

powerful
thinking

JOYCE MEYER

#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author

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New York • Nashville

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Whatever you hold in your mind will tend to occur in your life. If you continue to believe as you have always believed, you will continue to act as you have always acted. If you continue to act as you have always acted, you will continue to get what you have always gotten. If you want different results in your life or your work, all you have to do is change your mind.

ANONYMOUS

INTRODUCTION

Are you completely satisfied with every aspect of your life? Or are there areas you would like to change? Are there parts of your life where you feel you need to grow and become stronger? Are there goals you want to reach and dreams you long to fulfill? Is there something you believe you were made to do or be, and you just can't seem to get there? *The key to changing your life is changing your thinking.* As you develop thought patterns (mindsets) that agree with God's Word, everything about your existence will begin to improve. In some cases, your experiences will change, and in other situations, the change in your thinking will cause you to view the same circumstances

from a different perspective—and that will change your life. Either way, you win.

Your thinking is more powerful than you may realize. Everything in life begins with a thought, and your thoughts become the mindsets that chart your course in life and ultimately determine your destination. Your mindsets impact everything within you and everything you encounter. Every word you speak and every action you take originates in the mind. Your mindsets form your attitudes; they produce certain opinions and perspectives; they shape your self-image; they affect your relationships; they determine how productive you will be personally and professionally; they heavily influence your priorities; they guide the way you use your time, energy, and financial resources; and they make the difference between success and failure. There is no area of your life that your thinking does not touch. I cannot overemphasize how significant your thoughts are.

Your thinking can work for you or against

you in surprisingly powerful ways. This is because the mind is not simply a function of your human body; it is part of the human soul, along with the emotions and the will (the ability to make choices). The mind is also a spiritual battleground, and the thoughts you think will either help you grow in your relationship with God or hinder you by causing you to think the way your enemy, Satan, wants you to think. It is the ground on which you wage war not only with the enemy over your personal life and your destiny, but also with worldviews and concepts or ideas that threaten to deceive you. It is the battlefield on which you make the decisions that lead to frustration and defeat or the ones that lead to strength, health, love, joy, peace, and abundance.

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or against you
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powerful ways.*

Scripture clearly teaches that we become what we think about. Thoughts and mindsets

have the ability to make people happy, positive, strong, successful people or frustrated, negative, weak people. Mindsets make the difference between those who reach their goals and live their dreams and those who never seem to be able to do what they really want to do.

Before I continue, I want to state emphatically that I do not believe we can think into existence anything we want. That view of the power of thoughts is a form of humanism, which is an ungodly philosophy. But simply recognizing the fact that thoughts are powerful is not humanistic at all. In fact, it's quite biblical, according to Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV).

The Bible teaches us that our minds must go through a process of renewal in order to experience God's plan for us (Rom. 12:2). His thoughts are above our thoughts (Isa. 55:8–9), so in order to walk with Him and experience His good plans for our lives, we must learn to think as He thinks. Human nature is not bent

toward thinking godly thoughts, but we can choose and discipline ourselves to do so.

Few people realize that we have the ability to choose our thoughts and decide what we want to think; most of us passively meditate on whatever comes into our minds without ever realizing that the enemy uses our minds to control us and keep us from fulfilling God's plans and purposes for our lives. It is important to understand that while becoming a Christian immediately affects a person's heart and spirit, it does not suddenly cause a person to think differently. Each person who experiences regeneration through receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord receives a new spirit and a new heart from God. But our natural minds must be renewed, and we must learn to think with the mind of Christ in accordance with God's Word. The intent of a person's heart may be pure while the mind is still confused. The Bible declares that we are to be transformed by the entire renewal

of our minds and attitudes (Rom. 12:2). We do this through diligent, thorough study of God's Word and thinking accordingly.

Choosing to think powerfully is not always easy. One of the greatest breakthroughs I have ever experienced took place when I finally realized I had the ability to control my thoughts, and one of the greatest challenges I have ever faced was the challenge to change my thinking once I realized that was possible. You can read more about my journey toward godly thinking in my books *Battlefield of the Mind* and *Power Thoughts*, on which this book is based.

I refer to the twelve chapter titles of this book as “mindsets of the victorious believer.”

