



## **What does it mean to be Mastered by Nothing?**

**Being Mastered by Nothing is the pursuit of not being mastered by your past, lust or most commonly your wounds.**

**Throwing off everything that hinders you from the best version of yourself. The version of yourself that is led by the spirit, connected to his identity in Christ and walking in his purpose.**

**This seven-day devotional unpacks areas that many of us need freedom from in order to live a life that is mastered by nothing.**

# **DAY 1**

## **What Does It Mean to Be Mastered by Nothing?**

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Being mastered by nothing is the pursuit of not being controlled by your failures, success, vanity, lust, or, most importantly, your wounds. It is a pursuit because we never fully arrive. Instead, it is the continual pursuit of becoming the man God created you to be, the version of yourself that needs no mask, no facade, and remains transparent, authentic, and secure in his identity in Christ.

To be mastered by nothing is to be free to be led by the Holy Spirit, free to be used by God, fully available, and not distracted by worldly cravings or emotional triggers. It requires maintaining healthy habits and relationships so that nothing takes priority over your relationship with Jesus.

**We are mastered by many things. For some, it is the need to acquire more. For others, it is the need to be the hero. For many of us, it is lust for the beautiful thing called the female body. Let me add a few more: the wounds of failure, sin, divorce, heartbreak, a lack of affirmation from our fathers, or even the pursuit of six-pack abs instead of true health.**

**We can also be mastered by good things. Beneficial habits or pursuits, such as working out or serving in ministry, become unhealthy when they take priority over God.**

**The Word of God tells us to throw off everything that hinders and distracts us and to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-2).**

**How do we throw these things off? We approach God's throne of grace and ask for forgiveness for the things that have mastered us. We repent of the habits and addictions that have held us captive. We ask the Lord to search our hearts and reveal the areas that need His healing touch. Here is the hard part. We are often afraid to bring certain things to the Lord. We surrender some things to Jesus while keeping others hidden. News flash: He already knows. He sees it all, and He is inviting you to be vulnerable with Him by bringing everything into the light.**

**God wants us to be free. He desires for us to walk in freedom. When we live in that freedom, we discover it was never meant to stop with us. Through the power of our testimony, God uses our story to impact His Kingdom. He takes the very wounds and chains that once mastered us and uses them to help set others free.**

**1 Corinthians 6:12**

**"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.**

**1 Timothy 6:11-12**

**But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.**

**Revelation 12:11**

**They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**

## **DAY 2**

### **No longer Mastered by your past**

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Many of us walk through life mastered by our past. We carry wounds, failures, and past sins that shape our behaviors, decisions, and reactions. We bury these things deep within our hearts, only for them to surface when we are triggered.

So, how do we stop being mastered by our past?

First, we must identify the roots of our triggers. Beneath every argument, angry response, and timid reaction is often a wound that has gone unaddressed for far too long. Ask the Lord to search your heart and reveal what those wounds are (Psalm 139:23-24). For many of you, you already know what they are. It is the conversation you avoid, the memory you suppress, or the part of your story you refuse to surrender.

**Bringing those wounds to the feet of Jesus and remaining aware of the situations that attempt to reopen them is a blueprint for pursuing freedom. When those moments arise, lean into the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to guide your next thought, your next word, and your next response. This is not a one-time event. It is a lifelong pursuit of awareness, learning to master your response rather than allowing your wounds to control you.**

**The next step is confession. James 5:16 tells us, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." Confession and vulnerability carry tremendous freedom and power. When trusted brothers or sisters in Christ come alongside you, praying for you, encouraging you, and helping reveal areas where you need to grow, you experience the kind of authentic community God designed us to have.**

**1 Tim 6: 11-12 Tells us to run and resist evil things, the things that sprout up anger, jealousy and lust. We are commanded to pursue righteousness and faith, along with perseverance. As we bring today to a close, I want to focus on perseverance. To persevere is to endure and overcome something hard. To persevere is to be refined, to become stronger, to become a better version of yourself through overcoming the hard.**

**Do the hard work. Invite the Lord to examine your heart and reveal what needs to change. When He does, don't ignore it. Face it with courage. Don't bury it. Talk about it, pray about it, and invite those closest to you to walk with you through the healing process.**

