

BASIC TRAINING FOR  
**SPIRITUAL**  
INTELLIGENCE

DEVELOP THE ART *of*  
THINKING LIKE GOD

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# Welcome to the Beginning of Spiritual Intelligence

You are about to embark on an incredible journey, an exploration that will have a profound impact on your life and the lives of those around you, as well as on future generations to come. Do you believe it?

I hope so, because this manual is written for you—a *His-story* maker disguised as an ordinary human who is living a normal life, but who is actually God’s ambassador of heaven. You are someone who thinks like God. You access through the Holy Spirit the deeper dimensions of God’s mind. You walk in power and know how to love the *hell* out of people.

If you don’t identify with how I just described you, then I am here to tell you that you are on the precipice of discovering something wildly significant not only to your identity in God, but to how you approach the world. I say that with confidence, because I know that the more you experience your God-given spiritual capacity for brilliance—thinking beyond the confines of time and space, and thinking beyond the limits of human reasoning—the more profound an effect you will have in your sphere of influence.

My goal and prayer for you is that you greatly develop and increase your capacity for spiritual intelligence—or SQ—as you work through this manual and read my book *Spiritual Intelligence: The Art of Thinking Like God* (Chosen, 2020). I have based each module in this manual on a few chapters of the book, as noted in the module introductions. You will find it very helpful to have a copy of the book itself in hand as you work through this manual, so you can read the indicated chapters for more

information. You will also find a *Spiritual Intelligence Quotient (SQ) Assessment* included in the book, which you might find hugely revealing to take as you begin this process of learning about and developing your spiritual intelligence.

May God hide you everywhere, from the palaces of royalty to the streets of obscurity, and may you transform everything your heart has the opportunity to touch.

Let the journey begin!

Much Grace,  
Kris Vallotton

## How to Approach This Study

This manual is divided into five modules. Each module is designed to engage your IQ (cognitive intelligence) and EQ (emotional intelligence), but also to go beyond both of these and develop your capacity for SQ (spiritual intelligence). Each lesson in the modules has been divided into three sections: “Access God’s Thoughts and Ideas,” “Renew Your Mind” and “Build New Neural Pathways.” Here is a little bit about each section and what you will accomplish as you work through it.

### “Access God’s Thoughts and Ideas”

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This section starts off each lesson with a biblical approach that will help you gain insight into the mind of Christ.

Throughout this section you will also find *Cognitive Connections*, which are questions designed to engage the mindsets you presently hold and allow you the opportunity to apply the new concepts you are learning.

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### “Renew Your Mind”

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This section is the reflective portion of each lesson and will help you take what you are learning a step further. It will help you identify any thinking that is prohibiting your spiritual growth, and it will position you to partner with the Holy Spirit for healing, renewed vision and restored hope.

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### “Build New Neural Pathways”

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This section contains practical activations that will help you build new neural pathways to spiritual intelligence.

You will partner with the Holy Spirit to step outside the boundaries of what is comfortable and access the mind of Christ. As you develop your SQ and learn how to apply it, you will begin to walk as God’s “solutionary”—someone who helps bring His solutions to this world’s challenges.

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Here are some recommendations for maximizing your use of this manual as you develop the art of thinking like God:

- Resist the temptation to record logical answers as you work through the exercises in this manual. Instead,

intentionally allow the Holy Spirit to build and increase your capacity for spiritual intelligence.

- Go at your own pace, but be consistent. It has been proven that when you practice specific behaviors consecutively, new and healthy neural pathways begin to form in your brain. This increases your capacity for spiritual intelligence and brings to light God's life-transforming thoughts and ideas.
- Use the tools provided—the *New Neural Pathfinder* and the *Engagement Tool*—which I will tell you more about in a moment and which you will find in the pages ahead. Also use the prompts and questions in the *Cognitive Connections*, reflections and activations throughout each section. I have specifically designed all these features with you in mind, and they are directly connected to developing your spiritual intelligence.

After you complete each module, the *Engagement Tool* will help you organize the new spiritual insights you have discovered within the lessons and will prompt you to create a plan of action. I designed this tool to help you implement your newfound spiritual intelligence in your daily life. You will find a separate *Engagement Tool* included for you at the conclusion of every module.

## The New Neural Pathfinder Tool

Science has revealed that new neural pathways form in the brain when we repeat the same actions consecutively over time. These neural pathways, which we will learn more about in the lessons ahead, significantly impact our mental, physical and spiritual health. My goal throughout this study is to help you develop new neural pathways that will lead you directly to employing a greater level of spiritual intelligence in your life and daily activities. This *New Neural Pathfinder* tool is designed to give you a visual on how you are progressing toward that goal.

