

Partners In Courage, October, 2015

Best Thoughts Make “Best Life Ever”

Sermon by Wes Daughenbaugh

INTRODUCTION: I have a habit of going into bookstores and asking the Holy Spirit to draw me to any book he wants me to read. Recently I purchased SWITCH ON YOUR BRAIN—The Key to PEAK HAPPINESS, THINKING, and HEALTH by Dr. Caroline Leaf. I recommend that you buy and absorb this book. Much of the book is a brain scientist describing to average people how the brain works. However, the brain is so marvelous that even though the book is written for average people to read many people might get bogged down in the details of how the brain works and fail to appropriate her instructions on how to “switch on the brain” or “rewire your brain.”

She uses many scriptures in addition to scientific facts, saying often that science is catching up to the Scriptures. In this book she gives a five-step plan on how to detox your brain. The same five steps work to not only detox negative memories, but also give us the steps to reprogram our brains with thoughts that will help us have peak happiness, health, and very productive thinking.

I’ve been anointed as a teacher of God’s word for many years. My whole purpose in teaching is to make profound things simple to understand, easy to remember, and easy to apply. That said, I’m not going to repeat too much of the technical descriptions of just how the brain works. I want to emphasize the practical steps we can take to have the very best thoughts, and thus have the very best lives possible.

1. THOUGHTS ARE REAL PHYSICAL THINGS THAT OCCUPY MENTAL REAL ESTATE.

Our thoughts come from spiritual energy. Your mind and your brain are two different things. Your “mind” is actually your soul and you would have your soul even if you were killed. If you your spirit and soul stepped outside your body in a near death experience you’d be able to think just as you do now.

The brain is a physical organ, like a computer with its built in programs, and software we can use for creative purposes. Our mind, our soul, chooses what to file in this computer. However, most people are not taking direct responsibility for the thoughts they think.

The book describes that our thoughts actually take physical form in the brain. They look like electrical wiring—one thought wired to another. Some of them look like tree trunks sprouting up and having many branches.

HERE ARE A FEW QUOTES FROM CHAPTER ONE

“Eric R. Kandel, a Nobel Prize-winning neurophysiologist for his work on memory, shows how our thoughts, even our imaginations get ‘under the skin’ of our DNA and can turn certain genes on and certain genes off, changing the structure of the neurons in the brain. So as we think and imagine, we change the structure and function of our brains.” (Page 32)

“Our brain is changing moment by moment as we are thinking. By our thinking and choosing, we are redesigning the landscape of our brain.” (33)

“We cannot control the events and circumstances of life but we can control our reactions. In fact we can control our reactions to anything, and in doing so we change our brains. It’s not easy; it is hard work, but it can be done through our thoughts and choices.” (page 33)

“Research shows that 75 to 98 percent of mental, physical, and behavioral illness comes from one’s thought life. This staggering and eye-opening statistic means only 2 to 25 percent of mental and physical illness comes from the environment and genes.” (Page 34)

I personally believe that the number one health principle in the world is to have peaceful, loving, kind and positive thoughts dominating the mind, giving peace to the heart and purpose to one’s life. I get this from the example of the ancient Israelites who were eating Manna in the wilderness. The Bible says

it was the food of angels. Certainly God would have put every vitamin and mineral and substance needed for health in the Manna. Yet, almost every one of those people died before they reached 60 years of age. They had plenty of exercise, because they moved around in the desert and had to walk. What killed them early was their negative thinking and grumbling against God. They had the most negative perspectives and chose worry, complaining, grumbling and anxiety while rejecting trust, rejoicing, thankfulness and devotion to God.

The oldest person in the world (Age 116) eats bacon every day. Bacon isn't a health food. The dietary code in the Old Testament forbids eating fat and unclean meats. Bacon is both—lots of fat, and comes from an unclean animal. Then there are people who exercise, eat carefully, and take all kinds of supplements. Yet they die early. Well, no one can judge just why these things happen, but in my mind, having thoughts that give life is far and away the most healthy thing you can do. How much diet and exercise play into the equation I'm not sure. We should **“care for our bodies as Christ cares for the church”** (Eph. 5:29). But caring for what goes into our brains and stays there in the form of thoughts that have physical structure even more important than diet and exercise. Perhaps 80% of health is from thoughts, and 20% from diet and exercise. I can't say the exact percentages. My point is, don't concentrate just on diet and exercise to attain health while completely ignoring what kinds of thoughts are growing like plants in your brain.

