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How Do I Defeat My Worst Enemy? Me!

**Romans 7:24: (NASB) *Wretched man that I am!
Who will set me free from the body of this death?***



In many ways, we are daily in a fight for our lives. There are so many choices that present themselves to us each and every day, many of which can distract and derail us from what is most important. The biggest factor that determines whether we stay on track with life or go down some rabbit hole of distraction and disruption is simply - me. Yup, I am the decision maker - the gatekeeper of my own mind and body - and I alone have the final say as to what kind of victory or what kind of defeat I will experience. Wait a minute! As a Christian, shouldn't I be subject to the will of God through Christ? Absolutely! Then why am I saying that I am in control? It is simple! I decide how much influence the will of God exercises in my life at any given moment and that makes ME my worst enemy! Great! Now what do we do? We learn how to identify, fight and win the battle!

The seven points (they are actually chapter titles) in today's podcast come from a great little book titled, "Seven Choices for Success and Significance," by Nido R. Qubein. You can find the book at www.simpletruths.com.

1. Choose Transformational Patterns

Even though we may live with fear, do we want to change? Fear is a constant companion for most of us, which makes change harder and self-sabotage easier.

Self-Sabotage: I am too broken to have any real success.

The following is the third time that Jesus called Peter, and this time Peter left his life behind permanently: Luke 5:2-6,8,10-11: Jesus' invitation was too powerful to ignore, so Simon packed up his sinful self and followed him. When we are called, we come to the realization that we are sinful and need the merit of Jesus' sacrifice to make us acceptable to God. Where does humility fit in? Isn't it good to think lowly of ourselves? But humility can be taken too far to the point of sabotaging ourselves.

Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man -Jesus knew more about the sinfulness of Simon (later called Peter) than Simon knew himself. Simon was using his sinfulness as a cloak to protect himself from being exposed. His humility went overboard and initially prevented him from following Jesus. Humility has to be packaged correctly so it can help us run the race and not defeat us before we even start. We are not to take our own measurement of our self-worth to say, "I can't," using it as a crutch to not move forward.

Solution: See your transformation through the sacrifice of Jesus and the eyes of God - He sees what you are, He will seize what you are and see it through to His glory - if you let Him!

1 Corinthians 1:26-29: God's eyes are trained on different things than the eyes of men. Whose observations will you trust?

It is great to choose change in my life, but what if I just do not have the energy to make it happen? If we are honest with ourselves we must acknowledge that we are really broken and defective before God. Choosing to transform is a great beginning and must be followed up with actions that we, in our present broken state, can actually handle! This is not so easy!

2. Choose Energy Management Over Time Management

We all work differently and have different energy reserves. Let us focus on how we can live while we appreciate what *others* can do!

Self-Sabotage: I am simply not capable of doing THAT!

When we read of the efforts displayed in this next text, we can easily be discouraged to the point of self-defeat, because we cannot live up to such a standard: 2 Corinthians 11:18,22-29: Paul's background was, in the eyes of men, laudable. What an accomplished Jewish man! But my background is not as great. If God calls us because of our background, I am doomed! Is that why God calls us? This paralyzes us so we do not move forward.

Paul's persecutions and sufferings for Christ were breathtaking! Mine are not! If God calls us because of our persecutions and sufferings, I am doomed! Is that why God calls us?



Paul's heart and focus for Christ were laser-like! If God calls us because of our focus, I am doomed! Is that why God calls us? Who do you think you are, trying to be a footstep follower of Christ? We can SO easily give up and give in - unless we actually see what role we are being called to play!

Solution: I can, by the grace of God do THIS!

While we may not be able to do "THAT," we are very capable of doing "THIS:"

1 Corinthians 12:22-26: We all have different talents and abilities. Those who are not "out in front" are still special. There is equality in the body of Christ - a member having more honor or less honor does not matter. This can be a "rescuing idea" from self-sabotage. We are not called to be exactly like the Apostle Paul. We are called to follow Jesus in the way we *can* follow him.

God NEVER calls us to the impossible! He DOES call us to that which we, by His grace, can do. He knows you already! He will call you to what you can do and not what someone else did do or can do or will do. Even if we are "low-energy" people, we can still focus our energy on service.

Focusing the energy we have on those things that would transform us is a great place to start, but to leave self-sabotaging behavior behind we need to be far more specific. Next comes the *result* of focus and transformation: giving. As a Christian, there is no better way to express our genuine desire to be Christlike than to give!

3. Choose to Give

focus with sincerity on the needs of others.

Self-Sabotage: When I give, it is useless! I really have nothing of value to give! I am not talented, I am not energetic, I am not creative, I am not social, I am not a leader. Why even bother?

It is not even worth it. We have already decided the conclusion before we started.

Romans 7:21-23: Discouragement due to our weakness is SO easy to find.

Solution: God already knew what I have to give, and He called me BECAUSE of it!

Whatever is wrong with you, God knew before He called you. He sees in us the ability to stand, follow His will and the potential we have to do something great. Potential develops through difficult, harsh trials as we go through our experiences.

Mark 12:41-44: It did not matter that she did not have a lot - she gave what she could. This is one of the strongest points in dealing with our self-sabotage. God's accounting is based on who and what we are and what we can do with our circumstances. He measures abundance by the size of our heart and spiritual intentions - not the grandiosity of our gift!

