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Cogito ergo sum.”

This is Latin. Don’t worry, it’s the only Latin in this book, and now it’s behind you.

What does it mean? It’s a translation of the well-known French quotation “Je pense, donc je suis.”

You might know it better as “I think, therefore I am.”

Perhaps your reaction to the phrase is something like, “Duh! Of course!” But when René Descartes first published the thought in 1637, it was groundbreaking. People had been using their minds (more or less) since God breathed life into Adam, but rarely had they thought about the mind itself or how it functions. Descartes’s statement was a turning point for people’s awareness of their thought processes, and it became a hinge of modern philosophy.

Unfortunately, too few people today think about their own thought processes, much less taking steps to improve them. Yet the mind left untended becomes a fertile breeding ground for all kinds of destructive or unproductive thinking, which almost always results in destructive or unproductive behavior.

As I said in my book Total Quality Life, “Thoughts become attitudes. Attitudes become actions. Actions become habits. Therefore, the key to controlling your life is to control your mind.” In order to live happy, healthy, productive lives—total quality lives—people must care for their minds. The good news is, despite what you might be thinking right now, you can do it! That’s what The Power of Your Brain is all about—caring for our minds so that we’re empowered to experience total quality life.
MY PERSONAL JOURNEY

My journey with this mind-renewal diet began at the prompting of Dr. Melvin Maxwell, my college president, who took his now famous son, John C. Maxwell, and me to the Positive Mental Attitude rallies in Dayton, Ohio. The speakers’ inspiring messages still ring in my mind daily. I can hear W. Clement Stone saying, “What the mind can conceive, you can achieve.” I needed all the help I could get with Positive Mental Attitude since I spent the early part of my childhood in a coal-mining community called Baileysville, located in the majestic hills of West Virginia. It was a small town with a population of less than a hundred and a main street that was less of a street and more of a cul-de-sac. It featured a marvelous view of the hills, as well as an old-fashioned swinging bridge over which we could cross the river. It was the very definition of rural and, because of that, it was a place that was long on familial love though quite short on luxurious amenities.

I lived in a small, three-room house on the side of Baileysville Mountain with my mother, my father, and my two brothers, Mark and Terry. We got our water for free from a nearby well, and we kept warm in the winters with the help of our hardworking potbellied stove, which ran on the same coal my father mined. We didn’t have a bathroom; instead, we had a well-worn path to the outhouse. It wasn’t much. But it was home and we liked it.

On Saturday mornings, my family made for the Wyoming Company Store to buy supplies for the coming week. While my parents stretched their money as far as they could, my brothers and I took our weekly fill of television viewing on the black-and-white TV sets in the store’s furniture section. We had no television at home, so this was the only way we could keep up with the adventures of Sky King. As you might imagine, we always took advantage of that crucial opportunity.

Our Saturday morning excursion was always the highlight of my week. That made it all the more tragic the time we came home from it to find our little three-room home completely engulfed in flames. Sure, we could’ve run to the well and started hauling water to fight the fire, but it would’ve been only a token effort. The house was too far gone, and it was soon a smoldering pile of ashes.
I’ll never forget how my dad put his arm around Pastor Grindstaff that day and quoted a paraphrase of Job 1:21: “The LORD giveth and the LORD taketh away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.” My father’s faith in the face of such hardships helped provide a firm foundation for my life’s work today. His profoundly positive attitude, keeping a faithful perspective even in the midst of tragedy, was a testament to his singular focus on God. I cried for days afterward, but my father never wavered in his trust that God would take care of us. Looking back, it’s clear that he had a healthy mind.

He did not, however, have a healthy body. Toiling in the coal mines day after day took its toll on him, and by the age of thirty-one, he’d broken his back three times down in the mines and had begun to show symptoms of black lung, the dreadful disease often contracted by coal miners.