Are weeds growing? Are toxic thoughts that poison your whole system growing? Are thoughts growing that produce stress? Are righteous, good and lovely thoughts growing like trees in your brain—as if you were planting and growing your own little Garden of Eden?

“One study done by the Institute of HeartMath showed that thinking and feeling anger, fear and frustration caused DNA to change shape according to thoughts and feelings. The DNA responded by tightening up and becoming shorter, switching off many DNA codes, which reduced quality expression. So we feel shut down by negative emotions, and our bodies feel this too. But here's the great part: the negative shutdown or poor quality of the DNA codes was reversed by feelings of love, joy appreciation, and gratitude! The researches also found that HIV positive patients who had positive thoughts and feelings had 300,000 times more resistance to the disease than those without positive feelings. So the takeaway here is that when we operate in our normal love design—which is being made in God's image (Gen. 1:26)—we are able to change the shape of our DNA for the better.” (Page 36)

2. WE MUST FIRMLY DECIDE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR THOUGHTS.

My wife wants to have our kitchen cupboards refinished. I want to tear out a portion of the wall that makes a closet hard to get into. You may have plans to change something in your house, get a new car, or even lose weight. What do you want to change? You're probably thinking about changing something to get to a better state. *But have you decided to make your top priority changing toxic memories into positive ones? Have you decided to find and eliminate every lie you've believed that hinders you and prevents you from becoming all you could be? Have you decided to plant little trees in your mind that will grow into magnificent fruit trees that fill your life with spiritual fruit and the delight that comes from godly achievements?*

The Pharisees who made themselves enemies to Jesus Christ took great care to be very clean on the outside. Jesus compared them to beautiful tombs and monuments to the dead—pretty on the outside, but full of decay and death on the inside. (See Matthew 23:27)

Just how clean and neat do you want to be? Some people are just fine with a little order and a lot of mess and disorganization and chaos. If they take a bath once a week, it's okay with them. If the garbage can is overflowing in the house, it's okay to just let it sit there another day fouling the order of the house. It's okay with them if their refrigerator hasn't been cleaned in six months. As we grow and mature, we should always be moving the boundaries of our lives by increasing order and organization and pushing back disorder and disorganization.

Are you content to drive around in a filthy car—trashed on the inside and dirty on the outside? Many of you would say, “No, I make an effort to keep things clean and orderly.” Good. *My point: if you are going to clean up anything, or organize anything, or wash anything, or put anything in it’s place, the most important area to improve order and organization is in your thought life.*

Many people act like they have no control over the thoughts and emotions that drag them down. They can’t control the circumstances and events that happen to them, so they think they can’t control the sadness or the hopeless thoughts that come as a result. The truth is, each of us can control HOW WE LOOK AT THINGS. We choose our perspective, and that makes all the difference.

**** The apostle Paul was very careful to find and chose to adopt God’s view point on everything. He wrote, **“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all”** (2 Cor. 4:17).

He had rewired his brain. He had brought up the memory of beatings and imprisonments and deprivations that came from suffering for the cause of Christ—and instead of saying his troubles were heavy and life-long and were keeping him from achievement—he chose to look at them from God’s perspective and rewire his thoughts to that perspective. Now the same troublesome memories took on a different meaning, that encouraged him. The same troubles were thought of as light, momentary and best of all, they were achieving for him an eternal glory that far outweighed the difficulties of this temporary life.

The painful memories of beatings, stonings, whippings and imprisonment had been rewired so that the memories didn’t hurt. In fact, the memories now gave him encouragement to know that each pain was turning into some kind of eternal glory.

Jesus said, **“Blessed are you when people insult you persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you,”** (Matthew 5:11-12).

