

# Don't Download This Virus

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We've all had it happen. In just a moment we unwittingly open an email or click on a link that downloads a virus onto our computer. Once downloaded it quickly takes over the circuitry and we lose control of the machine. Even worse, it may destroy the software. That's why we've learned to never open an email from someone we don't know. Or, download a link unless we know who sent it. And even then we should be careful.

## A Thought Virus

I realize you've heard plenty of warnings about the dangers of computer viruses and how to avoid them. But I'm not writing to warn you about that kind of a virus. I'm writing to warn you about a thought virus that will download onto your brain and take over the circuitry. Once this happens your brain's chemical distribution plant will release a cocktail of chemicals that will race through your body producing fear, anxiety, depression and despair.

## A Freeway With Only On-Ramps

Over time this neural pathway will become like an interstate freeway that only has on-ramps. Picture that for a moment. The lies you've been telling yourself will form a bias which only accepts information that supports the bias. All contradicting thoughts will be rejected. Eventually this freeway will link up with the rest of your brain's circuitry. It will control your emotions and shape how you see yourself and the world around you.

## "I'm a Loser"

Maybe you downloaded a thought virus that said, "I'm a loser." If so you'll collect corroborating evidence to prove that thought is true. And you'll reject those thoughts that say you're a winner. If you've convinced yourself you're a loser you'll refuse to celebrate your successes because you'll view them as insignificant. You'll reject sincere affirmation because you know the kind words you're hearing can't be true because you're a loser.

Maybe the lie you believe has to do with financial loss, or academic failure, or sexual lust, or an inability to forgive or change. Whatever the virus, it always produces negative thoughts and feelings.

## Thoughts You Must Download

The good news is there's another set of thoughts that will dispel those damaging lies and build you up. These are the thoughts you must download.

When Paul exhorted us to "Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ," (2 Corinthians 10:5) he commanded us to take control of our thoughts and "make" them obey Christ. In Philippians 4:8 he wrote these words: "Whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely,

whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things."

We must avoid downloading a negative-lying thought virus. And when we realize we've done so, we must remove it and replace it with truthful thoughts that form a neural pathway of blessing. These thoughts will trigger the release of chemicals into our body that will bring a sense of joy and well-being (Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin, and Endorphins). They will release the flow of living water which Jesus promised to those who believe in him (John 7:38).

Moving into the New Year, let's reject curses and cling to blessings.