So we packed up and moved to Columbus, Ohio, in hopes of leaving the hardscrabble life of coal mining behind us. Dad began to work in construction, and though the pay wasn’t great, it kept us in pinto beans, cornbread, and fried bologna, which we had for supper nearly every night.

Then Dad got laid off in the winter of 1961. It was a tough winter that year, a winter filled with snow and frigid temperatures, but the severe climate was far from the worst of our worries. With money tight, my parents closed off the majority of the house to try to limit our utility bills.

Food was starting to become scarce too. On Christmas Eve, Mom looked in the cupboards and found no food for Christmas Day—not even our customary pinto beans, cornbread, and bologna. There was no food in the house and, with Dad out of work, no conceivable way of buying any.

Reluctantly, my family headed downtown to inquire about receiving government assistance. We parked our old Plymouth and got in line with hundreds of people all hoping that the city of Columbus could provide cheese, flour, dried milk, and powdered eggs. But even the prospect of receiving much-needed food couldn’t warm our hearts enough to fend off the stinging cold with the biting wind and blowing snow.
Finally, my father wouldn’t stand for it another moment. “We’re going home, boys,” he announced. “God will provide!” I didn’t understand where his faith came from or why God wouldn’t provide for us through the government assistance program, but I trusted his faith, and so did my brothers and Mom.

Once we got home, we found some popcorn in the cupboard, so that became our dinner. We boys spent the rest of the evening opening our Christmas presents, one to each of us, purchased with trading stamps from our neighborhood Top Value catalog store. After opening our presents, we gathered in our parents’ bedroom for the night, our stomachs full of popcorn, our hearts full of familial love, and our minds full of anxiety about tomorrow’s nonexistent breakfast menu.

The next morning, my tight-knit family was awakened by a loud knock at the front door and the muffled shout of “Merry Christmas!” We rushed to the door, threw it open, and found a crowd of people from our church, Fifth Avenue Church, standing on our doorstep with Christmas gifts, clothes, and, most importantly, a month’s worth of food—including our beloved pinto beans, cornmeal, and bologna. Merry Christmas, indeed!

GOD IS STILL IN HEAVEN

In a way, my dad’s expression of faith in desperate circumstances was like that of King Jehoshaphat. Facing an escalating military threat from three nations—Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir—Jehoshaphat knew his tiny kingdom of Judah couldn’t defeat these enemies. Not on its own, anyway.

So he turned to God, seeking the Lord’s assistance in front of an assembled throng of the entire nation:

O Lord, God our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name,
saying, “If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us” (2 Chron. 20:6-9).

Notice how Jehoshaphat begins his prayer with the rhetorical question, “Are you not the God who is in heaven?” Jehoshaphat is reminding himself—and the assembled mass of Judeans—that of course God can do anything. He’s “the God who is in heaven” for crying out loud! These seemingly invincible enemies from Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir are of no consequence compared to God. By asking the question, Jehoshaphat is attempting to refocus the minds and hearts of his people onto what really counts—God’s sovereignty and might.

In the next verse, Jehoshaphat continues with more rhetorical questions: “O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?” While the first question reminded God’s people of God’s power, the second galvanized their hearts and minds, including Jehoshaphat himself, by focusing on God’s faithfulness. God not only possesses the power to act, he has a history of using that power to act on behalf of his people. What a healthy way to think in the midst of adversity!

Now I can see that my dad thought the same way about God as Jehoshaphat did. Standing in line on Christmas Eve, my father as much as lifted his eyes and cried out, “Are you not the God of the heavens? Have you not provided for us in the past?” My dad had such a strong faith in God’s provision that he knew he could trust God to take complete care of us.

Though my father passed away less than a year later in an accident, his faith remains with me to this day, as an example and an inspiration. While I recognize that I enjoyed some advantages that many others haven’t, such as growing up in a faithful family, my hardships, including the loss of my father, were very real too. The bitter aspects of my experience could have easily compelled me to a life of self-pity and
aimlessness. Instead, by God’s grace and because of my father’s example, my childhood instilled in me a desire to help people lead a total quality life.

