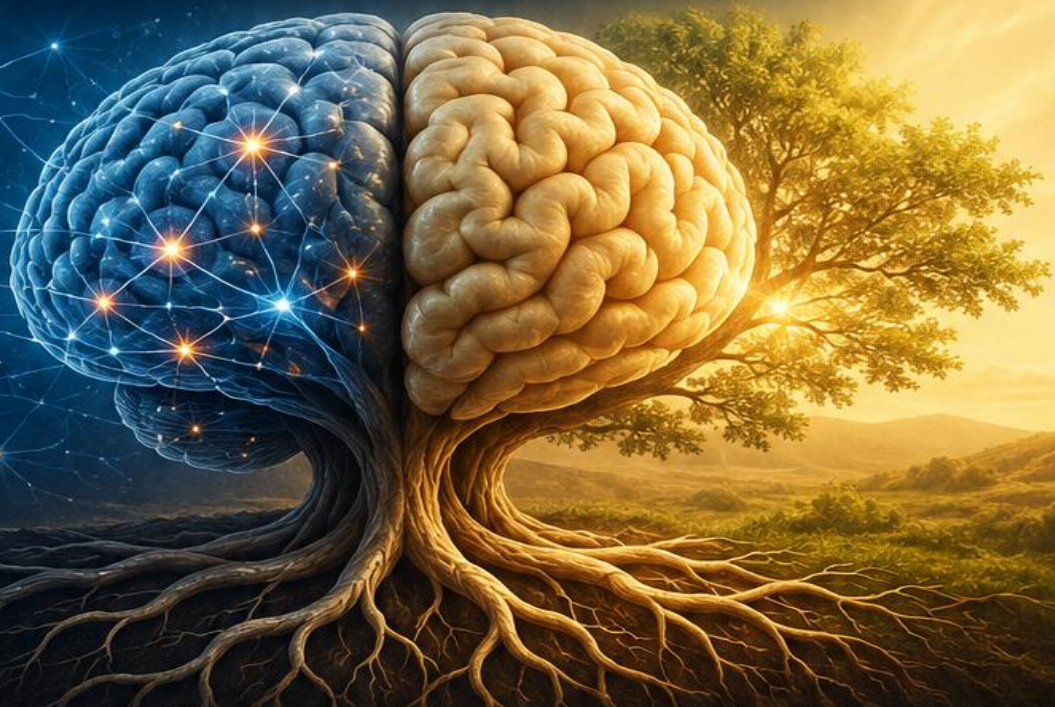


THE BRAIN GOD DESIGNED™

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND GOD CREATED
Through the Lens of Scripture & Science



FAITH • SCIENCE • STEWARDSHIP

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PRESENTED BY
THE REAL MINISTRY

A BIBLICAL & EVIDENCE-INFORMED DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

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Understanding the Mind God Created Through the Lens of Scripture and Science

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Scripture Notice

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture references are taken from the **New Living Translation (NLT)**. The authors recognize that readers may use a variety of Bible translations. Participants are encouraged to compare translations as they study God's Word.

Medical Disclaimer

This curriculum is intended for educational and discipleship purposes only. It is not designed to diagnose, treat, or replace the care of qualified medical, psychological, or mental health professionals. The scientific information presented reflects current understanding at the time of publication and is intended to help readers better understand whole-person stewardship. Readers are encouraged to seek appropriate professional care for medical or mental health concerns.

Theological Statement

This curriculum is rooted in the authority of Scripture and seeks to present biblical truth with integrity while responsibly engaging current scientific understanding. Where faithful Christians have historically held differing theological views, those differences are acknowledged with humility and respect.

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WELCOME

Welcome to *The Brain God Designed*™

If you're reading these pages, you've likely asked questions that many believers have quietly carried for years.

Can I love Jesus and still struggle mentally?

Does needing counseling mean I lack faith?

Can I pray and still benefit from therapy or medication?

Why do some believers experience anxiety, depression, trauma, or other mental health conditions?

What does the Bible actually teach about the mind?

This curriculum was created because those questions deserve more than opinions—they deserve careful study, biblical integrity, and compassionate understanding.

For generations, many Christians have felt forced to choose between faith and science, prayer and professional care, miracles and medicine. We believe that is a false choice.

The same God who inspired Scripture also created the human brain. The same God who formed us in the womb designed every neuron, every neural pathway, and every intricate system that allows us to think, learn, feel, remember, and grow.

Studying His creation should never diminish our faith. It should deepen our awe.

Throughout this journey, we will explore the incredible mind God designed through two complementary lenses:

The unchanging truth of God's Word.

The current understanding of responsible scientific research.

We will not replace Scripture with science. Nor will we ignore scientific knowledge because we value Scripture. Instead, we will pursue wisdom with humility, believing that all genuine truth ultimately belongs to God.

As we learn together, our prayer is that stigma will be replaced with compassion, fear with understanding, shame with hope, and confusion with wisdom. Whether you are a pastor, ministry leader, counselor, healthcare professional, caregiver, student, or simply someone seeking greater understanding, welcome. May this journey strengthen your faith, deepen your understanding of God's design, and equip you to steward the whole person He created.

Welcome to *The Brain God Designed*™.

Let's begin.

OUR COMMITMENT TO TRUTH

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7

Why This Curriculum Exists

The Brain God Designed™ was created to help believers understand and faithfully steward one of God's most remarkable creations—the human mind. Our goal is not to convince people to choose science over Scripture. Nor is it to encourage people to reject scientific understanding in the name of faith.

Instead, we believe that because God is the Creator of all things, all genuine truth ultimately belongs to Him. Scripture reveals God's character, His redemptive plan, and His truth for humanity. Science allows us to observe and better understand the intricate design of His creation. When both are approached with humility, they do not compete—they complement one another.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We Believe...

God is the Creator of the human brain. The Bible is our highest authority for faith and practice. Studying God's creation should increase our worship, not diminish it. Mental health conditions are not evidence that someone lacks faith. Seeking appropriate medical or mental healthcare can be an act of biblical stewardship. Prayer, discipleship, community, counseling, healthy lifestyle practices, and medical care each have a place in caring for the whole person. Every individual deserves compassion, dignity, and hope.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Throughout this curriculum, every lesson will be examined through four foundational lenses.

1. What Does Scripture Teach?

We will carefully study God's Word in context, allowing Scripture to speak for itself rather than forcing it to answer questions it was never intended to address.

2. What Does Current Scientific Evidence Tell Us?

We will examine current scientific understanding using credible, evidence-informed sources while acknowledging that scientific knowledge continues to grow and develop.

3. Where Do They Meet?

Rather than creating unnecessary conflict between faith and science, we will explore how biblical truth and responsible scientific understanding can work together to help us better steward the lives God has entrusted to us.

4. How Do We Apply It?

Knowledge without application remains information. Biblical wisdom transforms the way we live. Every lesson will conclude with practical steps designed to help you grow in wisdom, stewardship, compassion, and discipleship.

OUR PRAYER

It is our prayer that this curriculum will remove fear, reduce stigma, encourage healthy conversations, strengthen biblical understanding, and equip believers to care for the whole person—mind, body, and spirit—with wisdom, compassion, and unwavering faith in Jesus Christ.

Because understanding the mind God designed is not a departure from faith. It is an invitation to steward His creation with greater wisdom.

BEFORE WE BEGIN

A Covenant for Learning

As you begin this journey, we invite you to approach every lesson with four commitments. These commitments will shape not only how you study this curriculum, but how you engage with others whose experiences may be different from your own.

1. Come With Humility

None of us knows everything. Not the theologian. Not the scientist. Not the physician. Not the pastor. Not the counselor. Not the student. Wisdom begins when we remain teachable. Throughout this curriculum, we invite you to lay aside assumptions and allow both Scripture and trustworthy evidence to challenge, refine, and deepen your understanding.

