

NEW LIFE FREEDOM

Lesson 13



At this point in the freedom process, it can be tempting to think we've got it figured out and can handle the rest of the way ourselves. We've learned some important tools and are trying them out. We may have begun to see positive results and think we already know everything it takes to make all the changes we'll ever need. We may be impatient and want to get through as soon as possible. We ask ourselves if we really need this community. We want to take back the control we gave to God.

Proverbs 16:9 says, "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps." There's a big difference between making plans to act and actually carrying them out. We can have the best intentions of sticking with the new ways, but find ourselves going back into the old default mode when the pressure of our lives builds up. Going off on our own makes it easy to isolate ourselves. Then we get cut off from encouragement and positive resources. **This isn't a self-help course. We can't fix ourselves. God must be our leader and we need to let Him do the work in us if we want freedom that lasts.**

It's common to believe that all we need to do is change our behavior, to just stop doing the things that were destructive. This is certainly necessary, but it's only part of the picture. We may have just exchanged good actions for the old bad ones, but if we don't go after the thoughts that drive those actions, we'll eventually be right back in the same rut. Our thoughts develop tough roots that need to be seriously addressed.

These thoughts can make us believe we're helpless failures, victims of bad circumstances, or incapable of lasting change. We may think no one will fight for us so we have to go on the attack to get what we need. We may want what others have and believe that God is holding out on us, becoming resentful and ungrateful. Thoughts like these and many others can overtake us and become permanent parts of our identities if we just accept them. Ephesians 4:23 has a better way: "Let your minds and hearts be made new." Our minds are changed so our hearts can follow into new actions.

Remind yourself of your victories and share them with each other. Think about the way your words and thoughts are becoming more positive and hopeful and how that's affecting the way you look at your life.

One verse that shows us the power that's available to us is James 4:7: "So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Notice that our defense is made of submitting control to God, accepting His strength and using that strength to stand up to the devil. We reject his lies that say we are helpless and use the authority we have in Jesus to send him away. If you haven't started using this weapon, pick it up now.

SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:

Proverbs 16:9, Psalm 116:1 and 14, Ephesians 4:23, James 1:5-8, Matthew 6:34, Isaiah 43:18-19, 1 Peter 5:8-9, Matthew 4:1-11, James 4:7



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How are you letting the Holy Spirit lead you?