

CCC HOW TO BREAK A BAD HABIT Part 2

Last week we said that every one of us have bad habits. I know I do and guess what if I you have a belly button you got bad habits too. Some of our bad habits are obvious. Some of them are kind of hidden. But see either way it doesn't matter. Either way hidden or obvious they mess up our lives and keep us from being all that God wants us to be.

What do you do when you want to break a bad habit? We'll last week we said one thing you can do is you can go to the bookstore and look at all the self help books because there are a lot of them and they have there place. What I mean is they will all tell you some things to do but here is the problem... they can only tell you... they don't have the power, they don't have the energy to bring about genuine and lasting change. I read some of them... and they

have helpful things... They'll say things like, "Take control of your life." And when I read that I know that and am glad I am being reminded about that... But, listen, the truth is I can't control today, much less my entire life. How can I take control of... They say things like, "Shape up! Get rid of all your bad habits. Now listen saying those things to me is like saying to a guy who's fallen off a skyscraper, "Stop falling!" He'd love to stop falling, but he doesn't have the power to stop and we don't have the power either to stop our bad habits.

Now what we did last week and we will continue today and for the next few weeks is we're going to look at God's way. Were going to look at what God's Word, the Bible says about "How to break a bad habit." We are going to look at nine steps as well as have a testimony. I put these nine steps in an acrostic so you'll remember them.

They spell out BREAK FREE. Now last week we did a few of the letters and I want to do a short review of them. The first letter in wanting to break free of a bad habit is:

B - BEGIN TODAY Don't put it off. Proverbs 27:1 says *"Never boast about tomorrow. You don't know what will happen between now and then."* In other words, don't start next month; don't start next week, don't start tomorrow. That scripture is telling us start today. Every day that you procrastinate on changing a bad habit it gets more deeply ingrained. Every day you put off changing the things you know should be changed in your life, they become more habitual. They become stronger with delay. God says, "Don't wait! Don't put it off. Do it today."

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (Living Bible) *"If you wait for perfect conditions, you'll never get anything done!"* There's never a better time than now. You quit saying, "One of these

days I'm going to get my act together... One of these days I'm going to get right with God ... One of these days I'm going to do what I know is the right thing to do..." "One of these days" is "none of these days". Do it now.

The second letter in wanting to break free of a bad habit is:

R - REFUSE TO BLAME OTHERS You'll never break out of any bad habit until you accept responsibility personally and you say, "This is my problem." It's human nature that we blame everybody else for all the problems in our lives, It's human nature that we love to blame everybody else for all of our unhappiness. Our favorite phrase in America today is, "It's not my fault." We like to excuse and accuse. We excuse ourselves from all of our faults, our failures, our flops, and flubs and we love to accuse everybody else and point out their irregularities, point out their sins, point out their malfunctions, their

dysfunction and on and on. We accuse and excuse. It's human nature. We hide our sins, we hide our faults and then we hurl little bombs at everybody else. Verbal bombs. Hiding and hurling.

If you want to break free of bad habits, if you want to be the kind of person God wants you to be, if you really want to change your life – if you really want lasting change -- you must begin today and you must accept responsibility. You must refuse to blame other people.

The next letter in Break Free is:

E - EXAMINE MY LIFE

After I assume personal responsibility, I take personal inventory. I do an internal audit. I take an honest appraisal of myself. This principle we find in book of Lamentations 3:40 *"Let us examine our ways and test them and return to the Lord."* Circle "examine" and "test". God says, on a

regular basis, You and I need to do some personal inventory. I need to ask myself questions like, "Where am I most tempted? Where am I likely to fall? ... What are my weaknesses? ... How long have I had these problems in my life? ... Where am I vulnerable? ... Where am I coasting?" Anytime you're coasting you're headed downhill. You need to look at yourself and take a frank evaluation of your faults, failures and temptations. If you're going to change anything in your life, you've got to stop pretending.

You've got to stop faking it, you got to stop living the double life. You've got to stop covering up your faults because hiding a hurt and hiding a habit intensifies the pain and only causes it to grow deeper.