2. Extend Compassion Before Conclusions

Every person carries a story. Some stories are visible. Many are not. As we study topics such as grief, trauma, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, addiction, and other mental health conditions, we commit to responding with compassion rather than judgment. Our first response should never be condemnation. Our first response should always be love.

3. Pursue Truth Over Tradition

Not every belief we have inherited is rooted in Scripture. Not every opinion circulating on social media is supported by evidence. Not every cultural assumption reflects the heart of God. Throughout this curriculum, we will continually ask:

What does Scripture actually teach?

What does current evidence actually support?

We are committed to following truth—even when it challenges long-held assumptions.

4. Steward the Whole Person

God did not create us as disconnected parts. He created us as whole persons. Our spiritual lives influence our emotional lives. Our emotional lives can affect our physical health. Our physical health can influence how we think, feel, and function. Faithful stewardship means caring for the whole person God created.

A Final Thought Before We Begin

This curriculum is not an invitation to fear mental illness. It is not an invitation to diagnose yourself or others. It is not an invitation to replace biblical faith with scientific knowledge. It is an invitation to marvel at the wisdom of God. To grow in understanding. To care for others with greater compassion. And to become a more faithful steward of the incredible mind God designed. Let's begin this journey together—with open Bibles, open minds, and humble hearts.

THE REAL MINISTRY'S POSITION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Our Statement of Faith & Stewardship

At The Real Ministry, we believe every person is created in the image of God and possesses inherent dignity, value, and purpose.

We believe that God created humanity as whole persons—body, mind, relationships, and spirit—and that faithful discipleship involves stewarding every area of life.

We affirm the authority of Scripture as God's inspired Word and the foundation for our faith and practice.

We also affirm that God, as Creator, has given humanity the ability to observe, study, and responsibly care for His creation. Therefore, we do not view responsible medical or scientific knowledge as an enemy of biblical faith, but as one of the many ways God's common grace serves humanity.

We believe prayer is powerful.

We believe miracles still happen.

We believe God heals.

We believe God transforms lives through the work of the Holy Spirit.

We also believe God often works through wise counsel, healthy community, professional care, and the gifts and skills He has entrusted to others.

Because of this, we reject the false choice that says believers must choose between faith and appropriate healthcare.

We believe a person can pray fervently and faithfully follow a treatment plan.

We believe a person can worship passionately and attend counseling.

We believe a person can trust God completely while taking medication prescribed by a qualified healthcare professional.

Seeking help is not the absence of faith.

For many, it is an expression of faithful stewardship.

As a ministry, we are committed to creating an environment where people are free to seek truth without shame, ask honest questions without fear, and receive compassionate support without judgment.

We will not minimize suffering.

We will not shame those who seek help.

We will not make promises Scripture does not make.

Instead, we will point people to Christ, encourage biblical discipleship, promote wise stewardship, and support the whole person with humility, compassion, and hope.

Our Commitment

We are committed to teaching with biblical integrity.

We are committed to learning with intellectual humility.

We are committed to leading with compassion.

We are committed to stewarding the whole person God has created.

Because every mind matters to the God who designed it.

CHAPTER ONE

THE GOD WHO DESIGNED THE BRAIN

BIG IDEA

Before we can understand the brain, we must first understand the God who designed it. Everything in this curriculum is built upon one foundational truth: **God is the Creator.**

KINGDOM TRUTH

The more we understand God's design, the more we should worship the Designer.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 1:26–27
- Psalm 139:14
- Romans 1:20
- Colossians 1:16–17

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

Every journey begins somewhere. This journey begins with God. When people study the brain, they often begin with biology. When psychologists study human behavior, they often begin with observation. When neuroscientists study the brain, they begin with research. But as followers of Christ, our starting point is different.

Our starting point is the Creator. The opening words of Scripture establish the foundation for everything that follows: **"In the beginning, God..."** Those four words remind us that nothing about creation is accidental. The heavens were designed. The earth was designed. The human body was designed.

And so was the remarkable brain that allows us to think, learn, remember, imagine, create, communicate, and worship. Before we study how the brain works, we first acknowledge the One who created it.

UNDERSTAND

Every invention tells us something about its inventor. A beautifully designed building reflects the skill of its architect. A carefully written song reflects the creativity of its composer. Creation reveals something about its Creator. The human brain is one of the most extraordinary examples of God's design.

Although it weighs only a few pounds, it helps regulate movement, memory, emotions, language, learning, decision-making, creativity, and countless other functions that make everyday life possible.

The more we discover about the complexity of the brain, the greater our appreciation should become for the wisdom of God. Studying God's creation should increase our wonder—not replace our worship.

DID YOU KNOW?

Scientists estimate that the average human brain contains **approximately 86 billion neurons**. These neurons communicate through an extraordinary network of connections, allowing us to think, learn, remember, solve problems, and adapt throughout life. Every one of those neurons exists because of the wisdom of our Creator.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

Some people believe faith and science must compete with one another. Scripture teaches us who God is, why we were created, and how we are redeemed through Christ. Science helps us observe and better understand the world God created.

These serve different purposes. When approached with humility, they work together rather than compete. As believers, we do not study the brain to replace God. We study the brain because it belongs to God. Understanding His creation is one way we become better stewards of the life He has entrusted to us.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

Why do you think this curriculum begins with God instead of the brain?

Renew

Has there ever been a time when you believed learning about science could weaken your faith? How has this chapter challenged or strengthened your thinking?

Respond

This week, intentionally thank God for one aspect of His creation that you have never truly stopped to appreciate. Write what it is and why it reminds you of His wisdom.

Looking Ahead

In Chapter Two, we will answer an important question: **What does it actually mean to be human?**

Before we study the brain itself, we must first understand the person God created.

CHAPTER TWO

GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY

BIG IDEA

God did not create us to live disconnected lives. He created us as whole people, and faithful stewardship means caring for every part of the life He has entrusted to us.

KINGDOM TRUTH

You cannot faithfully steward what you refuse to understand.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Genesis 1:26–27
- Genesis 2:7
- Deuteronomy 6:5
- Mark 12:29–31
- 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

One of the greatest mistakes we make is separating what God designed to work together. We often divide life into categories.

"This is spiritual."

"That's physical."

"That's emotional."

"That's relational."

Yet throughout Scripture, we see that our lives are deeply connected. Jesus taught us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. God is not interested in only one part of our lives. He desires all of us. As we study the brain, we must remember that the brain serves a person. And every person is created in the image of God.

UNDERSTAND

The Bible teaches that every human being is created in the image of God. That means every person has inherent dignity, value, and purpose—not because of intelligence, ability, success, or health, but because of the One who created them.

Throughout Scripture, we also see that God cares for the whole person. He cares about our relationship with Him. He cares about how we treat others. He cares about how we think. He cares about how we live. He cares about our physical bodies.

While Christians may hold different theological views about the relationship between the body, soul, and spirit, we can all agree on this: God calls us to faithfully steward the life He has given us. Throughout this curriculum, we will explore four areas of stewardship:

Our Relationship with God – Growing in faith, worship, prayer, and obedience.

Our Mind – Learning, thinking, renewing, and growing in wisdom.

Our Body – Caring for the physical life God has entrusted to us.

Our Relationships – Loving God and loving people through healthy, life-giving connections.

These areas are closely connected. Growth in one often strengthens another. Neglect in one often affects the others.

DID YOU KNOW?

Research continues to show that healthy sleep, meaningful relationships, regular physical activity, and chronic stress all influence how the brain functions. The Bible has long emphasized the importance of rest, community, wisdom, and stewardship. While Scripture and science answer different kinds of questions, they often point us toward practices that support human flourishing.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

God never asked us to care for one part of our lives while ignoring the rest. A growing relationship with Christ should influence how we think.

How we think influences how we live.

How we live affects our relationships.

How we care for our bodies can influence our ability to serve others.

Faithful stewardship recognizes that every area of life belongs to God.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

When you think about stewardship, which area receives the most attention?