You see, we have the power to use our minds to rewire memories in such a way that they do not hurt, but rather give us strength. But we have to DECIDE to do this. More than just rewiring memories, we should wire in the best beliefs possible as to our future, God’s care, our abilities, and our goals to glorify Him. Unless these “hopes “ are wired in, our faith has nothing to bring into substance. (Heb. 11:1 Amp. says **“Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen (the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses).**

If nothing is hoped for, faith has nothing to believe into existence. Remember, James wrote, **“Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead,”** (James 2:17). So faith IS the substance of things hoped for, in that it’s the title deed for what we wait for from God. *But it also GIVES SUBSTANCE to things hoped for by the actions that bring those hopes into reality.* We need to decide to plant these wonderful HOPE TREES in our minds so that we can move into the actions of faith, believing that achieving those things are possible.

Paul wrote, **“We take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ”** (2 Cor. 10:5). We must firmly decide to DO that! But more than just take captive the enemy thoughts—we must CHANGE THEM—rewire them—so that they become obedient to Christ.

**** An example of a rewired thought would be Joseph, who hated by his ten older brothers and sold as a slave to the Egyptians. After years of suffering as a slave, then as a prisoner, God promoted him to the right hand of Pharaoh. When his brothers came to buy food, he could have remembered all the pain and acted from the toxic emotions that come from toxic thoughts. But he had rewired the painful memory and said to them, **“Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.”** And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them. (Genesis 50:20)

MY QUESTION TO YOU, DEAR FRIEND IS THIS: *How many of your painful memories are not rewired yet?* How many, when you bring them up, still HURT? How many memories, if you bring

them up, still produce emotional pain? Do you want to leave them unconverted? If so, they will keep on releasing toxic chemicals into your physical body. *They will harm you more than the painful events!*

Could negative memories about the abuse or betrayal actually do you more harm than the abuse or betrayal? YES! But if you would ask God to show you his perspective, you could rewire the memory in such a way that you could remember it, but the pain would be gone. You would be able to have some positive take-away like Paul mentioned and like Joseph spoke of. Paul's pain was becoming eternal glory. Joseph's pain had become the saving of many lives.

Many of you would say, "I DO NOT WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT! I WANT TO FORGET IT! Well, if you can forget it, then forget it! Good. But don't fool yourself. If it's not forgotten but just pushed down it will keep on harming you and your future. If that's the case, bring it up, rewire it, and then move on.

**** There's a story in the Bible about why famine came during the reign of King David. He prayed and asked why. God said the judgment was because his predecessor, King Saul, had put to death the Gibeonites. The people of Gibeon had made a peace treaty with Joshua when the Israelites first came into the land of Canaan. But Saul had violated the treaty and put them to death. David asked the remaining Gibeonites what he should do to make restitution for this wrong. They asked for seven male descendants of King Saul to be put to death. David listened to them, and seven male descendants of King Saul were killed. Then David dug up the bones of Jonathan (Saul's oldest son, and David's true friend) and he dug up the bones of King Saul. The men of Jabesh Gilead had taken Saul's body down from the wall of a Philistine temple and buried him and his son. But David brought them back to their home town, and reburied them in a family tomb. Then it was over. "**After that, God answered prayer on behalf of the land,**" (1 Samuel 21:14).

There are some things that aren't reconciled and they need to be DUG UP, REWIRED, AND THEN REBURIED WHERE THEY WILL CAUSE NO MORE PAIN.

3. THE FIRST STEP IN REWIRING OUR BRAIN IS TO GET QUIET BEFORE GOD.

Psalm 46:10 KJV "**Be still and know that I am God.**"

Dr. Caroline Leaf writes, "When our brain enters the rest circuit, we don't actually rest; we move into a highly intelligent, self-reflective, directed state. And the more often we go there, the more we get in touch with the deep, spiritual part of who we are. I believe God has created this state to directly connect us to him and to develop and practice an awareness of his presence." (Page 82) Jesus said, "**Watch and pray, that you may not come into temptation,**" (Matthew 26:41). The Amplified version says, "**Keep awake (give strict attention, be cautious and active) and watch and pray, that you may not come into temptation.**" The watching part of that is when we are still before God. *Jesus put it first, before prayer.* Many of us pray only a little and "watch" even less. When we do get before God—we usually are giving him a long list of things we'd like him to do. Solomon wrote, "**Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few,**" (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2).

