

Scriptural Ways to Keep the Devil From Sabotaging Your Mind

Most of us can relate to this example: You're doing just fine, heart content, emotions at peace; all in life is seemingly going well. When suddenly, someone says something, an experience or event takes place and in a moment, you feel your peace and joyful resolve leave you.

Before you know it, the warmth of God's love and goodness seems to be blocked. It happens faster than you can blink. It's a mystery—your thought life swept up in the seduction of self-talk, your body now paralyzed. You sigh, breathe deeply and welcome regret into your conversation. He whispers, *You wish things had been different in your life, your relationships, experiences. You wish you had known better, done differently, everyone around you seems to have what you would like to have—in their relationships, life circumstances—emotionally, materially, spiritually, physically, intellectually, professionally. They've won, and you have lost.*

You immediately muster up smiles, but no one notices. You cover up so no one suspects. You are silent, and no one relates. Locked away in loneliness, your heart aches. The happiness of others only seems to make your pain feel worse. Social media taunts you: "You are not enough, never will be." Envy, jealousy, grief, anger—you feel hopeless. You coast along, muttering through emotions now flooded by the slow raindrops of failure. Self-pity, your familiar friend, wraps her arms around you and holds her spoon up, offering it as if it were ice cream. It's icy alright, just one spoon will freeze you paralyzed.

Her ingredients: agreement seasoned with hopelessness and powerlessness. Agree with this: "It's too late for you, nothing will ever change. There isn't anything you can do about it. You are powerless." Before you know it, you swallow a spoonful.

How can I articulate this with such accuracy, you ask? Perhaps it's because I have experienced this on a personal level. I have had more than one occasion when this has happened to me.

A Dark Cloud Descends

I'd be coasting along, everything just fine. Feeling like I am winning at this thing called life; sun shining, each new morning greeting me with its scent of fresh-cut grass when, suddenly, it's as though a dark cloud descends upon me.

Overshadowed by its darkness, my spiritual race car comes to a complete halt. Now stuck, my thoughts drag themselves as they begin the climb into a dark trunk in my mind and there, in the corner of my head awaiting my arrival, are rotted, dusty, dry boxes full of disastrous accusations and rejection. One by one the boxes open, welcoming me into their haunted seclusion.

It's deafening as their voices rehearse painful songs—the Why-Has-This-Happened-to-Me and What-Have-I-Done-Wrong-to-Deserve-This songs? They beckon me to join them, to rummage through the past and the if only's, what if's, and God, what are You doing's? Or not doing? The voices fine-tune with their tuning fork. Like a piercing alarm, off it goes like armed prison guards. They are ready to keep me, to lock me up in this persecuting prison-like trunk of despair.

How? What happened? Where did all that come from? I will tell you what happened.

Nothing. Nothing caused it. Nothing in my life had changed. Nothing except my thought process, that is. My once unwavering, steadfast and fixed heart and mind are now trapped

by those thoughts that have hotly pursued and captured me, and now I falter in my footsteps.

Any rejoicing I had experienced from recent spiritual victories now suddenly replaced. The trophies of God's goodness and grace are buried deep in the trunk of my mind's vehicle and I can no longer move. Paralyzed. No longer in charge. And not because of anything I had done, or anything that had been done to me.

But what if I *had* done something? Yes, indeed, I had. I had allowed and chosen the whatever-you-want-to-think mode.

Real Everyday Unwavering Life

Friend, you are not alone in this any more than I am when thoughts like these take place, when these seemingly overpowering thoughts come. So then, what does one do when this happens? How is it stopped?

We begin by learning to take charge over the ravenous beast of self-destruction as Psalm 57 describes. Only these are not "sons of men" with teeth like spears and arrows whose tongues are sharp swords. No, these are far worse—an unseen enemy ushering in unwanted guests to our mental turmoil, into our thinking patterns and our thought processes. Friend, there is something that can and must be done. We must be quick to replace every vain fleeting, racing thought. We mustn't be paralyzed, doing nothing to silence them. Passivity is not so passive after all, for if left to itself, it will most assuredly act. Move. Every time.

Oh, I can stand firm during difficult circumstances and in difficult situations. But can I stand unwaveringly on an ordinary, uneventful day? When no one is looking, when the only one who sees and hears is Holy Spirit? He is hidden, but not in some dark, musty, cold, forgotten attic. No, He is hidden in the secret place, a place which He has made ready

for me and for you to come and fellowship with Him. A place where grace and mercy, joy and laughter are served at a banqueting table. That place where He reminds us He is the 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 God: The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction.

The Violent *Must* Take It by Force

We must take the step. That step is a motion, the act of tearing the roof off that miserable, despairing attic of vain imagination exalting itself against what we know as truth, against the beautiful knowledge of God. And as they did in the book of Luke, we must be that kind of friend to ourselves and let our own selves down right in front of the Master's feet (Luke 5:17-26).

This is the motion. These are the victorious steps we are called to take, they are determined for during those times of mental warfare and affliction.

This is where the real everyday unwavering life counts. Let's become different. Don't just choose whatever, choose with intention—whatever is true, noble, right, pure, whatever is lovely, admirable, the excellent, and praiseworthy (Phil. 4:8).

There in His excellence I am made strong, I am empowered in steadfast, unmovable, and unshakable faith, hope, and love. I am victorious. I cling to Him, His word, I sing the melody of His song of deliverance over my life. He is my only cure.

The kingdom of God suffers violence, the violent take it by force. We are His kingdom of priests, His holy nation (Ex. 19:6 and 1 Pet. 2:9). Beloved, we have been chosen to live and dwell in the secret place of the Most High God (Ps. 91). Be relentlessly violent over your inheritance as a child of God.

There is an invitation for you today to look at and pray the

blueprint Jesus gave us.

He says:

Finally, (insert your name), whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, (insert your name), let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you (from Phil. 4:8–9).

He will be with you, and you will not waver.

The Lord has given us a way to keep the enemy from thwarting our thoughts and drawing us into despair. The one who has given us access to a better way of being and thinking is worthy of all praise, and March 22-24 we will do just that at our Unwavering 2018 conference in Kansas City with women from across the globe. {eo}

Selenia Vera resides in Kansas City. An avid writer, blogger and author of *Go Quickly*, she is also on staff with the International House of Prayer where she serves in the Marketing Department.

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