As you engage proactively in developing and using your SQ, use this tracking tool each time you complete any of the listed actions. Color in the box that corresponds to the action you've engaged in on any given day that you choose to keep track. Blank lines are provided so that in addition to the actions I have already listed, you can write in any other spiritually specific action that you would like to start implementing and tracking in your daily life.

Do not feel bound, however, to using this tool every day (although that would be ideal at the start). The numbers correspond to individual days, but not necessarily to days of the month, so feel free to go at your own pace! I do encourage you to use this tool consistently over a period of time—for example, while you are involved in this study. You can even do more than one *Pathfinder* sheet, and extras are provided for you at the back of this manual. This will help give you visual data on the SQ work you are doing, which often goes unseen because it is a work of the heart and mind.

The more areas you fill in on the *Pathfinder* as you go along, the more you will realize how far you are progressing in spiritual intelligence. If you fill in more than one sheet and each subsequent sheet has more sections colored in and more new things you are tracking, then you are making great progress! Seeing your SQ level expand on paper, in “living” color in your daily life, will encourage you as you grow in the art of thinking like God.

# New Neural Pathfinder

a spiritual intelligence tracking tool

The form is a circular tracking tool divided into 31 numbered segments (1-31) around the perimeter. It features four concentric rings for recording activities. The outermost ring is labeled with the numbers 1 through 31. The inner rings are defined by horizontal lines extending from the center. The following activities are listed on the left side, with lines pointing to the corresponding rings:

- Read the Bible
- Meditate on God's Word
- Exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Record what God says to you

There are also several unlabeled horizontal lines extending from the center towards the right side of the chart, corresponding to the inner rings.

# Module 1

## The Foundation of SQ

Like the famous astronaut Neil Armstrong, the first man ever to step foot on the moon, or like Jacques Cousteau, the great undersea explorer who searched the depths of the ocean, we are embarking on a journey to uncover the mysteries of the divine mind. One of the most famous ancient explorers in this regard was the great first-century apostle Paul. Although he was not the first human ever to experience the ability to think transcendentally, he was one of the first ever to articulate his experience with a level of understanding that inspired many other explorers to join the journey.

Many people understand the concepts of IQ and EQ, and even AI (artificial intelligence), and realize that certain steps can be taken to heighten and strengthen these areas. Few people, however, have given much thought to the area of SQ. In fact, most are inexperienced in it. But if that includes you, that spiritual inexperience presents you with a fantastic opportunity to grow through this study! The invitation set before you today is to explore the nature of this whole new world of SQ with God, by way of the Holy Spirit.

Are you ready to forge ahead into the uncharted terrain of your spiritual mind? Before we begin this journey together, let's take a moment to do a preliminary self-check:

Based on your current perceptions, what do you think would be the single best measurable indicator that you are gaining spiritual intelligence?

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Currently speaking, name any roadblock(s) you feel might prevent you from renewing the spirit of your mind.

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Jesus says in John 14:26–28 that He will give us His peace and that the Father will also send us the Holy Spirit as our Counselor, who will guide us and teach us all things. Whatever roadblock(s) you listed, trust that the Holy Spirit is a wise navigator and that no perceived obstacle can stand in His way.

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\*For additional insights into module 1, read chapters 1–3 of my book *Spiritual Intelligence: The Art of Thinking Like God* (Chosen, 2020).

## Module 1 | Lesson 1—Thinking Tri-Dimensionally

The apostle Paul inspired the expedition that you are about to set out on when he exhorted us as believers to “be renewed in the *spirit of your mind*” (Ephesians 4:23, emphasis added). On the surface, this seems like a simple exhortation to learn to think well, but on deeper examination, you will notice that Paul instructs us to renew not the lower dimensions of thinking, represented in modern times by IQ and/or EQ, but the “spirit of your mind.” He was intentionally instructing us to give attention to a *specific* dimension of thinking—SQ. Let’s jump in and glean what we can from the apostle Paul’s insights about thinking tri-dimensionally.

### Access God’s Thoughts and Ideas

In 1 Corinthians 2:1–5, writing to a Greek church in the city of Corinth, Paul seeks to contrast the difference between the natural dimensions of wisdom and the divine wisdom available exclusively to believers:

When I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Underline in this passage what Paul experienced in the flesh. Circle what he experienced as he relied solely on the Holy Spirit’s wisdom.

