



## TAKING THOUGHTS CAPTIVE: HOW DOES THAT REALLY WORK?

Excerpt from the book,  
How to Hear God: 10 Ways God Speaks.  
Written by Sterling Harris

Book is available for purchase on Amazon.com



**Sterling Harris**

M I N I S T R I E S

[www.sterlingharris.org](http://www.sterlingharris.org)

This section [of the book] will give you some practical tools in responding to intrusive thoughts, stopping racing and obsessive thoughts, changing negative self-talk, transforming the negative self-narrative in your head and building up your self-esteem. Stop worry, anxiety, depression and being overcome by fleshly desires and destroying thoughts of fear, doubt and temptation from the enemy. This is all about controlling your thought life through spiritual based weapons! This is vitally important in hearing God's voice on a daily basis because it makes it challenging to hear God say the right things to you when you are often thinking and listening to the wrong things. It starts with changing and challenging your thinking! Your life will go in the direction of your predominant thinking, in essence, whatever direction your mind, will and emotions go on a consistent basis so will your life. There is a saying, "whatever you focus on, you become, for better or for worse" and in life I have found that principal over and over again to be true. As you keep your life focused and centered on the nature of Jesus and His Word you will become like Him. You become Christlike by fellowship, friendship, communion, and intimate relationship with God. As your mind is transformed by God you begin to live out the very nature of Jesus, which as a byproduct will render negative thoughts and the demonic forces that try to influence your life ineffective.

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*This is all about controlling your thought life through  
spiritual based weapons!*

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Have you ever heard the statement "Let go and let God" or "leave it at the foot of the cross" and wondered to yourself yeah that sounds great but how do you practically do it? Have you ever wanted to stop worry and anxiety from having place in your life? Have you ever wondered how you practice forgiveness for yourself, God and others? Have you ever heard you have to walk by "the Spirit" to not be overcome by the flesh? Have you ever wondered what does "walking in God's love" practically look like and mean? Well this next section will help you understand the practical application of these things and how to put them into action within a simple three step process. Together we will unpack some of those spiritual sayings and questions such as how to let go and let God, how to stop worry and anxiety, as well as what it means to walk in God's love.

The Word of God says above all things to put on God's love like a garment. Walking in God's love is an everyday decision and a choice, not an emotion. These 3 steps when put into action will empower you to take your thoughts captive and walk in the love of God! You have to put love on and choose love 100's of times a day in your thoughts, words and deeds but it all starts with your thinking. This process will radically change your life, as well as how you hear from God, if you will make the decision to practice this in your life on a daily basis. I have often said getting free is an awesome thing but staying free is everything! This process will empower you to maintain the victory that Jesus Christ obtained for you!

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 speaks of taking EVERY thought captive, punishing the negative thoughts and making them obedient to God by His Word and through your prayers; this is how you keep your heart clean! **“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 ESV**

When a negative thought comes into your mind you say, **“I refuse that thought in the Name of Jesus, that is not my thought, I have the mind of**

## STEP 1

### **CHALLENGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS THROUGH REFUSAL AND CORRECTION, GIVING THE ENEMY THE HAND AND THE SPIRITUAL STIFF ARM AND SLAPPING DOWN THE THOUGHTS**

**Christ and I am not taking it!”** You can also use the words refuse, reject, rebuke or the phrase **“I cast that thought down in the Name of Jesus! I have the mind of Christ!”** If possible you want to speak these words under your breath or out loud. This act of verbalization will help you to break up the thought. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, or it is not appropriate at the time, you can also do this within your mind. We are defining a “negative thought” as any thought you have that is not in line with God's nature, ways, Word, love and the Holy Spirit. Thoughts of irritation, frustration, defensiveness, stress, fear, doubt, worry, unforgiveness, lust, shame, envy, jealousy, regret and guilt would all be categorized as negative thoughts.

A great place to start reading and meditating in the Bible in order to help you identify negative thoughts and to understand a good definition of God's love, is 1 Corinthians Chapter 13 specifically in the Amplified Classic Bible translation (AMPC). I like this translation when it comes to this chapter because it explains God's love in a detailed way that will help give you a measuring device when it comes to your thoughts, words and actions. Use it as your love gauge and meter. Take 1 Corinthians 13:5 AMPC for instance **“Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful;”** based on this verse if you have any thoughts that are “self-seeking” (self-centered, self-absorbed or only looking out for what you want), “touchy” (overly sensitive or irritable), “fretful” (stress or frustration), “resentful” (offense, bitterness or indignation) you are going to identify those thoughts as negative or unwanted. Then challenge those thoughts and respond to them by utilizing these 3 steps. I suggest first starting out reading this passage 5 to 7 times a week and any thought contrary to God's love take it captive and cast it down using this 3 step process!