Choosing to think powerfully is not always easy.

Each chapter addresses a vitally important mindset for a Christian to develop. You have the power to develop them *because you are in Christ*. Apart from Him, we have nothing, we are nothing, and we can do nothing (John

15:5). But in Him, we have everything, we are everything, and we can do everything that is God's will (Phil. 4:13). With His help, powerful, renewed thinking is possible.

You may want to approach the chapters of this book as a twelve-week program by focusing on one each week, or a study over the course of a year by working on one per month. They will take time to become ingrained in your thinking; some will take much longer than a week or a month. I am simply suggesting ways you might approach this book.

As your thinking changes, you may find yourself doing well with a certain thought pattern for a period of time and then feeling you have slipped back into old thinking. That's okay; because you recognized it, you can change it. Changing your thinking is a process that may seem quite challenging at times. The key to it is not to give up when you struggle to align your thoughts with God's Word. Continue to meditate and speak aloud the mindsets of each

chapter, and in due time you will see that your thought patterns have truly changed.

The mindsets in this book are based on truths that are realities to us when we are in Christ. There is no true power apart from the power God gives His people, and to really think powerfully, we must think as God teaches us to think. I remind you that changing your thinking will change your life. I am convinced that powerful thinking leads to powerful living, and I believe that as you develop the twelve mindsets addressed in this book, you will begin to live a life that is wonderful beyond your wildest dreams.

Because I am in Christ

I Can Do Everything I Need to Do in Life

I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency].

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 AMPC

Do you believe you can do whatever you need to do in life? Or are there certain situations that trigger dread or fear or cause you to say, “I could never do that!” Almost everyone can think of some circumstance that truly seems impossible, something they aren’t sure they can handle.

The fact is, while some situations may be undesirable or difficult for you, through Christ you *can* do whatever you need to do in life. I know this because God's Word says that we have the strength to do all things because Christ empowers us to do so (Phil. 4:13). He doesn't say all things will be easy for us, and He doesn't promise we will enjoy every little thing we do, but we can enjoy life in the midst of every situation we face. In Him, we have the strength to do everything we need to do because He Himself empowers us and gives us the sufficiency we need.

WITH GOD'S HELP

Philippians 4:13 does not say we can do anything we want to do because we are strong enough, smart enough, or diligent enough. We can do what we need to do, meaning anything God wants us to do, but not just anything we decide we want to do. The key to being able

to do what we need to do is realizing that we cannot do it alone; we can only do it in Christ. For some reason, we often think we have to do whatever we need to do through our human strength and abilities. We tend to forget that the power of Christ works through us, so we are defeated before we even begin. We are partners with God; we cannot do His part and He will not do our part. He will guide and help us in all we need to do, but He wants us to respond to His direction and leading, relying completely on Him every step of the way.

You may be tempted at times to think, *This is too hard. I just can't do this. It's too much for me.* But as a believer in Jesus Christ, you are full of God's Spirit, and nothing is too difficult for you if God is leading you to do it. He will not call you to do anything that He will not enable and empower you to do.

God will not call you to do anything that He will not enable and empower you to do.

Difficult situations arise in everyone's life, and although God never authors our troubles, He does use them for our spiritual growth. Our attitude toward life's difficulties is actually more important than the challenges themselves, and it is a vital part of getting through them successfully. If you will develop an increasingly positive, faith-filled attitude, you will find that your trials are not as bad as you think and that, in fact, they can be steppingstones to your greatest victories.

God has given you the gifts, talents, abilities, and grace you need to do His will. God's grace is His power at work on your behalf. He will not only give you grace, but He promises grace and more grace (James 4:6). He never runs out of power—and that power is available to you through Christ. If you don't think thoughts that affirm and remind you that God's power is working through you, the enemy can defeat you with thoughts of inadequacy. But if you make

up your mind that you can do what you need to do, you'll find yourself able to do it—not in your own strength, but in the strength that God gives you.

THINK POWERFULLY, SPEAK POWERFULLY

Jesus says, “The mouth speaks what the heart is full of” (Luke 6:45). We can learn a lot about ourselves by listening to what we say. Let me ask you: Do your thoughts and words reflect your complete dependence on God, realizing that His abilities—not your own—empower you to do anything you need to do in life? At times, I have had to examine my own thoughts and words and ask myself if I portrayed a person who had faith in God, and I encourage you to do the same. I didn't like all of my answers, but the exercise in self-examination did open my eyes to see that I needed to make some changes.

