

Stop the Negative Self-Talk from “The Power to Change”

Craig Groeschel

I wonder how many of you have ever stopped to ask yourself, why do you do what you do? Why do you do what you do? Because chances are, in a similar situation, you often respond with similar actions. Why is it that you generally do what you do in different situations? For example, I'm gonna give you three kind of common scenarios and ask you, what do you do in the morning? What do you do at a restaurant? And what do you do with your money? Why do you do what you do? How many of you, in the morning, be honest, the alarm goes off and you hit snooze? Raise your hand, raise your hand. You almost always hit snooze. And those of you online, go ahead and type it in the chat, I hit snooze.

How many of you, when your alarm goes off, you jump out of bed or you maybe even might get out of bed before your alarm goes off? Raise up your hands, raise your hands. You're the first one to the meeting, you're wound up. You make the rest of everybody crazy. That's what you do. Why do you do that, I wonder? When you go to a restaurant, there's a healthy choice and there's a better tasting choice. How many of you go healthy almost all the time? Almost healthy? Almost nobody here. Good tasting, raise your hand. You can type it in the comments section. You go with a healthy choice, you choose chicken. You go with a better tasting option, you choose chicken fried steak with mashed potatoes and gravy and okra. And cherry pie and vanilla ice cream. All of the glory of God.

Why do you choose what you choose? When it comes to finances, and don't raise your hand on this, but I wonder how many of you always put God first? You're a steward and you worship him with the first 10% and you manage wisely what you have and you see the faithfulness of God and you almost always have money left over. Or like many people in the world today, I wonder how many of you spend almost all that you have every single month or maybe even spend a little more than you have? Did you ever stop to think about, why do you almost always do the same things? Why do you tend to do what you do? There are some reasons, what I'm gonna call some secondary reasons, and we're gonna address those because they're real. And then we're gonna look at the primary reason that you do what you do. Let's look at the secondary reasons, because there are some, and they're important.

Why do you do what you do? One reason you do what you do is because you feel obligated to do it. You wanna be a good mom or a good dad, or a good friend or a good worker, or you feel obligated to obey God, so you do what you do because you feel obligated to do it. Another reason you do what you do is because you actually want to do it. You want to please God or you want to be disciplined or you want to show love or you want to make the wiser choice or whatever, you do it because you want to. A third reason, and many of us do this, is you do what you do because you wanna be liked, you wanna be accepted. That's why you work so hard on taking the same fake photo over and over and over again just to get the right filter so you get enough likes because we're trying to create an image that people would think that we are what we want them to believe that we are. We do what we do because we wanna be accepted.

There are many different secondary reasons that we do what we do, but there is a primary reason that we behave consistently the way that we behave. What is the biggest reason you do what you do, if you're taking notes is this, you do what you do because of what you think of you. That's good. The biggest driving force of our behavior is our identity. We do what we do primarily because of what we think of ourselves. In the Old Testament, scripture says this, Proverb 23:7, "For as he thinks in his heart, so he is". Our identity, how we see ourself, drives our behavior. In fact, I'm excited to tell you that I have a book coming out. I'm very, very passionate about this message. It's called "[The Power to Change: Mastering the Habits That Matter Most](#)". In it, we look at what God's word says about how we change. We look at what God's word says and how they apply to our habits.

And we see how science confirms the teaching of God's work 'cause God created science anyway. And we apply these truths in a way that can be very, very life transforming. "[The Power to Change](#)" releases here in a few weeks. And in the book, I cite a study that is incredibly important, giving us the power to change. There's a study that talks about three questions that all of us subconsciously ask in any situation. When you face any type of situation in your mind without even knowing, you just plop in a split second, subconsciously, you process three questions that end up determining what you do because what you think of you determines what you do. And the questions that you ask yourself without even knowing it in a second in your mind, in a split second, you ask this. The first question you ask is this, what type of person am I? You face any kind of situation and you are kind of categorizing yourself. I'm a believer, or I take shortcuts or I'm disciplined.