THE REASON FOR THIS BOOK
You too can have faith like my father and King Jehoshaphat—faith that will carry you through whatever the circumstance. You can learn to function well in all facets of your life and enjoy a healthy spiritual life, healthy emotional life, healthy financial life, healthy relational life—the list goes on. But one key prerequisite to all these different types of health is having a healthy mind. If you’re struggling with a particular area in your life, it’s quite likely that your thinking about that area is not as healthy as it could be. You may need to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2). It might be time for you to go on a mind renewal diet.

Thus, my motivation to write this book. My heart’s passion is to help you live a total quality life, to help you make the most of your all-too-brief time on this earth. And if you aren’t functioning well, if you aren’t making the most of your life, I propose that you focus on developing a healthier mind. I know there are times when my mind is not as healthy as it should be. Even now, I sometimes allow negative and destructive ideas to creep into my thinking. It requires awareness, discipline, and the power of the Holy Spirit to restore my mind back to health. That’s where this unique diet can be of great help to you.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK
This book will teach you a four-phase process for restoring order and cleanliness to your thought life. The four phases are:

- Detoxification
- Realignment
- Reinforcement
- Perseverance

Each of the first three phases can be completed in one week, so that
you can work through the bulk of your mind renewal diet in about three weeks. But the results you achieve can last forever!

The fourth phase, Perseverance, focuses on the transition from diet to lifestyle. In it you’ll learn to challenge your mind so that you experience all the benefits of being a lifelong learner. In a sense, this fourth week stretches into a lifetime as you make healthy thinking a way of life.

Each week of your mind renewal diet, you’ll learn new behaviors you can incorporate into your life to promote healthy thinking. These are not so much steps to healthy thinking, as if you leave one behind and move up to the next higher step, but practices of healthy living that you can gradually layer on top of one another. Learning them one at a time over a three-week time frame is much simpler and easier than trying to incorporate them all in a single day.

At the end of each chapter, you’ll find a Lock It Down section that offers five practical actions you can take to apply the new behavior you’ve learned in that chapter to your own life. Don’t feel as if you need to complete every action in the Lock It Down section for one practice before moving on to the next practice. It’s okay to skip some actions and come back to them later. However, do choose at least one or two actions to work with right away before moving on. That’s the only way that you’ll move beyond reading about change to actually making a change. Also, resist the temptation to always look through and find the ones that seem easiest to you. It’s okay to do that every now and then, but most of the time, challenge yourself to do one of the actions that requires more effort. You’ll get much more benefit from the mind renewal process that way. As you try various actions and decide which ones work best for you, you’ll be building a system for renewing your mind that God can use to make an incredible difference in the way that you think, feel, and act.

I’m not going to tell you it’s easy to bring about change in your way of thinking, but it is doable! And it’s essential for anyone who wants to live a well-ordered, productive life. With this mind renewal diet as your guide and with the Holy Spirit empowering your transformation, you’ll be surprised at how quickly you begin to see a major difference in the way you think and act.
Once you’ve finished reading *The Power of Your Brain*, return to it often. My hope is that this will not be a book that you read once and then store on a shelf. Keep this book handy and use it! Refer to it often so that the process of renewing your mind sinks below the surface and becomes a way of life for you. Review the principles again. Try exercises you might have skipped the first time. And continue to experience victory, through God’s power, in the battle for your mind.

**VICTORY IS WITHIN REACH**

Renewing the mind is an ongoing battle. Satan and his slaves will not give up the battle to enslave your mind until Jesus returns. But—and here’s the key—you can have victory today. You can have victory tomorrow and the next day. This mind renewal diet is your battle plan; it will lead you to victory in the daily war for your mind. And as one small victory leads to a series of victories, and a series of victories leads to a victorious lifestyle, you’ll soon be able to look back and see how God has used this mind renewal process to change the way you think. It can have a positive impact on every area of your life.