If you are not talented, energetic, creative, social or a leader, it is okay, God will use whatever you are anyway? You do not have to be all those things? YES! My worst enemy is me, because I see my flaws and neglect to look at my potential. God sees my flaws through the eyes of my potential. He will guide us to experiences that will help us to get to that potential.

4. Choose to be Authentic

Who you are is not your past, but it is your present state of grace and forgiveness.

Self-Sabotage: I know the depths of my imperfect human nature - I cannot get away from it.

Romans 7:24-25

Solution: Place your love of God through Christ in the forefront of your heart, mind, soul and strength.

God's command to Israel had it right: Deuteronomy 6:4-9: Put the word and will of God in front of you wherever you go. We need spiritual sticky notes! Load your life up with reminders to bring you back to loving the Lord with your heart, mind, soul and strength.

It is deeply authentic to actively seek God in all of our ways, for it is HIM we serve. To deal with the depth of our imperfect nature, we need to focus on that above.



Focused energy, transformation giving and authenticity all bring us to a place of balance. When we are truly balanced we are able to wrestle the steering wheel of our lives away from our own personal saboteur (that would be me) and begin to drive our lives in accordance with God's will.

5. Choose to Live Life in Balance

This can be more difficult than it sounds, for it is really easy to choose a life that *looks* balanced with chaos under the surface rather than a life that really *is* balanced. Balance brings peace!

Self-Sabotage: *If I pretend to be balanced, I will look and feel good and that is all I need.*

Even though Israel had it right, some found a way to mess up the instructions by focusing on "looking the part": Deuteronomy 11:13,17-19: God told Israel several times His word needed to be kept in front of them at all times. Symbolically we need to have God's will and God's word constantly surrounding us.

The Pharisees took these (and other) Old Testament verses and expanded them to their detriment: Matthew 23:1-3,5-7: They blew the instructions out of proportion because they could look holier than others. These were empty actions. *Do not do according to their deeds* - Follow the Law, but do not do what the scribes and Pharisees actually DO. This was a powerful indictment of taking on the *look* of being balanced but being unbalanced on the inside. Jesus plainly called it out as hypocrisy.

The leaders did these actions out of personal pride, not to serve God better. What began as a way to remember God in all things became a way to forget God in all things.

We can do that by pretending to be something we are not. Do we hide under the cloak of outward appearance, only to later use it as proof of our unworthiness? This steps on the potential God sees in you.

Honesty - with yourself and with others - as how we look is not what we necessarily are. Realize God HONESTLY knows your frame and called you anyway!

God knows how broken you are and sees your potential.

Romans 12:2: Our transformation is, by God's grace and spirit, the renewing of our minds and opens the door to our ability to understand who we are and who we can become. That is part of what God wants us to understand.

Remember our theme Scripture? Romans 7:24 **Here is what comes after:** Romans 8:1-4: As wretched as we are, we have been forgiven. Because of his sacrifice, we are not under condemnation any longer. Paul is telling us we have the opportunity to claim balance in our lives - not because we are so great, but because Jesus and his sacrifice are so great. Now we have to believe in the forgiveness. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, God sees us as balanced before Him. The further we go with the whole idea of managing our self-sabotaging tendencies the better off we are, as the whole self-sabotage thing never quits. Our best approach is to be so well-equipped that the best sabotage efforts will pale in relation to our anti-sabotage preparations!

6. Choose to be Positive

"Be positive" is one of the most overstated statements made by self-help gurus. While it is true, this choice can become a genuine choice only when we have put the previous steps in order. Being at this point is a true victory against constant self-sabotage tendencies.

Self-Sabotage: *I have the opportunity to be positive and I want to be positive, but the possibility of failure looms too large.*

Matthew 6:28-30: God has you in His hand. Trust that above and beyond your own conclusions. No matter who you are, life brings challenges and challenges typically bring worry and doubt. Worry and doubt bring the temptation for self-sabotage.

Solution: *Reset your mind on things above - pray, praise and appreciate. Instead of replaying your failures, repeat your blessings.*

Philippians 4:6-8: *If there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things* - this can help undermine self-sabotage tendencies. When we consciously change what



we will think about (think about spiritual sticky notes), it puts things in a perspective that allows us to make progress. Just as God commanded Israel, we also should carry His grace and His will with us at all times.

7. Choose to be a Risk Taker

When built upon the six previous chapter titles, risk taking defies self-sabotage.

Self-Sabotage: We must be always conservative so as not to disappoint God, and in so doing we miss our greatest opportunities!

The parable of the pounds: Luke 19:20-23: God does want us to be risk takers. As a footstep follower of Jesus, we are required to step out of our fishbowl.

Solution: Take spiritually-minded steps in faith so that God's blessing is with those who truly seek Him!

Romans 8:35,37-39: Jesus gave his life for the purpose of eternity. He calls us to follow him for the same purpose - the eternal good of all of mankind. We cannot positively contribute to eternity if we spend our everyday in self-sabotage. We disallow our potential by heading it off at the pass. We have to be careful to understand how important it is to understand all the steps needed.

Follow the steps and become a mature, strong follower of Christ.

*So, how do I defeat my worst enemy? Me!
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*