**As you continue surrendering those wounds to Christ, their grip on your life will loosen day by day until you experience the freedom God has always desired for you.**

**Psalm 139:23-24**

**Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious  
thoughts. <sup>2</sup>See if there is any  
offensive way in me and lead me in  
the way everlasting.**

**James 5:16**

**Therefore, confess your sins to each  
other and pray for each other so that  
you may be healed. The prayer of a  
righteous person is powerful and  
effective.**

**Psalm 19:13**

**Keep your servant also from  
deliberate sins; may they not rule  
over me. Then I will be blameless,  
innocent of great transgression.**

# **DAY 3**

## **Mastered by Lust**

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**Lust, the destroyer of many men. Even the most successful, spiritual, and disciplined men can fall victim to lust. As men, the odds are against us. Our current culture is designed to distract us, tempt us, and hit us with cravings that can overwhelm our ability to think clearly. The ease of access to pornography, the fitness influencers at the gym, Instagram algorithms, and coworkers wearing low-cut shirts all surround us as stumbling blocks that slow us down, lure us in, and chain us to short-term gratification.**

**Scripture tells us to flee from sexual immorality, and there are times when we must literally remove ourselves from temptation. But no longer being mastered by lust starts with your eyes.**

**Matthew 6:22-23 says, "Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness." We must train our eyes not to wander, to look away, and to guard what we see.**

**Clean up some things, such as your social media feed and the shows you watch, and guard yourself in environments where immodesty is in your line of vision. Matthew 5:29 says to pluck out your eye if it causes you to lust; therefore, remove whatever triggers these temptations for you. Sex is one of the best gifts God has created; there, I said it. The Bible commands that sex be enjoyed within the context of marriage. Our culture has turned sex into a recreational activity, but God does not restrict sex outside of marriage to punish us. He does it to bless and protect us.**

**He is guarding us from a desire so powerful that few can control it once they have indulged it. The Lord wants to bless our obedience, not out of mere rule following, but out of reverence.**

**God does not want us to be slaves to sex. He does not want us to chase it, going from person to person in search of short-term gratification. He understands its power and the deep bonds it creates between individuals. He calls us to be free, mastered by nothing and aligned with the purpose He has for us.**

**Lastly, if you have struggled or failed in the arena of lust, do not let guilt and shame hold you captive. Jesus is a forgiving God. He redeems and restores. Repent and continue to fight the good fight of faith, putting safeguards in place to avoid falling again. Confess and be vulnerable with someone you trust to build accountability.**

**Set boundaries with women who are not your wife. Avoid one-on-one situations, and if you must meet, do so in a visible public place. If you are not married, establish boundaries with your girlfriend or fiancée that honor the Lord. For single men, prepare yourself to love well; guard your eyes, remove what pollutes your mind so you can protect the vision of your future wife. Do not chase fantasies; instead, fix your eyes on what is pure and filled with light.**

**Matthew 6:22-23**

**“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. ”**

**Matthew 5:29**

**So, if your eye, even your good eye causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away.**

**2 Timothy 2:22**

**Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-5**

**It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans.**

# **DAY 4**

## **Mastered by Physique**

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One's physical strength is essential; it is vital to remain physically strong and capable. Many men struggle with their physical health, either making it paramount, the "king" of their life, or becoming passive about getting "in shape." Few men can find a healthy balance.

I have struggled with this balance, to the point where my physical status defined my identity. Yes, I know who I am in Christ, but I carried the mindset of being defined by my muscles, appearance, and physical accomplishments. I once said to my wife, "Who am I if not the physical pursuit guy?" In the past, the pendulum swung too far for me, and it still requires intentional effort to keep it in perspective.

