

# SELF-TALK FOR SUCCESS



TAKE CONTROL  
OF YOUR THOUGHTS  
AND  
WRITE YOUR OWN FUTURE

**JOHN MASON**

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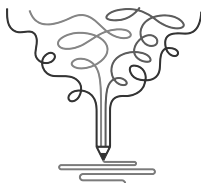
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## JOHN MASON



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I am proud to dedicate this book to my beautiful wife, Linda; our four great kids, Michelle, Greg, Mike, and Dave; my mom, Lorene Mason; my two daughters-in-law, Brittany and Kelley; and my five grandchildren, Emma, Olivia, Beckett, Darby, and Briggs.

To Linda, for your prayers, laughter, and love.

To Michelle, for your faithfulness and unwavering commitment to doing it right.

To Greg, for your deep faith and golf lessons.

To Mike, for your fearless spirit and worshipful heart.

To Dave, for your winning spirit and “Dave and Dad” fun.

To Mom, for your never-ending love and belief in me.

Dad, I sure miss you!

To Brittany and Kelley, for your love for my sons, my grandkids (your children), and the Lord.

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Your support, help, encouragement, sense of humor, and prayers sustain and bless me every day.

# CONTENTS

Introduction 11

1. Me versus Me 13
2. Fake Diamonds Appear Perfect, but Real Diamonds Have Flaws 16
3. If God Is Making You Wait, Be Prepared for Great Things 21
4. “Trust Me,” God Whispers 25
5. Dear Stress, Let’s Break Up 31
6. Don’t Believe Everything You Think 36
7. God Is Everywhere and Anywhere You Are 42
8. God Is at Work When You Least Expect It 45
9. Never Let People Who Aren’t Going Anywhere Take You with Them 48
10. Don’t Attend Every Distraction You’re Invited To 54

## Contents

11. Sometimes the Smallest Decisions Can Change Your Life Forever 58
12. When You Fall, Pick Something Up 63
13. Cinderella Is Proof That a New Pair of Shoes Can Change Your Life 69
14. Image Is Everything? 75
15. Thoroughly Enjoy Minding Your Own Business 82
16. Someone Else's Victory Is Not Your Defeat 86
17. Go to Sleep with a Dream and Wake Up with a Purpose 90
18. Miracles Come in Moments 95
19. Keep Going—Everything You Need Will Come to You at the Right Time 99
20. The Best Thing to Appreciate in Life Is Each Other 103
21. Anything That Costs You Your Peace Is Too Costly 111
22. The Right Time Is the Right Time 114
23. How Old Is Your Attitude? 118
24. Nothing Is as It Appears—Nothing 122
25. Better Things Are Coming 125
26. Question Everything 130
27. Have Fun (Seriously)! 134
28. Denying the Truth Doesn't Change the Facts 138
29. You Can Hear for Yourself 141
30. Jesus Didn't Say, "Follow Christians"—He Said, "Follow Me" 148

## *Contents*

- 31. No Excuses 152
- 32. Forgive Your Enemies—Nothing Will Annoy Them More 156
- 33. What Comes Out of Your Mouth Goes into Your Life 160
- 34. Stop Yourself from Stopping Yourself 165
- Notes 169



# INTRODUCTION

It's time to get out of our own way and stop being our own worst enemy.

Every person around the world faces this conflict—the battle in our minds. This war is raging around us twenty-four hours a day. It can sometimes seem unrelenting and unfair. That's because the devil is a liar, and our minds can play tricks on us. The good news is, we can remove toxic thinking and replace it with healthy thoughts.

Colossians 3:2 tells us where we should place our minds—on things above. Here's the truth: We get to decide what we think about. We don't have to accept or believe every thought that comes to mind.

Through the encouraging thoughts in this book, I desire to help you discover the power of a godly mindset—acting, thinking, and talking the way God wants you to. If you do, you can find a life of joy, a life of peace with God and yourself, and the opportunity to become all God created you to

be—ultimately successful. Proverbs says, “As he thinks in his heart, so is he” (23:7 AMP).

Position yourself to receive all the healthy thoughts God has for you through this book. That’s the mindset He desires for you and the one I work on for myself. Be encouraged; God is for you!

Together, let’s beat self-defeat!



## Me versus Me

Nothing in this world can trouble you as much as your own thoughts. No one has the right to make you feel bad, not even you.

Khalil Gibran said, “My enemy said to me, ‘Love your enemy.’ And I obeyed him and loved myself.” Look in the mirror—that’s your competition. Your worst enemy can’t harm you as much as your unfiltered thoughts.

I keep my friends close and my enemies closer—that’s easy for most of us to do because we’re our own worst enemy.

I had finished my day at the office and gotten up from my desk to walk out of the building when I noticed a bump on my knee. This bump was so big, it made my pants stick out on the right side of my kneecap. *I didn’t bang my knee on anything!* I thought. *What could it be?* I began to replay my

day over and over, convincing myself I had not bumped my knee on anything.

Never build a case against yourself. Don't put water in your own boat; the storm will put enough in on its own. And did you know that the great evangelist Dwight L. Moody said, "I've never met a man who gave me as much trouble as myself"?

I knew I hadn't bumped my knee on anything, and as I thought about it, a second thought came to me . . . *I've had bumps before, but this feels different! It doesn't feel like a bump. It feels like a lump!*

After five minutes of thinking like this, I began picturing myself playing golf with only one leg! You see, through thinking incorrectly, I'd gone from a *bump* to a *lump* to a *stump*! In only five minutes.

By then, I was driving home, and suddenly I realized what I was doing. I said out loud, "John, you're so stupid! I thank You, God, that by Jesus's stripes, I am healed. Your Word says believers can lay their hands on the sick, and they recover!" I laid my hand on my knee, said a prayer, and by the time I got home, that bump was entirely gone. Praise God!