I hope and pray that, as we embark on this journey together, you will take these lessons to heart—and to mind. It is my sincere dream that every person in this world, in the complete spectrum of existence, would cherish every breath of air as a gift from God, because that is exactly what they are.
PHASE 1

DETOXIFICATION

WEEK ONE
PRACTICE 1

SURRENDER CONTROL

FOCUS

to gain control of your mind,
relinquish control of your life

So, wait. The first step to winning the battle for my mind is to surrender? Absolutely. You got it. Okay, let me explain.

Think of the Christian life, as the Bible so often describes it, in terms of warfare. There is a huge difference between supporting a war verbally and actually stepping onto a battlefield. It’s pretty easy to sit in the comfort of your living room, watching debates in congress or listening to news pundits, and decide whether you are for or against a particular military action. In our day, supporting a war doesn’t necessarily require us to reorder our lives or make any sacrifice whatsoever. In many cases, people can talk at length about why they are for or against a war and then go on about life completely unaffected. It’s not as if they’re volunteering to be the first one into the firefight.

Not so with a soldier. Enlisted men and women surrender their very lives in support of a country’s defense or other military objectives. Soldiers relinquish much of their time, comfort, convenience, desires, freedom, and safety to serve the country and its mission. They place themselves under the command of their country’s leaders, agreeing to go where they are commanded to go and do what they are commanded to do in the way they are commanded to do it. While they can only trust that their leaders are concerned for their safety and well-being, they expect their leaders to always act in the best interests of their country. They agree to participate in whatever military action their leaders...
deem necessary to protect the nation’s welfare, no matter the cost. For a person who enlists, supporting a war means nothing short of total and complete surrender.

Many professing Christians approach their faith more as couch potatoes, armchair commentating about the war, than as soldiers stepping onto the battlefield. They verbally support the concept of building Jesus’ kingdom, but they stop short of volunteering for service or even inconveniencing themselves for the sake of the mission. They fail to relinquish control of their time, their goals, and their desires to the supreme Commander-in-Chief. They never quite make it, in a sense, to the recruiter’s office, to the point of surrendering their lives, their hearts, and their minds to the service of Christ.

But the call to faith in Jesus is not a call to a sedentary lifestyle of comfort and indulgence. It is a call to an active life of service, to participate in God’s plan to rescue and transform the world. To live such a life, we must first surrender our minds to be transformed, so that we can begin to think, as much as possible, the way Jesus thought. The good news is that we don’t have to accomplish all this in our own power. Instead, God gave us his Spirit, who transforms and empowers us to live the life God calls us to and to think the way Jesus thinks.

Perhaps you’ve never before considered that Jesus desires and expects to be Lord of the way you think. In fact, the Bible has quite a lot to say about our minds.

**MIND BY DESIGN**

God designed and gave us our minds—a unique gift to the pinnacle of his creation—and with them, instructions for their care and use.
laid out in black and white in his Word. Here is a small sampling, with my emphasis added:

- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37).
- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30).
- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind” (Luke 10:27).
- “Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45).
- “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires” (Rom. 8:5).
- “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2).
- “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Phil. 4:8).

As you can see, our minds are on God’s mind quite a bit. Maybe we need to pay more attention to our minds too.

**LORD OF THE WAY WE THINK**

As Christians, we are to surrender our minds so that Jesus becomes Lord of the way we think. Now, surrendering our minds doesn’t mean
that we stop thinking. Not at all. Christians can and should be among the most logical, rational, intellectually curious people in the world. Remember that God created our minds, and he expects us to use them to the best of our abilities!

Nor does it mean that we should uncritically accept any idea or thought that presents itself as Christian. There are lots of people out there claiming to be Christian teachers whose ideas, attitudes, and practices don’t measure up to Scripture. And some of what is simply accepted in our culture as a Christian point of view is inconsistent with, or opposed to, the teachings of Jesus. The Bible teaches Christians to “test everything. Hold on to the good” (1 Thess. 5:21).