Realizing we are wrong in an area is never a problem. The problem comes when we refuse to face truth and make the changes God is leading us to make. As you ask yourself whether or not you come across as a person of great faith in God, I encourage you to be willing to face anything He wants to show you and ask Him to change you. If you are trusting in your own strength, begin to trust Him instead. If you are becoming frustrated trying to do things out of your own human abilities, tell God you want Him to work through you, and let His sufficiency be your sufficiency.

When challenges arise, I encourage you to develop a habit of saying immediately, “I can do whatever I need to do through Christ, who is my strength.” Words are containers for power,

I can do whatever I need to do through Christ, who is my strength.

and speaking words that agree with God’s Word will help you do what God wants you to do. Don’t fill your containers

(words) with things that *disable* you but with things that *enable* you.

As you meditate on this truth that through Christ you can do whatever you need to do, you will find that you are not as easily overwhelmed by situations that once discouraged you. Each time you roll that thought over in your mind or speak it, you are developing a healthy mindset that empowers you to be victorious in any situation.

NO MORE EXCUSES

One reason many people do not enjoy their lives, miss out on some of the blessings God wants to give them, or feel bad about themselves is that they do not truly believe they can do whatever they need to do, so they quit when they meet challenges. They never taste the joy of a goal accomplished or a desire fulfilled because they do not press past the difficulties that arise.

Everyone has their go-to excuses. When

something hard or undesirable happens and challenges us or gives us more than we want to deal with, we think or say:

- “That is just too hard.”
- “I don’t have enough time.”
- “I hadn’t planned on this today.”
- “I don’t have the money.”
- “I don’t have anyone to help me.”
- “I can’t see how that would ever work.”
- “I just don’t feel like it.”
- “I have too many personal problems and too much going on in my life right now.”
- “I don’t know how to do that.”
- “I have never done this. I don’t even know anybody who’s ever done this.”
- “I’m afraid.”

Many of these thoughts are based on emotions (the way you feel about a situation). Let me encourage you not to think or speak out of your emotions; how you feel does not always

agree with God's Word. That is why it is important to realize that even though you feel overwhelmed, you should still say, "Because I am in Christ, I can do everything I need to do in life."

I hope you will begin right now to stop looking at all your weaknesses and insufficiencies, allowing them to tell you what you can and cannot do, because God's strength is made perfect in your weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). Through human weakness and inability, He displays His strength. He deliberately chooses people who absolutely cannot do what He is asking them to do unless they allow Him to do it through them. With God, you don't need ability; you simply need availability and a can-do attitude.

If you will exchange "I can't" excuses for "I can" thoughts and begin to say, "I can do whatever I need to do in life because God strengthens me. I am strong in the

With God, you don't need ability; you simply need availability and a can-do attitude.

Lord and in the power of His might, and whatever He asks me to do, I can do,” remarkable changes will begin to happen and you will have more zeal and enthusiasm as you face each day.

YOU'RE MORE THAN A CONQUEROR

Romans 8:37 teaches us how to think about the challenges we face: “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

I believe that being “more than a conqueror” means having such confidence in God that no matter what we face, we know that through Him we can overcome it. We know before we ever encounter a problem that we will gain victory over it. We believe that, with His help, we can do whatever we need to do. Therefore, we don't dread anything; we don't fear the unknown; we don't live in anxiety about what will happen in any situation. It doesn't really matter what the

challenge is; we know we can handle it through Christ. Defeat is not an option.

Thinking about negative circumstances too long will empower those circumstances to overwhelm us. No wonder the Bible says we should look away from things that distract us and instead fix our eyes on Jesus, who is “the Leader and the Source of our faith” and who brings our faith to maturity (Hebrews 12:2 AMPC). We need to remember at all times that *He* is the one who empowers us to do all things, and look to Him regularly throughout each day.

