

DO IT FOR A DAY

DAY 17 – LIVE NOT BY LIES

“We are not unaware of his schemes.

—2 Corinthians 2:11”

On February 12, 1974, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was arrested by the KGB and charged with treason. He had won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970, but Solzhenitsyn was more than an intellectual ivory tower. He had spent eight years in a Russian gulag. **Why? He was one of those rare souls who summoned up the moral courage to face what is wrong and defend what is right..** He refused to bow to the power, propaganda and intimidation tactics used against him and his family.

On the eve of his exile, Solzhenitsyn published a final petition for the Russian people. **The title speaks for itself: “Living without lies”.** "It won't be... an easy choice for the body," he said, "but it's the only one for the soul."

Before I tell you what it is to live without lies, let me tell you what it is not. It's not praising yourself to make you feel and look better. That's called ostentation, a subtle form of arrogance that's heavy on speech but light on action. **Living without lies is everything except empty words.**

To live without lies is to refuse to bow to cultural idols and ideologies that do not pass the test of truth. It's living your convictions while showing compassion for those who don't believe the same way you do. It is risking your reputation for what you believe to be good and right and true. It is speaking the truth creatively and lovingly to power, and it is speaking the truth in love. Living without lies is a conscience made captive to the Word of God, through the Spirit of God.

“Be cunning as serpents” Jesus said, *“and simple as doves.”*²

It is a two-sided truth. Once again, true wisdom has two sides.

If you do the right thing for the wrong reasons, it doesn't even count in the kingdom of God. We need to review motivations at the same time we leave our ego at the door. But we also have to outsmart the enemy, who happens to be the “smartest.”³

In other words, **we have to beat the enemy at their own game!**

There is an old saying that goes: “the best defense is a good offense”. I think that's true, spiritually speaking. Goodness is not the absence of evil! You can do nothing wrong and still not be doing anything good.

The best way to stay out of bad trouble is to get into good trouble! You need a vision that is bigger and better than the temptation you face. It is a method of habit change. **The best way to break a bad habit is to build a good habit.** It is the way we interrupt the pattern and alter the cycle of habit.”

Again, **abstinence is one of the most effective ways to break the pattern.** You remove the option entirely! Abstinence does not always mean forever. You can leave certain things for a certain time.

No alcohol means no alcohol.

No social media means no social media.”

“I'm not sure what habits you're trying to create or break, but how are you doing? If you went off the rails, hit the reset button. Consider it a second chance! Habit formation always entails some false starts. It's time to start over.

The enemy is known by a few names. **The enemy has been boycotting since the beginning of time.** It attempts to steal, kill, and destroy the future vision by making us keep the focus of our energy on past guilt.

A second signature is the angel of light. The angel of light uses smoke and mirrors to distract us. Do you remember the first temptation of Jesus?

“Tell these stones to become bread” said Satan. That seems innocent enough. What's wrong with that proposition? After all, Jesus would miraculously feed five thousand people with five loaves and two fish!

The third signature is the father of lies. Every time you lose hope, you believed a lie from the enemy. **It's always rewriting the true and the false.**

We make the same mistake, don't we? **We keep trying what doesn't work!** Please listen to me: for that reason we need a strong hand. **We need someone who cares about us enough to confront us.**

If you want to live counterculturally, you need a counternarrative.

I love words of encouragement, but they're not good enough. What is our counter narrative? It is the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus rewrote the rules in a way that is just as radical now as it was in his time.

At the heart of habit formation is the art of breaking and making rules, the art of breaking and making rules. In doing so, Jesus established a rule of life for all who follow in his footsteps.

We have rules for almost everything, don't we? There is a mnemonic for spelling in English: i comes before e, except after c. There is a rule for crossing the street: look both ways.

“Speaking of which, I love fun facts. **Do you know what the cassock worn by Benedictine monks is called?** It's called habit. I also love double meanings! The habit used by Benedictine monks symbolizes the seventy-three habits that make up their rules of life.

The Latin word for “rule” is regula and refers to the trellis where a plant grows. The trellis is used by gardeners or viticulturists to raise the branches, and it has a dual purpose. **Keeps branches off the ground** —what protects them from predators—**and maximizes productivity by keeping branches straight.**

A rule of life consists of daily routines that support growth.

It is an expression of the growth mindset, which protects us from temptation and points us to growth. It is the framework for the habits that help us grow physically, intellectually, relationally, emotionally, and spiritually.

HOW DO I MAKE IT A HABIT?

Rewrite the rules!

“In the practice of law, there is a concept called the rule of clear limits. It is a clearly defined rule that eliminates the need to make a decision. Why? A precedent has already

been set. It's very similar to the previous decisions we made on day 4. Here are some of my clear boundary rules:

I want to be famous in my home.

Playing it safe is risky.

The truth is found in the tension of opposites.

Critique by creating.

Let God be as original with others as he is with you.

Show off people behind their backs.

Check your ego at the door.

When it comes to setting priorities and boundaries, clear boundary rules are crucial. You need to write them down and place them in visible places. **You need to say them out loud over and over again.** Why? We tend to believe what we hear ourselves say out loud.

When our children were little, there was a note taped to the bathroom mirror that read: Choose your battles wisely. I have a card in my Bible that says: **Anything that takes me away from the Bible is my enemy, no matter how harmless it may seem..**

“What rules do you need to create? What rules do you need to break?”

Live not by lies!

Excerpt From

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