

## ***Introduction + Section 1 – Free Sample***

Welcome to *The Secret Place Within – Become “Very Good” Again*.

This reader’s book introduces the heart, vision, and theological foundation of the entire ecosystem. It is written for believers, seekers, and those rebuilding their faith—people who sense there is more to life with God than survival, performance, or shallow belief.

In these opening pages, you will explore:

- What it means to be created “*very good*”, what happened and why that still matters today
- How the prefrontal cortex and limbic system shape identity and behavior
- Why transformation is not about trying harder, but about renewed thinking and restored connection
- The biblical and spiritual framework that undergirds the entire journey

This section is not meant to rush you—it is meant to **ground you**. It establishes language, purpose, and safety so that deeper growth can happen over time.

*This sample offers a glimpse into the larger invitation of the reader’s book: a pathway from being stuck, fragmented, or spiritually fatigued into a renewed, fruitful, and integrated life with God.*

# Introduction

## The Why

What a huge blessing it is to be living the amazing and wonderful life that I am living and experiencing today. Happiness, joy, contentment, peace and love flow like a river keeping my lake (what I am referring to here as my body, mind, soul and spirit) full. Marriage, family, purpose and freedom are all in alignment under God. My beautiful wife, three wonderful and fully grown step-children, six adorable grandchildren fill our homes. Big family gatherings are always full of laughter and fun. Plus, this book and my musical talents are being shared with people all over the world.

Doesn’t my life sound spectacular? Are you feeling jealous and wishing you were living my life? Well don’t be because the word I didn’t use to describe my life was the word perfect! Though everything I stated regarding my life is somewhat true, *in my opinion*, there are certainly continuing trials and tribulations. But life is always a matter of perspective and what one chooses to believe. The wonderful life I’m living now, after decades of traveling through crazy, wayward and challenging experiences and circumstances, is truly a “very good” reality. Where what was once very bad, within me, has become very good again. So the reason I decided to write, develop, and teach this book was so I would be in obedience to what I believe God had asked me to do, which is to

teach how I became very good again and why I continue to press forward.

With that said, let me now ask you this, “have you ever found yourself living or existing on both sides of a fence?” I have and many times not even been aware of it. For instance, while believing I was happy and content, the other side of my fence had piles of doubt and fear. Being in that state was like living within walls of swiss cheese. It was impossible for me to feel any kind of lengthy contentment. In fact, I’ve spent many years trying to seal those holes or “fix” myself which included ways such as attending church, Bible study groups, recovery groups, counseling and medications for depression. I even learned, while training to become a Recovery Coach, about areas of our brain along with their functions.

Unfortunately, gaining knowledge and understanding never placed me into only one yard. Even though I learned new coping behaviors and saw others become well, I still found myself straddled on top of a fence. I knew there had to be something missing within me. A possible key ingredient not taking place in my life. And you know what? There was in fact something missing and I thank the Lord for being patient with me until I found it. And I am now happy to say, I feel like I’m living life to the fullest in one yard!

Of course, I can’t reveal that ingredient to you now because then you will not need to read any further. Sorry, you will just need to get over it and take this journey. I truly believe it will be so worth it. Right now, my desire for you is to know and understand that though I received my future and hope (*Jeremiah 29:11*), there is also a future and a hope for you as well, no matter how you answer the three following questions:

Question #1: Have you ever done something bad or unhealthy?

I’m sure everyone on this entire planet could say yes to that question and therefore this book can most likely help you.

Question #2: Have you ever *repeatedly* done something bad or unhealthy, knowing it was not good for you but continued to do it anyway?

If the answer is still yes, then this book will help you.

Question #3: Have you ever *asked yourself*, “Why do I keep doing bad, knowing that it’s bad, wrong or unhealthy but still continue doing it even when you know what the good, right or healthy thing to do would be?”

If you answered yes again, then this book will most definitely help you. Oh, and welcome to the 90 percentile of those who probably also answered yes to all three questions. What I’m basically saying is, “You are **not** alone!”

The third question is literally based upon one of the key scripture verses referenced in this book. Perhaps it’s the very question that has stumped mankind since the Scripture was written and maybe since the beginning of time. However, before we look at those Bible verses, I feel there is much to cover before we get there.

