

Chapter 1



God and Your Mind

Proverbs 23:7

The title of this book is “*Stinkin’ Thinkin’*”. It’s all about the thoughts we allow ourselves to think that stink up our lives.

We need to realize that most of our troubles don’t come from the outside. They come from the inside. We all have thoughts rolling around in our minds that are not true. They are our opinions, but they aren’t true. They are lies Satan planted in our thoughts. We think they are our own thoughts, so we feed on them. We think about them. We brood over them. We dialogue with ourselves about our opinions. Then we believe those contaminated thoughts. Once we believe our lies, we feel unpleasant emotions because of them. They poison our emotions. Once they poison our emotions, they squirt out of our mouths and our actions to contaminate those around us. The untrue thoughts in our minds become our beliefs, even though they contradict the word of God. They destroy our moods and defile those around us, our families, our children, our friends, and even our churches.

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

We can paraphrase that and say, “You are what you think.” Or “What you think is what you are.” Your thoughts define your character and your personality. Your thoughts also control your emotions and your moods. In this book, we want you to come face to face with the hidden thoughts you think every day that spoil your happiness. God wants us to come to grips with what is in our minds that harms our emotions.

The Lost Easter Egg

When I was growing up our parents would hide Easter Eggs around the house. Living in Michigan, it was usually too cold to hide eggs outdoors, so they hid them in the house. We had six kids in a small house ranging from 3 to 16-year-olds, so mom and dad had to be very ingenious in hiding those colored eggs.

All six of us children had the responsibility of finding those eggs. You can imagine the amount of eggs our parents had to hide in our small home in order to placate all of us. Mom usually was the one to hide them, and her memory wasn’t always that great. She put some in obvious places so the littlest ones could find them. But for the rest of us, she had to be creative. Once we had found all those beautifully colored and decorated eggs, we would put them on the table and count them.

I remember one Easter we put them on the table and counted, and there was one missing. Mom said there was an egg missing and being who she was, my mom said, “I can’t remember where I put it. You just have to find it.” So, we went back and turned the house inside out again, looking for the egg. We never found that one. Finally, mom decided she must have miscounted.

After about three months, we noticed a terrible smell in the house. We thought it might have been our dog doing her duty in some secret corner, but that was not it. We thought maybe the septic tank was backing up again, but it turned out not to be that either. So now the hunt was on. Mom had us all sniffing all around the house to find a dead mouse or rotten cheese. It was our missing egg. Mom had put it in the corner of the sofa cushion, and when someone sat down, it wedged its way down into the crack in the sofa frame. I’ll tell you it was much easier to find by following the smell. We followed that smell and finally put our hands in the sofa frame and pulled out a rotten, smelly, mold covered Easter egg.

The egg wasn't a problem until it stank. That's the way our thought-lives are too. Our thoughts don't seem to be a problem until they stink up our lives.

God says in his word, there are some putrid smells that come into the nostrils of God when things are not right in our thoughts. There are stinky thoughts that many of us hide deep inside. No one else knows they are there. But after a while they stink and everyone notices your stinky thoughts. They first affect you and your emotions, then they affect other people around you.

God wants us to find our Stinkin' Thinkin' before it gets out of control.

God Is Concerned About Our Thoughts.

God is more concerned about our minds, our thoughts, than He is about our bodies. Too often, we pray about our physical ailments when God is much more concerned with spiritual ailments. We are often only concerned with the way we feel and the symptoms that we experience than getting to the root cause. We don't want to get down to the nitty gritty of finding out what the problem really is beneath the surface.

In my research on the subject, I have found that many doctors have studied the relationship between physical healing and the mind. Their research has revealed that a majority, 60-80% of all illnesses, can be traced back to emotional or mental issues. Doctors have found that thinking disorders trigger, cause, or worsen a majority of illnesses.

Many times, when the Lord brings healing to someone's body, they are healed instantaneously. Within weeks or months, they are back in the same state, and we wonder why. The problem is their minds (their thoughts) remain in the same rut. *"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."*

God's primary emphasis in the Bible is not our bodies or our physical healing, but the healing of our minds that leads us to be sick in body and in relationships. God's concerned about our thoughts. Our mind is the boiler room of the body. It is the kitchen of the soul. That is where things get mixed up. It's where we make a delicious dish or a colossal mess. Our thoughts create our attitudes, emotions, and our actions in life. Our thoughts are the incubators of our whole life. Everything good and everything bad begins in our thoughts. *"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."*

Your thoughts color your soul. Just as a drop of ink dropped into a glass of water discolors the water, so one thought, one errant thought, a defiling thought, an ungodly thought, a lying thought that contradicts the word of God, will pollute your whole mind. It won't turn the whole thing black, but it will certainly taint it.

