

BREAKING A BAD HABIT

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"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:34 & 36.

A bad habit is something that often presents problems to a person who tries to do right. It seems to be almost automatic and can be blamed on many things. It is easier to make an excuse for a habit than to become disgusted with it and quit. Habit takes over and makes a slave of one who indulges in it. Yet as our text states we believers who have been made free, should be able to be free, and free indeed. The Bible has some great advice as to what you should do to break a bad habit. **(1). Admit It:** *"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."* Psalm 51: 1-3. The process of getting rid of a bad habit must begin with admitting it. Is there something in your life that you know is not the best, but you endlessly continue it? Don't pass over it with excuses and human reasoning, but spot the things in your life that are not Christ like, and deal with them. Even if others laugh at your concern, make up your mind with God's help to admit them and be cleansed. **(2). Hate It:** *"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate."* Prov. 8:13. You should hate the evil cigarette that is killing you and your family. You don't need that drink that has latched onto you, destroying your testimony before others. That temper, which spouts easily, or the slang that fills your mouth, angers the Lord and you should hate it. If you are proud or arrogant, you need to humble yourself

before the Lord and hate the words spoken that alienate others. You will never beat any habit until you truly hate it. **(3). Quit It:** *"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil."* Isa. 1:16. Take time to stop and think. Does this habit destroy my health? Is it a good testimony to my family and others in my circle of friends? Does it drag me down or draw me into sinful places? Does it waste time or bring temptation toward evil? If your language is not that of a believer, or what you repeatedly do seems to detract from your spirituality, then decide to stop it with no more excuses. Hitch your determination to the power of God and you can break any habit with victory over it. Decide to quit now! **(4). Confess It:** *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy"* Prov. 28:13. When you are aware of a bad habit, you need to confess it to God. Ask forgiveness for the profanity that has blighted your life. Express sorrow for immoral acts and thoughts, spotting the cause of such transgressions. Confess the lying tongue, and your uncontrolled eyes and ears, that have prompted the habit. That which angers God will always hinder you, until you confess and forsake it, and seek the forgiveness of the Lord. He has promised mercy and will help you. **(5). Claim Freedom:** *"O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee."* Psa. 25:20. Habitual sinning can be defeated by confessing the failures, correcting the causes, and trusting God for forgiveness. Only God can free you from the daily struggle you face. You swear without thinking, lie without considering the results, and explode in anger with little thought until it has happened. It is sad to be a slave to alcohol, bound with a health destroying smoking habit, or whatever you do wrong without thinking. Only God can give freedom from the habitual things that hold us in slavery. Quick recovery will result from putting your trust in the Lord. **(6). Get Help:**

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psm. 51:10. Instead of bottling up a bad habit with alcohol, break free of the habit. As a teen don't hide the habitual problem from your parents, but seek their advice. You have friends that have seen your struggle, that can help you to control it. Your dear pastor would be thrilled to help you be accountable, and step by step help you to break away from wrong habits. Over all if you are a child of God, you have the Almighty to help you break away from the chain of habit. Make the prayer of your heart a humble one, as you learn God offers help in the midst of all your human struggles to quit. He is ready to restore you to your very best, if you will trust Him. **(7). Practise Control:** *"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties."* Psa. 141:3&4. Call on the Lord for His strength and stop and consider the places, persons and things. Identify the things that have been used of Satan to build the habit which seems to control you. Let's take the control of TV for instance. Many believers have been weakened in their personal lives by what they have allowed themselves to watch. Much of that which is called entertainment is really education in evil. Funny shows have now become sexy shows, glorifying evil actions and making light of standards and decency. Many teens will try what they see. Never give them their own TV in their bedroom. You must know what they are watching, and what they are visiting on their computer. Much of juvenile crime and immorality has been repeatedly encouraged by what they watch. In one service a dad told me he became convicted that his whole family had made an idol out of their TV. He asked me for prayer, and the next day did a surprising thing. He carried it out to his back yard and set it on a stump. He then aimed his shotgun and ended

the addiction they could not seem to control. If you are trying to stop smoking, throw all the smokes and lighters in the garbage can and stay away from the sellers, and those who indulge, and breath pure air again. You and your children will be healthier and you will have more money for essential needs. Buy no more alcohol, and stay away from the taverns. One man said he failed to quit drinking and a Christian brother said, "I knew you would fail, you kept parking your car at the same meter in front of the tavern." Walk away from all locations of time wasting, character ruining habit, seek a path free of temptation. You may even have to change your friends, and separate from gatherings which remind you of past defeat. You'll never break the smoking habit sitting with smokers, or alcohol drinking spending time with other drinkers. God says *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you"* II Cor. 6:17. Hanging around rock music lovers will reignite your urge to allow such trash back into your life. Be careful who you choose as friends and lifetime partners. **(8). Don't Give Up:** *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* Phil. 4:13. I have lived by this promise all my life and it works. Many of the dumb habits we accommodate are almost mechanical, and we practise them without thinking. You will respond again and again unless you realize this thing is hurting you. Or, my anger, thoughts, and words are scaring my image of a Godly person. My own testimony is being cheapened and ruined by wrong things I do without thinking. Rethink the points I have given you today, identify the sources of temptation, cry out for God to help you and He certainly will. Be like the young man who said he solved his temper bursts with the phrase, "Oh Well" . How very good you will feel when nothing controls you but the Holy Spirit within instead of defeating habits..