



MOV DEVOTIONAL

ONE LINK AT A TIME



Who remembers the song “One Piece at a Time”? This was a hit novelty country song that was written by Wayne Kemp and recorded by Johnny Cash in 1976. The plot of the song follows a Detroit assembly line worker who steals parts to make his own Cadillac. He did this by stealing one piece at a time over a 24 year period. He smuggled the parts out by placing them into a large lunchbox and his buddy’s mobile home. The results after he put it all together was a bizarre "transcontinental" Frankenstein car combining parts from 1949 all the way to 1973. It didn't have a clear title or fit normal registration because it spans decades. Part of the chorus of the song went “I got it one piece at a time and it didn’t cost me a dime”

It’s just like sin we let in our lives. We get in it a piece at a time. We sneak around in hiding to get what we want. We seek a little bit here and a little bit there, we hide in secret, our friends talk us into it, we take that second look when we know we shouldn’t have. The devil says it's OK to make those little choices. That small peak on that website, that second look at the pretty lady walking by. He convinces us that everything will be alright and that no one will ever find out.

- It starts with that first link. Those small choices don't seem like much. It's only once and I got away with it. No problem!
- Then we make the next small choice. So then we add another link. It's still small and I am doing it in secret. Still easy peasy to get away with and stop if I want.
- Then we see our friends doing it and we make another small choice to follow them. They are doing it so why not. They look like they can handle it, so can I!
- We keep adding more links to our chain by another small choice which leads us to making another small choice which leads us to making more. The domino effect.
- Pretty soon our small choices have added up to a longer chain that we keep hidden. We start to think that it's still manageable and we can still keep it hidden from our wives, our family, our friends, our church. This is because we have kept it hidden for so long and when we do think about it, we only see the first couple of links, which makes us think we got this under control. We have hidden things so well that we don't realize how much it has consumed us.
- Eventually what we kept hidden will come to light. Luke 8:17 "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.
- When we finally look at the chain we see why we have felt so weighed down. All those small choices over time linked together and now have become a heavy burden on us and our families. We thought no one would ever know but now it's out for all to see. The devil will just sit back, laugh and say, "Yes he got it one piece at a time and it cost him more than a dime!"

The devil knows if he keeps us making those small choices, he will eventually control us by the chain he has placed around us. This is because he knows that those small choices over time become habits. We have already seen the bait and now all he must do is keep putting it in front of us. A little here and a little there. We just keep falling into the trap, time after time while he keeps pulling us deeper into the darkness. When you want something to stay down, what do you do? You keep adding weight to it. Over time all those small choices will become habits and then they become automatic. We automatically go to them without thinking about it. They become our default setting in our lives because we can't get the chains off of ourselves. We have fallen into the trap of the enemy. We tell ourselves it's our

identity, our nature - It's just what I do, I can't stop because I have been doing it for a long time. There is no hope for me. I am a child of God but I am a slave to sin. Today's choices become tomorrow's chains. Choices, Habits, Automatic, Identity, Nature.
(credit to Steven Furtick)

Paul mentions this in Romans 7:15-20 ¹⁵I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷As it is, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Paul feels confused by his own choices because he ends up doing the exact opposite of his good intentions. I think we all feel the frustration when we break a promise to ourselves to stop, and we keep repeating a bad habit.

So how do we get these chains off?

- Humble Confession - 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.” - You can't do it on your own. We need each other to help carry our burdens and start to break the chains that bind us.
- Total Surrender - Total surrender to God is the act of letting go of personal control, ambitions, and fears, choosing instead to trust His wisdom, submit to His will, and align one's life completely with His purposes without reservation. Romans 12:1 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.”
- Grab your Sword - Ephesians 6:17 "Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" The Helmet helps to keep the enemy's voice out of our heads. We won't hear the whispers from him telling us it's alright and that no one will ever find out. The sword is your weapon to fight him off and keep him at bay. The enemy is a liar and when we fight back with Christ beside us , he flees!

- Submit to God - James 4:7-8 "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." Submit to daily communication with God and He will help us to break the chains of sin and keep them out of your life.
- John 8:36 "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."
- Psalm 107:14 "He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and broke their chains in pieces".

So we must decide, if not today, when will we bring to light all that we have kept hidden. For some of us it may be just a few links that we need to break free from. For others it could take a while to remove all the links that we placed together over the years. I will leave you with this, it doesn't matter if it's a few links or many, they will never be broken if we keep them hidden. We must bring them out to the Light. We may have put it together one piece at a time, but guess what, we don't have to take it apart one piece at a time. Jesus will break them all at once because He is our Chain Breaker!