is a choice. Our happiness is a deliberate choice to choose joy over sorrow regardless of our circumstances.

Shortly after reading that book, I discovered another book that was extremely helpful to me. Dr. David Burns wrote, *[Feeling Good: A New Mood Therapy](#)*. It was my guidebook through the labyrinth of my negative thought patterns for over two years. Although it is not a Christian book, as I read each chapter, I was amazed at how I could see biblical principles in Dr. David Burns' words from a psychologist's perspective.

It takes time to change life-long thinking patterns. We must first recognize that our thought patterns are distortions of truth. (For months I argued my thoughts were true.) Then we have to see each of these patterns in our daily lives and maybe laugh about it as I did. Finally, we need to replace the old thought patterns with new God-honoring thoughts that are true according to God's word.

Over my years of ministry, I have shared my experiences and the discoveries that have transformed my unhappy heart into a happy one. I have since preached this series of ten messages to several churches and conferences. Young and old have found those sermons to be inspiring and life-changing. Many have asked me to consider putting it into print. This book is that attempt.

You can still find the audio series online at www.PrayerToday.org/Stinkin.htm.

The title of this book is *Stinkin' Thinkin'*. The entire series is about the power of Christ to transform us and take us out of our pit of *Stinkin' Thinkin'*.

This book is about the things that go on inside our minds that are not godly, but we allow them because we believe they are not sinful. After all, they are our thoughts. We excuse them by saying, "That's just the way I am." Or we believe it to be our personality trait and not a psychological problem.

God has a lot to say about psychological problems and their spiritual roots. We are going to be looking at our *Stinkin' Thinkin'* and how God wants to get into the negative part of our brains and allow the Holy Spirit to pull out those bitter roots and plant truth and joy so that the fruit of Jesus Christ can grow up in us.

First we are going to look at **10 Common Lies of Satan**, which psychologists call *Cognitive Distortions*. They are what God calls bitter roots, weights and sins that hinder us, trouble us and defile others around us. It is important that you study these and search for them in your life. We have added an Appendix to help apply these truths.

Then in the bulk of this book, we are going to examine nine common results of bitter roots that become lifelong troubles for us. They are:

1) Feeling Unloved 2) Perfectionism 3) Inferiority 4) Anxiety 5) Complaining 6) Anger 7) Lust 8) Depression 9) and Suicide.

In each chapter of this book, we are going to explore some mental issues, negative thoughts, distorted or untrue thoughts that affect our emotions and behavior. I call them *dysfunctional thoughts*. They create our emotions. All our emotions result from our thoughts and beliefs.

Our thoughts create every emotion we have. Every emotion we experience is based on a prior thought. Whether we are happy or unhappy, those emotions are first created in our minds then in our experience.

Most of those emotional thoughts are not conscious thoughts. They are automatic internal thoughts. Those thoughts become our beliefs that taint or color our world. If we can uncover the offending thoughts that create negative emotions, we will be well on our way to discovering the secret of a happy life. Life should be an adventure, not a nightmare.

Expect Resistance:

Some of you will experience adverse physical responses – migraine headaches, flare ups of arthritis, stomach disorders, backaches, heart problems, anxiety attacks, etc. Don't be dismayed. Do not let yourself be discouraged. Do not give in to temptation and give up. Keep reading until the end.

I'm going to address some things in this book that you may not like. Some of them will make you mad. That's because they hit close to home. It's because the truth touches a sore spot in your life. Don't just read, do the exercises we suggest. Track down your hidden thoughts that are causing you trouble, and transform them into corrected God-thoughts.

The Word of God is like antibodies invading the sick host body. It seeks out the evil thought and destroys them. They do not surrender easily without pain and complaint. They refuse to be unseated without a fight. There is a battle raging. The Bible exhorts us to “*Bring every thought into the obedience of Christ.*” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

It’s not about your spouse, it’s about you. This is not about your neighbor, it is about you. This is not about someone else’s problem. Your relationship to Christ is what it’s about. This is not about someone else’s attitude or sin. Your thoughts, emotions, attitudes, obsessions, internal dialogue, and lack of victory over the enemy’s thoughts are what it’s about. It’s every man’s battle. It is every woman’s battle. It’s a battle we all face.

