



Love Yourself Roadmap

- **Key Scripture to memorize:** Matthew 22:36-40 - ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" (Without hesitation) ³⁷ Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
- **How do we love ourselves in a biblical way?**
 - Utilize healthy-self talk – monitor the way you talk to yourself. Every time a negative word comes out of your mouth directed toward yourself, ask God to forgive you, and to help you modify this self-defeating behavior.
 - Understand self-love is not self-centeredness. The goal is not narcissism... it is learning how to balance caring for others with caring for yourself. Schedule time in your calendar for activities that feed and replenish the emotional part of your being.
 - Uncover God's point of view – if you struggle with loving yourself, memorize Psalm 139; Ephesians 2:4-6; Romans 8:31-39. Put yourself to sleep at night quoting these scriptures. God's word is a powerful means of changing unhealthy thought patterns.

NOTE: Give yourself grace in this process. Learning to love yourself takes time. Growth here is typically incremental.

- **Recommended Reading**
 - Emotionally Healthy Spirituality – Scazzero
 - Running on Empty – Cordeiro
 - Pastor Disaster - Opalewski
- **NOTE:** If you are currently experiencing depression, schedule an appointment with your medical doctor. Discuss the benefits of beginning an exercise program. Talk with him/her about how antidepressant medication may help stabilize your emotions.
 - Begin an exercise and medication regimen if your doctor so advises. Exercise a minimum of 3-4 times per week. Here are some suggested activities:
 - Walking/hiking
 - Weightlifting
 - Swimming
 - Continue with your exercise and medication regimen even when you begin to feel better. Work with your doctor closely here.
 - In addition, schedule an appointment with a licensed counselor. Converge Coaching can connect you with a network of qualified counselors. If you feel you are unable to keep yourself safe, seek emergency assistance immediately.



- **Ten warning signs of depression (From the National Institute of Mental Health).**
 - Insomnia or excessive sleeping.
 - Dramatic change in appetite – overeating, or appetite loss.
 - Loss of interest in activities that once proved pleasurable, including sex.
 - Persistent aches or pains, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment.
 - Fatigue and decreased energy.
 - Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and helplessness.
 - Feelings of hopelessness and pessimism.
 - Irritability or restlessness.
 - Persistent sad, anxious or empty feelings.
 - Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, a combination of five or more of these recognizable symptoms that last for two weeks may indicate a clinical level of depression.



Manage Your Anger Roadmap

- **Key Scriptures to memorize**
 - Ephesians 4:26 – “In your anger, do not sin.” (NIV)
 - Ephesians 4:31 – “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger.” (NIV)

- **How do we manage our anger in a biblical way?**
 - Assess it accurately
 - Anger is part of being human. It’s a normal response when you are violated. *Feeling* anger doesn’t mean you are a bad or immature person. What you *do* with anger is the key. Proper management stimulates growth. Improper management hurts you (and others). Remember the duration of your anger should track with the duration and depth of the wound.
 - Anger can involve residual forces – unresolved anger from past events can simmer underneath the surface and bubble over disproportionately. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any unresolved anger you are carrying. As He pushes up things to the surface – address them to the best of your ability. If you need help working through these things, enlist a coach or a counselor.
 - Anger is the right response sometimes – Moses and the golden calf (Exodus 32:19); Jesus and the man with a shriveled hand (Mark 3:1-5). For example, if a trusted friend betrays you, some degree of anger is to be expected.
 - Anger can signal overscheduling – your irritability may have a lot to do with your calendar.
 - Express it appropriately
 - Prepare yourself for people/situations that are ripe for an emotional eruption – spend time praying (and maybe fasting) in preparation.
 - Practice assertiveness – this means expressing... in a loving, respectful and *firm* way... how someone’s behavior is negatively impacting you.
 - Put aside aggression and/or passivity – getting physical, using vulgar language, yelling... these are aggression. Stuffing anger, stewing, holding a grudge... these are passivity. Both are damaging to your health.
 - Protect your schedule – avoid the temptation to pile on one draining event after another. Give yourself time to breath. Sync up with an accountability partner that will look at your schedule regularly and help you identify areas where you may be overcommitting.

