

# Neurospiritual

**The secret to overcoming an addiction is learning the secret to being content!**

**“...I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content . . . I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need”**

**(Philippians 4:11,12 ESV).**



**Understanding these laws is the secret to overcoming an addiction:**

**“The law of God according to the inward man”** (Romans 7:22).

**“The law of sin”** (Romans 7:22).

**“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”** (Romans 8:2).



1. In the English Standard version Bible, Philippians 4:11,12 says that Paul "learned the secret" of being content.

Explain how Paul would have "learned" this "secret."

When Paul was enjoying "plenty" and "abundance," he learned to remain humble and to continue to practice godly behaviors.

When he was suffering "hunger" and "need," he learned to remain longsuffering, as he continued to practice godly behaviors.

2. Explain the kind of "law" Paul is talking about in Romans 7:22.

It is like the Law of Gravity, which has powers (forces) that influence.

3. Explain "the law of God according to the inward man."

The "law of God" is how God created and designed the "inward man" (heart and mind) to function in the midst of good and evil forces.

4. Explain "the law of sin."

The "law of sin" includes evil, ungodly, carnal, and worldly influences in our mind that work to imprison us.

5. Explain the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

The "law of the Spirit" (Holy Spirit) helps us to overcome the "law of sin" through "Christ Jesus."

# The Secret to Overcoming Addictions Discovered in the Scriptures!

Like Matthew Fontaine Maury, we have discovered a great mystery within Scripture!



On a monument erected by the state of Virginia to his memory is found a plaque that reads as follows: "Matthew Fontaine Maury, Pathfinder of the Seas, the genius who first snatched from the oceans and atmosphere the secret of their laws. His inspiration, Holy Writ, Psalm 8:8.

Matthew Fontaine Maury discovered an oceanic mystery from Scripture: "The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas" (Psalm 8:8).

With confidence in the accuracy of the Bible, determined to discover the paths in the seas and the wind circuits, utilizing the charts and log books he had at his disposal, Maury began his search.

Maury did discover the great Gulf Current, 40 miles wide and 2,000 feet deep that comes out of the Gulf of Mexico into the Atlantic. Utilizing this information, the sailing ships of his day plied these currents and wind circuits, reducing by as much as three weeks, the time required to cross some oceans. (Evidence For The Bible)

**In neuroscience reports, we discovered a brain pathway that controls our desires. Scientists call it a dopamine pathway.**

**Neuroscience helps us visualize Scriptures about the brain and heart!**

**For 30 years, neuroscientists have been observing brain activity in real time!**

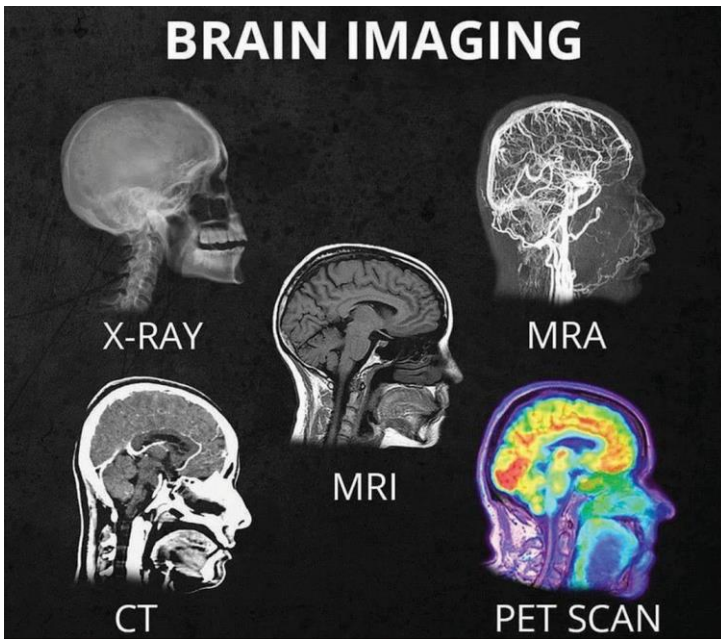


1. What did Matthew Fontaine Maury discover and how did he discover it?

Maury discovered the Great Gulf Current by reading about "paths of the sea" in Psalm 8:8.

