



Links Players

Defeating Red Lizards

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

As a new student approached me on the lesson tee, walking with his golf bag slumped over in a downcast posture, I sensed he was feeling defeated. Upon our introductions, he candidly expressed, "I don't think this old dog can learn new tricks." In his early seventies, he had stagnated for many years in progressing with his golf game.

I gently corrected his mindset, delving into the concept of neuroplasticity—our brain's ability to change and rewire itself. I explained that such transformation is not only scientifically possible but is also aligned with spiritual principles.

In Romans 12:2, Paul emphasizes the divine call to be transformed through the renewal of the mind, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Yet, the question lingered: how does one initiate this transformation? How can thinking, behaviors, and habits ingrained over decades be changed? Drawing inspiration from C.S. Lewis's novel, "The Great Divorce," specifically chapter eleven, I recounted to my student the tale of a man grappling with a red lizard on his shoulder—a metaphor for sinful desires, destructive behaviors, and negative mindsets.

The man in the story was on a journey in the afterlife and faced a choice: to allow an angelic spirit to kill and transform the lizard into a magnificent stallion, symbolizing redemption and spiritual growth. He was initially resistant to letting go of the red lizard, but his eventual acceptance became a potent symbol of the internal struggle against sinful nature. The man finally believed he could change and that he could live without the red lizard.

This allegory may resonate with all of us because the red lizard can symbolize diverse struggles residing in our flesh. Like the golf student who believed change was impossible for his golf game, many surrender to red lizards, succumbing to lies about transformation's impossibility.

Regardless of life's season or age, we as Christians possess the power to consciously change our minds and rewire our thinking. You can teach an old dog new tricks!

The pivotal step is allowing the Lord to eliminate these red lizards—negative influences or thoughts—attached to us. Ephesians 4:22 emphasizes shedding the old self and donning the new, created in God's likeness, “to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Additionally, in 2 Corinthians 10:5, we're urged to demolish arguments contrary to God's knowledge, taking every thought captive to obey Christ. When we release the deceptive red lizards (quit believing their lies) and submit our minds to our Creator, transformation becomes possible.

If you feel defeated in an area of your life (chronic negative thoughts, actions, sins, and habits), dismiss the notion of improvement as an impossibility and reject that lie from the red lizard.

The Lord desires us to rise like stallions, liberated from the red lizards binding us, running our races to eternal glory. As creatures of a loving Creator, surrendering our will and minds to Him ensures that He can and will effect change within us.

Prayer: Lord, remove any red lizards in our lives that hinder us and renew our minds.

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Meredith Kirk

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The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.