

Overcome Bad Habits

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

A habit is a behavioral pattern that is acquired through frequent repetitions. When we speak about habit it does not mean that habits are bad, because some of them are beneficial. It is something that we have learned and we do unconsciously or often compulsively. It is a pattern which has been reinforced through repeated use and either harmless or life threatening. It can be simple like facial mannerism, drinking water during meals, to something serious like drug addiction, drinking alcohol, smoking, gambling, fraud, lies, stealing, and many more.

Every one of us have certain habit regarding the way we live, the way we speak, we eat, etc. habits can be extremely important upon the course of lives. Those habits that are beneficial need to be appreciated and reinforced. Those habits that are dangerous and detrimental need to be carefully examined and eliminated.

The challenge of overcoming destructive habit can be a terrifying obstacle. The prophet Jeremiah presented a question, which shows the dilemma in overcoming and breaking bad habits. *"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil?" (Jeremiah 13:23)* some habits appear to be impossible to change, and the struggle to overcome bad habits can produce a deep sense of frustration. The difficulty of achieving a permanent victory over alcoholism, drug dependency and smoking can become a painful experience. As we try to overcome these habits we discover it is not easy to defeat or solve with simple remedies. Until our previous inability to defeat such sinful habit creates a sense of hopelessness and despair.

However, this problem can be successfully answered through believing in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus came down from heaven because we are living in sin and darkness. He came to seek and save the lost. He took our sins and died on the cross. He was buried and raised on the third day to give eternal life to everyone who believes in Him. He came to us so that we may have life and life to the full. From this point we can ask the questions: "Is there a genuine hope to overcome bad habits?" Yes! "Is there a solution?" Absolutely Yes! We must understand that there is no hopeless situation in Christ. *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthen me." (Philippians 4:12)*

Homosexuality, thievery, greed, slanders, swindlers and all bad habits, to these God made a possible way for us to overcome. What seems to be impossible for us to do, to God it is possible. Some of us have made many unsuccessful attempts to overcome bad habits. But let us remember that, we may lose few battles but we have not lost the war. In spite of our failures, through believing in Jesus we have the solution. Jesus does not provide a half way solution but a permanent victory. If He has done it to others He will do it also to anyone who comes to Him. So we must recommit ourselves to follow God's divine instruction and receive the victory:

1. **We must sincerely repent:** *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)*

Before we can defeat our sinful habits we must recognize them as sins. Our repentance should come from our conviction to please God and allowing His cleansing power to work in us.

2. **We must depend on God's power:** Before we can bring God's power to overcome problem we must recognize that we have a problem. If we deny that we have a bad habit we reinforce sin and ignore God's power. We must identify our sinful habit before we start to attack it through persistent daily prayer to God to change us. We must not depend upon our own power but upon God's power that we receive through prayer.
3. **We must strive for change:** Change is more than saying "no". Change involves two processes. Real change is not only stopping the sinful habit but to replace it with a Godly action. We must put off the old practice and put on the new Biblical alternative. We must restructure our lives in the right directions according to the word of God.
4. **We must be filled with the Holy Spirit:** We must replace our old habit with constructive alternative. As we do our best, the Holy Spirit of God will fill us with the necessary strength, support and power to overcome the weakness of our flesh.
5. **We must apply the cleansing power of the word of God:** We should read carefully our Bible and consider the scriptures that speak about the need for godly living. The word of God is a cleansing agent for our thoughts, desires, and inclination, and ultimately will purify us from bad habits.
6. **We must bring our habits under subjection:** We ought to exercise a firm hand in disciplining our sinful habits with no tendency to go back to the old ways. Victory depends upon decisive action. When we are tempted to continue a sinful habit, we must exchange the evil desire with the word of God and with prayer.
7. **We must form right relationships:** The Bible says, *"Bad company corrupts good character." (1 Corinthians 15:33)* We must terminate the relationships that hinder us to change, and surround ourselves with healthy relationships that bring us closer to God. We must strengthen our fellowship with other believers in Christ and focus our activity in the Christian church.

My dear and beloved: We must not give up. Let us persevere in order to achieve victory. Let us not allow our failures to discourage us. There is no instant success, it might take about 30 days to develop godly habits and we must not entertain defeat. Therefore let us press on with confidence because "we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us."

My prayer: *"Heavenly Father, thank You for your Son Jesus Christ who died on the cross to give me eternal life. Thank You for your word. Help me, Lord, to do what I read so that I can get rid of my sinful habits. Thank You, Lord, for your love to me. This is prayer in Jesus' name, Amen."*