2. How does neuroscience (brain science) help us learn God's Word?

Neuroscience helps us visualize the Scriptures.



During the 1980s and 1990s, scientists made dramatic strides in our ability to detect the brain's activity. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), positron emission tomography (PET), single photon emission computed tomography

(SPECT), & magnetoencephalography (MEG), are relatively recent inventions that have enabled us to map the brain's electrical activity, and we are actually able to watch the brain think in real time. Neuroscientists have estimated that over 90% of what we know about the brain, we have learned in the last 30 years. Perhaps even more startling, is that much of what they thought they knew about the brain turned out to be false.

**At Project Rescue we use neuroscience reports to illustrate Scriptures about the heart and mind.**



**This workbook will focus on the region of the brain that scientists call the dopamine pathway and reward circuit. Within this pathway, addictions begin and grow. Therefore, understanding the dopamine pathway holds the answer to overcoming addictions!**



1. Why did neuroscience make great progress studying the brain in the 1980s and 1990s?

**MRI type imaging devices enabled brain scientists to observe deep brain activity in real time.**

2. How is Project Rescue using neuroscience reports?

**We use brain science reports to illustrate the Scriptures about the heart and mind.**



# How your dopamine Pathway works



So, let's say you're hungry. Dopamine will start rising. Then you think about a burger, and it rises more.

It rises even more when you smell and hear the burger sizzling. Dopamine peaks right about your first bite. Then you take some more bites, and it starts to drop off. Finally, it drops back down to normal levels, and you're full. Free Medical Education (adapted)

Changing this illustration from a hamburger to a pornographic picture, an alcoholic drink or a drug helps us understand how our dopamine pathway works.

**Romans 7:22,23 describes a war in your dopamine pathway:** “For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”

**Like the forces involved in the law of gravity, our mind (dopamine pathway) has two opposing forces fighting each other: “the law of sin” versus “the law of God according to the inward man.”**



1. How does dopamine work when you are hungry and you think about a burger?

Your dopamine rises when you are hungry. It rises more when you think about a burger. It rises even more when you smell and hear the burger sizzling.

Dopamine peaks right before your first bite. It starts to drop when you take more bites. Then it drops to normal levels when your full.

2. How would the above hamburger illustration apply to drugs, alcohol, pornography?

The dopamine levels rise the same way, but much more intensely.

3. What are the 2 forces and influences warring in our minds?

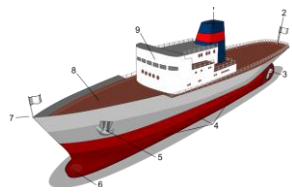
"The law of God according to the inward man" versus "The law of sin."

4. How does the word "law" in Romans 7:22,23 compare to the Law of Gravity?

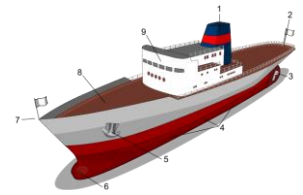
The word "law" here involves force and influence.