Dr. Caroline Leaf writes, "In this directed rest state, you focus inward, you introspect, and you appear to slow down; but actually, your mental resources speed up and your thinking moves onto a higher level. When you think in this way, when you pause your activity and enter into a directed rest, you will emerge far ahead of where you would have been if you just operated within the realms of a shifting, shuffling, limited conscious, cognitive mind. This is the state of being still and knowing that he is God (Psalm 46:10). (Page 83)

She writes, "Research shows that when we don't engage in this disciplined and focused self-reflective pattern of thinking...we may experience negative self-esteem, depression, worry, anxiety, and health issues, and over-focus on generalized and short-term issues. We may get stuck, unable to cope, and have a tendency to focus on the problem and not the solution." (Page 85)

When you get quiet before the Lord it is like a Sabbath rest for your brain. God wanted his people to have Sabbath rest, every seventh day and every seventh year. Apparently, he thinks this quiet rest, where we rediscover our own spirit and connect with his Spirit is a mighty important use of our time.

**** In this quiet we become aware of what we are thinking. We become aware of what we are focused on. We become aware of our perspective on whatever events have happened to us. We become aware of sad, mad and bad thoughts that are, as yet, not taken captive but are running around in our brains like wild stray dogs. We connect with our spirits so that our spirits can take charge of our brains and rewire them for peace, health and success.

**** In our culture, the devil works through constant social media to make sure we do not have a quiet time. The smart phone dings with incoming emails, text messages and rings with phone calls. We desperately need to turn off radios, TV's, and smart phones and do what the Bible says to do, BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.

Dr. Leaf writes, "A large number of friends on social media networks may appear impressive, but according to a new report, the more social circles a person is linked to, the more likely the social media will be a source of stress. It can also have a detrimental effect on consumer well-being because milkshake-multitasking interferes with clear thinking and decision-making, which lowers self-control and leads to rash, impulsive buying and poor eating decisions. Greater social media use is associated with a higher body mass index, increased binge eating, a lower credit score, and higher levels of credit card debt for consumers with many close friends in their social network—all caused by a lack of self-control." (Page 97)

Another quote, "Scientists have found that the amount of time spent milkshake-multitasking among American young people has increased by 120 percent in the last ten years. According to a report in the Archives of General Psychiatry, simultaneous exposure to electronic media during the teenage years—such as playing a computer game while watching television—appears to be associated with increased depression and anxiety in young adulthood, especially among men. Considering that teens are exposed to an average of eight and a half hours of multitasking electronic media per day, we need to change something quickly." (Page 96)

4. NOW MOVE INTO FOCUSED REFLECTION.

Which thought do you want to change? Which memory needs rewiring? The deeper you think the more changes you can make. Are there self-defeating lies you have believed? If so, which ones need to be destroyed with truth? Are there thoughts that could just be deleted—forgotten? Proverbs 17:9 NIV **Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.**

Are there good and noble and faith building thoughts that you want to remember? By deep meditation we can get scriptures to live in our minds without really trying to memorize anything. I really like the comfort I get from Isaiah 42:16, **I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.**

In this deep reflection we meditate on the Lord and His Word. Thus we retain what we want to retain so that we can draw strength from it daily.

Jeremiah 32:40 **I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.**

A meditation from this verse: I'm in the everlasting covenant. God will never stop doing good to me. He'll keep me for his very own. Doing good things for me is where he gets his joy. He has planted me in his everlasting kingdom, giving me a lasting place to grow and mature—with all his heart and soul.

Psalms 55:22 NIV **Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.** What a great thought. The kingdoms of this world will shake and collapse but God will not allow the righteous to be shaken.

Should you believe these good promises? How many more great thoughts could you PLANT in your brain so that they bear the fruit of peace and courage?