- My relationship with God
- My mind
- My body
- My relationships

Which area receives the least attention?

Why?

Renew

What is one area of your life that God may be inviting you to steward more intentionally?

Respond

Choose one practical step you will take this week to better care for the whole person God has created.

Looking Ahead

In Chapter Three, we will begin exploring one of the most incredible creations in the human body: **The brain.**

We'll discover how it is designed, how it communicates, and why understanding it helps us become better stewards of the life God has entrusted to us.

CHAPTER THREE

MEET YOUR BRAIN

BIG IDEA

The brain is one of God's most remarkable creations, designed to help us think, learn, remember, communicate, worship, and interact with the world around us.

KINGDOM TRUTH

The better we understand God's design, the better we can steward His gift.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Psalm 139:13–16
- Proverbs 2:6
- Romans 12:2
- Ephesians 4:23

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

Most people know where the brain is. Few people understand what it actually does. From the moment you wake up until the moment you fall asleep, your brain is working. It helps you breathe without thinking. It allows you to recognize the face of someone you love. It helps you remember your favorite song.

It allows you to learn something new. It helps you make decisions, solve problems, experience emotions, and communicate with others. Even while you are sleeping, your brain remains active.

Although the brain is incredibly complex, understanding its basic functions helps us appreciate God's wisdom and become better stewards of the life He has entrusted to us.

UNDERSTAND

The brain is often called the body's control center because it helps coordinate nearly everything we do. It receives information. Processes information. Stores information. Sends information.

Working together with the nervous system, the brain helps regulate countless activities throughout the body every second of every day. While scientists continue learning more about the brain, one truth remains clear: God designed it with extraordinary complexity and purpose.

WHAT DOES THE BRAIN DO?

The brain helps us:

- Think
- Learn
- Remember
- Speak
- Listen
- Solve problems
- Make decisions
- Experience emotions
- Control movement
- Maintain balance
- Regulate sleep
- Focus attention
- Respond to danger
- Form habits
- Build relationships

Every one of these abilities depends on the remarkable design of the brain.

THREE MAJOR PARTS OF THE BRAIN

For this curriculum, you do not need to memorize complex anatomy. Instead, understand the basic roles of the brain's major regions.

The Cerebrum

The cerebrum is the largest part of the brain. It helps with thinking, learning, memory, language, decision-making, creativity, and voluntary movement. Much of what we consciously experience each day involves the cerebrum.

The Cerebellum

The cerebellum helps coordinate movement, balance, posture, and physical coordination. Whether walking, writing, driving, or catching a ball, the cerebellum plays an important role.

The Brainstem

The brainstem controls many of the body's automatic functions. Breathing. Heart rate. Blood pressure. Swallowing. These are functions we rarely think about because God designed the brain to manage them automatically.

DID YOU KNOW?

Although your brain weighs only about three pounds, it contains approximately **86 billion neurons** communicating through trillions of connections. Every memory you make. Every skill you learn. Every conversation you have. Depends on this incredible network.

THE BRAIN IS ALWAYS LEARNING

One of God's most amazing designs is the brain's ability to learn throughout life. Children learn to walk. Students learn new subjects. Adults develop new skills. Older adults continue forming new memories. Learning is possible because the brain continues adapting as we gain new experiences. This means growth remains possible throughout life. No one ever outgrows the opportunity to learn.

THE BRAIN NEEDS FUEL

Like every other organ, the brain requires proper care. It benefits from:

- Healthy sleep
- Nutritious food
- Hydration
- Regular movement
- Meaningful relationships
- Healthy stress management

Stewarding the brain involves more than learning information. It involves caring for the body God designed.

THE BRAIN AND YOUR DAILY LIFE

Consider how many times you depend on your brain before lunch. You wake up. Remember your plans. Prepare breakfast. Drive to work. Read emails. Recognize familiar faces. Solve problems. Hold conversations. Make decisions. Learn something new. All before noon. We often take the brain for granted because it works so faithfully behind the scenes. Understanding its role should increase both our gratitude and our sense of stewardship.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

The Bible repeatedly speaks about wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and renewing the mind. While Scripture's primary purpose is not to teach neuroscience, it consistently reminds us that how we think influences how we live. Studying the brain helps us better understand one of the remarkable tools God has entrusted to us. Our faith is not placed in the brain. Our faith is placed in Christ. Learning about the brain simply helps us become wiser stewards of His creation.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

What surprised you most about the design of the human brain?

Renew

After reading this chapter, how has your appreciation for God's creation grown?

Respond

Choose one practical way you will begin stewarding the brain God has entrusted to you this week.

- ☐ Improve my sleep.
- ☐ Drink more water.
- ☐ Exercise regularly.
- ☐ Reduce unnecessary stress.

- ☐ Learn something new.
- ☐ Spend intentional time with God.
- ☐ Other: _____

Why did you choose this step?

Looking Ahead

In Chapter Four, we will explore the remarkable communication system God designed within the brain and discover how billions of neurons work together to help us think, learn, remember, and respond to the world around us.

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW THE BRAIN COMMUNICATES

BIG IDEA

God designed the brain to communicate through an extraordinary network of electrical and chemical signals that allow us to think, learn, remember, move, and respond to the world around us.

KINGDOM TRUTH

Healthy communication is part of God's design—from the cells in our brain to the relationships in our lives.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Psalm 139:14
- Proverbs 4:23
- Romans 12:2
- Ephesians 4:29
- James 1:19

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

Have you ever wondered how you can touch a hot stove and pull your hand away before you even have time to think? Or how you can hear a familiar song and instantly remember a moment from years ago? Or why one encouraging conversation can change your entire day? Your brain is constantly sending and receiving messages. Every thought. Every memory. Every movement. Every emotion. Depends on communication.

God designed the brain with an incredible communication system that works every second of every day. Understanding that system helps us appreciate His wisdom and reminds us that healthy communication is essential—not only within our bodies, but also in our relationships.

UNDERSTAND

The brain communicates through specialized cells called **neurons**. Think of neurons as messengers. Their job is to send information from one part of the body to another. However, neurons do not actually touch each other.

Between them is a tiny space called a **synapse**. To send a message across that space, the brain releases chemical messengers called **neurotransmitters**. These neurotransmitters carry information from one neuron to the next, allowing communication to continue.

Scientists have identified many neurotransmitters, each serving different functions throughout the brain and body. Some help regulate mood. Some support attention and learning. Others influence sleep, memory, movement, or emotional responses.

Rather than focusing on memorizing their names, it is more important to understand the bigger picture: God designed every part of the brain to work together in remarkable harmony. When communication is functioning well, the brain is able to coordinate countless tasks every moment of the day.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your brain can send signals at speeds of **over 200 miles per hour** through certain nerve fibers.

Every second, billions of messages are traveling throughout your nervous system, allowing your body to respond almost instantly to the world around you.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

Just as the body depends on healthy communication between its cells, our spiritual lives depend on healthy communication with God. Prayer is communication. Reading Scripture is communication.

Listening to the Holy Spirit requires communication. Healthy relationships require communication. God designed communication to bring connection, understanding, growth, and life. Whether we are caring for our relationships or caring for the brain He created, healthy communication remains part of His design.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

What surprised you most about the way the brain communicates?

Renew

Communication is important both inside our bodies and within our relationships. Is there an area where your communication needs to improve? With God? With yourself? With someone else?

Respond

This week, intentionally strengthen one area of communication. It may be spending more time in prayer, having an honest conversation, listening more carefully, or speaking with greater kindness and wisdom. Write one action you will take.

Looking Ahead

In Chapter Five, we will discover why God designed us for **rest**.

We'll explore the connection between sleep, stress, learning, memory, and why caring for the brain includes honoring the gift of rest.

CHAPTER FIVE

DESIGNED FOR REST

BIG IDEA

Rest is not a reward for finishing your work. Rest is part of God's design for healthy living and faithful stewardship.