Along our path of learning and discovery, we will uncover multiple layers of how our mind, will, emotions and experiences can steer our behaviors. For example, I have known others, including myself, who have rated their bad, wrong or unhealthy actions as *small*, *medium*, or *large* compromises. It's as if chronic lying is not as bad as a full blown drug addiction. Though somewhat true, many of the lies I told myself (and to others) paved the way to my full blown past addiction to crack cocaine. What about waking up almost every night, walking to the kitchen to get some milk and cookies? Now that's not as bad for your health as drinking alcohol almost every day, right? Maybe so, until your doctor says you have high cholesterol, or are borderline diabetic, and both insulin and cholesterol medications will become part of your future if eating habits aren't changed. How about unhealthy amounts of screen time on your phone or binge watching Netflix? No longer are you reading books to your kids or grandkids at bedtime but believing Alexa's lullaby songs are just as good. Maybe you and your spouse (or significant other) began sitting at opposite ends of the couch watching TV and scrolling TikTok or Facebook on your phones. Now instead of this occurring once or twice, it's happening four to five nights a week.

The Bottom Line is: ***All*** bad and unhealthy behaviors are dysfunctional, period! They can lead to (or stem from) physical and mental pain, emotional hurt or trauma, spiritual and relational destruction and/or all of the above. They can cause one to ask, "Why do I keep doing this," especially when you don't really want to be doing it and already know what you should be doing instead. So whether you are beginning on a path to destruction, currently in it, rebuilding from the aftermath, or sometimes still struggling with dysfunction, there is extremely great news for you. God created you to live a very good life and He has the way to get you living it.

In Sections 2 and 3 of this book, you will learn how unhealthy attachments and false beliefs play an integral part in keeping one from living the "very good" life that God created for them. Science, which includes therapy, helps people understand brain function, heal traumatic events or experiences and teaches coping skills along with providing ways to apply them. But as you will see, science can only take an individual so far. Though you will never become "perfect" in this life, understanding the nature of and having balance between your body, soul, and spirit, I believe, can only come by gaining the knowledge and wisdom of God. Then, as understanding of scripture from the Bible is attained, you can begin applying God's principles to your life.

This small book will cover a lot and it's not intended to be read quickly. I encourage you to take your time. Treat this book as a daily devotional. Read a few pages at a time, then read them again. Read, focus, and meditate on both the definitions, and Bible verses. Ask yourself how the content pertains to you. Ask God: "What do You want me to gain from this book? What am I to learn here? When have I struggled most within spiritual warfare of my body, soul, and spirit? What attachments have become unhealthy? What are the root causes that allow me to form a false belief?" If you can pinpoint and answer those previous questions, then you will begin to understand the, *Why do I's?*

Ask God and yourself the questions and *you will discover the answers you seek!* You will no longer be blind to the way Satan and others attack, distract and control your mind. Again, your life will never be perfect but you can: *Become "Very Good" Again.* Below are some Bible verses emphasizing this truth.

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

*John 10:10 (ESV)*

*If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace and work to maintain it. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and His ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.*

*1 Peter 3:10-12 (NLT)*

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding: In all your ways submit to Him and He will make your paths straight.*

*Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)*

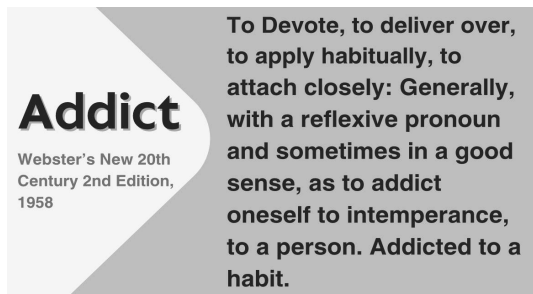
*I will instruct you in the way you should go: I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.*

*Psalms 32:8 (NIV)*

# Section 1

## Scientific & Biblical Truth

Before we begin exploring the scientific concepts in this book, it is important to understand the purpose behind them. The use of neuroscience is not intended to replace the authority of Scripture or the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Rather, these insights help illustrate how wonderfully God designed the human mind and heart. True transformation does not come from knowledge alone, but through the renewing power of God's Word and the work of His Spirit within us.



In the King James Bible, *1 Corinthians 16:15* states “I urge you brethren... that they have *addicted* themselves to the ministry of the saints.” The King James Version is the only Bible translation where the word “addicted” appears. I’d say the usage of the word in this verse is definitely a time when the term is used in a “good sense” as Webster’s definition (referenced above) stated. My prayer for you is to addict yourself to the teachings within this book. By that I mean you would attach closely, devote daily, and apply habitually to the truth of God’s Word outlined in this book. Amen?

