

Why Try?

Do you ever feel like your mind has turned against you? You've started down the path to healthy eating and exercise. You do well for a week, maybe two and then something happens and you crash and burn. You give into temptation or you just have a craving you feel you cannot overcome.

You eat what you've told yourself you will never eat again. You are mad at yourself. You tell yourself what a failure you are and how you will never amount to anything. You continue to try and fail and it is very discouraging, so why try? Might as well just give up and give in to the habits you think are helping take care of you. Because in the final analysis we are in some way trying to preserve ourselves from something we think is more harmful than what we are doing in the moment.

The Mind-Emotion Connection

We think if we can just change our minds that will take care of everything. It is true any change process starts in the mind. However I know for a fact that my emotions can wreak havoc with anything I've set my mind to do. We have to address our emotions or we will just be taking two steps forward and only two steps or more backwards.

Psychologists, psychiatrists and all kinds of behavioral gurus tell us that our minds effect our emotions, which in turn effect our behaviors.

We start with the mind, a fascinating study in and of itself. The main thing to know is the mind is changeable, malleable. It will change with how we program it, what station we set it to and how we focus it. We have the power to change or renew our minds as **Romans 12:2** tells us.

However, if we have always gone to chocolate to relieve our stress, our mind will always give us chocolate as our first choice when we are stressed unless we have set it to something else AND unless we have dealt with our emotional programming as well.

For instance, If when we were children and cried, we got candy to keep us quiet that will also factor into what happens when we are upset, hurt or stressed as adults. We revert back to an emotional response of eating candy. It's what worked when we were children so our programmed brain has continued to prefer it because in the moment it helps. It's just the long-term effects that cause us harm.

So we have it programmed in our minds and our emotions that we go to candy in certain situations. We didn't do it intentionally. In some cases our loved ones programmed it in though not intentionally, just through their own emotional response.

This reminds me of **Numbers 14:18 NLT**—“He lays the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.” I don’t believe this is through genetics or is a done deal. It’s what our grandparents did and passed that down through internal programming to our parents. We don’t have to continue that. We can change that in our generational line. It can start with us!

Going back to our scenario, as an adult we cognitively and rationally decide candy is bad for us. It’s triggering us to overeat and gain weight. We make an agreement with God and ourselves that we are not going to do this again. We vow not to eat candy again. That’s our stop. Our start is we will exercise three times a week for 30 minutes.

Then, we get inundated at work. We are stressed, underpaid, overworked and the boss just yelled at us. We go home after putting in four hours of overtime. We are hungry (because we didn’t prepare to be working late), angry (that we had to work such long hours mandated by a tyrannical boss), lonely (because this seems to only happen to us and no one understands) and Tired (beyond exhaustion). This is the classic acronym HALT that tells us if any one of these are true it can trigger us to go back to addictive behaviors. Somehow we missed all four we are Hungry, Angry, Lonely and Tired. We should have stopped or halted. But now, it’s hit us all at once.

We stop on the way home and load up with candy. We don’t pre-think it. We don’t listen to the still, small voice asking what are you doing and if we do we’d say I’m stopping myself from going ballistic!

Then we go home still not listening to anything, but our emotions screaming for us to eat candy, eat candy, eat candy.

This snowball has been rolling and gathering up speed and now our minds begin to join in by agreeing with our emotions. In essence our emotions have now taken control of our minds. They are in charge.

It’s kind of like putting a three-year-old’s heart and passions in charge of an adult’s mind.

It’s mass confusion. Our Emotions tells our mind: It’ll just be this once. I won’t eat it all. I just need this to get through to tomorrow. I don’t want to unload all this pain on my husband, best friend, parent or child. I’ll just take care of it. I know it’s not the healthiest alternative but I just don’t have any other recourse. It’s mass confusion inside of us. Our emotions are screaming one thing, our minds are too tired to fight any more and so we just give in.

James 4:1-4 KJV—“From whence comest wars and fighting amongst you? Come they not hence from your own lusts that war in your members? Ye lust and have not. Ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and

adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

We pig out the rest of the night, feel guilt, pain, remorse and a little sick at our stomachs. We go to bed mad at ourselves and feeling like a total loser.

Paul says it this way.

Romans 7:18-19, 21-25 NLT—I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. 19 I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. 21 I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God with all my heart. 23 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. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

So here is the \$10 million dollar question. How does He set us free? Paul doesn't leave us hanging, only those who divided up the bible into chapters do that. This lead us to the **Spirit Connection**. That makes ALL The difference!

Romans 8:1-2 AMP— Therefore there is now no condemnation, no guilty verdict, no punishment, for those who are in Christ Jesus, who believe in Him as personal Lord and Savior. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, the law of our new being, has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

The law of sin and death is living by rules and regulations. I liken it to diets which only stir up our desire to circumvent or short-circuit the rules. Rebel, much? We are born as rebels, born with a natural desire to do the things WE WANT.

