These brains of ours…can they change, adapt, and improve all through life?

In this session we are going to see how your brain is designed for renewal, restoration, and repair.

Let’s begin by taking a look at a Super Storm we all vividly remember. Katrina. Can we ever forget that name?

Katrina was the name of the second strongest hurricane in U.S. history. On August 23, 2005, it slammed into New Orleans, Louisiana, and several other states with winds up to 174 mph.

The storm surge was 20 feet high; 80% of New Orleans was under water. It affected nearly 15 million people and nearly 2,000 were killed.

The damage to the infrastructure was estimated at $75 billion, earning Katrina the title of the costliest hurricane in U.S. history.
A storm-ravaged city like Katrina has at least two major challenges:
1. Damaged infrastructure such as communication and transportation systems.
2. Weakened defense systems to protect against danger.

When a storm hits, every sector of the city is affected. It is in need of comprehensive renewal, restoration, and repair.

Summarizing its condition (this and the next slide):

Such a city has lost its synchrony and vitality. Its broken communication and transportation systems shut down the city’s normal operations. With weakened defenses, the city is especially vulnerable to vandalism and violence.

Plans for development and growth are shelved as the city switches into survival mode. Have you ever had times when you’ve been in “survival mode?” I think we all have!
Your brain is capable of physical, mental, and emotional improvement and spiritual renewal. The great news is that you can move forward and continue—whether your brain has been hit by a storm of stress, depression, negativity or bad habits.

Even if you haven’t faced a disabling storm in life but simply want to improve your brain and body health, you have come to the right place!

There are three major areas that influence your brain:

**Genes:** You cannot change your gene structure: but their function and activity is dramatically influenced by your diet, lifestyle, exercise, and even the way you think.

**Environment:** Your internal environment is how you think. Your external environment is what surrounds you. You can build an internal and external environment that create a powerful brain advantage.

**Choice:** Every choice you make, and even how you think, affects your brain. Every day presents you with opportunities to make choices that will influence the health of your brain, and even how your genes function.

God often uses the things we can see to help us understand the things we cannot see.

Notice this vivid comparison of just such a city with mankind in his broken condition:

**Slide 9**

God often uses the things we can see to help us understand the things we cannot see.

Notice this vivid comparison of just such a city with mankind in his broken condition:

Read slide

**Slide 10**

What kind of challenges can hinder healthy brain function?

Yes, that broken city powerfully illustrates the broken brain—a brain that may have been broken down over time by:

Read slide

**Slide 11**

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Read slide

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**Slide 12**

Rebuilding a broken city requires a plan; so does rebuilding a broken brain.

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Slide 13
Dr. Norman Doidge, a psychiatrist and author of the book *The Brain that Changes Itself* has this to say about the changing nature of our brains:

**Read slide**

The brain is constantly reshaping itself according to what it learns. This is called “**plasticity**.”

Plasticity is the term neuroscientists use to describe the remarkable ability of the brain to adapt and change.

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Slide 14
Notice this statement by Dr. John Ratey, a neuropsychiatrist and author from Harvard University in his book, *User’s Guide to the Brain*:

**Read slide**

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Slide 15
How do you heal a broken brain?

There are at least five key areas to consider:

**Read slide**

Each is briefly summarized on the next 5 slides

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Slide 16
**Assessment:**

1. It is always important to work closely with your physician or healthcare provider.
2. Lifestyle changes may reduce or eliminate the need for certain medications over time.
3. Use medicine or medical procedures when needed.
Environment

The internal environment of how you think and the external environment you surround yourself with are critical for achieving and maintaining positive change.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle choices are the foundation of mental, physical, and spiritual strength.

Managing Stress

We all need practical strategies to tap into when confronting challenges and stress.

Connections

Your associations and interests have a profound shaping effect on your values and goals.

Knowing that God’s power and guidance are available gives courage and power for the journey.
Quiet time is great; but a relative lack of social ties is associated with depression and later-life cognitive decline, as well as with increased mortality. One study, which examined data from more than 309,000 people, found that lack of strong relationships increased the risk of premature death from all causes by 50%. This meant an effect on mortality risk roughly comparable to smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, and greater than obesity and physical inactivity. 


Social connections like these not only give us pleasure, they also influence our long-term health in ways every bit as powerful as adequate sleep, a good diet, and not smoking. Dozens of studies have shown that people who have satisfying relationships with family, friends, and their community are happier, have fewer health problems, and live longer.

Spiritual well-being is at the center of a healthy lifestyle.
Slide 25
A close relationship with God is not only linked to a healthier immune system and reduced risk for depression and addictions, it also has remarkable heart-health benefits:
Read slide

Slide 26
Read slide
God created you in His own image. Genesis 1:27
How?
He gave you the intellect to reason about your existence; the capacity to know him; the ability to experience His love and share it with others.

Slide 27
Read slide
God knows all about you.
He knows where you are and what you need.

Slide 28
Read slide
God keeps watch over you in every condition and situation of your life.
God cares about your welfare; He has a plan, and He wants you to walk in hope.

God promises to personally guide, strengthen, and sustain you.

You are in the heart of God continually.

God invites you to come to Him for the patience, perseverance, and power you need for your journey.

God promises to personally guide, strengthen, and sustain you.

God cares about your welfare; He has a plan, and He wants you to walk in hope.
“Your brain changes with your thoughts and emotions. Knowing that you are created by God and that He is personally watching over you, helps heal the broken brain.”

Dr. Doidge, in *The Brain That Changes Itself* states:

Isn’t it great that our brains respond to a healthy diet; exercise; social connections; and a relationship with God through His Word?

God has given you the **intellect** to reason about your existence; the **capacity** to know him; the **ability** to experience His love and share it with others. He invites you to come to Him and **experience** His power, **trust** in His promises, and **walk** in His plan.

Would you like to experience these wonderful changes in your life?

If so, raise your hand with me.