Surrendering your mind to Christ does mean to choose Jesus as your mentor or teacher, to trust his wisdom as a guide for your life. It means to trust that his way of understanding and making sense of the world is true, accurate, and sufficient. If you choose to believe what Jesus believes, to order your life according to the principles he teaches, and to offer your life in his service, then you are surrendering your mind to Jesus.

Learning to think the way Jesus thinks doesn’t happen in an evening or a weekend. Just as soldiers go through basic training to prepare themselves for military service, Christians must submit themselves to training for Kingdom service. The mind renewal diet will help you train your mind to participate effectively in service to your King. Instead of being easily persuaded and blown about by every thought or idea that floats through your mind, you’ll learn to proactively select and act on the thoughts and behaviors that strengthen your life in Christ.

**MIND ASSAULT**

Just as soldiers guard themselves against those who might attack their positions, the soldier of Christ will guard against assaults on the
mind, whether the attacks are out in the open or more insidious. They understand, as C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity*, that every decision they make affects their ability to guard their mind and thinking:

> Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature; either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow creatures, and with itself.¹

What we think about is what we become. Unfortunately, many of us disregard this truth and carelessly ingest unhealthy content into our minds that inevitably produces a myriad of unhealthy thoughts, attitudes, and eventually, behaviors.

For example, even though we know we aren’t what we drive, we’ve allowed marketers and advertisers into our homes and into our minds, and they have convinced us otherwise. How many people do you know (perhaps you’re one of them) who are driving cars they can’t afford because of the way it makes them feel or look? They’ve exchanged financial health for an image of prosperity.

Here’s another one. What’s the best and healthiest way to lose weight? Eat less (and

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¹Memory is a function of the mind, and there are two types of memories: explicit memories, which are facts and events; and implicit memories, which remind you how to do something. For example, the answers to the questions on a history test are (hopefully) explicit memories. Implicit memories remind you how to actually write the responses.

The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.

**SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL**
better) and exercise more, right? Of course. Yet the diet industry raked in about fifty-five billion dollars in 2006 and is expected to exceed sixty billion dollars in 2008. Even though we know what it takes to lose weight, we let the advertising industry convince us that the newest pill or the next plan will be the magic bullet we’ve been waiting for. We exchange common-sense living for untested, unproven methodologies, many of which may end up causing more harm than good.

So how do we move from unconsciously accepting and acting on whatever thoughts or ideas bombard our minds to proactively choosing what we will believe and how we will act? We put ourselves on a thought diet.

**MIND FUEL**

The plain fact of the matter is that your mind, just like an automobile, needs fuel to operate. Fill your car with higher-quality gasoline, and it’ll run better. In the same way, your mind will function better when you fill it with premium fuel. And when it comes to your mind, I can guarantee that you’ll be able to afford the better stuff.

Or, compare it to your body. Remember when you were in elementary school and you learned about the food pyramid that provides a guide for healthy eating? You may have learned four major food groups or you may have learned five. Now the USDA says there are six! They are: grains, vegetables, fruits, oils, milk, and meat and beans.

God designed our bodies to rely on healthy portions of a variety of foods. We were never meant to exist on a strict diet of Big Macs and French fries. Not that there’s anything wrong with those things intrinsically—they’re fine every once in a while. If all you eat is junk food, however, you’re going to wind up with a junky body.

Astonishingly, your mind operates on the same principle as your
body. What goes in is what’s going to come out. Our minds are bombarded by so much junk—some of it unavoidable, some of it we welcome—that they get cluttered and overwhelmed, and our thoughts become cloudy and distorted. What’s worse than having a junky body? Having a junky mind!

In order to have healthy minds, we must have healthy thoughts. Just as the health of our bodies depends, in part, on the content of the foods we consume, the fitness of our minds correlates with the healthiness of the ideas we embrace.