- **Recommended Reading**
 - Boundaries – Cloud and Townsend
 - Happiness is a Choice – Minirth and Meier
 - Pastor Disaster - Opalewski



Protect Yourself from Abuse Roadmap

- **Key Scripture to memorize**
 - 2 Timothy 4:14-15 – *“Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.”* (NIV)

- **How to protect yourself from abuse**
 - Identify abusive behavior – abuse is any behavior that harms you verbally, mentally, spiritually, physically, etc.
 - Establish and enforce healthy boundaries. A boundary is not a wall... it is a “breathable fence.” It keeps *in* the good and keeps *out* the bad. It lets *out* the bad and lets *in* the good. Here are four ways to building a breathable fence:
 - Stand up for yourself – this is the main fencepost of protecting yourself from abuse. When an abuser attacks, draw a clear relational boundary. Tell them how their behavior is negatively impacting you. Let them know... kindly but firmly... that you will not allow them to treat you poorly. They may not get the message the first time... so stay consistent and eventually they should understand. If they don’t... protect yourself by putting some geographic distance between you and them. Avoid them when possible. This demonstrates you are serious about your position.
 - Size up the situation – it is one thing to be persecuted because of belonging to Jesus. It is another thing to simply be in the path of a narcissistic bully. Don’t confuse bullying with persecution. Even when genuinely persecuted... remember in the New Testament often the response to persecution was to flee.
 - Single out your past – if you grew up in a dysfunctional home, you are more likely to be subconsciously drawn to abusive people. Life’s not fair, is it? Be aware of family-of-origin dynamics and how they can set you up for abuse.

- **NOTE:** If protecting yourself this way is new territory for you, you will need a support group (or small group) of loving people in your life who will buffer the potential loss of relationship you may encounter when you stand up for yourself. You can practice this new skill with them before trying it out on people who are abusing you.

- **Recommended resources**
 - Don’t Let Jerks Get the Best of You – Meier
 - Crazy-makers – Meier
 - Pastor Disaster - Opalewski



Refuel Emotionally Roadmap

- **Key Scriptures to memorize**
 - Matthew 11:28-30 - *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* (NIV)
 - Mark 6:30-32 - *"The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.' So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place."* (NIV)

- **How to refuel emotionally** - Accept the reality that you are a 3-part being... body, spirit and soul. The soul-part of you includes your emotions. Care and feeding for your emotions requires paying attention to 3 key indicators:
 - Your schedule –Ministry doesn't fit neatly into a 45-50 hour week. Some weeks you will work more than 50. But if you do this consistently, you are not giving your soul time to recover. Develop a healthy ebb and flow between work and rest.
 - Your social life – regularly block out time on your calendar to spend with people who replenish you. These are "appointments" that should not be trumped by anything other than a legitimate emergency.
 - Your system – create your own personal game plan to maintain emotional fuel:
 - Exercise 3-4 times per week. Weightlifting, walking, swimming, cycling, etc. If not currently exercising, check with your physician prior to starting.
 - Laugh as much as possible. Watch a clean comedy series or movie weekly. Read the comics page.
 - Introduce some "boring" into your life. Periodically involve yourself in activities that distract you mentally from work. These can be simple, non-eternal types of pursuits... watching a sunset; splitting firewood; etc.

- **NOTE:** Laziness and workaholism are equally damaging to your emotional health. Refuse to allow the pace of our culture to influence you. An accountability partner can help you stay consistent with refueling. Show them your calendar and give them permission to tell you where you are overcommitting.

- **Recommended resources**
 - Margin - Swenson
 - The Search for Significance - McGee
 - Pastor Disaster - Opalewski