KINGDOM TRUTH

When we ignore God's design for rest, every area of our lives can be affected.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Genesis 2:2–3
- Exodus 20:8–11
- 1 Kings 19:1–8
- Psalm 127:2
- Mark 6:31

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

We live in a culture that celebrates being busy. Many people wear exhaustion like a badge of honor. "I'm running on four hours of sleep." "I'll rest when everything is finished." "I don't have time to slow down."

But God's design tells a different story. Before sin entered the world. Before stress, deadlines, and distractions. God established a pattern of work and rest. Throughout Scripture, we see that rest is not weakness. It is wisdom. Even Jesus stepped away from the crowds to rest. God never intended for us to live in a constant state of exhaustion.

UNDERSTAND

Sleep is one of the ways God restores the body and the brain. While you sleep, your brain continues working. It helps strengthen memories. It processes information you've learned throughout the day. It clears away waste products that build up during waking hours. It helps regulate mood, attention, and decision-making. When we consistently fail to get enough rest, it becomes harder to:

- Concentrate
- Learn new information
- Manage emotions
- Make sound decisions
- Handle stress
- Maintain physical health

Rest is not simply about sleeping more. It also includes creating healthy rhythms that allow our minds, bodies, and relationships to recover. God designed us with limits. Ignoring those limits does not make us stronger. It often makes us more vulnerable.

DID YOU KNOW?

Researchers have found that even one night of poor sleep can affect attention, memory, mood, and reaction time.

Consistent, healthy sleep supports learning, emotional regulation, and overall brain health.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

One of the most remarkable examples of rest in Scripture is found in the life of Elijah. After experiencing intense fear, emotional exhaustion, and physical fatigue, God's first response was not a lecture. God provided rest, food, water, and care before sending Elijah back into ministry. Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is honor the limits God built into our humanity. Rest is not the opposite of faithfulness. Rest is an expression of trust. When we rest, we acknowledge that God is still at work—even when we are not.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

How would you describe your current pattern of rest?

- Healthy
- Inconsistent
- Poor
- I honestly don't know

Why did you choose that answer?

Renew

What is one habit that regularly interferes with healthy rest?

Respond

Choose one practical step you will take this week to better steward the gift of rest.

It may be:

- Going to bed earlier.
- Limiting screen time before bed.
- Creating a consistent bedtime routine.
- Setting aside intentional Sabbath rest.
- Asking for help instead of carrying everything alone.

Write your commitment below.

Looking Ahead

In Chapter Six, we will explore what happens when life becomes overwhelming.

We'll discover how stress affects the brain, the body, and our daily lives—and why understanding stress is an important part of whole-person stewardship.

CHAPTER SIX

WHEN LIFE BECOMES OVERWHELMING

BIG IDEA

Stress is not always a sign that something is wrong with you. Often, it is your body's way of responding to what is happening around you.

KINGDOM TRUTH

God designed your body to respond to stress—but He never intended for you to live there.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Psalm 46:1
- Isaiah 26:3
- Matthew 11:28–30
- Philippians 4:6–9
- 1 Peter 5:7

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

Stress is a normal part of life. A job interview. A new baby. Moving to a new city. Caring for a loved one. Preparing for a sermon. Taking an exam. Even positive life events can create stress. Stress itself is not the enemy. The problem begins when stress becomes constant. When there is no time to recover. No opportunity to rest. No margin to breathe. The body and brain begin to feel the effects. God did not design us to live in a constant state of survival.

UNDERSTAND

When your brain senses danger or believes you are under pressure, it prepares your body to respond. Your heart may beat faster. Your breathing may change. Your muscles may tense. Your attention becomes focused on the situation in front of you. This response is often called the **stress response**. It is one of God's protective designs. The challenge comes when the brain begins responding as though every situation is an emergency. Over time, chronic stress can affect many areas of life, including:

- Sleep
- Memory
- Concentration
- Mood
- Relationships
- Physical health
- Decision-making

Not every difficult season can be avoided. But understanding how stress affects us helps us recognize when our minds and bodies need care, recovery, and support.

DID YOU KNOW?

Long-term stress has been associated with changes in sleep, attention, memory, and emotional regulation. Researchers continue to study how chronic stress affects the brain and body, but one thing is clear: Recovery matters. Healthy rhythms of rest, supportive relationships, movement, and appropriate care can all help the body recover from prolonged stress.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

Throughout Scripture, we see that God's people experienced seasons of pressure. Moses carried the weight of leadership. David faced danger and uncertainty. Paul endured hardship and persecution. Even Jesus withdrew to quiet places to pray and rest. God never promised a life without stress. He promised His presence in the middle of it. Our goal is not to pretend stress doesn't exist. Our goal is to respond to it with wisdom, faith, and healthy stewardship.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

What situations create the greatest stress in your life right now?

Renew

How does your body usually respond to stress?

- ☐ Difficulty sleeping
- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Muscle tension
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating
- ☐ Changes in appetite
- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed
- ☐ Other: _____

Respond

What is one healthy step you can take this week to better manage stress?

Examples may include:

- Spending intentional time with God.
- Going for a walk.
- Talking with a trusted friend.
- Creating healthier boundaries.
- Scheduling time to rest.
- Seeking professional support if needed.

Write your commitment below.

Looking Ahead

In Chapter Seven, we will begin exploring mental health through a biblical and evidence-informed lens. We'll discover the difference between experiencing mental health challenges and living with a mental illness, while learning how the Church can respond with wisdom, compassion, and hope.

CHAPTER SEVEN

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

BIG IDEA

Mental health is part of God's design for whole-person stewardship. Every person has mental health, and caring for it is an act of wisdom, not weakness.

KINGDOM TRUTH

Caring for your mental health is not a lack of faith—it is an act of faithful stewardship.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Proverbs 4:23
- Romans 12:2
- Philippians 4:8
- 2 Timothy 1:7
- Luke 10:27

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

When you hear the words *mental health*, what comes to mind? For some people, it brings hope. For others, it brings fear. Some immediately think of counseling. Others think of medication. Some believe mental health only applies to people with a diagnosis. But none of those definitions tell the whole story.

The truth is simple: **Every person has mental health.** Just as every person has physical health, every person has mental health. Some days we feel mentally strong. Other days we feel mentally exhausted. Some seasons are filled with peace. Other seasons may be marked by stress, grief, uncertainty, or emotional pain. Mental health is not something reserved for a select group of people. It is part of being human. Understanding this truth removes stigma and reminds us that caring for our minds is part of faithfully stewarding the life God has given us.

UNDERSTAND

Mental health influences how we:

- Think
- Feel
- Learn
- Handle stress
- Build relationships
- Solve problems
- Make decisions
- Respond to life's challenges

Healthy mental health does not mean we never experience sadness, fear, anger, disappointment, or grief. Those emotions are part of the human experience. Instead, healthy mental health helps us respond to life's challenges in ways that promote resilience, wisdom, healthy relationships, and continued growth.

MENTAL HEALTH IS A CONTINUUM

Mental health is not simply "healthy" or "unhealthy." It exists on a continuum. At different points in life, you may find yourself in different places.

Thriving

You feel emotionally balanced, connected, and able to manage life's challenges.



Doing Well

Life has normal ups and downs, but you are functioning well and recovering from stress in healthy ways.



Struggling

Stress, grief, conflict, burnout, or difficult circumstances begin affecting your daily life.



In Crisis

Your ability to function has been significantly affected, and additional support is needed.



Recovering

Healing is taking place one step at a time through support, treatment, healthy habits, and God's grace.

Where you are today is not necessarily where you will remain. Growth and recovery are possible.

WHAT AFFECTS MENTAL HEALTH?

Many factors influence our mental well-being.

Sleep

Poor sleep can affect mood, concentration, memory, and emotional regulation.