Notice what the Bible says in Psalm 32. David says, *"My dishonesty made me miserable and it filled my days with frustration until I finally admitted my sins and I stopped*

trying to hide them and God forgave me and now all my sin is gone." The Bible says "Ponder the path of your feet."

Where am I headed? What is the direction of my feet?"

And you do the examination on a regular basis. This is what healthy people do...

A - ASK CHRIST TO TAKE CONTROL OF MY

LIFE. Many people will tell me, "I'd love to change. But I can't. I've listened to the tapes. I've read the books. I've gone to the seminars. I've prayed in the quiet time. I've made the public commitment. I've prayed. I've cried. But I just can't change." I understand that and I know you can't and you will never be able to..._You can't on your own.

You need a power outside yourself. You need a greater power to change the things you can't change. That's why you need Jesus.

I'm not just talking about being a Christian. I'm not saying, you need Jesus not just for salvation. You need Christ every second of every minute of every hour of every day if you're going to change and be the person God meant for you to be. He needs to be in control.

Something is always going to control your life, one thing or another. You're always going to let something control you. Some of you are controlled by the desire to make money. Some of you are controlled by the desire to have fun. Some of you are controlled by the desire to be popular or famous. We can be controlled by the expectations of others. We can be controlled by a substance. Some of you are controlled by alcohol or drugs or prescription drugs, for that matter. You may be controlled by fear. You may be controlled by worry. You

may be controlled by guilt. You can be controlled by somebody else.

Anything that you allow to control your life that isn't God, the Bible calls that an idol. And in one of the Ten Commandments, God says *no idols*. Anything that you center your life around that isn't Jesus Christ is your god.

Anything other than God that's number one and at the center of your life let me assure you is not strong enough to hold it all together.

Peter tells us, *"They are slaves of destructive habits for a man is a slave of anything that has conquered him."* That means every time I sin it gets a stronger grip on my life.

So how do I break free? Freedom comes from choosing Christ as your master. Romans 6 *"Don't let sin control your body any longer; don't give in to its sinful desires.*

But give yourself completely to God -- every part of you --

to be used for His good purposes." Circle "completely".

In America, most of the time we want to give God the problem but we don't want to give Him anything else. We want to give God the situation that's hanging us up but we don't want to give Him our whole lives.

The Bible says if you want to break free, if you want to change your life, you've got to give yourself completely.

That means I've humbly said, "God, I admit it. I've blown it. You're God and I'm not. And I need Your help. I submit myself to do what You want to do. I want You to be the Lord of my life, Jesus."

We use the word "Lord" all the time – You here people say, “Make Jesus the Lord of your life... Jesus is Lord ... Lord Jesus.” What does it mean to be Lord. We don't understand this term because, in America, we live in a democracy, not a kingdom. We do not live in a system

where you have lords. What we have are presidents and things like that.

So what does it mean to be Lord? Lord is just the old fashioned term for "the big boss... number one... the guy in charge... the CEO, the chairman of the board..." When you say, "Jesus, I want You to be Lord of my life," what you're doing is putting a sign over yourself that says, "Under new management." I think that's the best definition of Christian -- Under new management. All of a sudden, I'm not calling the shots -- He's calling the shots. Jesus Christ doesn't want to be just a part of your life, He wants to be the CEO, the chairman of the board. He wants to call the shots. He doesn't just want to be resident in your life, He wants to be president of your life. That's what it means to give yourself completely and when you do that, guess what happens? Power. Power to change your life. Power to

break bad habits. Power to do the things that you never thought you could ever change in your life up to this point.

The next letter in Break Free of bad habits is:

K - KEEP AWAY FROM TEMPTATION

This is just common sense. I call this the no brainer. You need to avoid the situations where you are tempted. If you don't want to get stung you stay away from the bees. If you hang around the barber shop long enough, you're going to get a hair cut."

