

TAKE EVERY

EXCHANGE
LIES OF
THE ENEMY



FOR THE
MIND OF
CHRIST

THOUGHT CAPTIVE

KELLY BALARIE

TAKE EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE

EXCHANGE LIES OF THE ENEMY
FOR THE MIND OF CHRIST

K E L L Y B A L A R I E



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Kelly Balarie, Take Every Thought Captive

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To the biggest-little joys of my life, the ones who make me smile bigger than anything, the two highly effective teachers at shaping me into the image of Jesus: Michael and Madison.

I love you more than you know, more than words, and more than I probably ever let on. I am proud of you. Madison, you are the most courageous girl around! You overcome time and time again. Michael, you are a boy after God's own heart.

This book, and all that is contained herein, is for you.

Undoubtedly, God has great plans for you, and I know, 100 percent, that God will see them through!

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Introduction

The Call to Seize the Mind of Christ

God's thoughts belong to the world of spirit, man's to the world of the intellect, and while spirit can embrace intellect, the human intellect can never comprehend spirit.

A. W. Tozer, *An Anthology*

nly truth sets free. So, I'll start with truth: I write to help me. Every book I've written started from the fact that I need help from God. In this, God has always shown up for me. It's a biblical principle: those who seek, find.

First I wrote *Fear Fighting*, and He released not only me from fear but countless others. Then I wrote about being *Battle Ready*, and I—along with a host of other believers—became armed to overcome. Later, when I was out of steam from hard work, *Rest Now* gave me and my fellow collaborators deeper connection and union with God. Now, this book, *Take Every Thought Captive*, will be a release of all the worries, burdens, and lies kept deep within our minds. In this we will stop only surviving and start

thriving. We will start thinking, walking, and loving like Christ. We will gain His mind and stop living by ours.

The shift will be cataclysmic.

Take Every Thought Captive aims to be a practical, return-to-resource—a mark-it-up, underline, and write-in-the-margin book. By taking every thought captive, you will be able to live out God’s purposes and intents for your life. This book will be a mental arsenal to see you through a life that is honoring to God.

New friend, I’ve learned that when the going gets tough, a tough mind *has to* get going by taking every thought captive. Much of the material herein is time-tested and hard-learned through hard-fought trials. What is contained in this book is *His* action plan, His wisdom, and His truth. I’ve gleaned it through trials like an eating disorder, financial trouble, health issues, family distress, uncertainty, relationship conflicts, and insecurity.

I release His Word and how to apply it with great hope it will change your life just like mine.

As a result of the learning God has walked me through, I don’t have as much down-in-the-gutter thinking. Now, on those days when lies tell me that I’m a horrible mom, when I think everyone is against me, when someone criticizes me or downright rejects me, I have a go-to plan. I more quickly move from mind-yuck to God’s light.

There is no sinking sand when you stand with Jesus’s thoughts in you.

Absolutely one of the most powerful things a person can do is to let Jesus’s thoughts become their thoughts. The mind of Christ is radically assuring. It whispers things like, *The storm is conquerable, through Me*.

In this, rather than believing God’s Word cerebrally, truth is owned wholeheartedly and entirely. Doubt goes and faith comes. Hopelessness vanishes and hope comes.

Taking every thought captive is the avenue by which the mind of Christ fills our minds. It is where His thoughts become ours. It is where we don’t strive for faith but walk by His faith.



You should know I am focused and targeted with my words in this book. My goal is to set people free.

I've found God moves when I hit with strength. When I speak plainly. My hope is that doing so will shave hard times, years, tears, and trauma off your journey in radical ways. Then you will become like Christ, thinking as He thinks, acting as He acts, and loving like He loves, more quickly. This is 100 percent not *my* work, the work of Kelly Balarie. It is the Lord's work, which is why the Word of God is so front and center, active, and prominent in this book. It will save you from the world, from your own mind, from your fears, from your marriage difficulties, from the thought that you are not enough, from stress, from anxiety, and from pressures megaphoning in your life. Jesus saves. And He will save you, because that is His business. He is better than any human at setting people free. You don't have to shape up to receive from Him. He died for sinners. So go ahead and trash the self-berating and self-condemning, bullying thoughts that demand you *Do better! Shape up! Get it together!*

The pressure and burdens don't belong to you anymore. Let Jesus help you. He is good at carrying hard loads.

With Jesus, we will find release from thoughts like:

I'm not enough.

I can't.

I won't ever . . .

I make terrible decisions.

I'm a loser.

I'm crazy.

I'm impossible.

There is no way that . . .

I've made a horrible mistake by . . .

God is angry at me.
I don't belong.
I'm lonely.
I'm not enough.
I'm fat and ugly.
I'm a burden.
Something is wrong with me.
I have to please people to be liked.
I'm stupid.
I'm ashamed.
I'm useless.

