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## INTRODUCTION

### Spiritual Breakthrough Defined

“Spiritual breakthrough” and “dramatic spiritual growth” may be new terms to you. Perhaps you’ve never heard these phrases before, but you probably know you need to make some difficult changes, perhaps many of them. If this describes your situation, you are not alone. I find this to be true for many believers who are seeking spiritual growth. Think about the last time you made a spiritual breakthrough or experienced a significant change. For many Christians, it has been far too long. These phrases are rarely used, probably because they so rarely occur. But that’s not how it has always been. The heroes of faith in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New Testament made lots of breakthroughs and experienced dramatic spiritual growth. Why, you may ask? Were they more gifted than we are? Did they have some spiritual resource not available to us today? Was it because they lived in more simple times? I don’t think any of these possible explanations are true. No, I believe it was because they had different expectations for their lives. All of the Biblical characters mentioned throughout this book achieve radical transformations, but none started out as heroes or apostles. Like us, they also had to learn to banish negative thoughts, control their emotions, and break free from enslavement to certain behaviors. This scenario describes what my life was like for several years and describes the lives of millions of Christians today. These believers, like my former self, have yet to embrace the reality that they, too, can make radical changes in *any* area of their life. You may attend church with one of these believers, or perhaps you live with one. Maybe you are one, yourself. I was certainly one of them. Working with believers from all walks of life has convinced me there are far too many Christians having breakdowns and too few experiencing breakthroughs.

But what exactly is a spiritual breakthrough? For the purposes of this book, a spiritual breakthrough is “*an obvious and observable change in controlling thoughts, feelings, or behaviors, resulting in dramatic spiritual growth.*” The bottom line is, when you make a spiritual breakthrough, it will be obvious. You will know it, and others will see it, too. Making *and* sustaining spiritual breakthroughs will transform you into a drastically different person. That is what the power of God can do if we *allow* it. Yes, you read that correctly; we must *allow* the most powerful force in the universe to work in our lives. We can stop the power of God simply by deciding not to change. I made the decision to hinder His power many times in the past, and perhaps you are making it right now. My prayer is that by picking up this book, you made the first step towards opening your heart and mind to the power of God and are ready to delve into His Scriptures.

The Apostle Paul was radically transformed and offers this commentary on his life prior to becoming a Christian:

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

Galatians 5:1

Before becoming a Christian, Paul *was* a slave to sin. This statement is true for all believers. Before becoming a Christian, there is no question that I was powerless over worldly thoughts, had difficulty controlling certain emotions, and was enslaved to sinful behaviors. Unfortunately, there were also times I lived an anemic Christian life. You, too, may be living one right now. How does this impotent life occur? Like the Hebrew slaves who were freed during the exodus, I brought the mind of a slave into a new and free life. My failures at living a victorious Christian life in the past occurred because the mind of a slave also accompanies a heart of fear. God wants those He frees today to be empowered to change in *every* area of our lives. God wants His children to understand that we no

longer need to be enslaved to the things that held us captive before becoming Christians. As His children, God wants us to embrace the idea that Jesus did not come just to free us from the consequences of sin but to make us more than conquerors over sin.

Thriving spiritually is now my goal rather than just surviving. I am at the stage in my life where I *really* want to grow spiritually. As I matured as a Christian, I became tired of giving into fear, settling for mediocrity, going through the motions, and being powerless over certain things in my life. Perhaps you are, too. I now understand that being transformed more into the likeness of Christ is *always* God's plan for us and comes as a result of making *and* sustaining multiple spiritual breakthroughs. In the past, I failed to make spiritual breakthroughs and experience dramatic spiritual growth because I lacked an understanding of God's vision for me and hope that I could change. Many believers today are in this same situation. Throughout this book, I will explain Biblical concepts in a simple manner and help you apply them to your life. Whatever your current spiritual condition, I can relate, and this book will help you achieve the spiritual growth you seek. This book was inspired by the men and women of the Bible who were radically transformed, my own spiritual breakthroughs, and hundreds of believers who have implemented these godly principles presented in God's instruction manual for His people. My prayer for you now is that you will open your heart to God's word, His vision for your life, and His power as you move forward on your journey of continual transformation into the likeness of Christ.