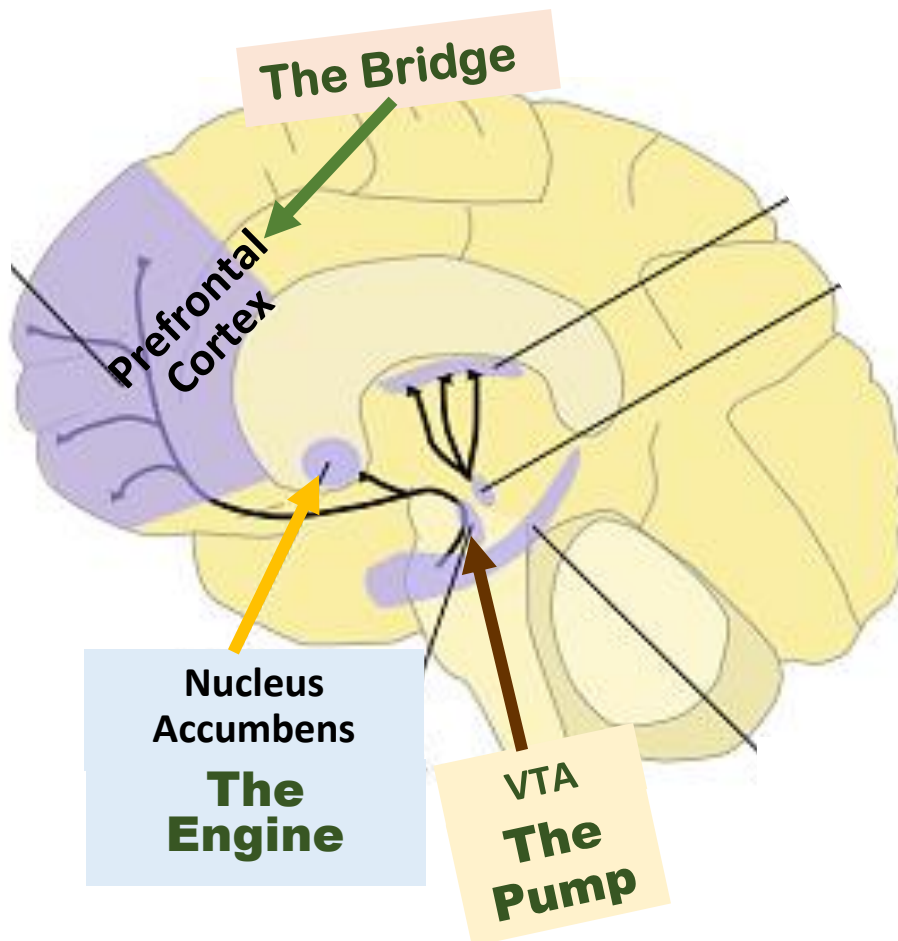
# Visualize what is happening in your brain when you are being tempted!



Think of your reward (dopamine) pathway as a ship having a fuel pump, engine and bridge (main deck).



Your dopamine pathway begins at the ventral tegmental area (VTA). It functions like a ship's fuel pump. When you see something you would like to have, do or accomplish, it manufactures the dopamine and sends the dopamine signal to the nucleus accumbens (the engine).



The nucleus accumbens functions like a ship's engine. When it receives the dopamine signal, it generates motivation and attention to help you accomplish the goals you choose.

Then, there is the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for judgment, decision-making, perspective-taking, and self-regulation. The prefrontal cortex, like the bridge of a ship, steers your behavior.

Neuroscientist Dr. Marc Lewis (adapted)



1. Explain how the brain's dopamine pathway regions are like a ship.

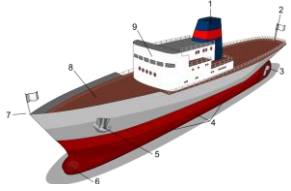
A person's desire for something, someone or somewhere activates their dopamine pathway.

The VTA is like a ship's fuel pump. When activated, it manufactures the brain chemical dopamine and sends it to the nucleus accumbens.

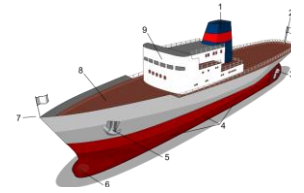
The nucleus accumbens is like a ship's engine. It generates the dopamine to increase motivation and narrows focus on the desire.

The prefrontal cortex is like the main deck of the ship that steers the behavior toward self- control and regulation.