Thoughts Matter to God

Thoughts affect your life and others around you. Either agree with God or contradict him and call him a liar. Either they are God’s thoughts, truthful and wholesome or Satan’s thoughts, evil and distorted. Every emotion is created by a thought. We all think. We are thinking beings, made in the image of God. There are no non-thinking humans. Descartes said, “I think, therefore I am.”

Your thoughts are “*either accusing or excusing you.*” (Romans 2:15) We are commanded to “*bring every thought into obedience to Christ.*” (2 Cor. 10:5) God’s desire and the Apostle’s prayer is that we would be “*wholly sanctified—spirit, soul, and body (and mind).*” (1 Thess. 5:23) God wants us “*to prosper, and be in health even as our soul prospers.*” (3 John 1:2)

Isaiah 26:3

*You will keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on Him,
because he trusts in You.*

2 Corinthians 10:5

*“We demolish arguments and every pretension that
sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and
we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”*

“10 Common Thinking Disorders.”

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7)

1. All or Nothing Thinking - Things are all good, or all bad.

It is the root soil for perfectionism. Everything must be perfect, or just right, or it is not good enough. Anything less than perfect is failure. You often use words like everyone, always, everywhere, never, and all the time. These are emotional superlatives that are almost never true. They are emotional exaggerations.

2. Overgeneralization (Murphy-ism) - You believe in Murphy's Law, “Everything that can go wrong will go wrong at the worst possible moment.” You laugh, but you really see life like that. You believe nothing ever goes right. Bad luck and bad breaks plague you. “Why does this always happen to me?” You may even have said, "Someone up there doesn't like me." You believe that most of the time, the world is against you.

3. Mental Filter (Negativism) - Life appears pessimistic at best. You wear emotional sunglasses. You see the world as tinted gray. You see the bad before you ever consider the good. You are negative about many things and distrustful of people who look on the bright side. You look at life through clouded glasses tainted by a negative bent.

4. Disqualifying the Positive - You overlook good things, or say they don't count. It is difficult for you to count your blessings. It is easier to count the non-blessings than to appreciate the good things God has done. "Yeah, but" is part of your vocabulary. You see the bad even in good things. Every silver lining has a cloud. Every sunset forebodes a storm. Every flower has a bee on it.

5. Mind Reading - You assume to know what others are thinking. You perceive yourself as being able to read their thoughts, intents, meanings, and motives, and it is always negative. Rarely do you ever read positive thoughts into people's expressions or actions. This is paranoia, feeling like you are unloved, unliked, and unlikable. You don't have many friends—is it any wonder? You think they don't like you.

6. Fortune Telling - You predict that disappointing or bad things will happen. You predict the good weather won't last. You knock on wood every time you mention a

blessing. You often say, "You just watch and see if I'm not right." You take pleasure in predicting the bad as though it were a "gift of God."—Psst, it is not!

7. Magnification - Little setbacks, accidents, and disagreements are blown out of proportion. You focus on one negative event to the point of enlarging it beyond belief. You make a big fuss over little things. Your own mistakes as well as other's get magnified, focused on, thought about, talked about, fussed over, fumed over, and kicked around until you are upset and angry. A toilet seat left up ruins your day.

8. Should Statements - Your life is ruled by "oughts and shoulds." You are driven by obligations. You are always in a hurry. You can't ever get enough things done. You carry a load of frustration over the way things "should" or "ought" to be. You have strong opinions about the way life ought to be. "It's not fair" is often your thought or feeling. You nag yourself and other people. You are driven by the "musts" and "shoulds" of life. You are stuck in a "justice trap" where you believe everything should be fair. The fact that life is not fair angers and frustrates you.

9. Labeling or Name Calling - You give people (or yourself) derogatory labels, like jerk, stupid, idiot, no good-for-nothing, failure, etc. You may have heard those derogatory names directed at you in your childhood home. You are quick to label people with negative labels. Somehow labeling others makes you feel better about yourself. Yet, when you fail or make a mistake, you often get down on yourself and label yourself as useless, hopeless, worthless, or stupid.

10. Personalization - You feel guilty and responsible when things go wrong. When someone says, "Who broke the lamp?" You feel like they are blaming you. You are just waiting to have a "pity party." You beat yourself up with guilt trips for not doing more to help someone or preventing something that went wrong. You feel you have to be someone's Savior, but often you fall far short, so you blame yourself. You feel guilty most of the time.

