Get Out of Your Head
Stopping the Spiral of Toxic Thoughts
Jennie Allen
How to Use This Journal

Welcome to Jennie Allen’s Get Out of Your Head. She will be releasing an official participant’s guide later this year, but we are ready to explore these truths now! And so, we’ve decided to write our own workbook and journal based on the book itself and a book club study guide that Jennie released at the time of the book’s release.

So, here’s how this is going to work. Each week’s homework comes BEFORE our group time together. This will allow us to finish on time and be ready for what God has in store for us next.

Each week you will find:
- A reading assignment from Get Out of Your Head
- A five-day S.O.A.P. study through the New Testament book of Philippians
- An exercise to help you process and apply the truths we are learning
- A set of 10 questions designed for your personal reflection and group discussion
- A podcast from Jennie Allen that offers further insights and information

It is my hope and prayer that by learning how to interrupt the spiral of negative thinking, you will be able to take each thought captive, submit it to the truths of God and find freedom from the toxic thinking that keeps you from the life God has in store for you.

Remember, the Enemy doesn’t want your freedom. An ineffective believer is his favorite thing. But that’s not what the “full and abundant life” Jesus came to give is all about! We will stand firm in the Armor of God and with the truths of Scripture to do battle, and we will find victory together through the One who has gone before us and will lead the way!

Fighting alongside you,

Leslee Stewart
Preston Trail Women’s Ministry Director
WEEK ONE
(to be completed prior to group time)

READ: Read Chapters 1-4 of Get Out of Your Head

PROCESS: The S.O.A.P. Bible Study Method

STUDY: Introduction to Philippians - Philippians 1:6

DISCUSS: Review discussion questions in preparation for group time

LISTEN (optional): Listen to the “Made for This” Podcast Season 3, Episode 1
Background on Paul

Paul, originally named Saul, is recognized as one of the most influential religious leaders of all time. He was one of the most educated men of the early church, having studied under the Jewish rabbi Gamaliel, and certainly the most educated of the New Testament authors. Having originally been a Pharisee who persecuted the followers of The Way, as early Christians were known, he had a powerful encounter with the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, an experience which turned his life and ministry around. No longer out to kill Christians, he became one of their most influential thinkers and advocates.

Thirteen of the New Testament’s 27 books are attributed to Paul, and half of the book of Acts contains his missionary story. He was a tent maker by trade and a church planter by calling, travelling on three distinct missionary journeys to establish and encourage new churches throughout the Ancient Near East.

Though always appealing to the Jews first, Paul considered himself to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. He was a master theological “bridge-builder” who sought to find common ground before sharing the gospel message. He appealed to Greek philosophy and poetry, and even to a statue dedicated to the Greek’s “unknown God,” as foundational similarities upon which to build the gospel.

Paul’s message was all about the significance and implications of the crucified and resurrected Christ. Because of that event, anyone who believes, can now have an intimate and immediate relationship with God the Father. Because of the resurrection, anyone who believes is now “in Christ” and all that happened to him—rising after death and being united with the Father forever—can be believed to be our fate. Because of Christ, we can now have restored relationships with each other, loving in such a way that we reflect the heart of the Father, and drawing others closer to him. Christ crucified was the heart of Paul’s message, and Christ resurrected and reigning from heaven was the foundation of his hope.

Reading Paul’s letters will reveal his powerful personality and passion to preach Christ in spite of repeated beatings, periods in prison and ultimate martyrdom for the faith. This example of commitment, and the willingness to suffer and even die for these convictions, were widely imitated in early Christianity and helped it to survive and even flourish during periods of persecution from outside the faith, and attacks of heresy from within. Profound passion for others to know the risen Christ and total dedication to the power of the Holy Spirit constitute part of the enduring legacy of Paul’s life and letters.
WEEK ONE, Day Two

Background on Philippi

Philippi was a major port city in the ancient world. Originally named Crenides, it was renamed by Philip II of Macedonia (father of Alexander the Great) and ultimately abandoned in the 14th century after the expansion of Islam during the Ottoman conquest.

