

JOSH MCDOWELL
AND BEN BENNETT
FOREWORD BY: DR. HENRY CLOUD

FREE TO THRIVE

HOW YOUR HURT, STRUGGLES,
AND DEEPEST LONGINGS CAN
LEAD TO A FULFILLING LIFE

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

Free to Thrive

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The names and identifying characteristics of some individuals have been changed to preserve their privacy.

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CHAPTER ONE

LEGITIMATE LONGINGS

Questions for Reflection

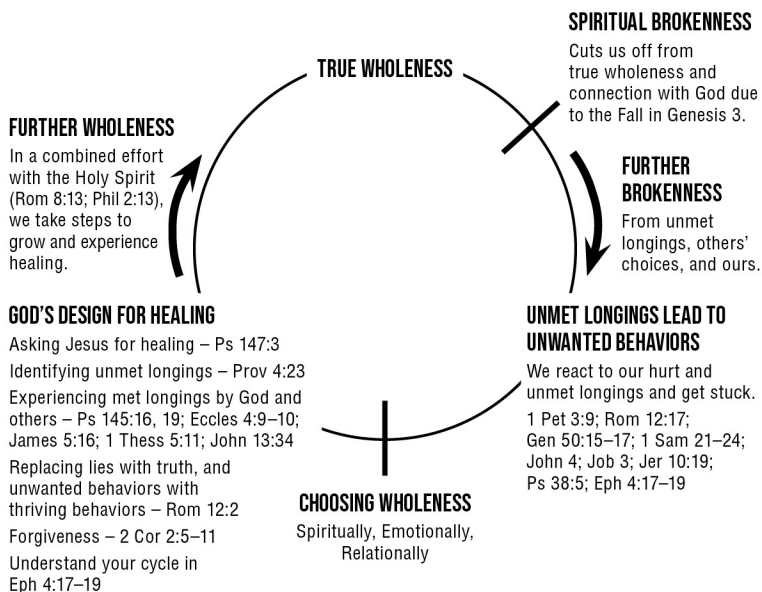
1. What are a few unwanted behaviors that are holding you back?
2. What emotions do you feel about these unwanted behaviors?
3. How do you really feel God views you as a result of these behaviors?
4. Do you really believe Jesus blesses the longings behind your unwanted behaviors and wants to satisfy those in healthy ways?

CHAPTER TWO

YOUR SEVEN LONGINGS

THE WHOLENESS APOLOGETIC

Supporting God's design for human flourishing in all areas of life.
We experience this primarily through the fulfillment of our
Seven Longings with God, self, and others.



Questions for Reflection

1. What longings were met in healthy ways before your teenage years?
2. Who were the people who met your longings in healthy ways?
3. What longing are you most thankful was met growing up?
4. If you could have one longing met today, what would it be and why?

CHAPTER THREE

YOUR UNMET LONGINGS

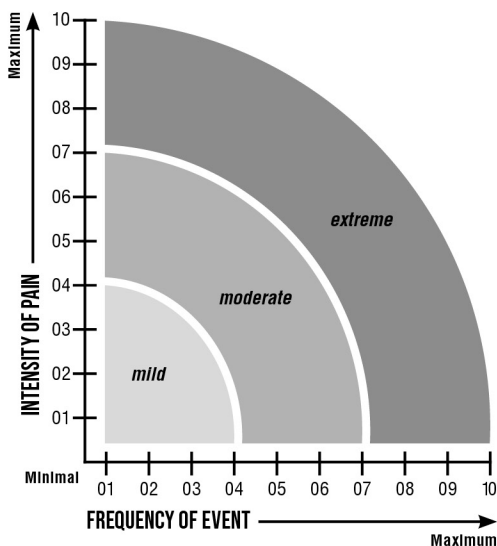
HOW ATTACKS AND ABSENCE LEAD TO PAIN

ATTACKS (Examples)

Sexual Abuse
Physical Abuse
Bullying
Manipulation/Control
Hurtful Words

ABSENCES (Examples)

Disinterest/Disengagement
Abandonment
Emotional/Physical Absence
Lack of Empathy
Lack of Attention
Lack of Loving Words