In this focused reflection we make decisions about what to pull out and discard, what to rewire from a new perspective, and what to plant like a tree that will grow into godly achievement. We survey the landscape of our minds, take full responsibility for all that is there—and build a better future by choosing our thoughts.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, 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” (Philippians 4:8)

We must do this with great intention. We should collect and plant these kinds of thoughts and maintain them by thinking of them with regularity and acting upon them, practicing them.

5. WRITE DOWN ALL YOUR THOUGHTS ON PAPER.

This is the third step in Dr. Leaf’s five-step plan to rewire your brain. She says, “This method of pouring out your thoughts encourages both sides of the brain to work together to integrate the two perspectives of thought—the left side of the brain looks at the information from the detail to the big picture and the right side of the brain from the big picture to the detail.” (page 185)

“The actual process of writing consolidates thoughts (memory).

Writing adds clarity to what you have been thinking about.

Writing helps you better see the area that needs to be detoxed by allowing you to see your unconscious and conscious thoughts in a visual way. Keep a thought journal.

Pour your thoughts out and only sort them in the next step—the revisit.” (page 185).

**** Where in the Bible does it say to write out your thoughts and then sort them? It doesn’t. But it does say, **“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come” (1 Cor. 10:11)**. There are many EXAMPLES of godly men writing down their thoughts—and then *sorting* them. Although the Bible doesn’t directly say, **“WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS”** it does say this, **“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience” (James 5:10 KJV)**. Shorten that to *“Let the prophets be an example to you.”*

There are a good number of examples in the Bible of the prophets just pouring out their thoughts on paper—and then coming to a better conclusion.

The prophet Asaph wrote out his thoughts, **“I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. (v. 3) This is what the wicked are like—always carefree, they increase in wealth. Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been plagued; I have been punished every morning. If I had said, “I will speak thus,” I would have betrayed your children. When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! (Verses 12-19) Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. (v24)**.

This is a great example of someone writing down their thoughts, pouring them out, so that they could examine them and not SPEAK the bad ones, but rather take them captive. Asaph had to write down his frustration and then get quiet before God until God gave him the right perspective. Then he rewired his thoughts so that his faith was made secure and not undermined.

Habakkuk just poured out his thoughts before God. **“How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, “Violence!” But you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted” (Habakkuk 1:2-4)**.

By the time Habakkuk gets done sorting his thoughts he has rewired his brain. At the end of his short book he says, **“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, thought**

the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights. (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

I like to write down goals, positive confessions, statements of affirmation and scriptural declarations like, “My supply comes from the Lord. Even when the streams of finances dry up and the economy crumbles my God will supply my ‘water’—my finances—because he has promised to make streams flow on the barren heights. Isaiah 30:25 **In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall, steams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill.** Isaiah 41:18 **I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs.**

Rivers do not flow from the tops of barren heights. There is no snow to melt. There are not pools of water in deserts. *God is saying that when the natural supply is cut off because of judgment God will still provide for his people, everything they need to do his will on the earth.*

I’ve wired that into my brain, and I keep reinforcing it by repeating it to myself and confessing that God will supply my “water”, that is, the finances I need to fulfill his will, no matter what judgments come—no matter what towers fall as the nation collapses into judgment.

IT’S NOT HARD TO WRITE DOWN THOSE KINDS OF THOUGHTS THAT I WANT TO HAVE. IN FACT, IT IS FUN AND EDIFYING. *HOWEVER, IT IS VERY HUMBLING TO POUR OUT THOUGHTS LIKE ASAPH AND HABUKKUK.* It’s humbling to admit, “Lord, I’m angry! I feel cheated! Life isn’t turning out like I thought it would. I thought you were going to bless me! These circumstances make me feel like you have cursed me!”