This step stops the temptation from gaining momentum and turning into worry, doubt, and confusion; like a snowball effect of negative thoughts. This step keeps the negative seeds and fiery darts from landing in your heart and mind and taking root. Because how many negative thoughts does one negative thought lead to? A lot more, right? 10 or 20? Or if you're anything like I use to be, maybe more! During this step we like to encourage people to use physical anchors for what is happening emotionally, mentally and most of all spiritually. For example, in this step I often will put out my hand in a stop motion depending on where I am if I am by myself I might do a full on stop motion, if I am around other people I will just put my hand down to my side and put my hand in a stop position. What am I doing? I am using a physical motion or anchor to remind myself that I am refusing this thought in the name of Jesus, that it is not my thought, I don't think this way because I have the mind of Christ and I am not going to take it. Being a former football player, I feel like I am giving those thoughts and temptations the stiff arm you would see a running back use where he uses the hand he is not carrying the football with to fight off would be tacklers. Some people like to envision themselves slapping down the thought, or they imagine the negative thought being burned up and being blown far away from them, whatever works for you. I often do a combination of things depending on the situation. I have found that physical anchors reduce my stress level and tie a physical action to what I am doing by taking thoughts captive, which is a fundamental part of spiritual warfare!

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You cannot stop the thoughts of temptation from coming into your mind, but once they are present, then you have full accountability, authority and power on how you respond to those temptations. The Bible even tells us that Jesus Himself was tempted in every way yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15) So we know through the Word of God that to have thoughts of temptation is not sinful in itself. However, it's when we entertain, mediate and act on those temptations giving them place in our minds and lives that we fall into sin. These negative thoughts come from several places. Negative perceptions, strongholds, and mindsets you developed during your lifetime from all kinds of places, from the way your parents raised you, to how other kids treated you and what they said about you as you were growing up. Painful or hurtful life experiences often lead to negative and fearful subconscious thinking. Other causes are your fleshly desires, reliance on self-will, limiting core fears and beliefs, the demonic realm or the negative words of others that have been spoken to you and over you. ***When you are tempted don't ever say, "God is tempting me," for God is incapable of being tempted by evil and He is never the source of***

***temptation. Instead it is each person's own desires and thoughts that drag them into evil and lure them away into darkness." James 1:13-14 TPT***

These thoughts attempt to frustrate you by trying to make you feel negatively such as guilty, shameful and fearful. They lead to additional accusations by the enemy with thoughts such as "how could you think like that, you should be ashamed of yourself". However, that is when you refuse even those additional thoughts and temptations in Jesus Name and give yourself some grace. Remind yourself that it is not the actual temptations that will arise that you can control, but how you respond to those temptations and negative thoughts! How you respond is within your full power, authority, and control. Always remember to call on the name of Jesus and to plead His blood over your mind. For we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 2:16)

***"If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises], and will forgive our sins and cleanse us continually from all unrighteousness [our***

## STEP 2

**THE RELEASE AND REMOVAL OF THE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS FROM YOUR HEART OVER TO THE LORD. THIS STEP IS THE "FORGIVENESS EXCHANGE" WHERE YOU RECEIVE FORGIVENESS AND GIVE FORGIVENESS**

***wrongdoing, everything not in conformity with His will and purpose]."* 1 JOHN 1:9 AMP**

After Step 1, you want to confess to God the negative thought of fear, worry, irritation, etc. and repent (repent means to change your way of thinking to the way God thinks, speaks and acts) of the negative thought by saying:

**"Lord, I confess my thoughts of (irritation, worry, shame) \_\_\_\_\_ about (the situation: a person, your finances, or the past) \_\_\_\_\_ to You, I repent and I receive Your forgiveness, I thank You that I am forgiven in Jesus' Name."**

**Then you give Forgiveness: "Lord, I forgive by faith and choose to release and cast \_\_\_\_\_ (any negative thoughts, feelings, or person(s) that may have wronged you), on You and I choose to love and forgive. Amen."**

Let's use an example that we can all relate to at some point in our lives, of a classmate or coworker that has said or done something to irritate, frustrate or offend you; we will call him Bill. This is an example of the model prayers above with the blanks filled in so you get a better picture of how step 2 follows. Remember these prayers are just a model for you to use and adapt to your specific needs and circumstances.