What type of person am I? And you ask yourself, what kind of situation is this? You don't even realize it, going on in your mind in a split millisecond is, what kind of person am I? What kind of situation is this? And then, what does someone like me do in a situation like this? And that determines what we do over and over and over again. What kind of person am I? What kind of situation is this? And what is someone like me do in a situation like this? And you'll find yourself in any number of different scenarios. You're taking a test and you don't know the answer and you can see the answer on your buddy's sheet. And you're tempted to cheat or you're tempted to take something that's not yours, or you're tempted to make somebody look bad by gossiping about them. Or you're tempted to be generous and give to someone and be a blessing. Or someone hurts you and you actually choose to forgive them. Or someone does something that doesn't seem right and you choose to believe the best about them.

Why do you do what you do? You do what you do because of what you think of you. What kind of person am I? What kind of situation is this? And what does a person like me do in a situation like this? For example, in the morning, your alarm goes off. What kind of person are you? Well, you kind of know, I'm the type of person that hit snooze seven times. Baa, snooze, baa, snooze, baa, snooze. That's the kind of person I am, that's what a person like me does in a situation like this. Or you just said it earlier, you're the type of person that often gets up before their alarm goes off and attacks the day. In your mind, that's the type of person that you are. Or you're driving down the road and somebody cuts you off. What type of person are you? Some of you, you are the type of person that brings justice on behalf of God. Oh no, you don't. And you run 'em down and you preach to 'em. There's only one way to God and it's this way. And you show 'em the one way. Peel the banana, buddy. Peel the banana, right?

That's the way some of you are. I've seen you in the church parking lot. Little sanctification come on your way. In the name of the father, son, right? Or you're the type of person that goes, ah, man, they cut me off, I did that yesterday. Maybe they're in a hurry. Maybe they're about to give birth to some kid, maybe. Maybe there's someone in the hospital. Maybe they're just a bad driver. I'm gonna give 'em grace because I've done the same thing. What type of a person are you? Someone brings donuts to the office. What kind of person are you? I'm a type of person that knocks everybody on the way, baby. I'm gonna get the first two chocolate frosted and cherry filled in the name of the father, son. Those are mine. Or I'm the type of person who likes donuts, but I brought healthy snacks and already had them.

So I don't need the donuts. I'm the type of person, honestly, that walks up to 'em, looks at 'em, smells 'em, walks away and asks for help. That's what I do. But I'm just telling you, that's what I do. I literally smell them and then I walk away. And occasionally, I'll eat a half of one and tell myself it doesn't count when you eat a half. And I'll come back later and eat the other half, and tell myself that somehow, it's better when you spread it out by 12 minutes. But that's just, it's just me. Anybody know what I'm talking about? Type it in the chat. Say, I've got that theology too, pastor. I've got that theology, too. In every area of your life, you tend to do what you do because of what you think of you. What kind of person am I? What kind of situation is this? What does a person like me do in a situation like this?

Years ago, when our office was in a shopping strip, some high school students came up, maybe 15 cars flying in the parking lot. And everybody got out and two guys took their shirts off and started fighting. And so I was studying the word of God and decided it was time for a break and ran through the office yelling, "Fight, fight, fight, fight, fight". Pastor Robert Wall, who's still our staff, came running out with me. And together, we watched these guys just tearing into each other for 12, 15 seconds or so. And then I stopped and asked myself, what kind of person am I? I'm a Christian and a pastor Christian. What kind of situation is this? Students fighting. What is a person like me do a situation like this? I said, "Oh, come on, Robert". And we went and broke up the fight. In every kind of situation, your mind goes through these questions. You do what you do because of what you think of you.