Stress

Short-term stress is a normal part of life, but chronic stress can affect both the brain and body.

Grief

Loss changes us. Grief affects people emotionally, mentally, physically, relationally, and spiritually.

Trauma

Painful experiences can continue affecting the way we think, feel, and respond long after the event has ended.

Relationships

Healthy relationships often strengthen us. Unhealthy relationships may increase emotional distress.

Physical Health

Illness, chronic pain, hormonal changes, nutritional deficiencies, and other medical conditions may influence mental well-being.

Brain Function

The brain is an organ. Like every other organ, it can experience conditions that affect how it functions.

Faith and Community

Prayer, worship, Scripture, healthy relationships, and Christian community can strengthen us during difficult seasons.

Mental health is influenced by many factors—not just one.

MENTAL HEALTH IS NOT JUST ONE THING

Not every struggle has the same cause. A person may be overwhelmed because they haven't slept. Another may be grieving the loss of a loved one. Someone else may be experiencing burnout after months of carrying too much. Another person may have an underlying medical condition. Someone else may be living with a diagnosed mental health disorder. Two people may appear to have similar symptoms while experiencing very different situations. That is why wisdom is more helpful than assumptions.

MYTH VS. TRUTH

Myth

"If I pray enough, I'll never struggle."

Truth

Faithful believers throughout Scripture experienced fear, grief, discouragement, and emotional pain.

Myth

"Strong Christians don't need counseling."

Truth

Seeking wise counsel has always been part of biblical wisdom.

Myth

"Medication means I don't trust God."

Truth

For some people, medication may be one part of a treatment plan developed with a qualified healthcare professional. Receiving appropriate care is not the opposite of faith.

Myth

"Mental health only matters if I have a diagnosis."

Truth

Every person has mental health, and every person is called to steward it.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

While no one can prevent every struggle, certain habits can help support mental well-being.

- Spending time with God
- Prayer
- Reading Scripture
- Healthy sleep
- Nutritious food
- Regular movement
- Healthy relationships
- Wise boundaries
- Managing stress
- Serving others
- Living with purpose
- Seeking appropriate professional care when needed

Stewardship happens in the small, consistent choices we make each day.

WHEN SHOULD I ASK FOR HELP?

Consider reaching out to a trusted person or qualified healthcare professional if:

- You feel overwhelmed most days.
- Your emotions are interfering with daily life.
- You have lost interest in things you once enjoyed.
- You are struggling to sleep for an extended period.
- You feel isolated or withdrawn.
- You are using unhealthy coping methods to get through the day.
- You simply know something doesn't feel right.

Asking for help is not admitting defeat. It is choosing wisdom.

DID YOU KNOW?

Everyone experiences mental health. Not everyone experiences a mental health disorder.

Understanding the difference helps remove stigma and encourages people to seek appropriate support when needed.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

Throughout Scripture, God welcomed people who were weary, grieving, fearful, discouraged, and overwhelmed. He never asked them to pretend they were fine. He invited them to come to Him. As followers of Christ, we should create that same invitation for others. The Church should be a place where people can tell the truth about what they are carrying and find both compassion and hope.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

How has your understanding of mental health changed through this chapter?

Renew

Which myth challenged your thinking the most?

Why?

Respond

What is one step you can take this week to better steward your mental well-being or encourage someone else's?

REMEMBER

It is okay to say:

"I need help."

"I'm struggling."

"I'm overwhelmed."

"I'm grieving."

"I need rest."

"I need prayer."

"I need wise counsel."

"I need to talk with my doctor."

"I don't have to carry this alone."

There is strength in humility. There is wisdom in seeking help. There is hope in Christ.

Looking Ahead

In Chapter Eight, we will explore common mental health conditions through both Scripture and current scientific understanding. Our goal is not to diagnose ourselves or others, but to replace fear with understanding, stigma with compassion, and assumptions with truth.

CHAPTER EIGHT

WHEN THE BRAIN NEEDS SUPPORT

BIG IDEA

Just as the heart, lungs, kidneys, and other organs can experience illness, the brain can also experience conditions that affect how a person thinks, feels, behaves, and functions.

KINGDOM TRUTH

A diagnosis may explain a person's experience, but it never determines their identity.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Psalm 34:18
- Isaiah 41:10
- Romans 8:38–39
- Galatians 6:2
- James 1:5

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

Imagine waking up one morning with severe chest pain. Most people would not feel embarrassed about calling a doctor. If someone broke their leg, we would encourage them to seek treatment. If a person was diagnosed with diabetes, we would likely encourage them to follow their treatment plan. Yet when the brain needs support, many people respond differently.

They hide. They feel ashamed. They fear being judged. They wonder if people will think they don't have enough faith. The brain is an organ. Like every other organ, it can experience illness, injury, or conditions that affect how it functions. Understanding that truth helps us replace shame with compassion.

UNDERSTAND

Mental health conditions are not all the same. They vary in symptoms, severity, duration, and treatment. Some develop after significant life events. Some involve biological factors. Some are influenced by genetics, environment, trauma, or prolonged stress. Often, several factors work

together. That is why there is rarely one simple explanation or one simple solution. Each person's story is unique.

A DIAGNOSIS IS A TOOL

Receiving a diagnosis can bring many emotions. Relief. Confusion. Fear. Hope. Questions. For many people, a diagnosis finally explains why they have been struggling. It gives healthcare professionals a common language to understand symptoms, guide treatment, and monitor progress. A diagnosis is not a label meant to limit a person's future. It is a tool that helps guide care. Your diagnosis may describe what you are experiencing. It does not describe your worth.

COMMON MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

This curriculum is not designed to diagnose. Instead, it provides a basic understanding of several common conditions.

Anxiety Disorders

Everyone experiences worry from time to time. An anxiety disorder goes beyond ordinary worry. It may involve persistent fear, excessive worry, panic attacks, restlessness, muscle tension, or difficulty concentrating. These symptoms may interfere with work, school, relationships, or everyday life.

Depressive Disorders

Depression is more than having a bad day. It may include ongoing sadness, loss of interest in activities, changes in sleep or appetite, fatigue, hopelessness, difficulty concentrating, or feelings of worthlessness. Depression affects people differently, and symptoms can range from mild to severe.

Bipolar Disorders

Bipolar disorders involve significant changes in mood, energy, and activity levels. Some people experience periods of depression. Others experience periods of unusually elevated mood, increased energy, decreased need for sleep, racing thoughts, or impulsive behavior. These mood episodes vary in intensity and duration. With appropriate treatment and support, many people with bipolar disorder live meaningful and productive lives.

Trauma-Related Disorders

Trauma affects people in different ways. Some individuals continue experiencing the effects of a traumatic event long after the danger has passed. They may have intrusive memories, nightmares, heightened alertness, emotional numbness, or avoid reminders of the event. Healing often involves time, support, and, for many people, professional care.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

OCD involves recurring unwanted thoughts, images, or urges that create distress. A person may feel driven to perform certain behaviors or mental rituals in an attempt to reduce anxiety. These patterns can become exhausting and interfere with daily life.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD affects attention, organization, impulse control, and, for some individuals, activity level. People with ADHD often possess remarkable strengths, including creativity, curiosity, and problem-solving abilities. With appropriate strategies and support, many thrive in school, work, ministry, and relationships.

TREATMENT IS NOT ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

No two people have the exact same treatment plan. Depending on the individual, treatment may include:

- Education
- Lifestyle changes
- Counseling or psychotherapy
- Support groups
- Medication
- Stress management
- Healthy sleep habits
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Spiritual support
- A combination of these approaches

Treatment should always be discussed with qualified healthcare professionals.

WHAT MENTAL ILLNESS IS NOT

Mental illness is not:

- A punishment from God.
- Proof that someone lacks faith.
- A character flaw.
- A sign of spiritual failure.
- Something to hide in shame.
- A person's identity.

People are always more than their diagnosis.

DID YOU KNOW?