**"Lord, I confess my thoughts of irritation, frustration and unforgiveness about Bill and how he treated me this morning, as well as the way I reacted to Bill out of my irritation with him. To You Lord, I repent**

**and I receive Your forgiveness. I thank You that I am forgiven in Jesus' Name." Then you give Forgiveness: "Lord, I forgive by faith and I choose to release and cast all irritations, frustrations and resentments that I have for Bill over to You God. I thank You that You have taken the offense that I had for Bill from me! I also forgive myself for allowing myself to get angry with him. I choose to love and forgive myself and Bill and I let the situation go into Your Hands. In Jesus Name. Amen"**

The physical anchor that I like in this step is flicking my hand like I am physically getting water off my fingers. This gives me the sense of release and is the physical anchor that I use on a daily basis. If I am by myself I will sometimes hold my arms out in front of me or to the side of me and flick my fingers against my thumbs in an outward flicking motion. If I am around others I usually hold one of my hands or both down at my side and flick my hands a couple of times as I forgive and release these thoughts over to God. I physically feel and sense something is being taken off of me. Another effective physical anchor is deep breathing. Taking a couple of deep breaths out as you forgive will help you come to a place of peace and slow your heart rate down. This helps especially if you are really irritated or frustrated with a person or situation. As I do this I envision blowing the negativity out and breathing in God's goodness and peace. I use physical anchors frequently throughout the day.

When taking thoughts captive I encourage you to use visualization techniques. For example when a fear based thought comes into your mind encase it in a large red stick of dynamite and then blow it up! Visualize putting the thought into a cage with a whole bunch of prison bars surrounding it and then throw it at the foot of the Cross of Jesus that is floating over a beautiful blue ocean. Next, picture it sinking into the sea and then say in your mind, "you cannot come back to bother me ever again"! You can also imagine that the thought gets covered by the Blood of Jesus and then is totally removed or melts away! Visualization has helped me many times as a great tactic to overcome negative and intrusive thoughts. This technique works very well for people that tend to be visual learners.

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The first step stops the negative thoughts and temptations from gaining momentum and leading to more unwanted thoughts. Step 2 releases and removes the negative and unwanted thoughts and stops them from taking root in your heart and mind. This release and removal is likened to tending a garden and pulling the weeds out of the garden of your heart. This is the way you are able to keep any negative seeds or weeds from taking root in your mind and

heart, no matter how small the seed. Because any seed or unwanted thought that does land in your heart and mind, produces after its kind. Who wants all of these weeds of frustration, fear, shame, worry, unforgiveness and irritation to grow in their hearts and minds on a daily basis? None of us want that! However, you have to make a determined response to remove them, otherwise by default they are planted and take root and then we water them with worry and anxiety because one negative thought usually leads to more! Why would you feed and water something you don't want to grow? The answer is you don't, but so many of us allow this to happen on a daily basis. I know for years, as a Believer, I allowed myself to be overrun with unwanted and negative thoughts. Comparing taking thoughts captive to tending a garden makes a lot of sense. If you pull the weeds up in a garden a little at a time on a daily basis then the garden stays in good shape, but if you go two or three weeks without pulling the weeds out then your garden will most likely be overrun with weeds! Just like our hearts and minds get overrun with thoughts of fear, worry, irritation and we wonder why we are anxious, depressed and frustrated by the end of the day or some of us on a daily basis.

You can also think about this process and these unwanted thoughts as pebbles. How uncomfortable is it to have one pebble in your shoe? This is something that we can all relate to. We all have had a pebble in our shoe at one time or another in our lives and it is so nagging and uncomfortable until you stop, take off your shoe and shake the pebble out of your shoe! Likewise our minds get bombarded with unwanted thoughts everyday that by the end of the day they leave us feeling worn down, anxious, frustrated and tired. I also have realized this truth: worry is administering or feeding fear to yourself and fear is faith in what your false perceptions, fleshly desires and the demonic realm say. I also like to use the example of a smoke alarm. Most often anxiety, worry and depression are a byproduct of an untended heart and it is your body and spirit's way of saying, "Hey there are some spiritual and emotional issues here! There is some hurt, pain, unforgiveness and fear we need to deal with and give over to God!" So ignoring them would be like ignoring a smoke detector that is going off in your house even though you smell smoke. The smoke detector is not your "issue or problem" it's the fire in your house! In like manner trying to medicate those things away or suppressing them with busyness, work, video games, television, food, drugs or whatever means you prefer to use, is like getting up in that same scenario and hitting the smoke detector with a hammer until it stops beeping and then going back to whatever you were doing. Again the issue is not the smoke alarm it is the fire in your house; the hurt, pain, fear and unforgiveness in your heart. These steps allow you to stop those unwanted thoughts and fight against them by using them as calls to prayer to release and practice your faith and prayer life with God; thus hearing His voice and experiencing His activity in your daily life.

