

How to Stop Being My Own Worst Enemy

Lesson 01 in the series: "Changing for Good"

I. I can be my own worst enemy if I allow negative thoughts to dominate my thinking.

"I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?" Romans 7:21-24 (NLT2)

Note: I can dwell on things that cause enormous pain and stress and lead to self-destructive behaviors:

- shame and guilt
- fear
- bitterness,
- insecurities
- compulsions
- hopelessness

II. I can stop being my own worst enemy if I allow God to change the way I think.

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." Romans 12:2 (NLT)

a. I must surrender control of my thoughts to the Holy Spirit.

"Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.)" Romans 8:5-9 (NLT)

b. I must meditate on things that are true.

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

- Jesus paid the penalty for ALL of my sins.

"So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus... Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us."

Romans 8:1,33-34 (NLT)

- The Holy Spirit gives me power to say "NO!" to self-destructive things in my life.

"And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death... The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live." Romans 8:2,11-13 (NLT)

- God has adopted me into His family. I am a child of God and a co-heir with Jesus.

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are

heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later." Romans 8:14-18 (NLT)

- Jesus has prepared a place for me in heaven and I will receive an amazing new body when I die.

"For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us." Romans 8:22-23 (NLT)

- The Holy Spirit is praying for me.

"And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words."

Romans 8:26 (NLT)

- God is using everything for my good.

"...we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Romans 8:28 (NLT2)

- God is greater than any problem or enemy I will face.

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31 (NIV)

- God will supply what I need.

"Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?" Romans 8:32 (NLT2)

- God will never stop loving me.

"Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ...No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:35-39 (NLT2)

- c. I must build relationships with other believers so we can remind each other of these things often.

"Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught." 2 Peter 1:12 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. When you hear the statement "I am my own worst enemy," what thoughts come into your mind?
2. Read Romans 7:18-25. How does it make you feel to know that the Apostle Paul, the greatest missionary in the Bible, wrote these words?
3. Discuss the following list of things that can dominate our thinking and lead to self-destructive behaviors:
 - shame and guilt
 - fear
 - bitterness,
 - insecurities
 - compulsions
 - hopelessness

Which of the items on this list can you relate to best? Why?

4. Read Philippians 4:8. How do we do this?

5. Discuss the following truths from Romans 8:

- Jesus paid the penalty for ALL of my sins. (Romans 8:1,33-34)
- The Holy Spirit gives me power to say “NO!” to self-destructive things in my life. (Romans 8:2,11-13)
- God has adopted me into His family. (Romans 8:14-18)
- Jesus has prepared a place for me in heaven and I will receive an amazing new body when I die. (Romans 8:22-23)
- The Holy Spirit is praying for me. (Romans 8:26)
- God is using everything for my good. (Romans 8:28)
- God is greater than any problem or enemy I will face. (Romans 8:31)
- God will supply what I need. (Romans 8:32)
- God will never stop loving me. (Romans 8:35-39)

How does this list make you feel? Which of the items on this list brings you the most hope? Why?

6. Read Hebrews 10:24-25. How can we help each other stop being our own worst enemies?