Millions of people live with diagnosed mental health conditions while faithfully serving their families, churches, workplaces, and communities.

With appropriate support, many experience significant improvement and continue to lead meaningful, purpose-filled lives.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

Throughout Jesus' ministry, He responded to hurting people with compassion. He did not reduce people to their condition. He saw their humanity. As followers of Christ, we are called to do the same. Before we speak. We listen. Before we judge. We show compassion. Before we assume. We seek understanding. This is how we reflect the heart of Christ.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

How has this chapter changed the way you think about mental health conditions?

Renew

Which truth challenged a belief or assumption you previously held?

Respond

How can you become a safer person for someone who is struggling? What practical step will you take this week?

REMEMBER

If you are struggling, you are not alone. If you have questions, ask them. If you need help, seek it. If you need prayer, request it. If you need counseling, pursue it. If your healthcare professional recommends treatment, prayerfully consider their guidance. God often works through people, wisdom, community, and appropriate care. Hope is always greater than hopelessness.

Looking Ahead

In Chapter Nine, we will discover the many tools God has provided to help us faithfully steward our minds, bodies, relationships, and spiritual lives.

CHAPTER NINE

GOD'S TOOLS FOR WHOLE-PERSON STEWARDSHIP

BIG IDEA

God often works through multiple means to bring growth, healing, wisdom, and restoration.

KINGDOM TRUTH

Stewardship is faithfully using every resource God has wisely provided.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Proverbs 11:14
- Ecclesiastes 4:9–10
- Luke 5:31
- James 1:5
- Philippians 4:8–9

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

When people are struggling, they often ask one important question: **"What should I do?"** Some people believe the answer is prayer alone. Others believe the answer is therapy alone. Others place all of their hope in medication. As believers, we recognize that God has provided many tools to help us grow, heal, and faithfully steward the lives He has entrusted to us.

The goal is not to choose one tool while rejecting all the others. The goal is wisdom. Just as a carpenter uses different tools for different jobs, God often works through different resources to meet different needs.

UNDERSTAND

Throughout Scripture, we see God provide for His people in many different ways. Sometimes He worked through miracles. Sometimes He provided wisdom. Sometimes He worked through

relationships. Sometimes He gave practical instructions. Today, we also have resources that can support whole-person stewardship. These may include:

Prayer

Prayer keeps us connected to God. It reminds us that we are never alone and invites us to bring every concern before Him.

Scripture

God's Word renews our thinking, shapes our perspective, and anchors us in truth.

Christian Community

Healthy relationships provide encouragement, accountability, support, and hope during both joyful and difficult seasons.

Counseling

A qualified counselor can help people process grief, trauma, relationship challenges, unhealthy thought patterns, and other life experiences in a healthy and productive way.

Medical Care

Physical and mental health concerns deserve appropriate medical attention. Healthcare professionals can help identify underlying conditions, recommend treatment options, and provide ongoing care when needed.

Medication

For some individuals, medication may become one part of a comprehensive treatment plan developed with a qualified healthcare professional. Medication is not appropriate for every situation, but neither should it be viewed as a failure of faith when medically indicated.

Healthy Habits

Sleep.

Nutritious food.

Regular movement.

Healthy relationships.

Managing stress.

These daily choices help support the brain and body God designed.

DID YOU KNOW?

Research consistently shows that healthy sleep, regular physical activity, meaningful relationships, and effective stress management all contribute to improved mental well-being.

Many people experience the greatest benefit through a combination of healthy lifestyle habits, supportive relationships, spiritual growth, and appropriate professional care.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

God rarely asks us to choose between trusting Him and using the resources He provides. Throughout Scripture, we see Him working through people, wisdom, community, practical provision, and His miraculous power. Faith does not reject wisdom. Faith walks in wisdom. As believers, we are called to seek God first while faithfully stewarding every resource He places within our reach.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

Which stewardship tool do you use most consistently?

- ☐ Prayer
- ☐ Scripture
- ☐ Christian Community
- ☐ Healthy Habits
- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Medical Care

Why do you think that is?

Renew

Is there a stewardship tool you have avoided because of fear, misunderstanding, pride, or stigma? How has this chapter challenged your thinking?

Respond

Choose one practical step you will take this week to better steward your mental, physical, relational, or spiritual well-being. Write your commitment below.

Looking Ahead

In our final chapter, we will bring everything together as we discover how faith, wisdom, and stewardship work together to help us care for the whole person God designed.

CHAPTER TEN

RENEWING THE MIND

BIG IDEA

God calls us to renew our minds, and lasting transformation often happens through daily surrender, intentional habits, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

KINGDOM TRUTH

A transformed life begins with a renewed mind.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Romans 12:1–2
- Philippians 4:8–9
- Colossians 3:1–2
- Ephesians 4:22–24
- Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV)

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

Most people want change. They want healthier relationships. Greater peace. Better habits. Freedom from unhealthy thinking. Spiritual growth. But real transformation rarely happens overnight. Throughout Scripture, God consistently calls His people to grow. To mature.

To become more like Christ. One of the primary places that transformation begins is the mind. Renewing the mind is not about pretending problems do not exist. It is about allowing God's truth to reshape the way we think, believe, and respond.

UNDERSTAND

Every day, your brain is learning. Every experience. Every conversation. Every habit. Every thought. Over time, repeated thoughts and behaviors become familiar patterns. Some of those patterns are healthy. Others may need to change.

Current research suggests that the brain is capable of adapting throughout life as we learn, practice new skills, and develop healthier habits. This ability is often referred to as **neuroplasticity**.

While science explains how the brain can change, Scripture teaches why lasting transformation matters. God desires to transform us into the likeness of Christ. As believers, renewing the mind involves more than gaining information. It involves allowing God's truth to shape our beliefs, attitudes, decisions, and daily lives. Renewing the mind is a lifelong journey. It is not about perfection. It is about faithful progress.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every time you practice a new habit, learn new information, or repeat a healthy behavior, your brain strengthens the pathways associated with that activity.

This is one reason consistency often produces lasting change more effectively than occasional effort.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

The Holy Spirit transforms us from the inside out. As we spend time in God's Word. Pray. Worship. Practice obedience. And develop healthy rhythms. We are cooperating with the work God is doing within us. Spiritual transformation is God's work. Faithful stewardship is our response. God changes hearts. We choose daily obedience. Both are part of the journey of discipleship.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

What unhealthy thought pattern, belief, or habit do you believe God is inviting you to surrender?

Renew

What biblical truth do you need to replace that pattern with?

Respond

Choose one daily practice you will commit to over the next 30 days to help renew your mind.

Examples include:

- ☐ Daily Scripture reading
- ☐ Prayer
- ☐ Gratitude journaling
- ☐ Memorizing Scripture
- ☐ Healthier sleep habits
- ☐ Limiting negative media
- ☐ Seeking wise counsel
- ☐ Other: _____

Looking Ahead

In Chapter Eleven, we will discover how the Church can become a place of healing, hope, and compassionate support for those navigating mental health challenges.

We'll learn how to respond with truth, wisdom, and grace while reflecting the heart of Christ.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE

BIG IDEA

The Church should be a place where truth and compassion work together, creating an environment where people can grow in faith while receiving the support they need.

KINGDOM TRUTH

People should never have to choose between finding hope and finding help.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Galatians 6:2
- Romans 12:15
- John 13:34–35
- James 5:16
- Ephesians 4:15

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

Throughout His ministry, Jesus saw people before He saw their problems. He listened. He showed compassion. He spoke truth. He restored dignity. He offered hope. As His followers, we are called to do the same. The Church should be one of the safest places for people to admit they are struggling.

Instead, many people suffer in silence because they fear being misunderstood, judged, or labeled as spiritually weak. The Church has an opportunity to change that. When we lead with both truth and compassion, we reflect the heart of Christ.