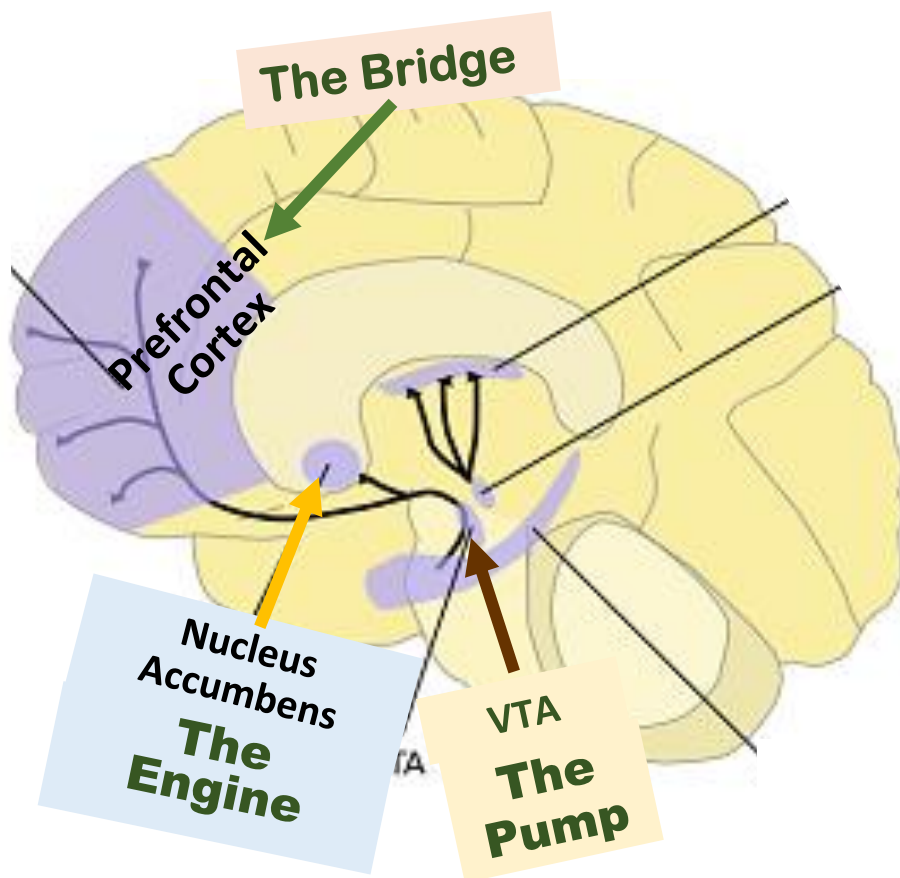
# To overcome an addiction you need to understand where the devil attacks your desires, and where the Holy Spirit helps your self-control!



Think of your reward (dopamine) pathway as a ship having a fuel pump, engine and bridge (main deck).



When we are tempted with ungodly pleasures, the dopamine pathway is activated. Dopamine is manufactured in the VTA and sent up to the nucleus accumbens. This makes it much harder to resist the sinful pleasure.



When the nucleus accumbens generates our motivation and attention on the pleasure, we lose sight of the consequences.

Communication with the prefrontal cortex becomes weaker every minute the dopamine is flooding our reward circuit. At this point the prefrontal cortex needs the Holy Spirit's help with the "fruit of the Spirit" called "self-control."



How does the Holy Spirit help us when our dopamine pathway is activated by ungodly desires?

When the nucleus accumbens is activated to generate motivation and sharpen focus on an ungodly desire, the prefrontal cortex loses its influence to resist and display self control.

This is when the Holy Spirit and the Scripture work together to strengthen the prefrontal cortex and to weaken the ungodly influence.

# Paul learned the secret to being content:

He wrote, "...I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content . . . I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need" (Philippians 4:11,12 ESV).

## Paul wants you to "understand" his "knowledge in the mystery of Christ"

"...He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) . . . that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery..." (Ephesians 3:2-9).

Understanding how the Holy Spirit helps your dopamine pathway is the secret to being content.

Being content is how you overcome your addictions!

God challenges your dopamine (desire) pathway with a choice.



and be not drunk with wine which leads to debauchery

**but be filled with the Spirit**

Ephesians 5:18

Ephesians 5:18

knowing-Jesus.com



## 1. How did Paul become content?

He learned to be content when things were going great and when things were terrible (Philippians 4:11,12).