What good would it be to write those kinds of thoughts down? Much good. First, when you write them you are not SPEAKING THEM. You write them so that you can sort them and AVOID speaking those kinds of things. You have to HUMBLE YOURSELF by admitting to God that those kinds of thoughts are running around loose in your mind and heart! By admitting it, we can ask for his perspective on our situation. I often pray, “What does it look like to you, O LORD?” *A horse can be caught to ride if you first herd him into a corral. Writing down thoughts is like corralling horses. You first take a thought captive (capture it). Then you make it obedient. Writing captures thoughts!*

6. REVISIT THE THOUGHTS BECAUSE NOW YOU KNOW WHAT TO CHANGE, WHAT TO KEEP, AND WHAT TO PLANT.

Dr. Leaf writes, “After you have gathered awareness and done your focused reflection and writing, you will have stimulated major neuroplastic activity, putting your brain in a highly active and dynamic state for marvelous and positive change. This is the perfect state to be in to rewire.

This step is all about you wiring in what changes you want. You get to design your new healthy thought to replace the toxic thought you want to get rid of. It’s all about redesigning, reorganizing, and re-creating the specific thought you are working on.” (Page 187)

This is where you actually TAKE CAPTIVE every thought and MAKE IT OBEDIENT TO CHRIST (2 Cor. 10:5)

**** There are two stories from the life of David that illustrate how to take captive mad, bad and sad thoughts. King Saul was killed in a battle with the Philistines. An Amalekite came to David at his camp, carrying Saul’s crown and bracelet. He claimed that he was on Mount Gilboa in the heat of the battle and saw King Saul mortally wounded. According to his story, King Saul asked that the Amalekite please kill him so that the Philistines wouldn’t come and torture him. The Amalekite said, “**So I stood over him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord**” (2 Samuel 1:10).

If David would have rewarded this man, he would have been rewarding a thought of vengeance against King Saul. Instead of rewarding this “messenger of sin” David ordered that he be put to death and his men killed him on the spot.

I once wrote a song and the chorus goes, “There goes a thought that’s not of God. Grab it and thrust it through. Don’t let it hang around one hour, lest it get into you. Like David of old who put to death the messenger of sin, take every thought captive to Christ and then you’ll always win.”

**** Another example is when two men came to David carrying the head of Saul’s son, Ish-Bosheth. They wanted a reward. Instead, David recognized them as murderers of an innocent man. He said, “I’m going to rid the earth of you,” and he gave the order to his men, who killed these messengers of sin. Again, if he had rewarded them, he would have rewarded a sinful thought of vengeance against Saul’s house. Just as David quickly killed these messengers of sin, if we find a thought coming to us that is mad, bad, or sad, or fearful or depressing—we should grab it and put it to death with the sword of God’s word! *“Don’t let it hang around one hour—lest it get into you.”*

7. NOW GO PRACTICE DOING THE GOOD THOUGHTS YOU’VE PLANTED.

Dr. Leaf calls this step the Active Reach step. “Active reaches are the challenging but fun part of this plan because they are actions and exercises you say and/or do during the course of the day and evening. You in essence practice using the new healthy thought until it becomes automatized like a good habit. You decide what these active reaches will be in steps 4 and 5 each day and then you monitor, evaluate and change them each subsequent day of the 21-Day Brain Detox Plan” (Page 193)

If you have had angry, bitter thoughts of self-pity, thoughts of vengeance and critical judgment towards someone who hurt you, then do what Jesus said, **“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you”** (Luke 6:27). *As you ACT on the thoughts of love for your enemies all the “branches” of the hate trees in your mind start to wither and fall off!* Your brain now has new trees of righteousness. In Philippians 4:8 Paul said to think on good and excellent things. The next verse tells us to PRACTICE those things and it’s every bit as important of a verse as Philippians 4:8. **“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you”** (Philippians 4:9). It’s not enough to just THINK ON GOOD THINGS. That’s verse 8. We must do verse 9 and PUT IT INTO PRACTICE. Practice puts our faith into action and thus keeps it alive and growing. James wrote, **“Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead”** (James 2:17). Act on your positive belief thoughts. Act on your thoughts of love. Act on your new plan of achievement. Act by speaking faith, rejoicing in hope, and acting in love. Jesus said **“But everyone who hears these words of mine and put them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock”** (Matthew 7:24).

I LOVE YOU. GOD BLESS YOU.