***"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God [set aside self-righteous pride],... casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares***

***about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully].” 1 PETER 5:6-7 AMP***

Notice God told us to humble ourselves and for us to do the casting of our cares. So we have to do the humbling, releasing, forgiving and casting! those same things in your heart and mind. It is kind of like playing a game of basketball or football, nothing happens in the game until the ball is released. Likewise, this release of negative thoughts; the receiving and giving of forgiveness is a vital step to winning the battlefield of your mind and thus the game of life! This is exactly why you want to immediately release and remove any unwanted thoughts that are trying to be sown into your heart and mind. Once you surrender those thoughts over to God, letting them go by releasing them over to Him, make sure you rest in and trust in the truth that you have surrendered those things over to Him, you are forgiven, you are free, and you are loved by God.

You see, God has given you directions on how to defeat the enemy and put your mind and flesh under the control of the Holy Spirit. The issue is a lot of us are not taking advantage of the power provided to us through Jesus Christ. The Bible says YOU resist the devil, you give him no place, you put on the whole Armor of God, you have the authority to trample on all the power of the enemy, you are called to put your faith into action and to use the power that God gave you through what Jesus has already done for you, you have to flip the switch! The power of the Holy Spirit is there but you have to utilize it! You do the praying for your enemies and people that irritate you, you do the forgiving, you do the casting of your cares on God. He gave you the access to His grace and love and He gave you the power of free will to act on His Word, His love, His name, through His own Holy Spirit that lives in you as a Believer, but you gotta flip the switch every day putting the Word to work in your life!

### STEP 3

**STANDING ON AND IN THE TRUTH OF WHO YOU ARE AS A SON OR DAUGHTER OF GOD AND BY FAITH RECEIVING, DECLARING, CLAIMING AND PLANTING THE GOOD AND LOVING THINGS OF GOD INTO YOUR HEART AND LIFE AS WELL AS INTO THE LIVES OF OTHERS**

In Step 3, you want to pray the opposite of the negative or unwanted thought to which you are being tempted. It can be a thought about God, yourself, another person or a situation. People often tell me they don't know what to say in this third step so I suggest that they take the negative or unwanted thoughts they are getting and turn them around in the opposite direction into a positive faith filled prayer. You bless and pray for the person who you are worried about, frustrated with or holding any unforgiveness for. As well as declare God's Word over your life, the lives of others, and the situation. Jesus commanded that you not only forgive your enemies but love them and bless them by praying for them (Matthew 5:44). If God wants you to do that for

your enemies, what about the people who have the most opportunity to irritate, frustrate or worry you on a regular basis: your spouse, kids, family, friends, coworkers, classmates and yourself? To be transparent, I have used these three steps on myself countless times because for most of us the one who we are the hardest on and tear down the most is ourselves. I have worked these 3 steps regarding my wife, daughter, family and coworkers a countless number of times as well! Because as we can all attest to in life, close relationships and family can be messy! I have also made the commitment to continue to work these steps on a daily basis so that I can live from a place of love and forgiveness for those closest to me. I would encourage you to do the same and even more importantly so does God!

Jesus says, ***“You’re familiar with the old written law, ‘Love your friend,’ and its unwritten companion, ‘Hate your enemy.’ I’m challenging that. I’m telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does.***

***“In a Word, what I’m saying is, Grow up. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously towards others, the way God lives toward you.” MSG Matthew 5:43-48***

For instance, if the negative thought is frustration and worry about your spouse because of something they may have done or said that irritated, worried or frustrated you, you would instead pray for them the opposite way of the temptation. These prayers and steps are usually prayed in your mind or under your normal voice tone or out loud if you are by yourself. These prayers are not for others to hear you, they are for yourself and God although, they do benefit other people.

### **BLESSING THE PERSON:**

Say, **“Lord, Jesus, I thank You that I treasure my spouse's heart. I pray blessings of wisdom and peace upon their life! Thank You that they are so valuable to You Lord, that they are Your child and that they come to know their true value and worth and so do I! I thank You Lord that they are loving and kind and that our relationship is full of love and blessings.”**

### **BLESSING THE SITUATION:**

Begin to bless your marriage, and call by faith what you positively see and want in your spouse by declaring blessings over them. **“Lord thank You that Your peace and understanding are covering my marriage and that You Lord are at the head and in the middle of everything we do! I thank You my spouse and I are quick to forgive and make peace with one another!”**

## BLESSING YOURSELF:

Then pray for yourself, **“Lord I thank You that I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, that my value is in You, that I am worth the blood of Jesus, that I am loving, caring, patient and kind towards myself and my spouse!”**

## BLESSING GOD:

Then praise and worship God, **“Lord thank You for loving me, thank You for my spouse! Father thank You for Your goodness and faithfulness to me and my family!”**

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*So now, using these three steps, you're taking the negative thoughts that were robbing you of your peace and using them as a call to pray and connect with God.*