No matter the unruly feeling pestering you underneath these thoughts, the truth remains: “we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37) and “[we] can do all things through Him who strengthens [us]” (Phil. 4:13 NASB). We can rest on the fact that all the grace we need, we have because of Jesus!

When we feel that changing our minds is too impossible, which I have felt on many a day, it is wise to remember there is no war that is unwinnable with the Captain of the Lord's army. The Lord of Hosts is on our side! It doesn't matter how scared we may feel about the advancing armies. If we feel the size of ants and we see giants. None of it matters! Available to us is not old mindsets but rather a better mind: the mind of Christ.

Dear one, this is 100 percent accessible to you, because, as you will see, the mind of Christ is available to you in God's Word. And the result of His mind will be awe-inspiring to those you want to reach for Christ.

They may even ask you, “How is it that you have so much joy and peace when so much fear and turmoil are surrounding us? How are you okay with all this going on in our world?” They won't see doubt or fear on your face; they'll see your faith in an unshakable God.

And you will also have the humility to know that it's not at all your work but *God's*.

The mind of Christ can change everything, if you let it. Never doubt the supernatural arming power of an armed-up God. He, Himself, in all His glory, might, strength, and power—working from the inside out of you—is enough to take any beast, wall, or stronghold down. Take courage! The size of your God far outweighs any issues in your mind.



DECLARATION

I have the mind of Christ.

Homework

Identify the bully thoughts that berate, condemn, or torment you. Write them down. Call them out.

Note for the Reader

This is my prayer for you: Father, I thank You for every reader of this book. I ask You to supernaturally meet them in every way their soul, mind, heart, and spirit needs. I ask Your Holy Spirit to move in powerful and profound ways. I thank You for the personal testimonies You've had me share. I pray that my breakthrough will become theirs. I know Your faithfulness is going to move. The strength of Your Word will go forth and do what You've sent it to do. Thank You for Your faithfulness. Bless each reader deeply and profoundly. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Prayer

Father, we want to release the lies of the enemy to gain the mind of Christ. We want to think like You, talk like You, and walk like You. We want to look like You and portray You to everyone we meet. I pray that when people look at us, they don't see us but rather see Jesus. May they see Your love, Your grace, Your compassion, Your hope, Your life, and Your truth shining out. I pray we don't get in Your way. I pray for You to come and do the work in us,

Holy Spirit, with power and quickness. Release us from mental prisons, from self-doubt, from fear. Renew us with Your truth, Your ways, and Your hope. Strengthen our inner selves as we read this book. Show us the paths of life and the ways everlasting. In Jesus's all-saving, ever-working name. Amen.

Free Download

Assess your mental strength. Take the “Take Every Thought Captive Assessment” to discover your areas for growth. Visit www.itakethoughtscaptive.com to download.



PART 1

Arm Up for Battle

1

Become a Blank Slate

I have since learned that the most mature believer is the one who is bent over, leaning most heavily on the Lord, and admitting his total inability to do anything without Christ. The greatest Christian is not the one who has achieved the most but rather the one who has received the most.

Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Faith*

I love being used by God to lead people to water. Thirsty people with impossible problems experience radical change. God feeds the hungry and gives drink to the thirsty. This is why, no matter how uncomfortable it may be, I try to live my life in want of Jesus. I want Him to squeeze me like a lemon, so He gets every bit of juice from my life.

But the opposite of this sort of posture is what creates issues. Let's begin with a story that will better explain what I mean.

Two ladies requested mentorship with me. Both seemed equally eager. Their education level was on par, they shared common hopes for the future, they were approximately the same age, and both

had big dreams. They also both had apparent needs. But, as I met in private with each of them, I couldn't help but notice the two were radically different.

One came as a blank slate, with an open heart and mind and a hungry sense to encounter God. She said, "I want to know all God has to tell me or show me." I think she knew, underneath, that she needed help. The stakes were high. She was hungry.

The other came knowing a whole lot about God. In our first meeting, she said, "I just want to talk." She wanted me to be a sounding board for her mind-rehash and regurgitations. She wanted to voice her worries and stresses. It appeared she was content staying in the pit she was in—as long as she could talk about it, which she did 99 percent of the time. I couldn't get a word in edgewise.

I knew within minutes person number two wasn't going to experience life-change. She was hardly an open slate; she was a closed door.

Jesus asked the lame man, "Do you want to be healed?" (John 5:6 ESV). Many of us should confront that same question today: Do we want to be healed?

I assume you do, or you wouldn't be reading this, but if you don't, you may as well shut the book. It will waste space in your life. Its material will gain cobwebs in your mind, and you may as well be watching TV.

Only blank-slated minds get new story lines crafted by the Master Author Himself. If you insist on your own story and opinions, the "Author and Perfecter of faith" (Heb. 12:2 AMP) may as well write His story somewhere else.

