MOV DEVOTIONAL

# ONE LINK AT A TIME, PT 2



**Last month I spoke on how we get into sin just one link at a time. How our small choices we keep hidden over time turn into massive CHAINS. Those chains keep us weighed down from serving our family, our communities and God. Our Choices become Habits, which becomes Automatic when we are alone, which leads to how we Identify ourselves, which becomes our Nature (Steven Furtick). At the end of that devotional, my pastor added how we can help each other to remove those links. So, I wanted to follow up this month with more of how we can help each other break the links that the enemy has placed on us.**

**In the Bible we see King David, who made those small choices to take one link at a time. We see this in 1 Samuel 11. He made many small choices over a short period of time. David made the choice to remain in Jerusalem when kings were usually off to war. He made the choice to walk around on the rooftop and when seeing Bathsheba, he made the choice to continue to look. Then he inquired about her and made the choice to have relations with her. When he found out she was pregnant, he made the choice to send for Uriah her husband. When David's plan didn't go the way he wanted, he had Uriah killed. David just kept adding one link at a time to his chain which he thought he could keep hidden from everyone.**
**It makes me wonder how David would have answered someone if they asked him, "How are you doing, David?" during this time. Would he have just answered "I am doing well. Everything is good." Was it? David was doing things that he shouldn't have been doing. He was not where he should have been (he should have been on the battlefield instead of on the**

**rooftop). He was hiding while adding one link at a time. He could have started to break the chain just by having a conversation about what was happening in his life at that time. Aren't we like that? When people ask us, "How are you doing today?" We use the automatic response "I am fine thanks." or "Doing well." We might even say something like "Good, and you?" so that we remove the focus off us and back on them. This way we don't have to answer the question.**

**Are we truly fine? The word "fine" has several distinct meanings. It can be a noun, a verb, an adverb, or an adjective. We are going to look at just one of the meanings of fine which is - very good, high in quality, satisfactory, in good health. Most people today usually treat this question as a friendly greeting rather than a literal request for their health or feelings. How many of us can say we are truly fine? That everything in our lives is perfect and going smoothly. Our jobs are going great, our kids listen and obey, our health is great and we don't have any issues with temptation. Even the men in the Bible were not fine. They struggled with anger, temptations, doubt, fear, and all the things we still face today.**

**What are some of the key reasons men say that "I'm fine." (according to Google)**

- **Cultural conditioning or "Strong Provider" Stereotype: Many men are taught from childhood to "man up," hide pain, and avoid appearing weak. Society teaches men to hide our weakness or sensitivity, handle their problems alone, and project strength. Admitting struggle can feel like failing as a leader, husband, or father.**
- **Fear of being a burden: They often worry that sharing their heavy emotions will bring others down. Many men feel that sharing their heavy burdens will inconvenience or worry others, so they default to a safe, neutral answer for casual interactions.**
- **Fear of Disappointing the Community: In many church environments, there is an unwritten pressure to look like you "have it all together" because you have faith. Admitting depression, doubt, or marital strain can feel shameful.**
- **Misinterpreting Joy and Strength: Some men mistakenly believe that displaying sadness or struggle contradicts biblical commands to "rejoice always" or trust God, forgetting that figures like David and Paul openly wept and expressed deep anguish in Scripture.**

**So how can we start breaking the chains? We can start by showing that we don't have everything figured out. That we struggle with things. We are men that need help whether it's with everyday tasks, our angers, our temptations, the list can go on. We are not perfect and God doesn't expect us to hide and keep everything inside. Men need other men to help get through life. Proverbs 27:17 - "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." This is my favorite verse. This verse reminds me that we all have times that we get worn down due to life or battles that we face. So, we need to be sharpened by other men who have been through it and can help us. On the flip side of that, there are times that we become the sharpener for those that God places in our paths. We get to help someone get through what they are facing, sometimes we do this just by listening and letting another brother let their frustrations out in a safe place. This is to vent and not be judged. To yell or even cuss if**

**needed (oh I forgot we are Christians we aren't supposed to do that). I would rather you yell and cuss to me in private, than you do it to your wife or kids. I am a big boy, and I will let you have a safe place to get your anger out and not judge you. I think that there are men in your life that understand and are there for you when needed. There are times in our lives that we need to do that. To let our frustrations out and what we have been struggling with. Keeping it in is like a ticking timebomb waiting for it to go off. We are meant to live as a community and not keep ourselves isolated.**

**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." Sharing our burdens and worries with each other is how we grow. It helps reduce stress and builds stronger bonds. It helps us get different perspectives on what we are going through and how we can apply it to our lives or situation. To break the chains, we must start communicating and trusting one another about what we are facing. Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NLT) "A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken."**

**Paul and Silas had each other when they went through things. They could bounce ideas off each other, they could share what was bothering them, they looked to each other for support when things got bad, they also got to share all the good times they experienced, they probably laughed together and cried together, and most importantly they got to worship together. That is what true brotherhood looks like.**

**So, God is asking us, "How is (your name) doing today?" Is there anything that you need help with? Are there chains that are holding you down that you need to be freed from? Is there anything that you are facing that we can pray over and with God we all can overcome together? Let's break the chains today!**