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So now, using these three steps, you're taking the negative thoughts that were robbing you of your peace and using them as a call to pray and connect with God. You use them as a springboard propelling you forward to bless your life and the lives of others, as well as an opportunity to praise, thank and worship God! As you practice praying this way it will begin to bless and transform your mind, heart and life as you stand on God's Word about His goodness, yourself, other people and situations. **Jesus said: “For this reason I am telling you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe (trust and be confident) that it is granted to you, and you will [get it].” Mark 11:24 AMPC** When you continually choose to speak life and blessings you and your family will live in freedom and prosperity (Deuteronomy 30:19). Some people will say to me, “Well these things are not true about me, my life or the person I am praying for, I feel like I am lying, I feel like am being a hypocrite.” and I ask them, “How can you lie and be a hypocrite by saying and praying what God says and calling forth what you want just like God does?” You're not a liar nor a hypocrite if you have any desire, intent or motivation to become more like Jesus. The sheer fact you're reading this book and seeking God means you have a desire to know Him and become more like Him! When you keep on doing the same negative things which you really don't want to do anymore, this just means you need to continue in the Word of God, continue being in close fellowship with the Holy Spirit and continue to say what God says about you, your life and others, till breakthrough and change comes! God promises in His Word that if you continue to do these things then you will experience change and transformation! I tell them the same thing I am encouraging you to do, “You have to see and speak blessings over yourself and others by faith through God's love, Word and Spirit

just like Jesus did, and just like He commanded you to do!" ***"God who gives life to the dead and calls things into existence that do not exist."*** ***Romans 4:17 CSB***

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*You are calling by faith the blessings and changes you want to see happen in your life and the lives of others that line up with God's TRUTH.*

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You are calling by faith the blessings and changes you want to see happen in your life and the lives of others that line up with God's TRUTH. That is why it is important for you to get into the Word of God and allow it to transform and renew your mind to what God says, as well as listening to His active voice on a daily moment by moment basis. By making the commitment, decision and daily choice to the practice and the training of taking thoughts captive, repenting, forgiving, and releasing your faith in prayer, will help you keep your heart clean of negativity, fear and unforgiveness and keep your life blessed and prosperous!

The first two steps were defensive in nature, but you cannot win a sports game by only playing defense. In order to win, you have to play the game with some offense as well! The first two steps you were responding to the temptation and keeping your heart clean by resisting unwanted thoughts and the enemy's temptations and removing whatever might have landed on your heart! This third step is where you become offensive, and you bless your life, the situation and the lives of others. When you pray and speak the Word of God over your life and others, God supernaturally causes things to move in the spiritual realm on your behalf. This will in-turn eventually affect the natural realm of your life causing breakthrough, change and blessings to occur! The Bible tells us that God actively watches over the prayers we pray for our lives and the lives of others to ensure they are carried out as we pray in faith by His Word! So we can be assured even when we don't see how God is going to bring it to pass through our prayers, God is working on our behalf behind the scenes in the spiritual and natural realms of our lives and the lives of others, kind of like on a movie set.

***Then said the Lord to me, You have seen well, for I am alert and active, watching over My Word to perform it. Jeremiah 1:12 AMPC***

The Bible tells us that Ministering Spirits and Angels work on our behalf as we pray and release our faith in praying and declaring blessings over ourselves and others. (Hebrews 1:14, Psalms 103:20). God honors our faith, love, and hope. You also allow the Word of God to transform and renew your mind and heart on a daily basis to be more like Jesus! We like to use the illustration of a palm tree on a white sand beach and it's filled with all this amazingly beautiful and tasty fruit of whatever you want for your heart peace, value, joy, freedom and as you declare these things through prayer you pull down these tasty fruits into your heart and you are filled back up with God's love, Presence and Word!

In this step the physical anchor that I like to use is, as I pray for others or certain circumstances in my life, I imagine and envision in my mind that the prayers I am praying for them or the situation are working and having a powerful impact. When I am praying for myself I will sometimes pretend I am picking fruit from that palm tree and as I claim who I am in Christ and thank God for His love for me, I pull those things down out of the air like I am pulling blessings down from Heaven itself, which spiritually speaking is a true statement, and I place my hand over my heart as to say I am putting these fruits of: value, identity, love, peace, worthiness, prosperity and healing inside my heart, soul and body! I also practice what I call "Running to the Throne Room" meaning I use this third step as a call to praise, thank and worship God. I claim God's blessings over my life through who I am in Christ. If I am having some prevailing thoughts that I am struggling with that won't seem to stop and that keep almost bouncing or swirling around in my head, I will write down the negative thoughts I am having so I can look at them and talk them over with God. I will ask God to give me His perspective and truth on these thoughts and then I listen. There is something powerful about getting thoughts out of your head by writing them down and then giving them over to God that brings clarity and freedom.