## 2. Why did Paul write to the Ephesians (Ephesians 3:2-9)

That they might "understand" Paul's "knowledge in the mystery" and "see" "the fellowship of the mystery."

## 3. What is the Holy Spirit's role in the secret to overcoming an addiction?

Learning to be content is a fruit of the Spirit. Being content is the key to overcoming addiction.

## 4. Which Scripture challenges your dopamine pathway?

Ephesians 5:18 says "Do not be filled with wine" "But be filled with the Spirit"



# The secret to overcoming an addiction is knowing how the Holy Spirit helps us!



“...Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit’” (Acts 19:2).

**Sadly, many today are missing out on the Holy Spirit’s help!**

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- the Spirit of truth...” (John 14:16,17).

**The Helper is still helping!!**



“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

**“The gift of the Spirit” is available today to be received!**





1. When Paul visited the Ephesians, whose help were they missing out on?

The Holy Spirit's help (Acts 19:2).

2. In John 14:16,17, what did Jesus promise the apostles?

That the Father would send another Helper (the Holy Spirit) to abide with them.

3. In John 14:16,17, what is the phrase "another helper" referring to?

That the Holy Spirit would provide the same kind of help Jesus was providing to the apostles.

4. What does a person receive when he/she is baptized?

Forgiveness of sins

The gift of the Holy Spirit

Your brain has 86 Billion Neurons. Our study is limited to the dopamine chemical messages and the neurons that carry out neuroplasticity (learning new skills).



An easy way to think of how neurons send and receive signals, is to imagine baseball players throwing a baseball around the field.

Each player represents a neuron.

The baseball represents a dopamine message as it is sent from one neuron to another.



Axon

One end of the neuron (dendrite) receives a chemical message from another neuron (axon).

That dendrite then sends an electrical signal to its opposite end (axon).

Then the axon sends a chemical signal to another neuron (dendrite).

This happens at high speed as a group of numerous neurons work together.



Dendrite

Among many other tasks, the neurons work together to activate your dopamine pathway and to perform neuroplasticity, as new skills are learned and perfected.



1. ur brain has \_\_\_\_ Billion Neurons. Our study is limited to the \_\_\_\_\_ chemical messages and the neurons that carry out \_\_\_\_\_ (learning new skills).

86 dopamine neuroplasticity

2. An easy way to think of how neurons send and \_\_\_\_\_ signals, is to imagine baseball players \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ around the field.

receive throwing baseball

3. Each player represents a \_\_\_\_\_.

neuron

4. The baseball \_\_\_\_\_ a dopamine message as it is \_\_\_\_\_ from one \_\_\_\_\_ to another.

represents sent neuron

5. One end of the neuron ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) receives a chemical message from another neuron ( \_\_\_\_\_ ).

dendrite axon

6. That dendrite then sends an \_\_\_\_\_ signal to its opposite end (axon).

Electrical

7. Then the axon sends a \_\_\_\_\_ signal to another neuron (dendrite).

chemical

This happens at high speed as a group of numerous \_\_\_\_\_ work together.

neurons

8. Among many other tasks, the \_\_\_\_\_ work together to \_\_\_\_\_ your dopamine pathway and to perform neuroplasticity, as new skills are \_\_\_\_\_ and perfected.

neurons activate learned



# Numerous neurons work together in groups to perform spiritual tasks like these!



“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:5-8



**Axon**

“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened . . . who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ . . . put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:17-24



**Dendrite**

# The secret to overcoming an addiction is to realize how urgently your brain needs the God's Words!



Andy climbed to the top of Mount Everest with a group of friends and a guide.

When it was time to head back down, Andy asked the guide if he could stay there by himself for 5 minutes.

The guide said okay, then reminded Andy to stop at the oxygen shed halfway down to hook up to a new oxygen canister.

When the group reached the camp, the guide called Andy.