UNDERSTAND

Supporting someone who is struggling does not require having all the answers. Sometimes the greatest gift we can offer is our presence. Healthy churches create environments where people are free to ask questions, seek wisdom, receive prayer, and pursue appropriate support without shame.

As believers, we should encourage one another to:

- Pray consistently.
- Stay rooted in God's Word.
- Build healthy relationships.
- Carry one another's burdens.
- Seek wise counsel.
- Receive appropriate medical or mental healthcare when needed.

We should also recognize our limitations. Pastors are not expected to replace physicians. Counselors are not called to replace the Church. Healthcare professionals are not called to replace the Holy Spirit. Each has a unique role, and together they can support the whole person.

DID YOU KNOW?

Studies consistently show that strong, healthy relationships are associated with improved emotional well-being and greater resilience during difficult seasons. God's design for community is not only spiritually significant—it also contributes to human flourishing.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

The Church has always been called to care for people. We feed the hungry. Visit the sick. Comfort those who mourn. Encourage the discouraged. Bear one another's burdens. Supporting mental health is not a departure from the Church's mission.

It is part of loving our neighbors well. When people walk through our doors, they should encounter both the truth of God's Word and the compassion of Christ. That combination changes lives.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

If someone in your church shared that they were struggling with their mental health, how do you think they would be received?

Renew

Is there a belief or assumption about mental health that God may be asking you to surrender?

Respond

What is one practical way you can help make your church, ministry, home, or community a place where people feel safe to seek help, ask questions, and experience the love of Christ?

Looking Ahead

In our final chapter, we will bring everything together by exploring how faith, science, and stewardship work together to help us faithfully care for the whole person God designed. We'll leave with a practical roadmap for living out what we've learned every day.

CHAPTER TWELVE

FAITH. SCIENCE. STEWARDSHIP.

BIG IDEA

God has entrusted us with one life. Faithful stewardship means honoring Him with every part of who we are.

KINGDOM TRUTH

The goal is not simply to know more. The goal is to faithfully steward what God has entrusted to you.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- Micah 6:8
- Luke 16:10
- Romans 12:1–2
- Colossians 3:23–24
- 1 Corinthians 10:31

Before continuing, read each passage in its entirety.

FOUNDATION

Throughout this curriculum, we have explored God's design for the human mind through the lens of Scripture and current scientific understanding. We have learned that the brain is part of God's remarkable creation. We have discovered that caring for our mental health is not separate from our faith — it is part of faithful stewardship. We have seen that rest matters. Healthy relationships matter. Wise habits matter. Community matters. Professional care has a place.

Most importantly, we have been reminded that every person is created in the image of God and deserves to be treated with dignity, compassion, and hope. Knowledge is valuable. But knowledge alone does not transform lives. Applied wisdom does.

UNDERSTAND

Stewardship is not something we practice only when life is easy. It is a daily decision. Every day we choose: What we think about.

How we care for our bodies.
How we respond to stress.
How we speak to others.
How we spend our time.
How we pursue wisdom.
How we love God and our neighbors.

None of us will steward these areas perfectly. That is why we depend on God's grace every day. Faithful stewardship is not about perfection. It is about intentional obedience. One faithful decision at a time.

DID YOU KNOW?

Research consistently shows that small, healthy habits practiced over time often produce meaningful and lasting change. Scripture teaches a similar principle. Faithfulness is usually demonstrated through consistent obedience in the ordinary moments of life. Small steps, taken consistently, often lead to lasting transformation.

KINGDOM CONNECTION

Faith and science do not compete for our loyalty. Our faith belongs to Christ. Science is one of the many ways we can better understand the world He created.

As believers, we remain rooted in God's Word while wisely stewarding every resource He has provided.

Our prayer is that this curriculum has not only increased your understanding but also strengthened your compassion, deepened your worship, and inspired you to care for yourself and others with greater wisdom.

The journey does not end here.

In many ways, it is just beginning.

ROOTED APPLICATION

Reflect

Looking back over this curriculum, what lesson impacted you the most?

Why?

Renew

What belief has God reshaped through this journey?

Respond

Choose one area of stewardship you will intentionally focus on over the next 90 days.

- ☐ My relationship with God
- ☐ My thought life
- ☐ My physical health
- ☐ My mental well-being
- ☐ My relationships
- ☐ Rest
- ☐ Stress management
- ☐ Healthy boundaries
- ☐ Other: _____

Write one practical commitment you will begin today.

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Remember... You are not defined by your diagnosis. You are not defined by your struggle. You are not defined by your worst day. You are created in the image of God. You are deeply loved. You are called to grow. You are invited to steward every gift God has entrusted to you with wisdom, humility, and hope.

One decision. One day. One step at a time.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed **The Brain God Designed™**.

May what you have learned move beyond information and become transformation. As you continue your journey, never forget: **The same God who designed your mind is faithful to guide your life.**

Continue learning. Continue growing. Continue stewarding. And above all, continue following Christ.

WHOLE-PERSON STEWARDSHIP ASSESSMENT

Every 90 Days

Instructions

Prayerfully reflect on each area below.

Using the scale provided, rate yourself based on your current habits and level of stewardship—not perfection.

Rating Scale

1 = Needs Immediate Attention

2 = Inconsistent

3 = Growing

4 = Healthy

5 = Thriving

SPIRITUAL STEWARDSHIP

I consistently spend time with God through prayer.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I regularly read and apply God's Word.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I participate in biblical community and accountability.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I trust God during difficult seasons.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Spiritual Stewardship Score: _____ /20

MENTAL STEWARDSHIP

I pay attention to my thought life.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I practice healthy ways of managing stress.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I recognize when I need help and am willing to seek it.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I intentionally protect my peace and mental well-being.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Mental Stewardship Score: _____ /20

PHYSICAL STEWARDSHIP

I get adequate rest most nights.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I nourish my body with healthy choices.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I engage in regular physical activity.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I care for my physical health and seek appropriate medical care when needed.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Physical Stewardship Score: _____ /20

RELATIONAL STEWARDSHIP

I communicate with honesty, love, and respect.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I maintain healthy boundaries.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I invest in meaningful relationships.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

I forgive others and pursue reconciliation when appropriate.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Relational Stewardship Score: _____ /20

OVERALL REFLECTION

Which area is currently your greatest strength?

Which area needs the most attention?

What has improved since your last assessment?

What challenges have you faced over the past 90 days?

MY 90-DAY STEWARDSHIP GOAL

The one area I will intentionally focus on over the next 90 days is:

Three practical action steps I will take are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

KINGDOM COMMITMENT

I understand that stewardship is not about perfection. It is about faithfully honoring God with the life He has entrusted to me. By God's grace, I commit to growing one faithful step at a time.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I also have one suggestion that I think will make this assessment unique to **The Real Ministry**: after each 90-day assessment, have participants compare it with their previous one. The question isn't, "**Did I score a 5?**" The question is, "**Where has God grown me over the last 90 days?**" That keeps the focus on transformation rather than performance.

MY 90-DAY STEWARDSHIP PLAN

"Be faithful in the small things." — Luke 16:10

Instructions

Stewardship is not about changing everything overnight. It is about faithfully taking one step at a time. Prayerfully choose **one area** where you believe God is calling you to grow over the next 90 days. Focus on progress, not perfection.

STEP ONE

My Primary Area of Stewardship

- ☐ Relationship with God
- ☐ Mental Well-Being
- ☐ Physical Health
- ☐ Emotional Health
- ☐ Relationships
- ☐ Rest
- ☐ Stress Management
- ☐ Healthy Boundaries
- ☐ Purpose
- ☐ Other: _____

STEP TWO

Why Is This My Focus?

Describe why you chose this area and what you hope to accomplish over the next 90 days.

STEP THREE

My 90-Day Goal

Write one clear goal.

Example:

"I will create a consistent bedtime routine."

"I will spend time with God every morning."

"I will schedule an appointment with a healthcare professional."