Paul makes it clear that he proactively restricted himself from accessing the “wisdom of man” so that he could demonstrate the superior benefits of God’s divine power and wisdom. As I mentioned in chapter 1 of my book *Spiritual Intelligence*, at the age of thirteen and over the course of five years, Paul (then Saul)

mastered Jewish history, the psalms and the works of the prophets, and he also learned to dissect the Scriptures. As a scholar, he then went on to become a lawyer and was likely on the fast track to becoming a member of the Jewish Supreme Court of 71 men who ruled over Jewish life and religion. With that context in mind, it is an incredible demonstration of faith when Paul informs the Corinthians that he has used restraint in accessing his own intelligence or the wisdom of man, and is resting solely on the wisdom of God, which he describes as “superior.” This is also a sincere act of devotion to his call to serve God’s people with God’s ways and wisdom.

In 1 Corinthians 2:6–16, Paul goes on to instruct the Corinthians about how they, too, can think like God by accessing the mind of Christ:

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written,

“Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard,  
And which have not entered the heart of man,  
All that God has prepared for those who love Him.”

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For

who has known the mind of the LORD, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Notice how Paul begins his insights with the fact that we have access to a dimension of wisdom that is otherworldly and inaccessible to those who don't know God. Paul makes three observations about this divine wisdom:

1. ***It's a mystery***, which is the Greek word *mysterion*, meaning “secret doctrine.” In fact, Paul goes on to tell the Corinthians, “Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and *stewards* of the *mysteries* of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1, emphasis added).
2. ***It's hidden from unbelievers, but available for believers***. King Solomon put it this way: “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter” (Proverbs 25:2).
3. ***It displays our glory***. In the days of Solomon, God's infinite wisdom was put on display for the Queen of Sheba, leaving her stunned and breathless. Likewise, the wisdom of God's Holy Spirit is to be demonstrated through us, His people, to the world around us. This divine demonstration not only brings glory to God; it also glorifies His people.

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\*For additional insights, read the “Mind—Your Business” section in chapter 1 of my *Spiritual Intelligence* book. Also note that the definitions I provide of Greek and Hebrew words throughout this manual are taken from *Strong's Concordance*, which is readily available at various Bible-study sites online.

#### COGNITIVE CONNECTION

John 17:22 says, “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one.” Highlight or circle the words *glory* and *one* in this verse, and then read it again.

Focus for a moment on this profound statement of Jesus. Sink into the truth that you and Christ are one. Allow the Holy Spirit to give you insight into what your life can look like when you are living in union with God. Record your thoughts in this anchor moment, as it will be foundational throughout this study:

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It is important to understand that spiritual intelligence is not just accessing your own spirit or brain. Instead, it is connecting with God's Spirit, who is eternal, has all knowledge and wisdom, and knows the future. The Spirit has unfathomable experience with humankind and knows the heart of every person on the planet.

**COGNITIVE CONNECTION**

The brightest minds in the world today are still essentially relegated to IQ and EQ, virtually ignoring the deeper dimensions of SQ—our spiritual capacity for brilliance. Should you choose to disregard the infinite nature of your redeemed spirit-man through Christ, you will never think tri-dimensionally, using your IQ, EQ and SQ as God intended.

Having access to the mind of Christ gives you and me the ability to bring heaven’s solutions to our daily lives, as well as to the global problems that face humanity. List one global challenge that you would like to gain spiritual intelligence about so you can help bring heaven’s solutions to it.

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Describe how this problem might be demonically influenced.

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How would the world be different if this situation were resolved?

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**Renew Your Mind**

You have just learned that as a believer, you have access to the mind of Christ. This means you are a steward of the intellectual properties of God that the Holy Spirit gives you access to. In what way do you see this reality affecting the following seven basic areas of your life?

*Family relationships:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Marriage relationship:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Financial situation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Personal development:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Spiritual development:* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Professional life:* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Social life:* \_\_\_\_\_

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Where in your life do you see that the reality of SQ in operation would have the greatest immediate impact?

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In what specific ways do you believe accessing God's wisdom will impact the overall master plan of your life? Why?

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## Module 1 | Lesson 2—Renew the Spirit of Your Mind

The apostle Paul wrote, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). The critical question here is, *How* do we renew our minds so that we live in our divine advantage? We will be answering this over the next few lessons, but first let’s gain some understanding about how our biological mind processes information.

### Access God’s Thoughts and Ideas

Are you ready for a crash course in neuroscience? I want to introduce you to three ways our brain processes information: *the principle of first mention*, *neural pathways* and *drawing conclusions while conserving energy*. Let’s look at each of these a little more closely.