Andy was screaming into the radio that the canisters were all empty. He stayed up at the top too long and his oxygen ran out and he was delirious from the lack of oxygen in his brain. The leader told Andy that all the canisters were full when they stopped at the shed earlier. Well, Andy was holding in his hand what his brain needed. However, because what was in his hand was not in his brain, he did not understand.

Likewise, there are many who enter our care, who do not have God's Word in their heart, **"...who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."**

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12



At Project Rescue we place the Bible in their hand and study with them, but we can only try to convince them to receive it into their hearts!





1. What kept Andy, the Mount Everest climber from understanding that he was holding in his hand what his mind needed?

Because his mind lacked oxygen, Andy didn't realize that his mind needed the oxygen he was holding.

2. Using 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, explain how Andy's mount Everest crisis compares to many today.

Because their mind lacked Scripture, they did not realize their mind needed the Scriptures to function properly.

4. In 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, why were the people perishing?

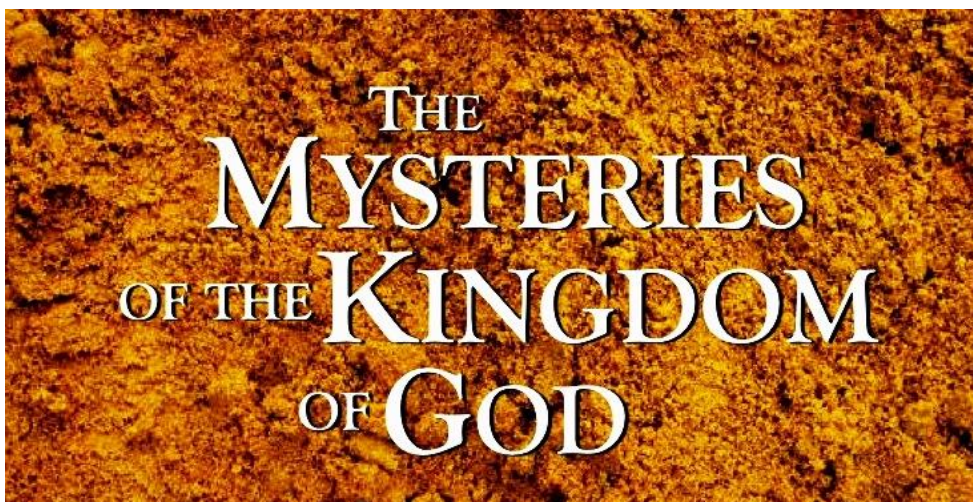
"Because they did not receive the love of the truth" "but had pleasure in unrighteous"

**The secret to overcoming an addiction is to recognize what can hinder you from understanding the Scriptures!**

The disciples asked Jesus why he spoke to the crowd in parables. Jesus answered, **"Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (Matthew 13:11).**

A mystery is something that needs to be figured out.

A parable has a spiritual meaning that needs to be solved.



In Matthew 13:15 Jesus explained why so many were not understanding His message:

**"the hearts of this people have become dull"**

**"their ears are hard of hearing"**

**"their eyes they have closed"**

Then Jesus concludes: **"Lest they should understand with their hearts and I should heal them."**



1. Regarding Matthew 13:11, why did Jesus say he taught in parables?

Because it was only given to the believers "to know the mysteries of the kingdom."

2. Regarding Matthew 13:15, why did people fail to understand Jesus' teaching?

Their hearts became "dull" (hardened)

Their ears were hard of hearing

Their eyes they had closed

Whoever  
has ears  
to hear ...



Let him hear!

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

In Matthew 13:3-9 Jesus tells a parable of a farmer who is scattering seed on the ground. However, the wayside, stony and thorny ground soil conditions prevented life and growth of the seed.

Then in Matthew 13:18-23 Jesus gives the spiritual meaning of the parable:

The seed is the Word of God and the ground is the heart.

The wayside, stony and thorny ground (hearts) were not suitable to support the life and growth of the Seed (God's Word).

Only the good ground (a willing heart) enabled the Seed (God's Word) to sprout life and grow.