"I will walk 30 minutes three times each week."

"My Goal"

STEP FOUR

Three Action Steps

What three practical actions will help you reach your goal?

1.

2.

3.

STEP FIVE

My Support System

Growth happens best in community. Who can encourage, support, and pray for you during the next 90 days?

Name: _____

How will they support me?

STEP SIX

Possible Obstacles

What challenges might make this goal difficult?

How will you respond when those challenges arise?

STEP SEVEN

My Weekly Check-In

At the end of each week, ask yourself:

- ☐ Did I remain faithful this week?
- ☐ What went well?
- ☐ What challenged me?
- ☐ What did God teach me?
- ☐ What will I improve next week?

MY COMMITMENT

I understand that transformation is a journey, not a single moment. With God's help, I commit to faithfully stewarding this area of my life over the next 90 days. I choose progress over perfection. Consistency over intensity. Faithfulness over feelings. One step at a time.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

KINGDOM DECLARATION

I declare that my life belongs to God.
My mind belongs to God.
My body belongs to God.
My relationships belong to God.
My future belongs to God.

By His grace, I will faithfully steward every gift He has entrusted to me.

I will not pursue perfection.

I will pursue faithfulness.

One decision.

One day.

One step at a time.

Remember: Stewardship is not measured by how quickly you change. It is measured by your willingness to remain faithful, even when growth feels slow.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Continue the Journey

Congratulations on completing **The Brain God Designed™**.

Learning does not end with the final chapter. Healthy stewardship is a lifelong journey of growing in wisdom, deepening our faith, and faithfully caring for the whole person God has entrusted to us.

The resources below are intended to help you continue learning. They are not endorsements of every opinion or theological position an author may hold. As with all resources, compare what you read with Scripture and seek wisdom as you continue to grow.

BIBLE STUDY

Continue developing a habit of studying God's Word.

Consider reading through:

- Proverbs (Wisdom for Daily Living)
- Psalms (Prayer, Worship, and Honest Emotions)
- The Gospel of John (The Life of Christ)
- Romans (The Gospel and the Renewed Mind)
- James (Practical Christian Living)

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Biblical Growth & Discipleship

- *Celebration of Discipline* — Richard J. Foster
- *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* — John Mark Comer
- *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* — Peter Scazzero

Mental Health & Whole-Person Stewardship

- *The Body Keeps the Score* — Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.
- *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* — Robert M. Sapolsky
- *The Deepest Place* — Curt Thompson, M.D.
- *Anatomy of the Soul* — Curt Thompson, M.D.

Brain Health

- *The Brain That Changes Itself* — Norman Doidge, M.D.
- *Keep Sharp* — Sanjay Gupta, M.D.

HEALTHY HABITS

Support your brain by developing healthy rhythms.

- Prioritize quality sleep.
- Stay physically active.
- Eat nutritious foods.
- Stay hydrated.
- Spend time outdoors.
- Maintain meaningful relationships.
- Practice healthy boundaries.
- Spend daily time with God.
- Make room for worship and rest.

Small, consistent choices often lead to meaningful growth over time.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

There may be seasons when additional support is needed.

Consider reaching out to:

- Your primary healthcare provider
- A licensed mental health professional
- A psychiatrist when medication evaluation is appropriate
- A licensed professional counselor
- A trusted pastor or ministry leader
- A biblically grounded support group

Seeking help is not a sign of weakness. It is often an act of wisdom and faithful stewardship.

IF YOU ARE IN CRISIS

If you believe you may be in immediate danger of harming yourself or someone else, or you feel unable to keep yourself safe:

- Call your local emergency services immediately.
- Go to the nearest emergency department.

- Reach out to a trusted family member, friend, pastor, or another safe person who can stay with you.

If you are in the United States or Canada, you can contact **988** to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting **988** for immediate support.

You do not have to face a crisis alone.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Apostle Dr. Jerry Lee Porter Jr. & Prophetess Dr. Jaletha Williams Porter

Apostle Dr. Jerry Lee Porter Jr. and Prophetess Dr. Jaletha Williams Porter are the founders and senior leaders of **The Real Ministry**, a discipleship-centered ministry committed to developing spiritually mature believers through biblical teaching, practical application, and whole-person stewardship.

Together, they have spent years serving individuals, families, leaders, and communities by helping people grow spiritually, emotionally, mentally, relationally, and professionally.

As **Certified Mental Health Coaches**, **Certified Life Coaches**, and **Certified Business Coaches**, they are passionate about helping people experience transformation in every area of life. Their coaching philosophy is rooted in biblical truth, practical wisdom, and compassionate care.

Both authors have personally navigated mental health challenges, giving them a unique perspective that combines lived experience with professional training. Rather than writing from theory alone, they write with humility, compassion, and a deep understanding of the hope that comes through faith, appropriate support, and faithful stewardship.

Their educational background includes graduate studies in **Christian Counseling**, along with doctoral studies in **Christian Leadership** and **Business Leadership**, equipping them to serve both the Church and the broader community with biblical integrity and practical insight.

Their ministry is built upon one foundational belief: **God cares about the whole person**. This conviction has shaped every lesson in this curriculum.

The Brain God Designed™ was written to help remove the stigma surrounding mental health, encourage biblically faithful conversations, and equip believers to steward their minds, bodies, relationships, and spiritual lives with wisdom and confidence.

Their prayer is that every reader will leave this curriculum with a greater appreciation for God's design, a deeper understanding of whole-person stewardship, and renewed hope for the journey ahead.

Together, Apostle Jerry and Prophetess Jaletha continue to teach, mentor, coach, and disciple individuals around the world, helping them grow in faith, leadership, purpose, and personal stewardship—always pointing people back to Christ, the source of wisdom, healing, and lasting transformation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, we give all glory, honor, and praise to God. Thank You, Lord, for Your grace, Your wisdom, and Your patience. Thank You for creating us with purpose and for allowing us to steward the gifts, experiences, and opportunities You have entrusted to us. Every page of this curriculum exists because of Your faithfulness.

To our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—thank You for being our hope, our healer, and our perfect example. May every lesson in this curriculum point people back to You. To the Holy Spirit—thank You for Your continual guidance, conviction, comfort, and wisdom. We acknowledge that true transformation is Your work.

To our families, thank you for your love, encouragement, patience, and sacrifice. Your support has made it possible for us to answer God's call while continuing to grow alongside you.

To The Real Ministry family, thank you for trusting us to teach, disciple, and walk with you through every season. Your questions, testimonies, victories, and transparency have helped shape this curriculum more than you know. Many of the lessons found within these pages were born from conversations, Bible studies, counseling sessions, coaching conversations, and life experiences we have shared together.

To the educators, researchers, physicians, mental health professionals, counselors, and healthcare workers whose dedication continues to advance our understanding of the human mind, thank you for your commitment to serving others. We are grateful for those who pursue knowledge with humility and use it to improve the lives of individuals and families around the world.

To every person who has ever struggled silently with anxiety, depression, trauma, bipolar disorder, grief, burnout, addiction, or any other mental health challenge, this curriculum is dedicated to you.

We see you. We honor your courage. We pray these pages remind you that your struggle is not your identity, your diagnosis is not your destiny, and your story is not over. Finally, thank you to every reader who has chosen to invest time in this journey. We do not take your trust lightly. It is our prayer that this curriculum not only increases your knowledge but also deepens your compassion, strengthens your faith, and equips you to faithfully steward every part of the life God has entrusted to you.

May everything we have written bring glory to God, strengthen His Church, and encourage His people for generations to come.

**With gratitude,
Apostle Dr. Jerry Lee Porter Jr.
Prophetess Dr. Jaletha Williams Porter**

The Real Ministry

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced, light gray horizontal lines running across the width of the page. The lines are thin and consistent in color and thickness throughout. There are no margins, text, or other markings present on the page.

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"Write the vision; make it plain." — Habakkuk 2:2