



SERIES: APRIL – YES, YOU CAN! OVERCOMING YOUR STRUGGLES

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Scripture: Proverbs 25:28, 2 Timothy 1:7

TITLE: The Law of the Trade-Off

“You have to give up to go up.” That’s what John Maxwell said in the *15 Invaluable Laws of Growth*. This is what he called the law of the trade-off. To grow and mature, you need to learn to be self-controlled. We need to be able to say “no” now to experience a “yes” later. We need to turn down a good option for a greater opportunity. That’s the law of the trade-off.

Everyone struggles with self-control. Even Christians struggle. In fact, according to the feedback you provide us, this is a major struggle today. Is there a way to live out the law of the trade-off, or is it really that big of a deal?

Let’s go back to the Bible for the answers. Proverbs 25:28 (ESV) says,

A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

This summer, I began seeing stink bugs in my son's living room. He’s not at the age yet where his room looks and smells like a trash heap, so I knew it had to be something else. Sure enough, there was a break in the seal in his window. The bugs were coming in through this opening. This is what a lack of self-control does for us. It lets in the junk we don’t want.

But can we really stop and overcome our struggles? Can we really say “no” today to say “yes” to tomorrow? According to the Apostle Paul, yes. He says this is 2 Timothy 1:7 (CSB), “*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.*” I think a better translation for “sound judgment” is, “discipline.”

I was able to meet former Mr. Olympian Jay Cutler. This was a big dude. 5’9” and in off-season, 290 lbs. When it was contest season, he would shed 30-40 lbs. How did he do this? Self-control. He constantly said no to foods and lifestyles that drove him to be the best in the world. Four times, he would be Mr. Olympia.

We have access to the same power for self-control because of the Spirit of God. The power that brought Christ from death to life is the same power in us today to live a life pleasing to God. It powers us to live the life of the trade-off each and every day.

So here’s my challenge for you today: make the trade. I don’t know what struggle you are facing. Chances are, you’ve been struggling for a long time. Whether it’s food, smoking, alcohol, pornography, or whatever battle you are facing, there is a better way and a way out. That is by relying on God’s power to help you win the day by making the trade.

So today, ask God for help to choose no to say “yes” to tomorrow. When we live the law of the trade-off in God’s power, we will win the day.