## BLINDED MINDS OF UNBELIEVERS



**“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”**

(2 Corinthians 4:3,4).



1. Regarding Matthew 13:18-23, describe the 4 different heart conditions:

The hearts of those by the wayside were too hard to receive the Word (seed).

The hearts of those on the stony ground received the word with joy, but trials distract them from studying the Word and they die spiritually.

The hearts of those among the thorns, receive the Word, but the cares, riches and pleasures of this life "choke" (distract) them from the Word, and they die spiritually.

The hearts of those on the good ground receive the Word and continue to be fruitful in the Word, therefore they live on spiritually.

2. Regarding 2 Corinthians 4:3,4, how does "the god of this age" (the devil) blind the minds of people from understanding the Gospel?

The devil uses the things of the world to distract people from receiving the Word.

**The secret to overcoming an addiction is to make this prayer your prayer:**

**“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height-- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God”**

**(Ephesians 3:14-19).**





1. Regarding Ephesians 3: 14-19, what was Paul's prayer for us?

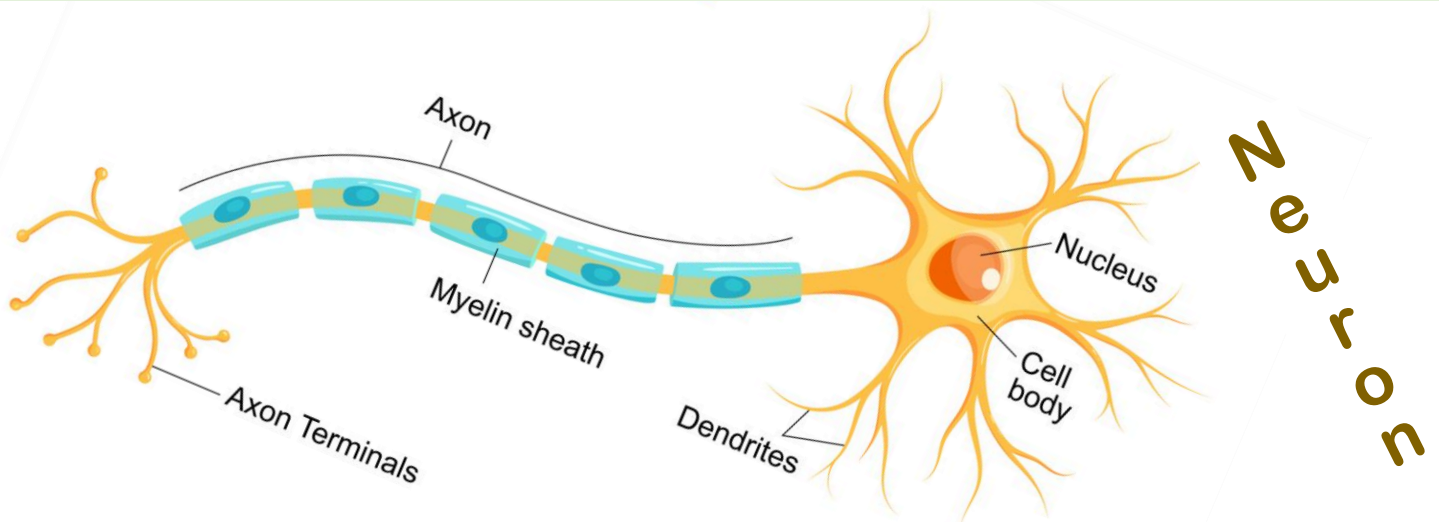
That our hearts ("inner man") would be "strengthened," and "able to comprehend," "to know the love of Christ," and "to be filled with all the fulness of God."



**Neuron  
communication is  
like people  
communicating with  
each other.**

**We use our mouths to speak and our ears to receive those messages. Our voices usually convey the message between one person's mouth and another person's ears. Dr. Tiffany Rogers**

Brain scientists agree that there are 16 billion neurons in the prefrontal cortex and 450,000 neurons in the dopamine pathway. Scientists set the total number of neurons in the brain at 86 billion.