Inaccurate conversations with ourselves give a small thing a big shadow. Those damaging words are the misuse of God's creative imagination placed inside us. The more we listen to our negative thinking, the bigger its shadow grows and darkens what were once bright areas in our lives. Someone once said, "Don't believe the things you think in the middle of the night. You're your own worst enemy, and you can't win that fight."

When wrong thinking comes your way, here's how to win: you can keep "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5 ASV). Instead, I like to tell myself (join with me), "I am who God says I am, I can have what He says I can have, I can do what He says I can do. I accept how God has made me and choose to say yes to Him."

There's been a lot of talk recently about fake news. There's no more critical fake news than when we tell ourselves we can't do what we know God wants us to do. That news is false, twisted, out of context, and fraudulent. The truth is, as told to Winnie the Pooh by Christopher Robin, "You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

Don't believe everything you think. Ralph Marston advised, "There are plenty of difficult obstacles in your path. Don't allow yourself to become one of them."



## Fake Diamonds Appear Perfect, but Real Diamonds Have Flaws

What has stolen your joy? Could the thief be perfectionism? Stop letting perfectionism hold you back. It's a dream killer.

Thinking that everything needs to be flawless leads to procrastination and regret. You'll find yourself paralyzed. Imperfections should not be regretted; they're supposed to be learned from and accepted. People are supposed to make mistakes—that's why we have erasers.

I love that the Bible is full of imperfect people, with one notable exception. God did this to encourage all of us very flawed people. You were born to be real, not perfect.

I've had the opportunity to help many authors with their books, and over the course of years, I've come up with several sayings that apply to all my authors. One of my favorite ones is, "There has only been one perfect book, and it's not yours." Authors often believe that what they write has to be perfect. I find this challenge more common with first-time authors. As a result, many times they don't even get the book finished or it's so late that it's lost its opportunity. A flawed diamond is more valuable than a perfect brick.

My hope in saying "there has only been one perfect book, and it's not yours" is to communicate to authors the genuine value of finishing the book as best they can, with what they have, where they are. Then trust God to do what He wants to do through the book. I also recommend that they trust others who are skilled in editing and fine-tuning to help the book become as "perfect" as possible. You don't inspire others by being perfect. You inspire others by how you deal with your imperfections. According to Dejan Stojanovic, "In trying to be perfect, he perfected the art of anonymity, became imperceptible, and arrived nowhere from nowhere."

The Bible says, "If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done" (Eccles. 11:4 TLB). When God thought of His plans for you, He knew you'd mess up. When you stumbled, He didn't say, "Oh Myself!" Your mistakes are not a surprise to Him. At the end of a long day, don't get into bed, turn off the lights, and then spend eight hours thinking about every mistake you've ever made.

There are three musts that hold us back: I must do it perfectly. You must treat me flawlessly. And the world must be pure.

Pastor Tom (not his real name) was a fantastic worship leader. I had just begun to speak in churches around the country and found myself sitting in the front row as the music started. I could immediately tell he was a talent unlike any other I had seen. He had a natural gift for leading worship. His voice was terrific. It was apparent that he genuinely loved worshiping God. About halfway into the first song, I noticed that he adjusted some dials with his hands and some buttons with his feet while leading the congregation in worship. I'm sure that took a unique talent all of its own, but it also was incredibly distracting. I knew he was a professional and trying to get it "just right." But what was evident to me was that no one could tell the difference based on any change he made, yet it was disrupting his primary goal to help people encounter God through song.

I remember thinking this was a snapshot of life. We become so easily distracted that we get in our own way in the pursuit of perfection.

Pastor Tom came up to me after the service and asked what I thought about the music. I told him it was wonderful but he might want to consider refraining from adjusting the board and the knobs on the foot pedal during the entire worship service. He said he didn't know he was doing that. I guess it had become a habit. Let's stay away from anything that keeps us from doing the main thing.

Here's the excellent news: Pastor Tom had a teachable spirit. What he wanted most was godly worship. He received



the correction and enjoyed several wonderful years as the worship leader at that church. Thirty years ago, he founded a church that is still thriving and impactful today.

Here's how *Psychology Today* describes perfectionism:

Perfectionism is a trait that makes life an endless report card on accomplishments or looks. When healthy, it can be self-motivating and drive you to overcome adversity and achieve success. When unhealthy, it can be a fast and enduring track to unhappiness. What makes extreme perfectionism so toxic is that while those in its grip desire success, they are most focused on avoiding failure, resulting in a negative orientation. They don't believe in unconditional love, expecting others' affection and approval to be dependent on a flawless performance.<sup>1</sup>

Don't be like the mom who said, "I didn't know I had a problem with perfectionism until I watched my kids hang ornaments on the tree wherever they wanted." Only God is perfect. He's perfect at perfecting us too. He's God, you're not. The Bible says, "The LORD will perfect *that which* concerns me" (Ps. 138:8, emphasis added). You and I are perfectly imperfect.

God says to come to Him just as you are. Stop being disappointed with everything you *aren't* and start accepting yourself for everything you *are*. I believe it's accurate to blame social media for some of this. It has caused us to display jealous behavior based on illusions. People are envious of things, relationships, and lifestyles that don't even exist.

The fastest way to kill something special is to compare it to something else.

Relax. Karen Salmansohn said, “You don’t need a perfect life to be happy. You just need to surround yourself with people who love you for who you are.” Know that you can stumble, miss the mark, start late, make a wrong decision, look different, be unsure, waver in your faith, start over, and still succeed. Don’t worry about being perfect—it will never happen. You can beat the self-defeating thinking of perfectionism.