But how can we know the difference between healthy and unhealthy thoughts? What sort of thoughts are on our approved mind food pyramid? Remember the passage I quoted above, Philippians 4:8: “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” There are your healthy mind food groups.

Of course Philippians 4:8 is easily quoted, but not so easily practiced. Our minds tend to be so crowded, it’s a challenge to search for and destroy all the thoughts that fail to meet the Philippians 4:8 standard, and even more difficult to prevent them from entering our minds in the first place. The key, again, to gaining control of your mind is to first surrender control of your mind, heart, and body, to give it over to your supreme Commander-in-Chief, Jesus. More about that after an important introduction.

MEET JAKE

As we journey together through the different practices involved in renewing your mind, you’ll learn about a person I’ve created to journey along with us. This is not an actual person, but more a conglomeration of people, a collection of experiences with mind renewal. Let’s call him Jake.

Jake has a fairly good life. He has a wife whom he loves and a couple
of kids who are the delight of his eyes, to borrow a biblical-sounding phrase. He isn’t wealthy, but he isn’t poor. He has a job that pays the bills and takes care of the mortgage, that puts food on the table for his family and allows them to take a vacation every once in a while. He buys a tall cup of coffee, with room for cream, at Starbucks every day on his way into work; he often meets his wife and kids for lunch at the pasta place down the street from his office, or, depending on how close payday is, Taco Bell.

In his spare time, Jake likes to read the occasional bestselling novel or go to the movies to catch whatever is popular at the time. He has a few favorite TV shows, including the news, which he usually catches with his wife after the kids are in bed. He watches a lot of sports and DVDs on the weekends, but not so much that it interferes with his family time. Driving, he listens to music or talk radio, and while he’s at work, he mostly works, but he does enjoy the occasional e-mail from a friend and reading up on his favorite Web sites.

Jake and his family attend a thriving church and have many friends and acquaintances there. He sings harmony during praise and worship and takes notes during the sermon, though sometimes his mind wanders when his pastor preaches. He smiles when he shakes hands during greeting time and looks people in the eye when he talks to them.

But—and here’s the catch—Jake still feels a little empty and spiritually lethargic; like he’s carrying around excess weight in his soul. He believes he’s a Christian, but he doesn’t see much evidence of God’s power transforming his life. Though he tries to read his Bible (occasionally), he doesn’t really get it or have the time (he thinks) to figure it out. He’s pretty sure he loves God and (most of) God’s people, but he’s not really serving them or others in any way that he can see. Like a person who has packed on a little too much around his middle, Jake has an overweight mind that indulges a little too much on junk food and not enough on spiritual nourishment.

What is a man like Jake to do to shake off his sluggish spirit? He needs a mind renewal diet. But, just like any other diet, a thought diet will only help if Jake makes a full commitment to it. A nutritional diet won’t work if we don’t commit to eating the right foods, and a
mind renewal diet won’t work if we don’t commit to thinking the right thoughts.

What Jake—along with the rest of us—really needs is to learn how to think the right thoughts (which then produce the right behaviors) by committing his heart and mind to righteousness. Jesus made it plain in Matthew 15:19 that our hearts, when left to their own devices, are the source of ungodliness in our lives. That’s why the first step of the mind renewal diet is a complete relinquishment of the mind and heart to the One who created them in the first place.

Not to say that Jake has to be perfect. Nor do you. Nor do I. That’s the whole point of salvation and living a life submitted to God—that we are imperfect people who are in need of help. Be honest with yourself; don’t try to put a happy face on your bad days. If you’re lonely, angry, or discouraged, admit it to yourself with honesty, and then give your feelings and circumstances over to God to help you get through them. But in order to live with healthy minds, we must have healthy spiritual hearts, and to do that, we must give up ownership of our hearts. We must give that ownership to our Creator.