UNMET LONGINGS TABLE

Longings	Mom / Dad	Siblings / Relatives	Friends	Others
1. Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dad never said, “I love you” • Mom regularly treated me as weird or different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My brother teased me for being different • Grandpa never seemed to want to spend time with me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My best friends often said I was weird 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers valued me based on my grades
2. Appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never heard Mom say “I’m proud of you,” or “Great job” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often helped my sister clean her room but was never thanked; felt used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I often cook for my roommates, but they never help me clean up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My coach often told me to try harder even when I played my best
3. Affection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dad didn’t give me hugs or comfort me when I was upset • Mom often didn’t pick me up when I wanted to be held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My brother always seemed to be irritated with me rather than being kind in words and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My best friend is often standoffish physically and refrains from anything deemed “sappy” or “emotional” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I told my husband about my difficult day and he just said “that sucks” when I wanted physical affection and comfort

4. Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dad was often gone on work trips or at the office • Mom was emotionally distant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My sister avoided me growing up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've spent many Friday nights alone recently without friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My boss is seldom there when I need his help
5. Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dad never cared too much about my hobbies or interests • Mom never entered my world; said my interests were "silly" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My grandma never asked me how my games were going or what I enjoyed about sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My best friends only want to hang out if we do what they want to do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My life coach talks about himself all the time rather than seeking to understand me
6. Affirmation of Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was unacceptable to be sad or upset in my family growing up • Mom often told me not to be so whiny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I recently told my sister how hard my year was and she told me I was partly to blame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing up, my friends often said I was overreacting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I told my teacher how sad I was about my struggles with math and he said I just wasn't a math person
7. Assurance of Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My parents lived paycheck-to-paycheck so I grew up worrying about money and my basic needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was picked on and beat up as a kid and my brother never stood up for me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My best friends teased me quite a bit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was sexually abused by a family friend



DEPTH OF LONGINGS ASSESSMENT



This assessment, developed in collaboration with Dr. Ted Roberts, is intended to help you identify and understand the unmet longings that have been holding you back in your journey toward wholeness. Please check item under Y (for “Yes”) or N (for “No”).

Y N

- ☐ ☐ I have trouble stopping certain actions even though they are unhelpful/destructive
- ☐ ☐ I repeat destructive behaviors over and over, starting early in my life
- ☐ ☐ I often have increased sexual desires when I am lonely
- ☐ ☐ I feel loyal to people even though they have hurt me
- ☐ ☐ I use the internet, streaming media, eating, and hobbies as a way to check out
- ☐ ☐ I repeatedly put off certain tasks
- ☐ ☐ I feel badly about myself because of shameful experiences in my past
- ☐ ☐ I hide some of my behaviors from others
- ☐ ☐ After engaging in an unwanted behavior, I feel sad afterward
- ☐ ☐ I feel controlled at times by my unwanted behaviors
- ☐ ☐ I fear the rejection of other people
- ☐ ☐ I think what I do is never good enough
- ☐ ☐ I feel I’m not worthy of love
- ☐ ☐ I fear that I am a bother to people
- ☐ ☐ I feel unknown and misunderstood
- ☐ ☐ I believe that my thoughts and opinions don’t matter
- ☐ ☐ I have fears about my safety, finances, or emotional needs

Scoring

Count how many statements to which you answered “Yes.”

Total “Yes” Responses ____

A score of 6 or more “Yes” responses indicates significant longings may have gone unmet in both the past and present. We recommend finding a professional therapist to help you navigate these unresolved areas of unmet longings and pain. This assessment is not conclusive, but rather meant to be an indication of the depths of unmet longings and hurt in your life.

Questions for Reflection

1. Of the Seven Longings we’ve discussed in this book, which would you say are the two you find yourself thinking about or desiring most?
2. In what ways have these two longings gone unmet in the past year? Throughout life growing up?
3. Can you identify moments when these longings went unmet through attacks? Absences?
4. Try praying this prayer of David before you complete the “Depth of Longings Assessment”:

Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.
(Psalm 139:23–24)

**CHAPTER
FOUR**

IDENTIFYING THE UNWANTED

COPING BEHAVIOR TABLE

Adultery	Alcohol(ism)	Anger/Rage
Anxiety/Fear/Worry	Approval of Others	Boasting/Bragging
Body Image Issues	Cheating/Cutting Corners	Complaining
Control	Depression	Disobedience/ Rebellion
Divorce/Separation	Drugs/Substance Abuse/Pills	Fantasy
Fear of Failure	Fear of Intimacy	Gambling
Greed	Hopelessness	Insecurity
Isolation/Withdrawal	Jealousy/Envy	Lack of Growth
Laziness	Lying/Deceit/ Dishonesty	Materialism
Overeating/ Undereating	Oversleeping/ Undersleeping	Overspending
Overworking	Perfectionism	Poor Boundaries