Our Dog Sassy

We had a dog that used to enjoy drinking out of the toilet. We were shocked when we brought her into our home after getting her from somebody else. Sassy was a wonderful dog. She would lick our hands and even our faces. But then we discovered when her water bowl was empty she would wander into the bathroom and get right up on the toilet, put her head down and start lapping up the toilet water. Obviously

it wasn't dirty toilet water. It had been flushed. It was clean water, but none the less, tainted water. It was tainted, unclean water. Would you do that? Would you drink from the toilet bowl? No, of course not!

Yet our minds do that constantly. We lap up things that are unclean. We feast on unclean thoughts. Oh, they aren't dirty thoughts, but they are tainted thoughts, thoughts that are not true, thoughts that are little white lies, stinky thoughts. They are thoughts that are lies of Satan. We lap them up. We think there's no harm. But these thoughts are pollutants, things that God said are detestable in his sight.

God says, *"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."*

God is concerned about our thoughts. We are not exempt from thoughts because we're saved. God doesn't say, "It's okay to think whatever you want because the blood of Jesus will cover you." You think you can just ask for forgiveness and it will be gone. That's not the way it works.

Our Thoughts and Our Emotions

This internal dialogue the Apostles referred to is an important help to our understanding of our mind and emotions. All emotions are the total of the thoughts we think. Our internal dialogue convinces us that certain things are true. As we repeat that dialogue over and over, we become convinced that what we think is true. In fact, we brain wash ourselves by repetition. Even when our internal dialogue is a lie, we still internalize it as though it were true. That truthful or untruthful thought comes out as emotions. We think, therefore we feel. All feelings, all emotions, whether good or bad, result from thoughts. They are the result of our internal dialogue.

We all experience a wide range of emotions. Unless you've had a lobotomy and someone has removed your emotional chip, you have emotions. Most of us have a wide variety of emotions. Where do those emotions come from? Where do moods come from? You say, "I'm in a bad mood this morning" or, more likely, someone else may say, "You're in a bad mood today." You may have just woken up, but you find yourself in a bad mood. Where did that bad mood come from? It didn't just magically appear out of nowhere. It came from some hidden thought or thoughts that are troubling you.

Thoughts create emotions. Every emotion that you feel is created by a thought. You don't create emotions just by taking drugs. Drugs may make you feel good, but that is because they suppress your negative thoughts. There may be chemical imbalances in people's bodies that aggravate their thinking patterns and cause unhealthy emotions. But basically, all emotions come from our thought patterns.

I've investigated this over years of counseling with people and being counseled myself. I realize that every emotion I have, whether it's good or bad, is brought on by my thoughts.

Have You Ever Had a Really Bad Day?

Let's say you got up in the morning and for no apparent reason, you are just in a foul mood and your wife says, "What's the matter with you?" You respond, "Nothing." Well, number one, that's a lie, something is the matter. You have a thought or many thoughts that are out of order. That's what's wrong!

Let's say you proceed through the day and you get to work. Everybody around you knows you are in a bad mood. Then somewhere in the middle of the day, the phone rings, and you answer it and the speaker says, "Hello, is this Richard W. LaFountain?" I respond, "Yes, it is." He announces, "This is the

Pennsylvania Lottery Commission. Someone purchased a lottery ticket for you. (I have to say that because I don't purchase them myself.) You have just won the \$70 million jackpot." Now what happens to your mood? Are you still grumpy? Are you still gloomy? Are you still out-of-sorts? No! I don't care who you are, when you hear that you just won the lottery, you're ecstatic. You're euphoric. You're on cloud nine. You run around the room shouting, "I won the lottery. I'm rich!" You immediately think, "I am a wealthy millionaire. All my problems are solved!"

I can guarantee that would happen with every one of us. I can guarantee it is going to affect your emotions no matter what your foul mood is at that hour. They are going to change dramatically from sadness to joy. Your emotions will make a complete turnaround. Why? What changed? Did your bank account change? No. Did you physically have \$70 million in hand? No. Did the chemistry of your body change? No. What changed? Your thoughts changed! The thoughts that were going through your mind changed immediately, instantaneously. Your whole demeanor changed.