**Neurons send electrical signals from one end of the neuron to the other. They send chemical messages from one neuron to another.**



1. Neuron communication is like \_\_\_\_\_ communicating with each other.

people

2. We use our \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and our \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ those messages. Our \_\_\_\_\_ usually convey the \_\_\_\_\_ between one person's mouth and another person's ears.

mouths speak ears receive voices message

3. Brain scientists agree that there are \_\_\_\_\_ billion neurons in the prefrontal cortex and \_\_\_\_\_ neurons in the dopamine pathway. Scientists set the total number of neurons in the brain at \_\_\_\_\_ billion.

16 450,000 86

4. Neurons send \_\_\_\_\_ signals from one end of the neuron to the other. They send messages from one neuron to another.

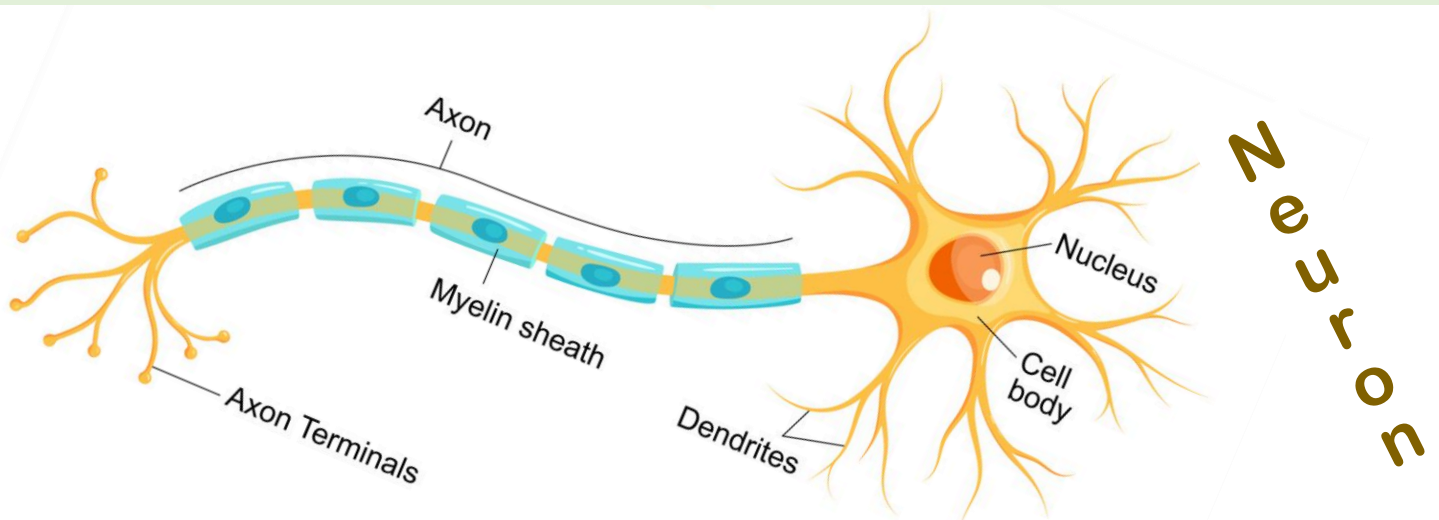
electrical chemical



**A group of numerous neurons will work together to enable you to perform the “works of the flesh” or grow “fruit of the Spirit.”**

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...” (Galatians 5:19-21).

“...The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...” (Galatians 5:22,23).





1. A group of numerous \_\_\_\_\_ will work together to enable you to \_\_\_\_\_ the “works of the flesh” or \_\_\_\_\_ “fruit of the Spirit.”

neurons   perform   grow

“Now the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, \_\_\_\_\_ ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, \_\_\_\_\_, revelries, and the like...” (Galatians 5:19-21).

works   flesh   selfish   drunkenness

Name three of the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22,23 that you struggle with?