Pornography/ Arousing Images or Writing	Pride/Self- Righteousness/ Judgmentalism	Procrastination
Profanity/Swearing/ Cursing	Racism	Resentment/ Bitterness
Self-Harm/Cutting	Self-Sabotage	Self-Worth/Too High or Too Low
Sexual Compulsivity	Smoking/Dipping/ Vaping	Social Media
Stealing	Streaming Media (Netflix, YouTube, etc.)	Suicidal Thoughts
Unforgiveness	Unhealthy Relationships	Victim Mentality
Video Games		Total:

Questions for Reflection

1. What was the total number of individual coping behaviors from the chart that you have struggled with?
2. What stance(s) have you found yourself occupying in relationships with others?
3. What are your top three unwanted behaviors that you still struggle with, and when did each behavior begin in your life?
4. In relationships, what effect does the stance(s) you take have on you and the other person (or people)?

CHAPTER FIVE

LISTEN TO YOUR LONGINGS

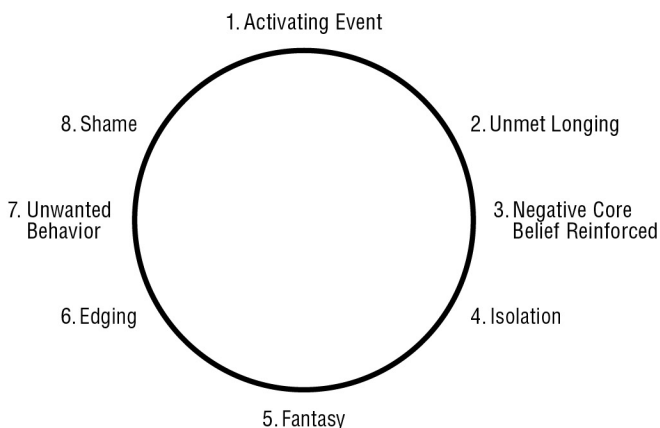
Questions for Reflection

1. Begin the practice of listening to your longings. Which of the Seven Longings might you be seeking out in your primary unwanted behaviors?
2. In what recent ways through interactions with people, circumstances, and events have those longings gone unmet?
3. What feelings and rewards do attempting to meet those unmet longings temporarily bring?
4. Why might this longing be of such significance for you? Where might this longing have gone unmet in your past?

CHAPTER SIX

WHAT YOUR BRAIN NEEDS YOU TO KNOW

UNWANTED BEHAVIOR CYCLE



Questions for Reflection

1. What negative core beliefs about yourself might you have developed from your unmet longings?
2. What negative core beliefs about God might you have developed from your unmet longings?
3. What negative core beliefs about others might you have developed from your unmet longings?
4. What are 2 or 3 common activating events in your life that lead to unmet longings and reinforce some of these negative core beliefs?

CHAPTER SEVEN

YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG GOD

Questions for Reflection

1. What negative core beliefs might you have about God?
2. What unmet longings, painful experiences, or past relationships with authority figures might have contributed to these beliefs?
3. What one positive core belief about who God truly is do you want to develop?
4. What fathers in your life model well who God truly is, so that you can intentionally learn from them?

CHAPTER EIGHT

SEEING YOURSELF AS GOD SEES YOU

Questions for Reflection

1. Do you at times view yourself as either worthless, unlovable, or just a face in the crowd?
2. What unmet longings and painful experiences from the past may have led you to develop those negative core beliefs about yourself?
3. What positive core belief(s) about your true identity do you want to grow in believing?
4. Do you know anyone with whom you can intentionally spend time—someone who treats you as valuable, loved, and unique?

CHAPTER NINE

YOU'RE MADE FOR MORE

BROKENNESS VS. WHOLENESS

ACTIVATING EVENT

Any situation that leads to an unmet longing. E.g., rejection from a friend; thinking about an upcoming task or deadline; a spouse or friend being unattentive or angry; feeling misunderstood in a conversation.



UNMET LONGING

The activating event leads to one or more of the Seven Longings going unmet. This often brings with it the pain of the same longings going unmet in past circumstances.



REINFORCE NEGATIVE CORE BELIEFS

Telling yourself lies (e.g., "No one cares," "I am not good enough," "I will never get things right," "I must get revenge," "God isn't good or loving," etc.).



SEEK FULFILLMENT OF LONGINGS IN UNHEALTHY WAYS

Overworking to feel a sense of worth. Over/Undereating to regain control/feel safe. Looking at porn to feel someone's attention. Procrastination, anxiety, depression, oversleeping, anger, etc.