Then, let's suppose, about the end of the day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the phone rings again. "Hello. This is the lottery commission. Is this Richard W. LaFountain?" You happily respond, "Yes, it is." The Lottery Commission responds, "We called you earlier. We are sorry to inform you that we notified the wrong Richard LaFountain. You did not win the lottery. We're sorry for the mistake." and they hang up. What happens to my emotions? It may not be as dramatic as getting the news, but it will suddenly make me realize everything is the way it was before that news came. Now I'd be in a worse mood than before.

Our Thoughts Rule Our Emotions.

When you are depressed, you must understand that you cause your own depression with your thoughts. You're not depressed because of what somebody else did. You're not even depressed because of life. You're depressed because of your thoughts about other people and about life. God wants us to understand that.

A Young Lady's Story

There was a wonderful lady who came into my office who I had been counseling for several weeks. She was dealing with negative thoughts and emotions. As we dealt with these things, we practiced the pattern of journaling every day. I had her track her emotions every day. She was to write down what she was feeling and what thoughts were going through her mind at the time.

She did that for some weeks, but then got away from doing it. That day, she was severely depressed. She said, "On Tuesday morning, I was in my house and for no reason at all, Pastor, I swear to God, no reason at all, I was standing there and suddenly this huge depression came on me and it's been there ever since." It was then Saturday.

I asked if she remembered what we had learned, that a thought created every emotion? She said she did. So, I asked her to go back to that Tuesday and investigate her thoughts. I asked her, "What was going on in your thoughts?"

She said, “Nothing, Pastor, I wasn’t thinking about anything.” Of course I knew that was not true because we are always thinking about something. We are all thinking about something all the time, even when we are sleeping. So I challenged her. “No, you were thinking something. Tell me everything that was going on that day. Describe to me the room.” She described the room. She had cleaned the house. She had stayed home from work that day and it made her feel good. She was standing at the ironing board ironing. And suddenly, she felt a wave of depression.

So I asked, “What was going on in the room? Did you have the TV on?” No, she replied. I asked, “Did you have the radio on?” She said, “Yes, there was music in the background.” I reasoned, “Think about that music for a moment. What was playing?” She said, “Well, I remember the worship music stopped.” I asked, “Then what came on?” She replied, “It was *Family Radio*.” (A Christian radio station in many parts of the country.) She said Harold Camping was speaking. (He was the station owner who made biblical commentaries.) I asked, “What was he saying?” She scrunched her face into a grimace and said, “He was talking about working mothers who don’t stay at home and how terrible they are.” I asked, “Is that when you got depressed?” She burst into tears and cried, “Yes, It was at that very moment!”

This young lady finally understood that emotions don’t just happen, that thoughts always trigger them. Even if your moods are triggered by chemical imbalance, that imbalance manifests as thoughts. You are not responsible for your chemistry, but you are responsible for your thoughts.

Our thoughts control our emotions. That is why God is concerned about our thoughts. They concern everything about you. They determine the course that you take. They’ll determine the traits you have and the way other people perceive you. They determine everything about your life.

God is concerned about our thoughts. He said,

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”

God Wants to Correct Our Thoughts!

Not only is God concerned about our thoughts, He holds us accountable for them. We must correct our thoughts. Nobody else is going to do it for us. Parents, if you think you can correct your children’s thoughts, you can’t. Every person must correct his own thoughts.

“The heart is deceitful above all things and is desperately wicked. Who can know it?”
(Jeremiah 17:9)

It’s the wise man that knows it. God holds us accountable for the thoughts of our heart and the ways of our mind. Throughout Scripture, we have admonitions about thoughts.

Peter writes to the church in **1 Peter 1:13**, and he says this:

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;”

A more modern translation says,

“Put on the girdle of your mind,” tightening the belt of your mind. Stop living such a sloppy life with your thoughts, gird them up. Tighten your spiritual belt, get your thinking under control.

In **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**, we read concerning spiritual warfare. God again holds us accountable for our thoughts. He says,

*³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 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.***

You see, God holds us accountable for our thoughts and says, this is spiritual warfare, folks. Do you want to know how to tear down Satan's kingdom? Start with what is inside of you. We must begin with ourselves and be accountable for our own thoughts and use the weapons of prayer and the weapons of God's word to bring our thoughts into subjection.