If you will begin to think every day, *I can handle whatever life hands me. I can do whatever I need to do in life. I am more than a conqueror. I am equal to anything through Him who infuses inner strength into me*, even before you get out of bed in the mornings—just let it roll over and over in your mind—your confidence will skyrocket, and you will find that indeed, in Him, you can do whatever you need to do in life.

THINK, THEN ACT

1. What do you need to begin to believe you can do with God's help? What steps will you take to do it?

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2. What will you begin to think and say to reflect your confidence in God's ability to help you do whatever you need to do?

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3. In what specific situation do you need to believe you are more than a conqueror? How can you act on that belief?

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Because I am in Christ

I Am Loved Unconditionally

Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (consecrated and set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, even above reproach, before Him in love.

EPHESIANS 1:4 AMPC

What's wrong with me?"

If you are like most people, you have asked yourself this question many times. It's a common query that the enemy plants in people's minds, and I asked it for many years. It is designed to make you feel that you are not what

you need to be and to prevent you from enjoying yourself and your life.

The enemy wants you to ask what's wrong with you so you will become self-focused by trying to figure out what's wrong with you. God does not want you to be tormented by this question. He wants you to know how much He loves you. When you truly believe God loves and accepts you unconditionally, the enemy will no longer be able to make you feel bad about yourself. You might feel bad about something you have done wrong, but you won't feel bad about yourself if you realize that God never stops loving you for even one second.

Not only does God love you, but He chooses to view you as right with Him, accepted and blameless (2 Cor. 5:21). This comes through faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Because this is true, you can accurately say, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ. I am chosen in Christ, and in Him I am blameless before God." This is your inherited position

with God through faith in Jesus, not through works you view as “right” or “wrong.”

While God does want you to learn proper behavior, He accepts and loves you first, before you ever do anything that pleases Him. Once you are rooted and grounded in His unconditional love, then He begins transforming your character into the image of His Son. If you want your behavior to improve, then your knowledge of the unconditional love of God must be the foundation for the “new you.” The more you experience His love, the more you will desire to do what pleases Him.

RELATIONSHIP, NOT RELIGION

Jesus didn't die so we could be religious; Jesus died so we could have deep, intimate, personal relationship with God through Him. Legalistic religion offers us rules and regulations to follow in order to be close to God. But relationship

allows us to be close to Him because He has chosen us as His beloved children. There is nothing we can do to earn or merit His love. He simply is love (1 John 4:8), and He loves us because of who He is, not because of what we do or don't do.

We will not draw near to God if we are afraid He is displeased with us. That's why it is vital that we know the difference between our "who" and our "do"—that we learn how to separate *who* we are in Christ and how important we are

Relationship allows us to be close to God because He has chosen us as His beloved children.

to God from *what* we do, whether we feel it's good or bad. Only when we can separate the two will we begin to be confident that we are loved uncondi-

tionally. When we sin, we should admit it and repent, but God still views us through Christ, and we are still in right standing with Him.

Too often, the enemy succeeds in deceiving

us into thinking that our acceptance is based on our performance. This is totally unscriptural. God loves and accepts us completely. We are made right with Him because we place our faith in Jesus Christ and the work He accomplished for us on the cross. He paid for our sins and misdeeds. He absolved us from guilt and reconciled us to God. Now, when we stand before God, we have “rightness,” not “wrongness.” And we have it because He gave it as a gift, not because we have earned it.

I once saw a bumper sticker that said, “I owe, I owe, so off to work I go.” I immediately realized that I had lived my spiritual life with that mentality for years. I felt that I owed God something for all the wrong I had done, and I tried every day to do good works to make up for my mistakes. I wanted Him to bless me, but felt I needed to earn His blessings. I finally learned that we cannot pay for God’s gifts; otherwise, they are not gifts at all.

God sees our hearts, and His dealings with us

are based on the kind of heart we have toward Him. I don't do everything right, but I do love God very much, and I want His will in my life. I am very sorry for my sins, and it grieves me when I know I have disappointed Him. I am sure that, since you are reading this book, the attitude of your heart is the same as mine. Per-

Knowing that God loves you unconditionally releases you from negative emotions.

haps like I was, you have been tormented for years wondering what is wrong with you. Knowing that God loves you unconditionally releases you from those negative emotions and allows you to enjoy yourself while you are changing and growing in Him.