1. ***The principle of first mention:*** The first time you hear information about any subject, it becomes the *way* in which you view that topic from that point on. In other words, the information you receive first about something creates the lens by which you view that subject. Everything you hear or experience after the first exposure to that topic will be processed through the information you received first. The first-mention info in your brain creates a *truth lens* by which you measure and/or evaluate all other proceeding information concerning that theme. The principle of first mention creates a number of concerns, the primary concern being the unhealthy dynamic that takes place when first-mention info is wrong or inaccurate.
2. ***Neural pathways:*** Another fact I want to share with you comes from Dr. Caroline Leaf, a neuroscientist and the author of *Who Switched Off My Brain?* (Thomas Nelson, 2009). I learned from Dr. Leaf that our thoughts travel on brain highways called *neural pathways*, and that the more

**COGNITIVE CONNECTION**

Can you recall any belief or perception that the principle of first mention may have formed in you? Specifically, did you adopt any belief system because of it that might produce negative behavior that “feels right,” but that you innately know is unfruitful?

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**COGNITIVE CONNECTION**

Metaphorically speaking, visualize neural pathways being like the result when a hot marble is dropped through a block of cheese. The wider the highway becomes, the easier it is to repeat the same thought. You can see from my simple explanation how easy it is to create a superhighway of constructive or destructive mindsets.

List one negative thought that seems to sabotage your progress repeatedly. What activity or circumstance triggers this repeated thought process in you? How has it sabotaged your success or growth in the past? What positive and/or scriptural thought can you practice replacing it with consistently?

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we repeatedly have the same thought (positive or negative), the wider the physical highways or pathways for that thought to travel on become in our brain.

**3. Drawing conclusions while conserving energy:**

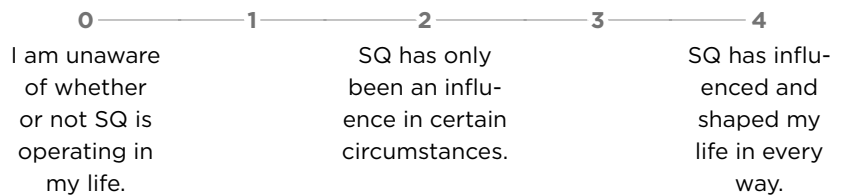
One more fascinating nugget about how our brain processes information comes from Donald Miller, an American author and speaker and the CEO of StoryBrand. According to Miller’s research, when our brains draw a conclusion about something, they use the least amount of energy to get to that conclusion. In other words, it is challenging to direct our minds to go a different route than what they are accustomed to.

Now that you have had a crash course in neuroscience, you see why it can be difficult to change our thought patterns. This is why it is vital for us to understand why Jesus gave us access to His thoughts by way of the Holy Spirit. The mind of Christ gives us access to divine wisdom, which is the ultimate spiritual intelligence. SQ therefore transforms our lives when we apply it.

**Renew Your Mind**

You have just learned about three neuroscientific facts that can make it difficult to change your mind. Yet the Holy Spirit has given you access to His mind, and He has also given you the ability to grow in your capacity for SQ—spiritual intelligence. On a scale of 0–4, how frequently has SQ influenced and shaped your life?

**Perception Ruler**



Regardless of how you scored yourself, what opportunities do you see in your life to grow in spiritual intelligence with God?

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**Build New Neural Pathways**

The Holy Spirit is the Genius of geniuses, the Scientist of scientists, the Doctor of doctors, the Engineer of engineers . . . you get the idea. He is the real definition of true brilliance.

Take a moment to ask the Holy Spirit to engage the divine imagination of God that He can give you access to. Ask Him to reveal the plans He has to prosper your life (see Jeremiah 29:11). You may get images, impressions, a knowing. . . .

Whatever way God communicates with you, remember that this is an opportunity to lean into God’s understanding of your life, not rely on your biological brain’s understanding of what you believe you can accomplish. Write here what He reveals to you:

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**COGNITIVE CONNECTION**

Think about the last time you were driving in your car. Did you take the shortest route to get from point A to point B? I propose that you did not take the shortest route, because the shortest route is actually as the crow flies. You probably followed the route your GPS suggested instead. To clarify Donald Miller’s point about drawing conclusions and conserving energy, our minds will always take the quickest route, like a crow that flies the shortest, quickest route from one point to another. This is such a powerful image of *how* we think and why it can be difficult to change our minds about life.