You want to make sure you fill the void that was made by the negativity that you gave over to God and that He took from you in the second step. When you released whatever it was over to Him and are receiving and giving forgiveness. In Matthew chapter 12:43-45 Jesus speaks of a person that had a demon cast out of them. In the parable after a time the demon came back and found the house (the person's heart) empty, clean and in order and Jesus said that the demon came back with 7 other spirits more wicked than the first demon and the state of the person was worse than before. What is the key here? Do not leave your house, your heart and mind, empty. Fill yourself up with God's love, Word and Presence!

The enemy recognizes this truth so when you begin to put these three steps into play, you render the enemy's attack ineffective in a lot of ways. You are in essence becoming much harder for the enemy to tempt and frustrate. You will find that the longer you have been putting this into practice in your life, the easier it will be for you to defeat the enemy's temptations. You will begin to learn how to dominate the enemy, your self-will and fleshly desires by controlling your thought life through these spiritual weapons of prayer, worship and praise. Thus controlling your mind, will, and emotions instead of allowing them to control you.

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***So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7 NLT***

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These three spiritual steps empower you to put this scripture above into action in your life; humbling yourself by acting on God's Word, submitting your thoughts to God, resisting the devil through affirmative thankful prayer and praise to God which causes the devil to flee from you! Living like this will cause

you to walk in the power and authority that Jesus gave us in His finished work on the cross. As you live this out as a daily practice and choice of lifestyle, you will experience the Fruit of the Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Meekness, Gentleness, Kindness, Faithfulness, and Self-control overflow in your life by leaning on the Holy Spirit in you through these three steps (Galatians 5:22-23). This type of lifestyle is one of freedom and victory in, with and through Jesus Christ!

I have been practicing these 3 steps for years now, so sometimes I don't work the steps in order. I may go straight to releasing, forgiving, using physical anchors and praying opposite of the temptation, or a combination and variation of the 3 steps. Most of my focus now is spent doing the 3rd step; praising and thanking God for how awesome and amazing He is and who I am in Him as His son. Then praying Bible based blessings over myself and other people. However, if you are just starting out it is best to get comfortable with the 3 step process and then from there you can use variations of the 3 steps. I use these steps or a variation of them at a minimum of 10 times a day, every day. On other days it may be 50 to 60 times, and on the really challenging days it feels like I am working these steps hundreds of times, because I have made the commitment to no longer give the enemy or negative thinking place in my mind or heart! After years of practicing these steps, I find myself at times working the steps in my mind as an automatic response to negative or unwanted thoughts coming at me. Still other times, I find myself having to be very intentional and focused on working these steps through continual prayer. Remember this is not a works based process that you're trying to do in your own self-effort and self-will. On the contrary this is a God-centered spiritual victory based process where you are engaging your faith in the Word of God, through prayer, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus surrendering, trusting and resting in God's Word and in all the finished works of Jesus. Since I have made these steps part of my daily walk with Jesus I have been completely delivered from worry, anxiety, depression and fear. I have also overcome the doubts I use to have about God, His promises, His goodness and His Word being completely true. What does that mean to be completely delivered and free? Do those types of thoughts still come? Of course they do, and do I still have to contend daily to keep my peace and joy? You better believe it! The difference is I use to allow my mind to run wild with fearful thinking and anxiety. I use to entertain worry and allow it to rob me of my peace. I use to read the Bible and allow thoughts of doubt to race through my mind. I use to slip into days of depression but now no longer! Now I know how to respond to these thoughts! Now I fight back and I am winning the battlefield of my mind on a daily basis! Now I know how to, lean on and press into, the Holy Spirit through these 3 steps and keep the garden of my heart free of the weeds that use to weigh me down! That is deliverance and freedom! These 3 steps can and will do the same for you and even more! I have seen these steps when applied, radically change lives, stop anxiety, worry and depression; restore marriages; improve the way people parent; increase job performance and cause financial breakthrough. I have seen children's hearts, behavior and lives turned toward God and families who were in disfunction

totally reconciled by coming into right standing with one another and more loving than ever! This 3 step process when put into practice will enable and empower you to hear the active voice of God with greater clarity and sense His activity in your daily life by heightening your awareness of Him.

I would like to share with you a couple of tips about living these steps out. First of all, give yourself plenty of GRACE always, but especially when you first begin to do this because you are probably going to find out that you have a lot more negative, fearful, unloving and doubtful thoughts than you assumed you had. I know I did when I began to live this as a lifestyle.