FURTHER BROKENNESS

Shame, unresolve, loss of control. Remaining stuck in unwanted behaviors and unhealthy patterns. Repeat the cycle.



REINFORCE POSITIVE CORE BELIEFS

Telling yourself truth (e.g., "I am not defined by their rejection, opinions, or these feelings; I am loved, worthy, redeemed by Jesus, gifted," etc.).



SEEK FULFILLMENT OF LONGINGS IN HEALTHY WAYS

Reach out to safe people and share your unmet longings and feelings. Ask them to remind you of truth. Experience acceptance and validation. Talk to God and meditate on who he says you are.



FURTHER WHOLENESS

Satisfaction, healing, resilience. Growing into your true identity and overcoming unhealthy patterns. Repeat the cycle.

Questions for Reflection

1. Who is one person you can be vulnerable with to share the areas of your life causing shame?
2. What risks might you face if you continue on in life without being vulnerable and seeking healing?
3. What is the greater vision God might have for your life, to make an impact for him, that is being limited by hurts and unwanted behaviors?
4. What is one step you can take today to get involved in a growth environment?

CHAPTER TEN

WHAT'S TRUE FOR ME IS TRUE FOR YOU

Questions for Reflection

1. Before you read this chapter, did you think truth was significant? If so, why? After reading this chapter, what have you learned about truth?
2. In what ways has our culture's shift toward subjective and emotional truth affected your view of truth?
3. What bearings do the truths explored in this chapter have on your identity, value, and purpose in life?
4. If you wish to learn more, will you consider obtaining and reading Josh's books, in particular *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* and *More Than a Carpenter*?

**CHAPTER
ELEVEN**

YOUR MOVE

LONGINGS TABLE

Longing	Results of My Longings Being Met
Acceptance	Secure in my value and how much I'm loved. Not compromising my standards, schedule, or capacity in an attempt to get people's acceptance or approval. Not reacting to lies and coping through unwanted behaviors. Being able to rest in my acceptance rather than being exhausted by striving to feel accepted.
Appreciation	Knowing that God approves of my effort and is proud of me no matter what. Being secure in knowing that what I do is meaningful and matters in this world, rather than being unsure and always wondering if my life means anything.
Affection	Respecting myself and others rather than seeking out affection through unhealthy people or inappropriate interactions.
Availability	Knowing that I am worth people's time and love, and that I'm not a burden. Believing God is always close, interested in the finite details of my life, and willing to engage with me.
Attention	Being confident in my thoughts, opinions, and choices. Knowing how to get to know others, take interest in their lives, and celebrate the differences.
Affirmation of Feelings	Knowing that my thoughts and feelings are legitimate and part of what it means to be human. Knowing that I am understood, seen, and not alone.
Assurance of Safety	Free from anxiety, obsessive thoughts, and knowing that God cares for my every need and will protect me.

APPENDICES

TOOLS FOR GROWTH

APPENDIX A

THE MET AND UNMET LONGINGS TABLE

Use this table to identify the extent to which your longings went unmet in your life growing up. Doing so will help you understand why you might struggle to this day with specific unmet longings and help you to begin to find healing. For each category, respond with one of the following: Hardly Met, Sometimes Met, Mostly Met.

After filling out the table, identify which three longings went unmet the most growing up:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Longings	Mom	Dad	Siblings	Friends
1. Acceptance to be included, loved, and approved of as you are, no matter what.				
2. Appreciation to be thanked or encouraged for what you have done.				
3. Affection to be cared for with gentle touch or emotional engagement.				

4. Access to have the consistent emotional and physical presence of key figures.				
5. Attention to be known and understood with someone entering your world.				
6. Affirmation of Feelings to have our feelings affirmed, validated, or confirmed by others.				
7. Assurance of Safety to feel safe, protected, and provided for emotionally, physically, and financially.				

What negative core beliefs might you have about yourself from these unmet longings?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What negative core beliefs might you have about God from these unmet longings?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What negative core beliefs might you have about others from these unmet longings?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

See “Renewing the Mind” on the following pages for ways to overcome these negative core beliefs.

APPENDIX B

RENEWING THE MIND

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (*Romans 12:2*)

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (*2 Corinthians 10:5*)

Use the following exercise as one way to begin rewiring your brain daily. When unmet longings and lies come up, meditate on these truths and experiences. We encourage you to utilize this practice to rewire negative core beliefs about God and others as well.