Romans 8:5-6 AMP—Those who are living according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, which gratify the body, but those who are living according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit His will and purpose. 6 Now the mind of the flesh is death, both now and forever— because it pursues sin; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace, the spiritual well-being that comes from walking with God—both now and forever;

What Paul is saying here is almost like you can't help it. You are human. You have your mind set on gratifying your bodies, doing what feels good in the moment, what you WANT, CRAVE and as a result think you HAVE to have. But we have a secret weapon.

Romans 8:13-14 AMP— If you are living by the power of the Holy Spirit you are *habitually* putting to death the sinful deeds of the body, you will really live *forever*. 14 For all who are *allowing themselves* to be led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

I love the fact that by living by the power of the Holy Spirit we **HABITUALLY put to death** the deeds of the body. This means we are setting aside what we think our bodies crave or even need.

We can do this because as **2 Corinthians 2:16** tells us “**we have the mind of Christ to be guided by His thoughts and purposes.**” Up in **verse 11** it tells us **that no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.**

Have you ever prayed, “God give me the mind of Christ?” Here’s the truth, you already have the mind of Christ at your disposal. It’s already there through the Spirit of God. However, we have to reprogram our minds to focus on God thoughts. How do we do that? **2 Cor. 2:11** tells us it’s through listening to the Spirit of God.

How do we do that? We spend time intentional no-agenda time with Him. We are quiet and still before Him, attempting to shut out the noise of the world. Then, we ask Him questions and we listen to His answers.

Jeremiah 33:3 NLT—“Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come.” Amplified says “Call to Me and I will answer you, and tell you [and even show you] great and mighty things, [things which have been confined and hidden], which you do not know and understand and cannot Distinguish.”

I like the wording of remarkable secrets from NLT and things which have been confined and hidden from AMP. There are things God cannot show us yet. It may be because it would overwhelm us to know the complete destiny God has for us. But still they are remarkable secrets, great and mighty things.

God has tremendous plans in store for you. We discover more of these in the times we spend with Him as He pulls back the curtain a little at a time. For me, He never opens it completely, just enough to get a glimpse of where He’s taking me, never too much to scare me, but just enough to keep me dependent on Him.

How to Start

Along the way, our emotions get so tangled up with our thoughts that it’s hard to tell what is what, which is where and how they ever got so mixed up. How do we get everything untangled? Where do we start?

It reminds me of my necklaces. I used to have them all in a jewelry box. This never worked. They’d get tangled 10 ways from Sunday, all mixed in with bracelets and rings. I have metal clasps on a lot of them which helps me take them on and off but encourages entanglement with other metal objects. I have

them separated on my armoire doors on hooks, but even still they get so tangled I can't get them apart and it is frustrating to the point that I can't deal with it. I don't know which end to start at, when I pull one end it tangles another part even more. So what do I do? I take the mess to my husband wherever he is and I walk away. In a matter of minutes he brings everything back to me all nicely separated. I asked, "How do you do that?" He said, there was one necklace that everything was tangled around. Once I knew which one, it just took time and a small pick tool to separate everything out into it's own space.

Friends, God has a huge pick He uses to untangle our thoughts and emotions. Then He presents them all to us but He also shows us which one was the root, the thing that everything else got tangled up with. If we start there and ask Him to help us understand how to get through that, it will make all the difference in the world.

When I talk with y'all on monthly video calls God usually shows me that thing that everything is entangled up with. I don't always know how to untangle the emotions and thoughts, but God does. He feeds me the questions. All I have to do is ask you and then He does the rest of the work.

God is the great Spiritual untangler. When we can't go forward and get to the point where we think, "Why try?" there is usually a root we are afraid to uncover. It will be something that will begin to set everything right, organized and clear. Our job then is to keep our minds on Him.

Isaiah 26:3 NKJV— You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose mind is stayed on You*, Because he trusts in You.

Why Try?

Because your very future and the futures of those you influence depend on it. Why try? Because God has something great and mighty to show you yet to come. Why try? Because God requires you to allow the Spirit to lead you. It's where the blessings flow. Why try? Because Jesus said He would help you when you repent, that is change your inner self—your old way of thinking, regret past sins, live your life in a way that proves repentance; seek God's purpose for your life. Why try? Because the kingdom of heaven is at hand right now this very minute and God is depending on you to be one who believes His will can be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Action Step:

Spend some time reading Romans 7 and 8 in NLT, AMP, MSG, NIV and other versions. Type out the verses which are most meaningful to you. Read over them each day this week. Meditate on them which just means to spend intentional

time thinking about them. Journal your thoughts. What do these Scriptures say to you on your journey? Did God reveal a new stop-start to you? Write it down and share it in the group.