Ever noticed? God doesn't force Himself on people who don't want Him.

What We Risk

God's thoughts are not our thoughts. We cannot come opinionated, full of our own thinking—our rights, our formula, our way,

our plan of what should happen—and name it God’s. Pride has a hard time seeing itself. Pride can’t see its own rear end. Many of us figure our thinking is right thinking.

As my friend and author Joanna Weaver once said to me, we can be right and still be wrong. We may even have truth. But without love to accompany it, is that truth right? We must have God’s thinking so that even our best thinking doesn’t become tainted with self-righteousness, self-promotion, or self-pity.

God’s thoughts are not ours. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD” (Isa. 55:8).

What if our whole breakthrough is less about what we think and more about what God thinks? What if He cares less about our rights and more about His glory, His thoughts, and His intentions working through us?

The most self-absorbed people constantly think about themselves. We don’t want to be absorbed in our thoughts; we want to be absorbed in His thoughts.

For a long time, I thought, *I should do this. I will do that. They should know this. I think this. I am right. I am going here. I am doing this. I need to say that. They have to hear this. I have to defend myself.* My mind was a loose cannon, shooting in every direction. I didn’t think God cared about my rapid-fire responses, unhinged mouth, emotionally motivated responses, opinionated determinations, or assumptions. I didn’t think much about how things pleased Him—I thought about me. What made me feel good. What I wanted. How I wanted people to treat me.

Do you find yourself thinking this way too? Do your hurts, opinions, summations, and categorizations fill your mind?

I’m learning that relying on me often causes me to rebel against Him. But, more importantly, this is how God sees this sort of thinking:

Stop deceiving yourselves. If you think you are wise by this world's standards, you need to become a fool to be truly wise. For the wisdom of this world is **foolishness** to God. As the Scriptures say,

“He traps the wise
in the snare of their own cleverness.”
(1 Cor. 3:18–19 NLT)

The Lord knows the thoughts and reasonings **of the [humanly] wise** and recognizes **how futile** they are. (v. 20 AMPC)

For if any person **thinks himself** to be somebody [too important to condescend to shoulder another's load] when he is nobody [of superiority except in his own estimation], he deceives and deludes and **cheats himself**. (Gal. 6:3 AMPC)

When we think thoughts of self, we cheat ourselves. When we think we are wise, we are actually fools. For instance, when I “think myself” too good, too above some task, too set in my ways, too fearful of service, too embarrassed to submit to God, too put-out to love, I cheat myself of the goodness gleaned in enduring awkwardness. I miss God's treasure. “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble” (James 4:6).

Opposing God's way for our own way is foolish. “A *fool* does not delight in understanding, but in revealing *his own mind*” (Prov. 18:2 NASB). Fools have all the right answers and independent spirits that rely on their own ways. But the bottom line is: “The thought of foolishness is sin” (24:9 KJV).

Fools set on revealing their own minds are not open to the mind of Christ; they are not in the right position to be blank slates. They are in sin. They know it all. They are set in their own way. They are blind to pride. They are determined that God should do things their way. Rather than seeing God's goodness, they get opposed due to their pride and, as a result, they become angry, bitter, and resentful.

The Practicalities of Coming as a Blank Slate

What does a blank slate look like? Who, in the Bible, was a blank slate?

Jesus.

He said, “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” (John 5:19).

Jesus, the Savior of the world, could do nothing by Himself? That is an astounding thought. But think:

- When the Father called Jesus to pray, He prayed.
- When the Father called Jesus to go, He went.
- When the Father called Jesus to be moved in healing, He did.
- When the Father called Jesus to die, He gave up His life.

Jesus was always open, always ready, and always willing—to the point of death. Notice Jesus did not suppose *to know*. He supposed to *not know* until the Father showed Him how to go.

Look again at what John 5:19 says: “the Son can do nothing by himself.”

Even Jesus did not rely on Himself. This is almost unbelievable. Fully God, Jesus was humble and reliant, obedient to the point of death, and always effective.

If Jesus was reliant on God, how much more should we be? Paul said, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2 ESV).

Blank slates are openhearted people in desperate need of the Author’s rewrite. To them, the Author is the Source and Finisher of not their own stories but His story, a work playing out in their lives and minds. Jesus said,

I have come in My Father’s name and with His power, and you do not receive Me [your hearts are not open to Me, you give Me

no welcome]; but if another comes in his own name and his own power and with no other authority but himself, you will receive him and give him your approval. (John 5:43 AMPC)

Blank slates say, “Jesus, I need You! I can’t do it without You. It is Your power that saves. Jesus, You are the ONLY way! Jesus, You are the truth! Jesus, You are life abundant! Come, Jesus! Come, Holy Spirit! Come. Come. Come. Transform me into Your image by the power of Your grace. You are more than enough, no matter how I feel about me! If You saved the world, You can save me! I believe in You, despite me!”