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*Give yourself plenty of GRACE always, but especially when you first begin to do this.*

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Secondly, do not let this process of renewing your mind and heart frustrate you or get you off track into shame, pride or guilt. Instead, let yourself off the hook, forgive yourself, give yourself some grace, and realize that you, as well as all of us, are continual works in progress! Remember that you cannot stop the thoughts of your fleshly desires, self-willed soul and demonic temptations from coming into your mind because that is the work of your fallen flesh, fear based strongholds, soulish perceptions and the enemy. What you do have within your control and have accountability for as well as full authority over is how you respond to these thoughts and desires. When taking thoughts captive don't be pushed around and intimidated by the enemy or by the fearful thoughts of your flesh and self-will. As Moses encouraged the children of Israel as they were going over and taking new territory called the "Promised Land" which is a Biblical example of living in a loving intimate relationship with God that produces freedom and blessings. I encourage you also to be strong and full of boldness now as you are taking new territory in the Promised Land of your heart, mind, will and emotions! ***"Be strong. Take courage. Don't be intimidated. Don't give them a second thought because God, your God, is striding ahead of you. He's right there with you. He won't let you down; He won't leave you."* Deuteronomy 31:6 MSG**

The Bible says, ***"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."* 2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV**

The enemy will always try put a little doubt or a little shame or unworthiness on you. He is trying to land as many shots as he can, like "You should not be thinking that. You are no good. If people knew what you were thinking no one would like you. I can't believe you are having that thought about that person. Yeah I know what the Bible says but you know what you did. You should be ashamed of yourself. What about this in your life that you did wrong or that time things went wrong? What if it happens again?" the list goes on and on of accusatory statements by the enemy. Even today when I meet someone the enemy will often give me a slight thought of judgment about the person and then blame me for thinking that way! The enemy is a liar!! Cast that thought down,

shake off the guilt and shame, it is not yours to carry! Give it over to Jesus! The truth is you were not created to carry stress, worry, shame, guilt and fear. It can and will kill you if you choose to carry it and not cast it on Jesus as the Bible commands us to do (1 Peter 5:7). These 3 steps are how casting your care on Jesus is practically done!

When intrusive thoughts come at you remember, don't just let the enemy get over on you. Cast those thoughts down and replace them with God's truth by bringing them to God and speak the Word of God over these thoughts. In addition, I suggest getting a fresh "Rhema Word" from God, which is a personal and timely word from God to your heart. What does getting a fresh Rhema Word from God look like? When these thoughts come, I often will ask God, "Lord, what are You saying about this lie? Lord, give me some truth to combat this lie," then I listen.

The Holy Spirit will often bring a scripture, parable or phrase to my heart in the form of flowing thoughts, mental images, inward impressions or a video playing within my mind of the Rhema right now truth God wants to share with me. He will also often give me kinetic feelings of peace that we spoke about earlier in the book, regarding God's active voice of the Holy Spirit. He may remind me of one of His promises, His nature, one of His sayings to me like, "I got you son, don't give the enemy any place, I love you, follow Me." God will often bring Biblical stories, spiritual principles and spiritual laws to my heart. For example, He will bring to my heart that as I think, speak, and act on His Word it has great power. As I speak faith filled words it is causing things to happen in the unseen realm, that my prayers do change things! That if I continue to speak His Word, I will see breakthrough and walk in the reality of His promises to me, as His son. God will also bring to my remembrance spiritual markers of prayers He has answered in the past, as well as previous dreams, breakthroughs and encounters I have experienced with Him. These experiences are like your own personal "Gospel" message of what God has done in your life, it is like He takes out the "scroll" of the personal testimonies He has done in your life and shows them to you. It is so comforting hearing some fresh words and encouragement from God and getting some, right now, Holy Spirit spoken truth! His active voice adds layers of intimacy to your personal relationship with Him and so many times, will break the back of the enemy's attack against you.

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*. When you are on the verge of blessings, new seasons of increase and breakthroughs you will often sense opposition from the enemy.*

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Remember, when you are in a daily relationship with God and you're meeting heightened levels of adversity, you're often close to victory, breakthrough, blessings and seeing the glory of God manifest in major ways in your life. When you are on the verge of blessings, new seasons of increase and

breakthroughs you will often sense opposition from the enemy. This also happens when you are doing things that are going to position you for increase such as prayer, reading the Bible, spreading God's love and becoming more like Jesus. I often practice doing the opposite of what that voice of doubt says "Oh reading the Bible is not doing anything for you. You can't even remember the scriptures you are reading", "Don't pray for that person, what if they think you are weird", or "There is no use in praying, it is not going to change anything anyways. It is just some words you are speaking into the air". These are all lies of the enemy and fearful mindsets that still try to come against me but now I know where they come from! Now I know to do the exact opposite! The truth is, if the enemy is fighting what you are doing then there must be some activity and power going on in the spiritual realm that he does not want to happen.