How come I can't change? How come I still lose my temper? How come I still look at things I don't wanna look at? How come I still find myself going back to the same bad habits again and again? Here's a key thought and don't miss this. Let me set it up. You do what you do because of what you think of you. Write this down. If you wanna change what you do, change what you think of you. If you wanna change what you do, it's time to change your identity and change what you think of you. I wonder how many of you are like me? How many of you would say, that when you think about who you are, it's often easier to believe the bad things than it is the good things. Raise your hands. You can type it the comment section. It's easier to believe the bad things. It is for me. Why is it that we tend to believe the bad things about ourselves? The reason is because the devil is a liar and the devil has been lying to you since the day that you were born.

Scripture says this, Jesus said. In John 8:44, He said this, "The devil has always hated what"? Let's say it aloud. He's always hated, he hates the truth. "He hates the truth, because there is no

truth in the devil. When he lies, it is consistent with his character". Why? Say it with me, because who is he? "He is a liar and the father of lies". Why does he do what he do? That's because of what he thinks of him. He is a liar. Now watch what Jesus says next. Jesus says, "The devil is a liar". And then watch what Jesus says. "So when I tell you the truth, you just naturally don't believe me". You've been believing the lie from your spiritual enemy for so long. When Jesus tries to tell you who you are, you've been so pre-programmed by the lie that you don't believe the truth and that truth will set you free. You're so used to hearing that, you can't change and you're not that, and you'll never be faithful. You're not a real man of God and you're not a good mom. And you're never gonna be financially free and you can never overcome that. And you're always gonna be addicted and you're always gonna be stuck. And it's easier to believe the lies. I know it because I do it. I had an interesting moment with Amy.

I told you a few weeks ago that my dad died and my schedule has been just jammed. And like honestly, I am looking for time to grieve because I haven't processed it. And so the emotion sneaks out in weird times. I was reading a verse in the Bible and I read a verse and I just started crying, thinking about my dad. Just sneaks out. So the other day, I was feeling down. And Amy said something and I was short with her. And she says, "Why are you being short with me"? And what I didn't think was, I'm almost always loving to her and I really do tend to treat her well. And I am a godly person. I'm grieving and she'll understand. What I thought was, I suck. That's what I thought. And I thought, I'm selfish. And I thought, I'm not good enough for her. And I thought for a moment, she'd be better off without me.

That's what I thought. Because when you do something you're not proud of, the devil doesn't tell you, that was just a momentary thing. And God is really with you and you're still really full of a Holy Spirit. No, the devil doesn't tell you you did something bad. The devil tells you are bad. Yeah. The devil attacks your identity. You're not worthy. You should be ashamed. You're pathetic. You're not the real thing. You're a hypocrite. You're an addict, you're a loser. You're never, you know, you can't change. This is just the way you are. And what is he trying to do? He's lying to you about your identity. And here's what happens. You can write this down. Your distorted identity starts to sabotage your success. Your distorted identity starts to sabotage your spiritual success and your progress along the way. And you start to think, well, I'm just got an addictive personality.

And so this is what I do to cope. I pop the pill, I drink the bottle, I look at the porn. It's just what I do. It's just how I have to do it because you think, this is my identity, or you think, I just stink at handling money. And so I'm always gonna struggle financially. I'm never gonna get ahead. I'm always gonna be broke. So you just go to Amazon and click buy, buy, buy, buy, buy. Or you tend to think, I've never really had close friends so I can't trust people. So you continue to put on a false front and you keep people from a distance and you might scroll and double click, and scroll and double click, and put on the fake face. But you never really let anybody in because you believe you aren't worthy to be loved. And there's this very deceptive cycle that the devil tries to do in your life.

You can write this down. What he does is this, is he takes your distorted identity and uses it to create destructive habits. Your distorted identity creates destructive habits. And your destructive habits reinforce your distorted identity. You think poorly of yourself, therefore you do the wrong

thing and the wrong thing confirms that you're really not honoring God along the way. How do you break the devil's destructive cycle? Well, if you wanna change what you do, you have to change how you think. And that's why I wanna tell you, you are not who the devil says you are. You are not who others say you are. You're not even who that little critical voice in your own head that tears you down and rips apart your confidence, says that you are. Jesus is speaking the truth about you. And you need to believe the truth about you. When instead of having a distorted identity, you start to have a Christ-centered identity. I am who He says I am.

When you have a Christ-centered identity, that breaks the destructive cycle. Write this down. A Christ-centered identity leads to Christ-honoring habits. And Christ-honoring habits reinforce a Christ-centered identity. Why do you tend to do what you do? You do what you do because of what you think of you. If you wanna change what you do, change what you think of you. You are not who your spiritual enemy says you are. When you believe that, you live the wrong habits, which reinforces the wrong identity. You are who Christ says you are. And when you start with that identity, it brings about God-honoring habits which reinforce the God-honoring identity. Let me try to explain it 'cause some of you are looking like the cow looking at the new fence. Mmm. Don't get it. Let me slow it down. I want you to get this. This is so important. I'm gonna give you an example of how this played out in the life of Jesus and I'm gonna modernize it for fun.

Okay, those of you that wanna criticize me, you're being a heretic, this isn't in the Bible. This is for fun. If you don't like it, email me at craigandidontgivearip.com. So it's a real email. It's got an auto response. Try it, if you don't. Believe me, it's there. Okay, so let's just pretend this is going on. This is a real Bible story with modernized picture. So let's just say some guy comes up and says, "Hey, I'm a PR agent, Jesus. What I'm gonna do is I'm gonna give you an idea. I want you to do a YouTube live event. You do a YouTube live, we're gonna reach millions of people. YouTube live, it's gonna be amazing". And Jesus says, "No, no, no, no, no". He refuses, "Because I wanna be with the people. I like the gathering". And so, the guy says, "Okay, we'll do this sermon on the mountain," they promote it. And they sell out faster than a Taylor Swift concert. It's sold out.

Jesus is there teaching and the Pharisees are there protesting. "Get Jesus canceled, get Jesus canceled". At the end of the event, everybody there, security says, "Jesus, we gotta get you home". And Jesus says, "No, I wanna pray for the people". So He goes to pray for the people, but most of the people want selfies. That hurt His feelings. When He got done, He came back and regrouped the disciples and said, "How do you think it went"? And Peter was bad because Jesus didn't tag him in the photo on Instagram. And Jesus said, "I'm done with y'all". Didn't really happen, it's not in the Bible, in case you're new to the Bible. It's a modernized version of it. So Jesus goes home. What does he do? What does he do? He's physically exhausted, people let him down. He feels maybe discouraged that they weren't responding the way he wanted. What does he do? Does he veg on his favorite Netflix series? Sound like a good plan to me. Does he sneak in the kitchen and finish off the brownies? Or does he take a bath with soft music and turn all the bath water into wine? What does he do? You with me? What does he do?

He's tired. He's all God. And He's all man. His body is tired, maybe He's discouraged. What does He do? Well, if He asks, what kind of person am I? What would He say? He would say, "I'm the type of person that needs intimacy with my Father". What kind of

situation is this? I'm physically exhausted and emotionally discouraged. What is a person like you do in a situation like this? They go and spend time praying to the Father. Yeah. And so what does Jesus do? According to scripture, He goes to the Mount of Olives, not just any place, but a beautiful place, 330 feet above Jerusalem. A gorgeous view of the city where he can overlook the people that he's praying for. And scripture tells us how often He went there to pray. The Bible says in Luke 21:37, "Each day," everybody say, each day. "Each day, Jesus was teaching at the temple and each evening".

Everybody say, each evening. "Each evening, He went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives". What did he do? His habit was to teach in the day and his habit was to pray at night. Luke 22:39 says, "And Jesus came out and went," as what? Say it with me, "As was his habit, to the Mount of Olives". What I want you to see is that Jesus wasn't going like, "Oh, I better try to pray". No, He's the type of person that prays. He's the type that prays. And His prayer habit reinforced His spiritual identity, which therefore strengthened His habit. How do you change? If you wanna change what you do, you change what you think of you. Here's what you do, you ready? Write this down. Write this down. You start with, who before do. Look at the person next to you and say, who before do. Type it online. Type it in. Who before do. Who before do. Who before do. Who before do. Instead of focusing on what you wanna do, you start with who you wanna become.

And I wanna ask you right now, not what do you wanna do? Start with identity. Who do you want to become? Who do you wanna be? Yeah. Who do you wanna be for the glory of God? Because what you think of you determines what you do. So we're not starting with the action, we're starting with the spiritual Christ-centered identity. And I'm gonna give you some examples and you can pick your own and I hope that you do. We'll start general and then we'll go specific. Who do you want to become? You might say, "I wanna become a mom who is fully present and wholly intentional". How many think that might be a good person to be? God bless both of you. Pray. We'll try another one. How about this one? "I'm a teenager who's found purity in Christ and doesn't look at porn". "I found purity in Christ".

Here's another one. You might say, "I'm a man of God who will lay down my life to serve my wife and my children". That's a good idea. Who do you wanna be? Another one. "I am someone who is sober and is a testimony to the power of Christ to change a life". Come on, somebody, is that who you wanna be? Why do you do what you do? Because of what you think of you. We might even get specific if you want to, I can hear some specific ones. You might say this, "I'm a person who doesn't skip workouts. That's the type of person that I am". You might say this, you might say, "I am a Christian who reads the word of God every single day". That's the type of person I am. You might say, "I'm a person who puts God first in my finances and with everything in my life". You might say what I say, "I am disciplined but not in my own power". What is it? It's Christ in me that is stronger than the wrong desires in me.

Start with who before do. Let's play it out. Let's say, you're like, "I'm a mom who wants to be fully present and wholly intentional". And every time you're with your kids or you're with your husband and your phone dings, ding, ding, ding. And every time, you don't look at it. What have you done? You have reinforced the identity that I am a parent who is wholly intentional and fully present. You might say, "I'm a Christian who reads my Bible every day". And every day, you

wake up and you open up the living Word of God. How in the world can we do life without God's bread feeding us, nourishing our soul? And every day you do that, it reinforces the identity, strengthening who you're becoming in Christ.

There's a fantastic book by my friend, James Clear, if you haven't read it, I hope you do. "[Atomic Habits](#)". And he's very, very practical. In it, he says this, I love this quote. He says, "Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become. No single instance will transform your beliefs, but as the votes build up, so does the evidence of your new identity". Why do you do what you do? You do what you do because of what you think of you. Can somebody say, amen? Amen. While I get some water? Amen. You guys are making me preach hard. Come on. Come on. Here's what's gonna happen. You're gonna start to seek God for a new identity.

Remember last week, we have a spiritual why. This week, we have a spiritual who. this is our identity. And the moment you start to believe that you can become who God wants you to be, the devil's gonna tell you, you can't change. Who are you gonna believe? Because who you believe will determine what you do. And I wanna show you a very, very powerful scripture that I want you to let it soak into your heart and build your faith. Ephesians 4 says this, "Since you've heard about Jesus and you've learned what," let's say it aloud, "and you've learned the truth that comes from him," here's what you do, watch this. "You throw off the old sinful nature and your former way of life," that's not you anymore. You've been forgiven, you've been transformed. "You throw off that former way of life which is corrupted by lust and deception," believing the lies. Scripture goes on to say, "Instead," what do you do?

"You let the spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes". Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. You don't believe the lies of the enemy but you let the spirit of God renew your thoughts and attitudes. "You throw off the old nature, you put on the new nature created to be," watch this, "like God, truly righteous and holy". You throw off the old self, you put on the new Christ. And then when you believe who he says you are, you start to live how he says you can live. And no single action is gonna change your identity, but multiple actions over time change how you see yourself and eventually, it changes your identity. This, last week, remember, is not behavior modification. This is spiritual transformation.