Little is known about the ancient town, apart from it being the capital city of Macedonia. Today, archeological remains include walls, the Greek theatre (later expanded to hold Roman games), the foundations of a house under the Roman forum and a little temple dedicated to the hero cult of the day.

Around the time the New Testament documents were written, Philippi was designed to be a “mini Rome” in both architectural design and
governmental structure. It was governed by two military officers called “duumviri” who were appointed directly from Rome. The New Testament records Paul’s first preaching on European soil in Philippi during his second missionary journey. He would later establish a house church there and would encourage its maturity on subsequent journeys through the area. Philippi would be the home of a thriving Christian community.

The prosperity of Philippi in the following centuries was attributed to Paul and the influence of his ministry. Throughout the centuries, various churches and ecclesiastical buildings were constructed that rivaled some of the most beautiful around the known world. By the sixth century, there were seven different church buildings in Philippi alone.

Attacks by Slavic invaders and bouts of the plague weakened the town, and an earthquake in 619 A.D. devastated it. Philippi never recovered its status as a bustling epicenter of commerce and thought. Based on its strategic location, however, people always resided there until it was abandoned and destined to be mere ruins in the 1300’s. The Turks, using Philippi as a quarry, would carry away many of the architectural details to build their own towns in the surrounding area.

Excavations from the 1920’s through the 1960’s uncovered the original city walls and theatre grounds.
Background on the Letter to the Philippians

It is uncertain where Paul was when he composed this letter, but it was during one of his imprisonments (in either Rome or Caesarea). Most scholars believe it was written during a later period in Paul’s life due to the developed theology and impending sense of death throughout the letter.

The theme of this New Testament letter is to have joy in knowing and following Christ regardless of circumstances. The fact that it was written by Paul while he was harshly imprisoned only furthers the emphasis of this theme. Paul points to his ability to further the Christian message even while in prison and encourages believers in the region to be bold in doing the same.

Prisoners during that period were not fed or clothed by the prison, and if they were to eat or have any basic necessities, it had to be delivered by a family member or friend. Paul thanks the Philippian church for taking care of him through the gifts delivered by Epaphroditus, and he lets them know that even though Epaphroditus was very ill, he has recovered and will be returning to them soon.

Chapter 2 contains the famous “Christ Poem,” or early Christian hymn, describing the nature of Christ and the implications of his act of redemption.

Chapter 3 focuses on the importance of a change of heart. Paul says is more important than any outside act of faithfulness—including circumcision. If anyone had reason to brag over their pedigree or accomplishments, it was Paul, but he counts all of that as “rubbish” in comparison to knowing Christ crucified. It’s not only not a positive element for him, but he considers it a negative because it tempts him to think he can be saved by his bloodline or his own efforts. Only the blood of Christ can cover our sins, Paul says, and the circumcision of the heart is what matters.

Chapter 4 encourages believers to have unity and to deal with one another with love. By setting their minds on things that are above, they will better be able to settle conflict and differences in a way that honors the Lord.
Summary and Outline of Philippians

• Introduction (1:1-11)
• Seeing God’s hand in all circumstances (1:12-30)
• Imprisonment means the spread of the Gospel (1:12-18)
• Dead or alive, Paul will honor Christ (1:19-26)
• First call to unity and perseverance (1:27-30)
• Call to humility, with Christ as the model (2:1-18)
  - Second call to unity (2:1-4)
  - Example of Jesus Christ (2:5-11)
  - Practical outworking (2:12-18)
• Commending co-workers - Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30)
• Encouragement, warnings, and advice (3:1—4:20)
  - Rejoice! (3:1; 4:1,4)
  - Beware (3:2—4:3)
    o The enemies: Judaizers (3:2-3)
    o Paul’s story - Trusting in his own righteousness vs. God’s gift of righteousness in Christ (3:4-14)
    o The heavenly vision and reward (3:15-21)
    o Third call to unity (4:1-3)
  - Life in Christ (4:4-20)
    o A life of joy (4:4)
    o A life of gentleness (4:5)
    o A life of prayer and peace (4:6-7)
    o A life of positive thinking (4:8-9)
    o A life of contentment (4:10-20)
• Conclusion (4:21-23)
The SOAP Bible Study Method

S: scripture
   As you read, write out the verse(s) that stuck out most to you.