The text in this book will largely focus on two areas of the brain along with their functions. While using both neuroscience and Scripture, I hope to show and prove God explains these two areas of our brain just as neuroscience does. However, creation over time has evolved and though mankind may believe they created science, I believe God created mankind and gave mankind the ability to create science. *Genesis Chapter 1*, explains all of God’s created universe. In just six days, everything was created with man being the last creation. It is in verse 31 where we read:

*Then God saw everything that He had made and indeed (it was) very good.*

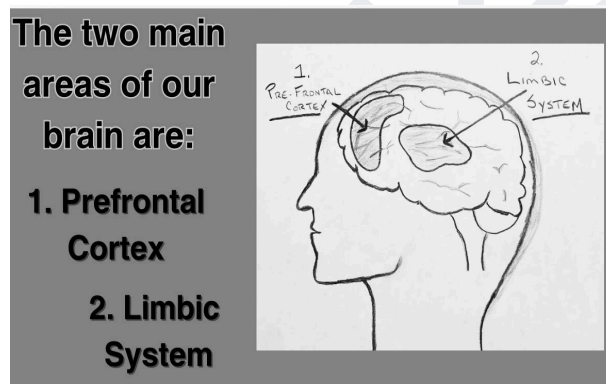
*Genesis 1:31 (NKJV)*

“Very good” seems clear that God was pleased with His creation. Also, back in verse 27 of *Genesis Chapter 1*, it says, “man was created in His image.” Since God is perfect and just, He created man perfect and just, in His image. However, in *Genesis 1:31*, God said “*it was*” very good; meaning something was going to change. Why else are the words “*it was*” italicized? (Those words are only italicized in the New King James Version.) Since God knows everything, (past, present and future) I believe God, in *Genesis Chapter 1*, is

already telling us a change was going to happen. *Genesis Chapter 3* tells us the change is that mankind (Adam and Eve) gave in to temptation, disobeyed God, gained an understanding of evil, brought sin into the world and everything was no longer “very good.”

Today, we can be thankful for the study of science and neuroscience (any and all of the sciences dealing with the structure and function of the nervous system and brain). Through science, we have more understanding of God's creation. Also because of neuroscience, we have terms or names, definitions and the functions of our multifaceted brain which everywhere in Scripture is simply called “the mind.”

## The Created by God & Scientifically Named Prefrontal Cortex & Limbic System



The definitions for all these subjects are noted below. The first area of the brain discussed throughout this study is called the prefrontal cortex.

**Prefrontal Cortex:** is the gray matter of the anterior part of the frontal lobe that is highly developed in humans and plays a role in the regulation of complex cognitive, emotional and behavioral functioning, (Miriam-Webster.com).

God created your prefrontal cortex to have “*very good*” godly values, morals, beliefs, convictions, integrity and truth which provide the ability to formulate and make *only* healthy decisions.

The second area of the brain, in this study, is called the limbic system. The limbic system actually consists of several interconnected components such as the hippocampus, amygdala, thalamus, hypothalamus, basal ganglia, and cingulate gyrus. Each of these components have their own functions. However since they are all part of the limbic system, I’ve decided to keep the functions and explanations as basic as possible and only use the term “limbic system” to cover all included limbic components.

The first two definitions were retrieved from an older resource that did not list the

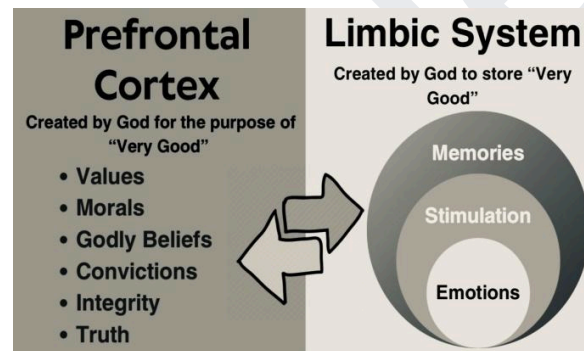
term “limbic system.” But I am using both the older and one newer definition (limbic system - which was retrieved from a different source) because the terminology is best understood with the use of these crucial concepts. Below are the terms defined.

**Limbic:** “Edge, border or margin” (Webster’s New 20th Century, 2nd Edition, 1958).

**System:** “A set or arrangement of things so related or connected as to form a unity or organic whole. A set of facts, principals, rules, classified or arranged in a regular, orderly form so as to show a logical plan linking the various parts.” (Webster’s New 20th Century, 2nd Edition, 1958).

**Limbic System:** “A complex system of nerves and networks in the brain, involving several areas near the edge of the cortex concerned with instinct and mood. It controls the basic emotions (fear, pleasure, anger) and drives (hunger, sex, dominance, care of offspring),” (Google definition from Oxford Languages).

The limbic system deals with three key functions: Emotions, memories, arousal or stimulation. It processes and regulates emotions and memory while also dealing with stimulation and learning.