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever 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

God's Antidote for Negative Thoughts

The ten distorted thought patterns that believers often indulge in are unhealthy, untrue, and ungodly. They are "root" thinking disorders of the mind that cause anger, bitterness, and depression. God has not taught you these things. You are believing lies that God never said. Here is what God says about these lies.

1. All or Nothing Thinking (perfectionism) - things are good or all bad.

Think soberly about yourself as God thinks. (Romans 12:3) Glory in your weaknesses, God uses your weaknesses! (1 Corinthians. 12:9-10) Rejoice you are a jar of clay, so God gets the glory for fixing you. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

2. Overgeneralization (Murphy-ism) - You believe in Murphy's Law.

Stagger not in unbelief as some men do. (Romans 4:20-21) Keep believing even against all hope. Believe ALL things work together for good. (Romans 8:28) God is at work even when things go wrong. Believe that God has good plans and purposes. (Jeremiah 29:11) He plans to prosper you, not harm you.

3. Mental Filter (Negativism) - Life appears pessimistic at best.

Bad things do happen to good people (Job 1:22) He did not charge God foolishly. Think on good things (Philippians 4:8) Count your blessings, not your disappointments. In everything give thanks. (I Thessalonians 5:18) Give thanks for good things and bad things.

4. Disqualifying the Positive - You overlook good things, or think they don't count.

God hates a false balance. (Proverbs 11:1) Balance negative events with positive events. Believe you can do all things in Christ. (Philippians 4:13) Believe that you can endure troubles. You are blessed with all spiritual blessings. (Ephesians 1:3) Enjoy it when God blesses you.

5. Mind Reading - You think you know what others are thinking. You don't mind-

read positive thoughts. Use the test of a false prophet. Being wrong once disqualifies you. (Deuteronomy 18:22) You can't read minds. Love thinks no evil. (1 Corinthians 13:5-7) Stop thinking evil. Think the best of everyone, not the worst. Don't judge outward appearances. (John 7:24) Judge righteous judgment. (Psalm 94:11, Matthew 12:25) Only the Lord knows the thoughts of men. Only God knows the heart and discerns thoughts. (Hebrews 4:12)

6. Fortune Telling - You predict disappointing or bad things will happen. You are not a prophet or you'd be 100% right. (Deuteronomy 18:10-13) Stop predicting bad things. If a person turns to mediums, I will cut him off. (Leviticus 19:31 and 20:6) You aren't a medium. Let God be true, and every man a liar. Believe what God says, not your intuition. (Romans 3:4)

7. Magnification - Little set-backs are blown out of proportion. Believe nothing can separate you from God's love. (Romans 8:35) Magnify His love for you. Believe if God be for you none can be against you. (Romans 8:31) Magnify the Lord, not the bad. Believe no weapon formed against you will prosper. (Isaiah 54:17) Magnify God's power, not Satan's.

8. Should Statements - Your life is ruled by "oughts & shoulds." No one is justified by deeds of the law. (Romans 3:20) Keeping rules makes no one perfect. By taking thought, you can't add one cubit to your stature. (Matthew 6:27) Rejoice in forgiveness. Even if you kept every law, broke one, you'd be guilty of all. (James 2:10) Calvary covers it all. By the works of the law no one is justified (Galatians 3:11) Let grace be magnified.

9. Labeling or Name Calling - You give people derogatory labels. Call no man a fool. (Matthew 5:22) He who is without sin cast the first stone. What God has cleansed don't you call common or unclean. (Acts 10:15) Don't smudge God's people. Swear not at all. (Matthew 5:34-37) Let your 'yes', be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no.'

10. Personalization - You feel you are to blame or responsible when things go wrong. Satan is the accuser of the brethren, not you. (Zechariah 3:1-5) He's a liar. Don't believe him. Satan accuses you before God day and night. (Revelation 12:10-11) Don't join in. Jesus is the Messiah, you are not. There's only one Lord. There's only one Savior, it's not you. (Ephesians. 4:5) He is the Savior of the body. (Ephesians 5:23) Jesus makes the bride perfect, you don't.

1 Corinthians 2:16

For who has known the mind and purposes of the Lord, so as to instruct Him?
But we have the mind of Christ. [to be guided by His thoughts and purposes].

Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: