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### PREPARING A PLANNED RESPONSE

A prepared planned response is something every one of us needs to work into our lives when a problem or area of temptation arises in which we seem to constantly fail. In the process of overcoming the problems that dominate our life, we must identify the specific things (people, places, books, TV) that trigger those sinful responses. This process is the principle of "putting off/putting on" described in Eph. 4:22-32.

The prepared planned response is all a part of disciplining your life for the purpose of Godliness (I Tim. 4:7). The results are victorious in overcoming anger, fear, worry, depression, gossip, sexual sin, marriage, family or communication problems, loneliness, impatience, bitterness and any other life dominating problems. Now no "method" is victorious because only Jesus is victorious. It is only through the Word and the Spirit of God that we can overcome sin. Yet we are held responsible and accountable by God to cooperate in this process. Godliness and a Christlike character don't just float mystically into our lives. Read what Paul says in I Cor. 9:24-27; Col. 3:5-25. Yes, it is God who works in us, but Paul explains the balance in Col. 1:29! (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 4:13; Jn. 14:3; 2 Tim. 4:7)

Now Scripture warns us that we should not let Satan get an advantage over us. We are not to be ignorant of his thoughts and purposes in our lives (2 Cor. 2:11). Satan is very much aware of our weak points and knows just what to do so that we trip ourselves up. I Pet. 5:8 exhorts us to be sober, alert and watchful because Satan is prepared to pounce on us and devour us like a roaring lion. Also, Eph. 6:11-13 encourages us to be prepared for we fight a spiritual warfare! In fact it tells us that we must prepare ourselves by taking every possible measure so that we will "have done all to stand firm" in victory over sin.

Another supportive insight for this principle of preparing a planned response is derived from the word "discipline" or "exercise" in I Tim. 4:7. That is, that when you discipline yourself you are actually conditioning and preparing your body or mind to perform adequately and successfully. In the same sense when you've identified your weakness, let's suppose it's gossip, you'll be preparing ahead of time the method of action you're going to take so as to replace the wrong conversation with the right conversation (putting off-putting on, Eph. 4:22-32). You must consciously prepare a planned response in order to rechannel your energy so that you will be constructive and positive; otherwise it will result in bringing about sinful consequences. There's no neutral ground; your response will either reinforce a sinful habit or confirm the righteous character qualities into your life. Therefore, I'm sure you'll agree that the only way to overcome sinful habits and responses is to prepare yourself ahead of time with the righteous response.

1. The first thing you must do is to identify the area of problem. What is it? Or who is it? Evaluate how things have built up in the past and what has triggered it off.

2. Identify your sinful response to the whole situation and confess it as sin to God and those involved. Also ask them to help you change and tell them that you are going to, by the grace of God.

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3. Identify what the proper response should be according to Scripture. What scriptural response needs to be applied? How does God want you to react?
4. Memorize the verses and now prepare by practicing - review a situation where you failed in the past. Now review it by inserting the proper response which will rechannel that energy positively and constructively. Rehearse it with your spouse or someone who could help keep you in check. Role play, practice, memorize and rehearse the planned response because that's what discipline involves.
5. Then pray that God's Spirit would make you very sensitive in this weak area. Pray that He would give you the opportunities to put this prepared response into action. Ask Him to empower you to obey God so that you will make the prepared planned response a part of your life. The result is overcoming evil with good and thereby glorifying God.

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