Step One

Identify three core lies you believe about yourself, God, and others (e.g., *I'm worthless, I'm unlovable, I can never measure up, I can't trust people, if I let people close they will hurt me, God doesn't love me*).

Often, these are directly tied to some of the painful experiences in your life growing up.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Step Two

Identify a verse of Scripture to challenge each lie (e.g., *I'm not worthless because I'm loved, as 1 John 3:1 (ESV) says—"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are"*).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Step Three

Identify a time in life when you experienced the truth of this Scripture and when God communicated this to you (e.g., *My first year in college, I recommitted my life to Christ at a worship gathering. During that experience I felt so loved and accepted by God and others and experienced what it meant to be a loved child of God, as 1 John 3:1 says*).

Visualizing this past experience engages the limbic system, the emotional brain, the same place our experiences of unmet

longings are recorded. This helps the truth of Scripture sink into our heart and renew our mind.

1.

2.

3.

APPENDIX C

PROACTIVE SUPPORT

We encourage you to identify one or two people you can begin talking with throughout each week about how you're truly doing. You may want to go through this book with them, but at minimum we encourage you to use the following questions to support one another in the growth process.

1. Which of the Seven Longings are going unmet in my life this week?
2. What am I feeling and believing as a result?
3. What unwanted behaviors might I desire to go to in order to cope with these unmet longings?
4. How can I seek their fulfillment through God and others?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In this section you'll find great additional resources for various issues related to unmet longings and unwanted behaviors. From counseling organizations to support for your spiritual life, these resources offer great next steps to this book, helping you experience further healing and growth (for more resources, check out resolutionmovement.org/resources).

Compulsive Unwanted Behaviors

RTribe (rtribe.org)

An organization offering online coaching, articles, and support for mental health and behavioral health issues. Its online platform offers daily support, empowering a movement of connection, freedom, and integrity by equipping and inspiring its users.

Genesis Process (genesisprocess.org)

The Genesis Process provides a biblical and neurochemical understanding of what is broken and causes our self-destruction. Through videos, books, small group resources, and events, this

organization offers a groundbreaking approach to understand and overcome unwanted behaviors.

***How People Grow* (cloudtownsend.com)**

Authors Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend unlock age-old keys to growth from Scripture to help people resolve issues of relationships, maturity, emotional problems, and overall spiritual growth. In this theological foundation to their best-selling book *Boundaries*, they discuss key concepts to help individuals understand and overcome unwanted behaviors.

IITAP (iitap.com)

The International Institute for Trauma and Addiction Professionals (IITAP) is a global leader among practitioners who treat addictive and compulsive behaviors. IITAP provides a wealth of articles and resources, as well as a therapist locator to find the best support in your area.

Sexual Issues

Pure Desire Ministries (puredesire.org)

Your safe place to find hope and healing. A biblically and clinically sound organization offering counseling, small group resources, blogs, podcasts, and books to help individuals understand and overcome the effects of unwanted sexual behavior. Its groundbreaking book, *Pure Desire*, by Dr. Ted Roberts, is a must-read and a great starting point.

Faithful & True (faithfulandtrue.com)

A Christian counseling ministry specializing in the treatment of unwanted sexual behavior, support for struggling spouses, and guidance for couples who have experienced relational betrayal. It offers counseling, weekend intensives, small group resources, blogs, podcasts, and books.

The Freedom Fight (thefreedomfight.org)

A Christian-based and neuroscience-informed online recovery program for unwanted sexual behavior. This resource offers an anonymous and tech-based approach to experiencing freedom.

***God Loves Sex* (theallendercenter.org)**

This book by Drs. Dan Allender and Tremper Longman III offers a truly liberating, godly view of holy sensuality. Pairing psychological insight with sound biblical scholarship, it brings desire and sex out into the open, allowing Christians of any age and marital status to understand sex the way God meant it to be.

***Unwanted* (jay-stringer.com)**

In this book, therapist Jay Stringer explores the “why” behind self-destructive sexual choices. Through his groundbreaking research, Stringer found that unwanted sexual behavior can be both shaped by and predicted based on the parts of our story—past and present—that remain unaddressed. When we pay attention to our unwanted sexual desires and identify the unique reasons that trigger them, the path of healing is revealed.

Abuse and Trauma

Allender Center (theallendercenter.org)

One of the leading Christian organizations specializing in support for abuse and trauma. This theologically rich and psychologically deep organization offers trainings, specialized counseling, blogs, podcasts, and books to help individuals find healing from abuse and trauma.