O: observation
   What truth can you learn? Are there any warnings? Principles? Commands? What is the overall message of the verse?

A: application
   How does this verse apply to your life today? How can you live differently in light of this truth?

P: prayer
   Turn these thoughts into prayer. Ask the Lord to show you how to meditate on and apply this scripture to your life.

CARRIED AWAY MINISTRIES
WEEK ONE, Day Four (Philippians 1:1-2)

S:

O:

A:

P:

What’s the relationship between grace and peace?
WEEK ONE, Day Five (Philippians 1:3-6)

S.

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P.

Who do you thank God for every time you think of them? Why?
QUESTIONS FROM THE READING
(Chapters 1-4)

1. Why is the battle for our minds considered the battle of this generation?

2. How do we change emotions that we don’t want?

3. Why can a toxic thought life lead to poor physical health?

4. What do you find yourself thinking about most?

5. Of the three typical lies we believe (I am helpless. I am worthless. I am unlovable), which one represents you the most? Why?
6. How do we stop the downward spiral of toxic thinking?

7. How does doubt steal our hope?

8. What tools do you think God gives us to fight the downward spiral of toxic thinking?

9. What are you hoping you will be able to accomplish over the next five weeks?

10. How can your community help you in that goal?
The greatest spiritual battle of our generation is being fought between our ears.

JENNIE ALLEN
Get Out of Your Head Book
WEEK TWO
(to be completed prior to group time)

READ: Read Chapters 5-7 of Get Out of Your Head

PROCESS: Mind Mapping

STUDY: Philippians 1:6-30

DISCUSS: Review discussion questions in preparation for group time

LISTEN (optional): Listen to the “Made for This” Podcast Season 3, Episode 2
How to use your **mind map** to reveal which thoughts are building a storyline about God that is either true or untrue.

**STEP ONE:**
In the center of the page, write the primary feeling or emotion you’re experiencing right now. It could be good or bad (anxious, peaceful, overwhelmed, angry, afraid, etc.).

Scattered around that large circle, write everything you can think of that is contributing to that feeling or emotion (laundry that isn’t finished, work, kids, body image, finances, etc.). Draw smaller circles around each of those contributing factors and then trace a line from each of them back to the large one.

**STEP TWO:**
Look for patterns and common themes in your circles.
- Are you worrying about things you can’t control?
- Are you angry about how you’ve been wronged?
- Are you obsessed with what you don’t have?
- Has food, sex, entertainment or money taken over your thoughts?
- Are you ashamed of what you’ve done in the past?
- Are you self-critical?

**STEP THREE:**
Talk to God about it. Pray with your paper in front of you and talk through each thing you’ve written down. Tell him about it. Ask him to show you what you are believing wrongly about him and yourself.
MIND MAP EXAMPLE

Project due tomorrow
Disagreement with co-worker
Feel inadequate for my job

WORK

OVERWHELMED

FAITH

Lonely lately
Feel like I give and give with no return
Excited about a few new friends

FRIENDS

Feeling distant from God
Not doing enough for God
Excited about my new small group

HEALTH/BODY

Feeling insecure about my weight
Worried about the doctor’s appointment
Anxiety flaring up lately
Your Mind Map
According to Paul's prayer, what is the role of knowledge? Why is it important for the disciple to grow in both grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?
WEEK TWO, Day Two (Philippians 1:12-18a)

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How has being in prison advanced the gospel and made bold those who are not in prison for their
WEEK TWO, Day Three (Philippians 1:18b-26)

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Why does Paul consider life or death a win/win situation?
How should we face suffering for Christ based on the example of Paul... and of Jesus, himself?
WEEK TWO, Day Five (Philippians, Chapter One)