So I ask you, who are you? Who are you? Who are you? Let me tell you who the Word of God says you are. Scripture says that if you have surrendered to Jesus and called on Him, you are a new creation in Christ Jesus. The oldest God in all things have been made new. Scripture says that you are God's workmanship. His poetic statement created in Christ Jesus to do good works which he prepared in advance for you to do. Scripture says that you are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. You are an ambassador of the most high God. You are the highest ranking diplomat sent from heaven to earth by God to declare his kingdom principles in this world. You are not who the devil says you are. You are not who others say you are. You are not who you think you are.

The word of God says you are more than a conqueror through Christ who gives you strength. You are child of the living God. You've been forgiven because of the shed blood of Jesus.

You've been redeemed, you've been chosen, you've been called, you've been set apart. Filled with the very same spirit that raised Christ from the dead. That is the truth of who you are. The devil is a liar, but Jesus is the truth and the truth will set you free. Amen. Why do you do what you do? Lot of secondary reasons, but the primary reason is, you do what you do because of what you think of you. And Jesus said, the devil's a liar. And the problem is when I tell you the truth, you don't believe it. Step into the truth. Step out, put off the old nature. Step into the new nature and be who Christ created you to be, like God, holy and righteous for His glory. In Jesus name. Somebody say, amen. Amen.

At all of our churches today, Father, we pray that your Spirit would do a work in us.

As you're praying, without looking around today, nobody looking around. Those of you who would say, there is something I wanna change. Raise your hands right now. Raise your hands up online. Just say, there's something that I want to change. Type it in. There's something I wanna change. What I want you to do, last week, we looked at your spiritual why. This week, your assignment is your spiritual who. Who before do. And our life groups will talk about it. Over meals, we'll talk about it. Who do you want to become, a Christ-centered identity?

Father, open up heaven and show us who You want us to be. Change our identity to be like Your Son, Jesus.

As you keep praying today, some of you right now, you're like going, yeah, sounds all good and everything, but my life is a total mess. If we sat down and just talked across a table from each other, maybe over coffee, and I ask you, where do you stand with God? You might say, yeah, like I grew up in church, or I kind of believe in God or I'm far from God. But you'd have to say, I'm not the type of person walking intimately with God. Why do you do what you do? Because of what you think of you. And in a moment of time, every lie that you've believed about you can be freed by the truth of Jesus about you. You may feel unworthy, like you're not good enough for God, like you've sinned too much for God. And the truth is, all of us have done that. But the same truth is, that we can never be good enough on our own. It's only by the grace of Jesus. Jesus, the perfect son of God.

The lamb of God who was slain and God raised him from the dead so we could be forgiven. No matter where you're watching from, if you say, I don't know God, I'm not walking with God, we're gonna just take one step out of that old nature, out of that old life and surrender to Jesus. When you confess your sins, God is faithful. He forgives your sins, you become brand new, forgiven, transformed, not better, but new, but different. All over the world, wherever you're watching from, those who say, I need that, I know I've done wrong. I want his forgiveness. I wanna be different. One prayer, one moment, one God and your life has changed wherever you are. I need his grace. I need his forgiveness.

Today, I'm stepping outta my old life. I'm surrendering to him. I know I've sinned. I know I need forgiveness today. I'm giving my life to you. Those of you who say, Yes, I need his forgiveness today by faith. I give my life to Jesus, that's your prayer. Lift your hands high right now. Lift

them up all over the place. Say, "Yes, Jesus, I'm surrendering to you". Others today who say, "Yes, I trust you, Jesus. I give you my life". At all of our campuses today, as we have people calling out on Him, type in the comment section. "I'm surrendering to Jesus. I'm giving my life to Jesus". And we're gonna pray today with people all over the world. Pray:

Heavenly Father. Forgive me, all of my sins. Save me. Change my mind to think like you. Fill me with your spirit so I can live for you. My life is not mine. I give it all to you. Thank you for new life. You have all of mine. In Jesus name, I pray.