**I have allowed my physical pursuits to master my mindset to the point where my schedule and routine could not be interrupted. I would wake up early and rush through my time with the Lord just to spend more time at the gym. My planning and training consumed my thoughts and influenced many of my decisions. I overvalued my workouts and training to maintain my reputation and appearance.**

**I believe it is essential for men to have a physical pursuit. These pursuits can be any physical challenge that is difficult; the harder, the better. This will look different for everyone. It might be a hike, a race, a lifting goal, the Murph challenge, HYROX, or a CrossFit competition, anything that requires discipline, training, and carries a risk of failure. What I have learned is that physical pursuits are more about what your body can do than what your body looks like. They also connect to your spirituality.**

**The discipline and challenge of physical pursuits create opportunities to be emptied of self and to encounter God in your weakness.**

**From running marathons to completing the Murph challenge, the hardest moments in those experiences drew me closer to God. I found myself having vulnerable conversations mid-race, praying and reciting scripture, and in those struggles, God met me.**

**How do I keep it in balance now? 1 Timothy 4:8 says, "For physical training is of some value, but training in godliness has value for both this life and the life to come."**

**I felt God impress on me that He could do more with three workouts a week than I could do with five. So now, I keep my motives in check. I regularly evaluate my reasons for maintaining a workout routine.**

**Truthfully, I want my wife to find me attractive, I want to stay dangerous, I want to be able to do hard things, and I want to build my physical health for longevity.**

**Don't be mastered by selfish ambition or vain conceit. Don't be mastered by passivity or comfort. Find something to pursue physically, maintain balance, and take on the hard.**

### **1 Timothy 4:8**

**For physical training is of some value, training in godliness has value in this life and the next.**

**Philippians 2:3**

**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,**

**Matthew 6:25**

**Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?**

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

**Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.**

# **DAY 5**

## **Mastered by Success**

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**Success, the driving force for many men, the exhilaration that fuels competition, and the hunger to execute a perfectly formulated plan. But how do you define success? I want you to stop reading, grab your journal, or open a note on your phone and write out your definition, not ChatGPT's definition, but the one that truly resides in your mind.**

**Done? Good.**

**We need full transparency and vulnerability when it comes to how we define success. How you define success determines when you feel content or dissatisfied. It shapes your priorities and influences what you consider a failure. More importantly, it dictates what you pursue and invest in the most.**

**My definition of success is this: being obedient to what the Lord prompts me to do and being more famous at home than anywhere else.**

**If your definition of success is tied to something you can acquire or accumulate, a simple question arises: "Then what?" You become a millionaire, then what? You get the promotion, earn the title, buy your dream car, then what? The wrong view of success will leave you wanting more, dissatisfied, and chasing the wind.**

**We need to re-examine our priorities and be intentional about where we invest our time and energy. I believe that, as men of faith, we can be successful in our careers, with our children, and in our marriages if we maintain intimacy with our Lord and Savior. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you."**

**We have heard this verse many times, yet we go through seasons where we seek success first, hoping it will bring value to every other area of our lives.**

**Not being mastered by success requires reflection on the rhythm of our lives. Is there a pattern of rest in your week? Do you observe a Sabbath, a day of rest, to restore yourself and connect with those closest to you? A day to worship God intentionally by slowing down. Do you trust God to do more with your five or six days of work than you could with seven?**

**What are your first thoughts when you wake up? Is it a to-do list? Questions of "how"? There's a powerful truth: "What you think about most is what you value most." I was deeply convicted when I first heard that. Honestly, much of my thought life used to be consumed with making money, chasing women, or training to prepare for something.**

**Tracking my thoughts and making them obedient to Christ now allows me to fight the urge to think obsessively.**

**An even bigger question is this: while you are chasing success, what are you neglecting? Being mastered by success can steal your joy, weaken your dependence on God, and damage relationships along the way. This is not a criticism of success itself, but rather a warning about pursuing it in the wrong way.**

**Are you offering good things, but not the best things? Gifts, vacations, and expensive experiences can never replace the value of quality time with those we love. More than anything, they want you, not another purchase. Let's end on this note: God wants us to be successful. He desires for us to live abundant lives, lives where we thrive, create, steward wealth, and serve as vessels to build His kingdom. What He does not want is for us to cling so tightly to success that we no longer have a free hand to walk and work alongside Him.**

**Proverbs 16:3**

**Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.**

**Proverbs 23:4-5**

**Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own cleverness. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.**

**Luke 12:15**

**Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."**

**Colossians 3:2**

**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.**

## **DAY 6**

### **Mastered by Pride**

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I believe the Lord wants us to take pride in certain things. God wants us to take pride in caring for our homes, our appearance, and even where we come from. I believe He calls us to operate from a heart of excellence in everything we do; this is a healthy kind of pride.