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Highlights or favorite take-aways from Chapter One?
Questions from the Reading
(Chapters 5-7)

1. Have you ever been the victim of your own negative thinking? What happened?

2. How do our thoughts affect the way we live?

3. Write the idea “I have a choice” in your own language. What does that mean to you?

4. What is your typical thought fixation these days?

5. What happens when we think new thoughts?
6. What is a deliberate interruption? How can it help you?

7. What is the best that self-help can offer, and why is that not enough?

8. How will capturing your thoughts and believing the truth give you peace and joy that transcend your circumstances?

9. Of the three barriers to victory in our thought lives (the Devil, our wounds, our sin), which do you struggle with most right now? Why?

Because alone in the dark the devil can tell you whatever the hell he wants... if our thought lives are the deepest, darkest places of stronghold within us, all hell will try to stop us from being free.

Jennie Allen
Get Out of Your Head Book
WEEK THREE
(to be completed prior to group time)

READ: Read Chapters 8-10 of Get Out of Your Head

PROCESS: Thought Assessment Worksheet

STUDY: Philippians, Chapter Two

DISCUSS: Review discussion questions in preparation for group time

LISTEN (optional): Listen to the “Made for This” Podcast Season 3, Episodes 3-8
**Thought Assessment Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grab the Thought</th>
<th>Diagnose the Thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Is it True?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a failure because I disappointed a friend, forgot two important things this week and messed up at work.</td>
<td>No, this isn’t true. I did make mistakes, but my mistakes do not define my worth or change God’s love for me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Take It to God</th>
<th>Make a Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What does God say about it?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Am I going to believe God?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am he who blots out your mistakes… I will not remember your sins. Isaiah 43:25</td>
<td>I choose to believe that God removed my sin as far as the east is from the west. I am loved and secure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab the Thought</td>
<td>Diagnose the Thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>Make a Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does God say about it?</td>
<td>Am I going to believe God?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fight with Truth</td>
<td>I will fight for you. Exodus 14:14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t be afraid for I am with you. I will strengthen you and help you. Isaiah 41:10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am the beginning and the end. I am the first, and I am the last. Revelation 22:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My Spirit is within you. Ezekiel 36:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You will be with me. I will wipe every tear from your eyes, and death will be no more. Behold, I am making all things new. Revelation 21:3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I give power to the weak. Isaiah 40:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I will keep you safe. Psalm 4:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I will equip you for every good work I’ve planned. Hebrews 13:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not worry; instead, pray. Then you will experience my peace, which exceeds all understanding. Philippians 4:6-7</td>
<td>To all who receive me, who believe in my name, I give the right to become children of God. John 1:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will take care of all of your needs. Philippians 4:19</td>
<td>I will comfort you as you wait. Isaiah 66:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In just a little while I am coming, and I will take you to the place I am. Hebrews 10:37</td>
<td>Don’t be afraid. I am here to help you. Isaiah 41:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am light; in me there is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:5</td>
<td>I did not give you a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am on my way. Revelation 3:11</td>
<td>My steadfast love endures forever and ever. Psalm 138:8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
S.

O.

A.

P.

What is the difference between thinking of others first and being a doormat? (Note - Paul is not calling us to be a doormat!)
WEEK THREE, Day Two (Philippians 2:5-11)

S.

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What can we learn from the example of Jesus?
If good works don’t save us, what is our motivation to do them? What is their benefit or purpose?
There are times when we can't do the things we would like, and we have to say "No." How can we empower others to do what we can't?
WEEK THREE, Day Five (Philippians, Chapter Two)

S.

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Highlights or favorite take-aways from Chapter Two?
Questions from the Reading  
(Chapters 8-10)

1. What is keeping Jesus from being the thing you live for?

2. Do you struggle finding time for silence and time with God? Explain.

3. How could you think creatively about your time with God? What tools have been helpful to you?

4. How would connecting with others in a deeper way change your everyday life?

5. What’s most challenging for you about connecting with others?
6. What would it look like for you to “go first” and reach out to someone?

