

# 7 Ways to Combat Destructive Emotions

BY RICK WARREN

If you're a believer in Christ, you have two natures. One is your "old nature," your sinful nature that was part of you before you started following Jesus. And the other is your "new nature," who you are through the power of the Holy Spirit working in your life. These natures fight against each other.

The apostle Paul felt that fight in himself. As he dealt with his old nature, he eventually became overwhelmed: *"What a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life dominated by sin and death?"* (Romans 7:24 NLT).

Notice that Paul didn't ask, "What will free me?" He asked, *"Who will free me?"* And that was the right question. No pill or program or book or seminar will free you. Only Jesus Christ and his Spirit inside of you can free you from self-destructive emotions.

There are seven problems—seven main areas where your old nature can cause you to self-destruct. And there's a healthy habit you can form—from the truth of God's Word and through the power of the Holy Spirit—that will help you combat each problem.

## Problem 1: Shame

Shame can rob you of your happiness as you walk around with the burden of guilt and regrets.

## Healthy Habit 1:

Remind yourself daily of what Jesus did for you and how much he loves you.

*"So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus."* (Romans 8:1 NLT)

## Problem 2: Uncontrolled Thoughts

Uncontrolled thoughts cause unhappiness, grief, and pressure and can eventually ruin your life.

## Healthy Habit 2:

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you his mindset, which brings life and peace.

*"Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit."* (Romans 8:5 NLT)

## Problem 3: Compulsions

Compulsions are the inner drives and desires that you feel you must act on, even when you know they're wrong.

## Healthy Habit 3:

Realize you have a new ability to say no.

*"But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you."* (Romans 8:9 NLT)

### **Problem 4: Fear**

Fear limits your life, destroying your happiness, potential, and purpose.

### **Healthy Habit 4:**

Turn your thoughts to God whenever you're afraid.

*"For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you slaves and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God's children, and by the Spirit's power we cry out to God, 'Father! my father!'"*  
(Romans 8:15-16 GNT)

### **Problem 5: Hopelessness**

Hopelessness is a self-destructive weapon; it discourages you and makes you want to give up.

### **Healthy Habit 5:**

Focus on God's plans and promises for you, not on your temporary circumstances.

*"Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings he keeps for his people, and we will also possess with Christ what God has kept for him."* (Romans 8:17 GNT)

### **Problem 6: Bitterness**

Bitterness is self-destructive; it eats you alive and hurts you more than anyone else.

### **Healthy Habit 6:**

Remind yourself that God is good and in control.

*"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* (Romans 8:28 NIV)

### **Problem 7: Insecurity**

Insecurity makes you do foolish, stupid things; it makes you struggle with your identity in Christ.

### **Healthy Habit 7:**

Trust that God will never stop loving you.

*"For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels won't, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God's love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, or where we are—high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean—nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when he died for us."* (Romans 8:38-39 TLB)

Remember, the answer to the problems inside of you will never be stronger willpower or a more effective program. The answer to your deepest problems is always a person. It's Jesus Christ and his Spirit living inside of you.