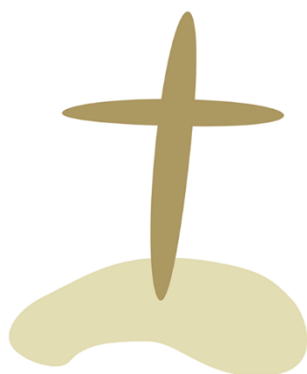


A Christian Devotional

DEFEATING OCD IN 40 DAYS



Featuring Therapy Tools to Overcome
Intrusive Thoughts, Spiritual Anxiety,
and Experience God's Peace

REEMA ANGELIQUE

Defeating OCD in 40 Days

*A Christian Devotional Featuring Therapy
Tools to Overcome Intrusive Thoughts,
Spiritual Anxiety, and Experience God's Peace*

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This book was written with prayer, compassion, and a desire to see hearts healed in the presence of Christ. You are welcome to share brief quotations for the purpose of review or encouragement, provided they are credited to the author.

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Day 1: You Are Not Your Thoughts

“We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

2 Corinthians 10:5

One of the most heartbreaking things that I see when working with individuals living with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is the way the disorder targets the things they value most. Let's say somebody cares deeply about their friends or family. You may see that their mind attempts to convince them that the people they're closest to secretly hate them. Even worse, they may have disturbing thoughts pop into their head about harming the ones they love. Although they have no desire to do it, these thoughts still show up and can cause an immense amount of anxiety or pain. If a person holds their faith dearly, their mind might insert blasphemous images or doubts. These thoughts are uninvited but the shame that follows them is often unbearable. This leads many to ask, “What kind of person thinks something like this?”

Maybe you've been there? An intrusive thought enters your mind, and instantly you start to panic. You begin praying or start confessing your "sins" repeatedly. All the while your brain is replaying the scenario to no end. You think, "Why did that pop into my head?" or "I need to make sure that everything is going to be okay." But the truth is that these intrusive thoughts are not actually proof of who you are. Having these thoughts is not a sin and they do not mean that you are failing spiritually. Sin is a willful act. These thoughts are simply mental misfires. These misfires are unwanted, involuntary, and meaningless until you decide that they have meaning. Almost everybody in the world has intrusive thoughts and they are completely normal, despite how they feel.

The difference between somebody who has intrusive thoughts and somebody who has OCD is that the person who has OCD interprets these thoughts as having a deeper meaning rather than just letting them go. This leads to a cycle of anxiety and the performance of compulsive behaviors to try to relieve that anxiety. Unfortunately, this cycle typically only reinforces the idea that the initial thought was indeed a problem that needed to be solved, making it more likely to reappear and harder to break free from.

As you see, suffering often comes from how you interpret the thought, not from the thought itself. When Paul says to "take every thought captive," he

is not commanding that we obsessively control everything that enters our mind. He is inviting us to notice a thought, hold it up to the light of Christ, and ask, “Does this belong here?” If the answer is no, you let it pass without worry. There is no need to repeatedly confess or prove you are “good enough” for God.

God sees your heart. He knows the difference between temptation, fear, and your actual will. His grace is sufficient to cover every unwanted image and “what-if” your brain throws at you.

CBT Insight: Intrusive Thoughts Are Normal

There are forms of therapy that merge incredibly well with the Christian faith. These therapies can help Christians understand what’s going on within their mind, giving them practical tools they can use, all while allowing God to be the center of their healing journey. We’ll cover some of these therapies in these 40 days but for today we’re starting with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

CBT is a form of therapy centered around the idea that our thoughts influence our feelings, which in turn influence our behaviors. Think of it like this: negative thoughts create negative feelings, which lead to negative behaviors. The goal of CBT is to learn how to challenge these negative thoughts and replace them with more realistic and positive ones, improving our mental health in the process.

CBT teaches us that everyone gets strange or unsettling thoughts from time to time. The difference is in the reaction⁷. Someone without OCD might think, “That was weird,” and move on. But with OCD, the thought feels dangerous, so you try to neutralize it, and in doing so, you accidentally teach your brain that the thought must be important. The more you fight it, the more it sticks around. Healing starts when you stop trying to give the thought more meaning than it deserves. Instead of asking, “Why did I think that?” try saying, “That’s an intrusive thought. It doesn’t need a response.”

Reflection Questions:

What thought have you been trying to suppress?

What might it feel like to let God, rather than your thoughts, define who you are?

Action Step:

Write this truth somewhere you’ll see it today:

“This is just a thought. I am not what I fear. I am who God says I am.”

⁷ Whittal, M. L., Thordarson, D. S., & McLean, P. D. (2005). Treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder: Cognitive behavior therapy vs. exposure and response prevention. *Behaviour research and therapy*, 43(12), 1559-1576.