7. What are the most common “what if’s” in your life?

8. Have you found yourself making better choices with your thoughts in the past couple of weeks? How has it been?

9. How could your life look different if you chose trust instead of fear?

10. How has the “Thought Assessment Exercise” helped you?
Week Three Small Group Notes and Prayer Requests

Self-help can offer only a better version of yourself; Christ is after a whole new you.

JENNIE ALLEN
WEEK FOUR
(to be completed prior to group time)

READ: Read Chapters 11-14 of Get Out of Your Head

PROCESS: Read the list of verses from Week Three and choose to memorize one this week

STUDY: Philippians, Chapter Three

DISCUSS: Review discussion questions in preparation for group time

LISTEN (optional): Listen to the “Made for This” Podcast Season 3, Episodes 9-16
S.

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P.

Paul is warning them against those who would try to add to being saved by faith alone. Judaizers were Jews who welcomed the Gentiles into the faith but insisted they undergo circumcision, keep dietary and Sabbath laws. Paul was very much against this! Faith alone saves.
Paul was the Super Jew, if ever there was one, by both genetics and training. And yet, he counts all of those “benefits” of being steeped in religious training and knowledge as not “neutral” but “harmful” compared to knowing and being found in Jesus.
Paul had to set his past successes and failures aside in order to be a part of what God was calling him to “today.” What do you need to set aside from your past (good or bad) that is keeping you from being fully present in God’s destiny for you?
Paul is asking them to be careful about their mentors. We all learn from someone. Who are your teachers?
Highlights or key take-aways from Chapter Three?
1. About what are you most cynical?

2. When’s the last time you truly delighted in God’s creation?

3. What do you find the most beautiful in all of God’s creation?

4. Discuss the world’s way of self-esteem. How is that different from what Scripture teaches?

5. What would it look like for you to serve others right now?

6. How has a “victim” mentality shown up in your life?
7. Is it difficult for you to thank God for the hard things in your life? Why?

8. Share about a painful season in your life when it was difficult to thank God for anything?

9. What does complacency look like in your life?

10. What’s exciting to you about knowing you’re part of a story bigger than yourself?
Not only can our thoughts be changed, but we can be the ones to change them.
WEEK FIVE
(to be completed prior to group time)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READ:</th>
<th>Read Chapters 15-16 of Get Out of Your Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROCESS:</td>
<td>Celebrate! Write on an index card: __________ no longer has power over me. Share what you wrote and pray together as a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDY:</td>
<td>Philippians, Chapter Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSS:</td>
<td>Review discussion questions in preparation for group time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LISTEN: (optional)</td>
<td>Listen to the “Made for This” Podcast Season 3, Episodes 17-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WEEK FIVE, Day One (Philippians 4:2-7)

S.

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P.

What does it mean for peace to “guard” your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus?
WEEK FIVE, Day Two (Philippians 4:8-9)

S.

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P.

What happens when we fill our minds with these things? Is there still room for toxic thinking? Why or why not?
While this famous verse can apply to many situations, the context of it here is contentment. How often do you experience the gift of contentment?
What is the reward for giving to the missions of God? How can you be a part of furthering God's work in the world?
WEEK FIVE, Day Five (Philippians, Chapter Four)

S.

O.

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P.

Highlights or key take-aways from Chapter Four?
Questions from the Reading (Chapters 15-16)

1. We are called to TRAIN our minds to think like Jesus. How is this different than TRYING to think like Jesus?

2. What about speaking things out loud and laying down your last 2 percent could be freeing for you? What's stopping you?

3. What does it mean to “trust your training” when dealing with victory over toxic thinking?

4. What does “As we think, so we live.” mean to you at this stage of the journey?

5. How can our thoughts change the world around us for the better?

6. What no longer has power over you based on the journey through this study?
7. What’s been hard about this process?

8. What’s been most rewarding?

9. Have you found yourself making better choices with your thoughts in these past few weeks? How has it been?

10. What are your hopes for yourself at the end of our time together?
We were built to be seen and loved.

JENNIE ALLEN