EMDR (emdr.com)

EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) is psychotherapy that enables people to heal from the symptoms

and emotional distress that are the result of disturbing life experiences. Repeated studies show that by using EMDR therapy, people can experience the benefits of psychotherapy that once took years to make a difference. It is widely assumed that severe emotional pain requires a long time to heal. EMDR therapy shows that the mind can in fact heal from psychological trauma just as much as the body recovers from physical trauma. Check out the website to locate an EMDR specialist in your area.

***Healing the Wounded Heart* (theallendercenter.org)**

This book by Dan B. Allender addresses issues of sexual abuse across social, religious, and gender lines. He provides a biblically based path for survivors to find healing and restoration through God's help, love, and mercy.

***Please Tell: A Child's Story about Sexual Abuse* (amazon.com)**

Written and illustrated by a young girl who was sexually molested by a family member, this book reaches out to other children in a way that no adult can. Jessie's words carry the message, "It's o.k. to tell; help can come when you tell." This book is an excellent tool for therapists, counselors, child protection workers, teachers, and parents dealing with children affected by sexual abuse.

Mental Health

RTribe (rtribe.org)

An organization offering online coaching, articles, and support for mental health and behavioral health issues. Its online platform offers daily support, empowering a movement of connection, freedom, and integrity by equipping and inspiring its users.

AACC (aacc.net)

The American Association of Christian Counselors offers articles, courses, and a large network of coaches and therapists in your area.

To Write Love on Her Arms (twloha.com)

A movement dedicated to presenting hope and finding help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide. TWLOHA exists to encourage, inform, inspire, and invest directly into treatment and recovery.

Better Help (betterhelp.com)

An organization offering online professional counseling in an accessible, affordable, convenient, and private way. Through its online platform, anyone who struggles with life's challenges can get help anytime, anywhere.

The Brain

***The Brain That Changes Itself* (normandoidge.com)**

In this revolutionary look at the brain, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Norman Doidge, M.D., provides an introduction to both the brilliant scientists championing neuroplasticity and the people whose lives they've transformed. From stroke patients learning to speak again to the remarkable case of a woman born with half a brain that rewired itself to work as a whole, *The Brain That Changes Itself* will permanently alter the way we look at our brains, human nature, and human potential.

***Switch on Your Brain* (drleaf.com)**

This book by Dr. Caroline Leaf offers breakthrough neuroscientific research. What you are thinking every moment of every day becomes a physical reality in your brain and body, which

affects your optimal mental and physical health. Based solidly on the latest neuroscientific research on the brain, as well as Dr. Caroline Leaf's clinical experience and research, you will learn how thoughts impact our spirit, soul, and body.

***Wired for Intimacy* (ivpress.com)**

In this book, neuroscientist and researcher William Struthers explains how pornography affects the male brain and what we can do about it. Because we are embodied beings, viewing pornography changes how the brain works, how we form memories, and how we make attachments. By better understanding the biological realities of our sexual development, we can cultivate healthier sexual perspectives and interpersonal relationships.

Spiritual

Cru (cru.org)

Cru, the largest missionary organization in the world, consists of various ministries for teens, college students, young professionals, and married couples in your area. Check out its online videos, articles, and ministries to take the next step in your spiritual journey.

***The Cure* (trueface.org)**

This book offers a unique and biblical understanding of the character of God. Many of us couldn't measure up to a standard we created, so we convinced ourselves it was God's. We read his words through our grid of shame and felt ourselves fall farther and farther behind. We took it out on each other: judging, comparing, faking, splintering. We all need to understand who God truly is, for it impacts the way we live, love, and see ourselves and other people.

Church.org

Find a church in your area and get connected to invest in your spiritual growth and serve others.

The Unshakeable Truth (josh.org)

This book uniquely presents apologetics relationally, focusing on how Christianity's doctrines affect relationships. The authors ground every concept in the overarching story of creation, incarnation, and re-creation. They cover core concepts of the Christian faith and how we can know it is true. Topics include: who God truly is, self-image and human value, evidence for the deity of Christ, evidence for the reliability of Scripture, and how we grow.

See Yourself as God Sees You (josh.org)

This book uses stories and Scripture to establish and remind you of what God says about who you are, so that you can discover and live according to your true identity.

10 Ways to Say "I Love You": Embracing a Love That Lasts (josh.org)

A book to help married couples learn to express and fulfill the Seven Longings in ways that will deepen and broaden a lifelong love.

How to Be a Hero to Your Kids (josh.org)

This book will position parents to meet their kids' longings in healthy and lasting ways.