That's what Romans 13:14 is saying. *"Don't give any chance to the flesh to have its fling."* If you want to stop drinking, you don't stock a wet bar in your house. That's a no brainer. If you're having a problem with lustful thoughts, there's certain movies you don't go to see, there is certain TV shows you don't watch, adult internet sites not to visit. You don't find yourself frequenting certain book

stores or the magazine racks. You just avoid that kind of stuff. Stay away from it.

I have to admit I've been trying to think of some new inventions to be used for us who struggle with our eating. What if we were to invent a refrigerator door that every time you opened it, it gives your weight? That might work for me. What am I trying to say here Proverbs 24:27 says, *"Plan carefully what you do. Avoid evil."* It is saying plan and avoid temptation. Circle "plan". The secret to overcoming temptation is to have a plan and to plan ahead, if you don't have a plan I have always said then your planning to fail. You decide in advance that you're not going to give in. You decide in advance what your plan is. If you wait until you're in the tempting moment to decide what you're going to do, you've already lost and chances are because the emotions are swelling up and the feelings

are real now and all the senses are engaged your going to miss your mark. You have to decide in advance.

For instance, if you're a single adult and you say, "I'm going to go by God's moral standard about sex for my life." You have planned and say that's your standard. You don't wait until you're at the end of a date, standing at the door to decide what I should do.

Teenagers, you don't wait until you're sitting in the back seat of a car -- or over a friends house and their parents aren't home to wonder, "What's going to be my moral standard?" You plan what you're going to live for... When you date you have to plan your date. Why you may ask, because you're either going to live by your plans or your glands. One of them is going to win out in your life. You have to plan to avoid temptation in advance.

I asked a guy one time, "How did you quit smoking?" He said, "I wet my matches. Listen friends, smoking is not going to send you to hell but it's sure going to make you smell and look like you've been there.

What about drinking? My answer is simple it comes from... Ephesians 4:27 *"Don't give the devil a foothold."* That means don't put yourself in places where you're going to be tempted. For some of us that means that you have to drop some friends. But I found out what I called friends really were people that we all were heading in the wrong direction and when I change my direction they didn't want to be my friends any more... But look at what God gave me in return. God's word says, *"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul."* Get out of the situation. Burn your bridges. Keep away from temptation.

Next week were going to look at the Word FREE. Now next week message is for everyone but those who struggle with eating God's word has some great help for you to break Free of that bad habits that is your idol that controls you...

Prayer: The road to freedom begins with the first step.

Pray this prayer in your mind. God will hear you. "Jesus, You know how much I'd like to change some things in my life. I've got some habits that are really causing me problems. Some of them I'm really ashamed of. You know how I've tried to change in the past. I've failed repeatedly. I can't do it on my own power. I just can't change on my own. Today, Jesus Christ, I admit that I need Your help. I need You to be my savior and I ask You to be my Lord. I need the power of Your Holy Spirit to change my life. I ask this in Your name. Amen

HOW TO BREAK A BAD HABIT PART 2

"... they are slaves of destructive habits -- for a man is a slave of anything that has conquered him." 2 Peter 2:19 (GN)

HOW TO B.R.E.A.K. F.R.E.E.

BEGIN

"Never boast about tomorrow. You don't know what will happen between now and then." Proverbs 27:1 (GN)

*"If you wait for perfect conditions, you'll never get anything done!"
Ecclesiastes 11:4 (LB)*

REFUSE

"Some people ruin themselves by their own stupid actions and they blame the Lord." Proverbs 19:3 (GN)

EXAMINE

"Let us examine our ways and test them, and return to the Lord." Lamentations 3:40

*"My dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with frustration ... until I finally admitted my sins and stopped trying to hide them ... and God forgave me! All my guilt is gone!"
Psalms 32:4-5 (LB)*

ASK

*"Don't let sin control your body any longer; don't give in to its sinful desires... But give yourself completely to God -- every part of you -- to be used for His good purposes."
Romans 6:12-13 (LB)*

KEEP AWAY

*"Don't give any chances to the flesh to have its fling."
Romans 13:14 (Ph)*

"Plan carefully what you do ... avoid evil ... " Proverbs 24:27 (GN)