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How to Break Bad Habits

CONNECT

- Tell us about one of your good habits. How did you develop it?
- Do you think you're a disciplined person? Why or why not?
- Who is the most disciplined person you know? Recall a specific instance explaining this.

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

WHAT

Habits are behavior patterns that have been acquired by repetition. Some habits are as harmless as putting on the right shoe before the left. Others are destructive, such as alcohol or drug addiction. Some habits seem almost impossible to break. Jeremiah speaks of a people who are unable to do good because they are in the habit of doing evil. Can such a person ever change? Is it possible to break bad habits? This lesson presents four tools that will help anyone break free from bad habits.

1

Discipline

¹⁰Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. HEBREWS 12:10,11

Bad habits are not formed overnight and they will not be broken overnight. Eliminating a bad habit takes discipline. Bad habits like oversleeping, overeating, TV and internet addiction, habitual tardiness must be replaced with a lifestyle of self-control and discipline.

What is
"discipline?" Why
does discipline
seem so painful?

What is the
final result of
discipline?

2 Faith

For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

1 JOHN 5:4 (SEE ALSO HEBREWS 11:1.)

Everyone who is born-again can live in victory over bad habits. Faith is the key to victory.

What is "faith"?

What is "hope"?

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3 People

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. JAMES 5:16

We need human help to overcome our bad habits and weaknesses. We confess to God to receive forgiveness and to people when we need help breaking the habit. As we walk with people who love God, we confess our struggles, receive healing prayer, and keep our lives open for inspection and correction.

Recall a time when you walked in victory over a bad habit because of the people in your life?

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4

Persistence

For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.

PROVERBS 24:16

“If at first you don’t succeed, try and try again!” This phrase was drilled into most of us as little children. It is not in the Bible, but it is essential for breaking bad habits. If I attempt unsuccessfully to break a bad habit, should I accept that this is just how I will be forever?

What is persistence?

SO WHAT

- How do you think discipline helps break bad habits? How do you feel about discipline?
- Why is faith so important in the struggle to break bad habits? What happens if a person does not believe that the habit can be changed? Why is persistence important as well?
- What role do you think people around you play in breaking a bad habit? How do you feel about having someone believe in you and cheer you on?

NOW WHAT

- What is one habit you are currently trying to break? How can you begin walking in victory over this in the coming week?
- How can you develop discipline and persistence in your life every day?
- Who is your life open to? Who challenges you to grow more and be all God wants you to be? How can you continue to develop this relationship?

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- Thank God for the people around you who are helping you grow in your faith. Speak a blessing over them.
 - Pray that God would give you the discipline, persistence, and faith to overcome your bad habits. Commit your plans to Him and ask for His grace and strength.
 - Pray that you would be more disciplined every day, and that you would choose to do what is right even when you don't want to or when you don't feel like it.