Where pride begins to master us is when we start to believe we are the provider and sustainer of what we do, have, and desire. The pendulum can begin with dependence on God and swing far in the opposite direction as soon as we start thinking, "I've got this." Those words can be some of the most dangerous we utter as men. It marks a shift, a pride that blinds us and fosters the belief that we do not need help, we do not need others, and ultimately, we don't need God.

**We see this in the story of King Saul. The Bible says that when they were looking for Saul to anoint him as king, they found him hiding among the baggage. Saul clearly thought little of himself and felt unqualified. Over time, as he reigned and gained power, we see his downfall begin as he disregards the Lord's instructions. In his arrogance and pride, Saul made his own decisions. He began to fear the people, worried about losing his influence and reputation, and moved forward without regard for the consequences of his actions.**

**I experienced this in my own life. It was during a season when I was dealing with the aftermath of poor decisions and sin. I was on the phone with a good friend when he asked me, "Do you think you will still keep your job after this?" I replied, "Yes, they cannot afford to lose me. Look at what I have built. They love me too much." That was the pinnacle of my pride, and I believe it was where the breaking point began.**

**My pride blinded me and made me feel untouchable. In the weeks that followed, I lost it all, and I found myself faced down on the floor of my parents' guest bedroom, crying out to the Lord.**

**How is pride mastering you? Is it keeping you from admitting when you are wrong? Are success and achievement the source of your pride? Does it show up as a need to control, to make everything fit your checklist and expectations? What might your pride be blinding you from?**

**Pride is something we must keep in check. We want to have confidence in our calling, but not arrogance in our achievements. To do this, we must walk in humility. Keep your ears and eyes open so you do not miss what the Holy Spirit is prompting within you, or worse, ignore what God is trying to teach you.**

**Ask the Lord to reveal the areas of pride that are mastering you. Allow Him to search your motives and test your thoughts. Invite those closest to you to speak into your life as well. Receive it, repent, and walk in freedom from pride.**

**Proverbs 16:2:**

**"All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD."**

**1 Samuel 15: 24**

**Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the Lord's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them.**

**Proverbs 13:10**

**"Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice."**

**Proverbs 11:2:**

**"When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.**

# **DAY 7**

## **Mastered by Fear**

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**Fear masters us more than we realize. The fear of failure, the fear of repeating our mistakes, and the fear of being hurt again are present in all of us. We must come into agreement against fear and recognize that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. Pastor Richie Sarlo reframes our fear of failure by asking, "What if you succeed?" The fear that chains you is keeping you from living with purpose. Fear entangles us, keeps us comfortable, and prevents us from stepping forward in faith. What is God calling you to step into? What idea, pursuit, or change have you left on the back burner because you are afraid?**

**Fear often shows up as anxiety. We become anxious about tomorrow, worried about things that may or may not happen. We play out scenarios in our minds and rehearse arguments about situations that have not even occurred yet.**

**Anxiety is rooted in fear. Events like COVID-19 amplified many of our anxieties, from concerns over basic supplies to fears about sickness, and anxiety has reached high levels in our culture. The struggle with anxiety is real and heavy, and it should not be dismissed. However, our culture often labels stress and uncertainty as anxiety and can treat it as a normal state of living or even a crutch. As believers, we are given spiritual tools to fight against it.**

**The Word of God instructs us to bring our anxieties to the Lord in prayer, in every situation. We are called to cast our cares on Him because He cares for us, hears us, and is with us.**

**Ask the Lord to reveal the root of those anxious thoughts, and when He does, apply His Word to those areas. God's Word does not return void. When we speak the truth of Scripture over our fears and anxieties, we stand firm on a solid foundation. We push back against the enemy's schemes and declare that he does not have authority over our minds, our homes, or our purpose. Seek the Lord, call on His name, and trust in His Word with confidence, knowing that He will deliver you from your fears.**

**This is a daily battle. It requires taking every fearful thought captive and replacing it with truth. You cannot allow fear to master you; the purpose God has for you is too great. Understand that nothing is wasted. You are not meant to remain chained to fear. God has called you to break free so that you can live fully and be used for His kingdom.**

**Philippians 4:6-7**

**"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."**

**2 Timothy 1:7**

**"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."**

**1 Peter 5:7**

**"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."**

**Psalms 34:4**

**"I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears."**