The enemy will even try to use condemnation for having negative thoughts, to try to bring guilt, shame and unworthiness, because some of those thoughts entered your mind. I fight this battle all the time but now instead of taking those thoughts and letting them land in my heart I cast them out by the Name and Blood of Jesus! I declare "They are not my thoughts and I don't think like that I think like Jesus! I have the mind of Christ! (1 Corinthians 2:16)" The great news is the more you practice these 3 steps and declaring God's Word over your life, situations and others the less power negative or unwanted thoughts will have over you. You will also begin to recognize and experience more God inspired thoughts in your daily life. Thus your life will be transformed into the victorious life Jesus paid for you to live!

Any time you feel condemned just know that is the enemy and your own self-doubt trying to get you to accept feeling guilty, shameful and less than your true value as a son or daughter of God. There is a huge difference in conviction and condemnation. Conviction can be described as a "godly sorrow" that you experience when you sin or do anything contrary to what you know is right based on God's Love, Word and Spirit. ***"For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death."*** 2 Corinthians 7:10 NLT

Conviction is from the Holy Spirit about something you need to look at changing, repent of, let go of and give over to God. Conviction will come with a sense of encouragement, love and wisdom it draws you closer to God. It's an inner knowing of remorsefulness that what you did was not right and needs to be changed, repented of, forgiveness needs to be given and received between yourself, God and others. Conviction is an invitation to connect with the Holy Spirit so whatever needs to be corrected can be addressed, repented of and changed. Conviction, while it may be uncomfortable, will always draw you closer to God and He wants you to respond to His voice, activity and guidance. Experiencing conviction means your heart is already changing and you are not who you use to be in the past the fact that you want to do better and be closer to God already is proof your changing and being transformed.

Condemnation is of the enemy and your own negative self talk. It is designed by the enemy to push you away from God through guilt, shame,

unworthiness and fear. God does not operate in those areas, meaning He does not use fear based feelings like guilt, shame and unworthiness to communicate with you. The Bible says, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” Romans 8:1 NIV*** If you find yourself feeling any of those ways or having those types of thoughts of thinking “God does not love me, I can’t go to God after what I did or He is ashamed of me”, that is not God’s activity or voice, that is the voice of the enemy and negative mindsets that fear has caused in your life because of life experiences and lies you have believed about yourself, God and others.

In Philippians 4:6-7 AMP the Apostle Paul encourages us, ***“Do not be anxious or worried about anything, but in everything [every circumstance and situation] by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, continue to make your [specific] requests known to God. And the peace of God [that peace which reassures the heart, that peace] which transcends all understanding, [that peace which] stands guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus [is yours].”*** Paul is writing this encouragement to us from his prison cell. Although, he was physically locked up in prison mentally and spiritually he was experiencing freedom and peace in his heart, by putting his faith in Jesus into action, through putting a variation of these 3 steps into practice in his daily life. We all have had “prison experiences” of some type in our lives where we have felt trapped, stuck, locked up and imprisoned in some way. It could be a challenging living situation, school, financial difficulty, an unhealthy relationship, health issues or a challenging season of life that you feel stuck in. No matter what we are facing the grace, love, peace and freedom found in a daily relationship with God will empower us to overcome!

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*It’s time for you to start living the victorious life  
Jesus Christ has already bought and paid in full for  
you to possess!*

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It’s time to start winning the battlefield of our mind! It’s time to expose and be delivered from the things that keep hooking you negatively, hurts from your life experiences, hang ups that keep limiting your life, unhealthy habits and relationships, intrusive thoughts, negative cycles, unhealthy patterns, destructive behavioral cycles and limited mindsets and beliefs, so you can live God’s best for your life now! It’s time for you to start living the victorious life Jesus Christ has already bought and paid in full for you to possess! It’s time to start hearing, experiencing and focusing on what the Lord is thinking and saying about you! The way you think and the thoughts you entertain and focus on will greatly impact hearing God’s voice and sensing His activity in your daily life. If you will make the decision to put these 3 powerful steps into action in your daily life you will see your whole life transform, remember the choice is yours!

*We hope you enjoyed this excerpt from the book,  
How to Hear God: 10 Ways God Speaks, by Sterling Harris.  
You can purchase the book on Amazon.com*

*Connect with us on Facebook at Sterling Harris Ministries*

*Check out more information about Sterling, his blogs,  
videos and future speaking engagements at  
[www.sterlingharris.org](http://www.sterlingharris.org)*



Sterling Harris is a former NFL Player and federal prisoner who's life was radically changed by starting and developing an intimate Love Relationship with Jesus. Sterling is a person who tried all life had to offer and found no true peace and fulfillment until God moved him from being a lukewarm religious Christian with no

intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit to hearing God's voice and being on Fire for Jesus!

Sterling is a widely sought after speaker who empowers people all over the world to hear God's voice for themselves and equips others to develop their own personal intimate relationship with God.