Taking such a step is extraordinarily countercultural. In our culture, it’s almost indisputable dogma that we’re entitled to do as we please as long as it doesn’t infringe on someone else’s rights. If it feels good, do it—that’s the underlying message we receive on a near-constant basis. As the poet William Ernest Henley taught us, we are the masters of our fate, the captains of our soul. To surrender our hearts and minds to the control of another, even our Creator, goes against the grain of nearly every message we are bombarded with in our culture. And yet it’s exactly the step that we all need to take in order to gain control of our minds, and thus our lives.

At this point in his life, Jake has seized control of his heart. He may have surrendered it to God some time ago, but he isn’t allowing God to change him any longer. He has taken back the control of his heart, and it is having a negative impact on his mind. To break out of his spiritual lethargy, Jake must again relinquish control of his heart. He needs to surrender his heart to God day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, inviting the Lord to infuse his heart with God’s presence.
SWEET SURRENDER

In a physical diet, we need to give up control over what we eat and surrender our desires for junky food in exchange for foods that nourish our bodies. We must care for our bodies as God intended, feeding them the types of foods he designed them to consume. The same holds true for a diet to renew your mind. When we enter into a mind renewal diet, the first step is to give up control over what we think and surrender our desire for unhealthy mind food in favor of that which is pleasing to God. Unhealthy thoughts flow from the heart, which means we must also give up control of our hearts to God. If you’re still clinging on to that control, you need to surrender it to the Maker of your mind, body, and heart.

How do you do that? Simply make the decision, and then invite God to transform your heart through saying a simple prayer. Even if you’ve prayed a prayer like this in the past, praying it again is a great way to remind yourself whose child you are, and to affirm that you want God to be in charge of your life—including your heart and mind. Ask him to change you from the inside out. Pray that God will help you relinquish control of your heart, and therefore your mind, to him. Not only is it the first step toward a healthy mind, but it’s the most important thing you can ever do in your life.

- **Admit that you have sinned.** “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).
- **Believe that Jesus Christ died for you.** “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).
- **Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life.** “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Rom. 10:9-10).

*Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe you died for
my sins and arose from the grave. I now turn from my sins and invite you to come in and transform my heart and life. I receive you as my personal Savior and follow you as my Lord. Amen.

Jake got up from his knees feeling as though he was a new man. He knew God had heard his prayer, and he knew he truly wanted God to be in charge of his life again. This prayer was only a first step, but Jake was sure it was a step in the right direction.

In the Lock It Down section, you’ll find a number of exercises that will help you begin to surrender your heart and mind to Jesus, as well as to prepare for the next practice in the mind renewal diet: detoxifying your mind.

**LOCK IT DOWN**

*Now complete these five exercises to apply what you learned in this chapter.*

1. As you begin this unique diet, take some time to seriously consider what you hope to accomplish through the process. Write out or journal your answers to the following questions: What changes do you hope to see in your life? What outcomes do you expect to experience? What would make your mind renewal diet a success for you?

2. When setting goals, it's helpful to make them as specific and measurable as possible. In writing them, you can answer the question, “How will I know for sure that I’ve accomplished this goal?” After considering what you hope to accomplish through the mind renewal process, write out some specific, measurable goals for yourself. Later, you can use them to evaluate the difference the mind renewal diet is making in your life.

3. When we are not performing very well in a particular area in our life, most often we can trace it to an issue of knowledge, desire, or resources: I don’t know enough to do well, I don’t care enough to do well, or I don’t have
everything I need to do well. Sometimes it’s a combination of two or three of the factors. Keep a private list of each of your mind struggles this week. In each case, note whether it is an issue of knowledge, desire, or resources.

4. As you go through this process, you’ll learn much more about the unhealthy ideas that bombard our minds from a variety of sources. Before going on, take some time to identify what you suspect are the most common sources of unhealthy ideas in your own life. Pray now that the Holy Spirit would help you identify those sources and empower you to experience victory over the unhealthy ideas that flow from those sources.

5. Choose one of the Bible verses in the Mind by Design section on page 19 and memorize it. (You can do it!)