Blank slates desperately pray more than they endlessly think. Blank slates know Jesus is the only gate to great. Jesus said, “I am the gate for the sheep” (10:7).

How do we come ready to receive Jesus and His work as Author, Source, and Finisher? Blank slates:

1. *Come ready to receive* by hearing, understanding, and perceiving what Jesus is doing and saying to them through the mind of Christ. They are askers, seekers, and knockers. As a result, they find doors open to them.
2. *Don’t make the past the final story.* They trust God with tomorrow despite how things looked yesterday.
3. *Get God out of the box and believe He is extraordinarily powerful.*
4. *Pray and ask for help.* They remember, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick” (Jer. 17:9 ESV).
5. *Ditch know-it-all, critical, and blaming postures that prohibit growth.*
6. *Don’t justify bad behavior but are willing and ready to change course.*

7. *Open their hearts to receive the sifting, shifting, and operation being conducted by the Master Surgeon, the Holy Spirit.* Rather than looking at Scripture and saying, “I know that already,” they’re open to really knowing God. They welcome Jesus with open arms, just as He died for them with open arms.

The Potential Gain

What is on the other side of a blank slate?

A renewed mind.

Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) **by the [entire] renewal of your mind** [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may **prove [for yourselves]** what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]. (Rom. 12:2 AMPC)

Blank-slated minds are renewed. They get new ideals and new attitudes. They get a mind redo. Everything is made over. The Author writes a new story. New attitudes, new mindsets, and new glory make new paths open up to them. They begin to prove what is good and to understand—not by their own minds—the very will of God.

To let go of our own minds is to walk by the mind of Christ.

What is this elusive mind of Christ we keep talking about? First Corinthians 2 tells us:

But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God’s deep secrets. No one can know a person’s thoughts except that person’s own spirit,

and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), **so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.**

When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others. For,

**“Who can know the LORD's thoughts?
Who knows enough to teach him?”**

But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ. (vv. 10–16 NLT)

The mind of Christ:

1. Searches out things.
2. Reveals things to us by His Spirit.
3. Shows us God's deep secrets.
4. Knows God's deep thoughts and tells them to us.
5. Makes known to us the great things of God.
6. Gives us words from the Spirit.
7. Offers us the Spirit's words to speak spiritual truths.
8. Offers words and wisdom that sound foolish to the world.
9. Speaks our language by giving us understanding.
10. Teaches us the Lord's thoughts.

If we were to *think* like Christ, imagine the immense potential of how much we could *do* and how we could love just like Christ.

Blank-slated minds are primed for renewal. Renewed minds think as Christ thinks, love as He loves, and act as He acts.

As you prepare to go through this book and begin your journey, I encourage you to not come hardened, already knowing everything, assuming your thoughts are correct. Don't come deciding you've already read the Bible and know its stories, verses, and doctrines. Come as a blank slate. Come humble. Come hungry. Come needy. Come ready. Come believing. Come willing. Come expecting God's Word to meet you and renew you. Come anticipating a transformation by God.

Come. Offer yourself as a blank slate to God. Call out to Him. Tell Him your need. Relay the pain. Submit to what He wants to do. Receive His goodness.

Blank slates get new mind narratives written by the Master Author, God Himself.



DECLARATION

I don't have to know it all, because Christ does, and His mind leads me.

Homework

Examine your approach to God. How are you more led by your own thoughts than God's? How do you think you are open—but how might your heart be deceptive? How might you actually be living a closed-up life that's unwelcoming to Christ? How might God be calling you, right now, to let go? To change course?

Note to the Reader

If you haven't received Jesus as your Savior, if you don't know Him in a personal way, if you aren't sure if you will spend eternity with Him, there is more for you, my friend. I want you to receive all that Jesus has for you. I encourage you to make Jesus the Lord of your life by praying this now with me: *Father, I know that I am a sinner. I confess this fact. I can't change me. I need a Savior. I need help. I believe that Jesus died for all my sins. I receive and confess Him as my Lord and Savior. I also ask to be filled with Your Holy Spirit. Thank You, God, for all this. In Jesus's name. Amen.*

Prayer

Father, I can't. I can't do this on my own. My thoughts are not Your thoughts. My ways are not Your ways. Forgive me for my foolishness of mind and for trying to be self-sufficient and independent. Forgive me for doing things my way, on my time, without seeking or yielding to You. I don't want to be a know-it-all. God, I want to know You. I want to be open to Your wisdom. You say You give wisdom generously to those who ask. So, I ask You for it today. Help me to yield to the Holy Spirit, to welcome Jesus in, and to see a new work in my life. I need You, Jesus. I want to see Your renewal in my mind. I welcome You, Jesus. I open myself up to receive from Your Holy Spirit. Come and do a good work in me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

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