Those are quite the definitions and explanations. Although, as vast as the limbic system is with its many components, I will only focus on a few functions which, in all actuality, control much. All I need for you to understand is that the limbic system learns from decisions and emotions such as fear, pleasure, anger, and labels them as experiences. Then those experiences are stored in memory. I added Webster's 1958 definition of “system” because I could understand how my pleasures, healthy or unhealthy, became “so related or connected in forming unity” with my decisions and behaviors.

God partly created your limbic system to be a type of storage drive. This created storage drive, which God saw as “very good,” was designed to take every “very good” result decided or made from your prefrontal cortex and store it as a “very good” memory or “very good” experience. Are you following me? These “very good” memories or experiences would then help humans to continue making “very good” decisions based on their “very good” memories or experiences. Life would continue to be “very good.”

## The Fallen - Sinful Worlds Prefrontal Cortex & Limbic System



Since the fall of Adam and Eve where sin entered the world, mankind continued to be created the same. So basically everything in the prefrontal cortex functions in the same manner except now “very good” has been tainted, and therefore, knows both *good and evil*. Because sin has entered the game, unhealthy values and morals, worldly beliefs, condemnation, deception and lies have distorted our ability to formulate and make *only* healthy decisions. We can also add emotions such as fear, anger, guilt and shame as distorted culprits. These distortions allow your prefrontal cortex to make bad or unhealthy decisions. Then those decisions become stored into your limbic system as bad memories, bad experiences, sinful pleasures/rewards, traumas, unhealthy feelings and unhealthy emotions.



The limbic system has no time barriers. It can recall any experience, good or bad, whether from decades ago or yesterday and provide a solution to a present thought. Therefore, **every decision you have made in your entire life, good or bad, are permanently filed away in the storage drive as experiences.** These undeletable saved files will always remind you how a similar situation was previously handled. So if by

chance a poor decision was made and a sinful pleasure/reward was experienced, that experience will have the opportunity to repeat itself replicating the experience again and again becoming a more “*closely attached*” (referencing definition) addicted habit.

## Previously Handled Experiences

Poor decisions from the past, where unhealthy outcomes were experienced and repeatedly replicated, can explain why a person continues to relapse when in recovery from addictive behavior. The forever stored memories from addictive behaviors and/or unhealthy experiences explain the following actions:

- A person relapses, recalling getting high as being the solution.
- The workaholic will work more hours to isolate from family.
- A shopaholic when filling a void will shop on phone apps.
- The brokenhearted or depressed woman will eat a half gallon of ice cream.
- The alcoholic continues to drink hoping the problem goes away.
- A sex addict finds prostitutes or continues watching pornography.
- A cutter will cut again to either escape emotional pain or to feel something.
- Victims of abused relationships find themselves in other abusive relationships. Possibly even becoming the abuser.
- The codependent finds someone else to fix.

What all of these examples reveal is not simply a lack of willpower, but a pattern that has been deeply learned and reinforced over time. The brain, particularly the limbic system, is designed to remember what once brought relief, comfort, or escape, and then prompt us to return to those same behaviors when similar emotions or triggers arise. What may have started as a one-time response to pain becomes a repeated cycle, eventually forming strong attachments that feel almost automatic.

This is why many people in recovery find themselves returning to the very behaviors they desire to leave behind. But this also reveals something hopeful: if these patterns were learned, they can be unlearned. With truth, intentional choices, and the renewing power of God’s Word, new pathways can be formed, leading not back into bondage, but forward into freedom.

However, what science has clearly demonstrated, researched and explained, the Bible also clearly illustrates only in simpler terms. It is interesting that what neuroscience calls the “limbic system” closely resembles what Scripture describes as our **Soul**, which also houses our non-physical flesh/sinful nature. And the “prefrontal cortex” aligns closely with what Scripture describes as our **Spirit** (spirit-led mind).

**Note:** This is not to say that our spirit or the Holy Spirit is confined to or limited by

any physical part of the brain. Instead, this comparison helps illustrate how God designed the human mind to respond to His leading and truth. I promise to explain everything in greater detail, in Section 5. Having said that, I encourage you to continue reading, keeping an open mind and willing heart.

### ***What Comes Next***

What you have just read lays the foundation for the journey ahead. The remaining sections of the reader's book expand on these truths, helping you identify false belief systems, renew the mind, and understand how spiritual growth unfolds in progressive stages.

As the book continues, you will explore:

- How beliefs shape identity, behavior, and spiritual fruit
- The difference between striving for change and allowing transformation
- A biblical framework for moving from survival to fruitfulness
- How God restores what has been fractured—personally and relationally

The full reader's book is designed to be read slowly and thoughtfully, either on your own or alongside the workbook and group discussions.

*This is not about finishing a book—it is about beginning a renewed way of thinking and living.*