JESUS PAID THE HIGHEST PRICE

The fact that God sent His only beloved Son to die a painful death in our place assigns value to

us and lets us know He loves us immensely. We are bought with a price, the highest, most precious price—the blood of Jesus (1 Pet. 1:18–19). He paid for our misdeeds, secured our justification, balanced our accounts with God, and absolved us from all guilt (Rom. 4:25).

At the cross, Jesus stood in our place, taking what we deserved (punishment as sinners) and freely giving us what He deserves (every kind of blessing). His sacrifice immediately transferred us, through faith, from a state of being wrong to a state of being viewed by God as right through faith in Jesus. His death and resurrection transferred us out of the misery and torment of the enemy's kingdom into the unspeakable blessings of God's kingdom, to live as His beloved children (1 Pet. 2:9; Col. 1:13). The grace of God purchased our freedom, and faith is the hand that reaches out and receives it.

Nothing ever done on Earth could even come close to the awesome gift Jesus gave us on the cross. God's justice required that our sins

be paid for and Jesus paid everything we could ever owe.

PERFORMANCE CANCELED

Our experiences in the world have told us that we cannot be accepted apart from “performing” well in life and that our performances determine how much acceptance we receive. We have been deceived into believing that what we do is more important than who we are. This leaves us constantly working to prove to ourselves and others that what we do determines our value.

As long as we think God’s love is conditional, we will keep trying to earn it by attempting to prove that we are worth loving. Then, when we make mistakes, we feel we are no longer valuable and therefore do not deserve love. We suffer the guilt, shame, and condemnation of believing we are not lovable and should be rejected. We keep trying harder and harder until sometimes we are exhausted mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and

even physically. We try to put up a good front, but inside we are weary and often very afraid.

Once we believe God's love is based on who He is and what Jesus has done for us on the cross—not on what we do—the struggle is over. We can cancel our “performance” and serve God because we *know* that He does love us and we do not need to “get” Him to love us. We already know we have His love and that under no condition will He ever stop loving us (Rom. 8:38–39). We no longer have to live in fear of His rejecting us because of our mistakes. When we do something that does not please God, all we need to do is repent, receive His forgiveness, and refuse the guilt that comes with sin. That guilt no longer applies to us once sin is forgiven and removed.

We have God's love, and under no condition will He ever stop loving us.

God is displeased when we sin (this is our “do,” not our “who”), but He *always* loves us.

He loves us enough to correct us and continue working with us to bring us into more godly behavior (Heb. 12:10). We are destined to be molded into the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29), and I am grateful that He has sent His Holy Spirit to convict us of sin and to work His holiness in and through us. This is a work of God's grace, and it takes place little by little as we study God's Word (2 Cor. 3:18).

An important verse to understand as we learn to believe we are loved and in right standing with God is 2 Corinthians 5:21: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Knowing we are loved and accepted even in our imperfections is such a relief! Serving God from a sense of desire rather than from a feeling of obligation is incredibly liberating and brings great peace and joy to our lives. The Bible says that we love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Being assured of God's

unconditional love gives us confidence and boldness, and it makes us more than conquerors in every situation (Rom. 8:37).

Our confidence should not be in anything or anyone but Jesus. We can count on Him to always be faithful and do what He says He will do—and He says He will always love us. He says we are righteous in His sight, and we need to choose simply to believe it.

No matter what other people may say, God delights in telling you in His Word who you are in Him—loved, valuable, precious, talented, gifted, capable, powerful, wise, and redeemed. He has a good plan for you. Get excited about your life. You are created in God's image, you are amazing, and you are loved unconditionally.

We are more than conquerors in every situation.

THINK, THEN ACT

1. In your own words, how do you believe God feels about you? Now say, “God loves me unconditionally!”
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2. List five positive things about yourself. You may find this difficult if you have never done it, but be bold.
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3. Draw a line down the center of a piece of paper. On one side of the line, write “Who,” and on the other side, write “Do.” Under “Who,” list who you are according to God’s Word, and under “Do” list things you do right and things you do wrong. This will help you separate who you are from what you do. Now cross out the “Do” section, because it has nothing to do with God’s love for you. Look only at who you are in Him!
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