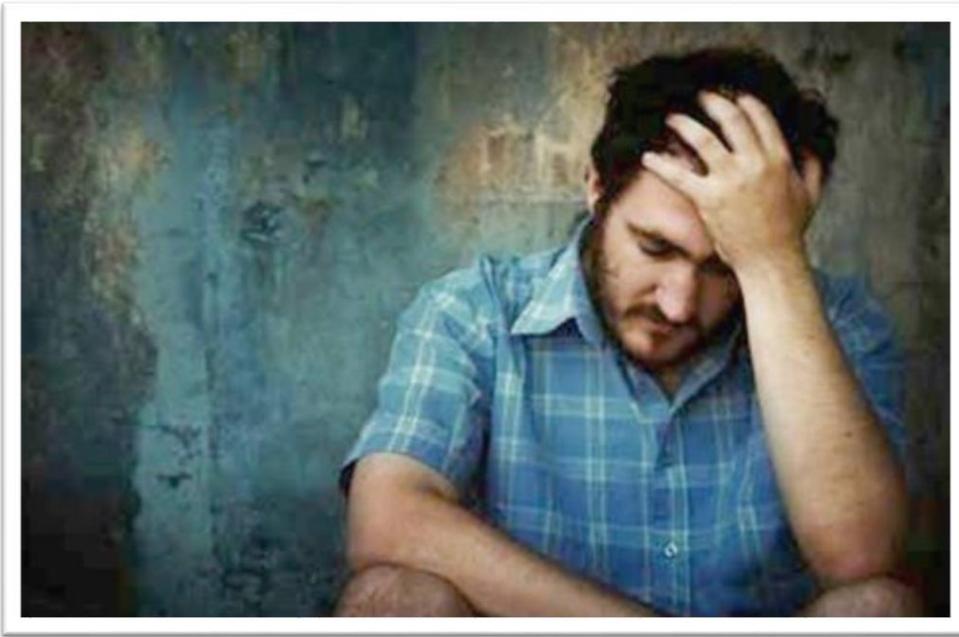


HOW DO I BREAK FREE OF HABITUAL SIN?



You must start from the conviction that having entrusted yourself to Jesus as his follower, you are already forgiven. Completely. Forever. Permanently. Not because you deserve it (who does?) but because JESUS determined that his death and shed blood would save you from ALL your sins -- past, present, and future. The one who would see this as an excuse to sin recklessly, I must say, with all respect, that person simply has not been converted. I am writing this article to help those dear ones of Christ who continue to fail in things that bring them continuing shame.

Jesus provides a full and complete salvation. Your salvation rests in JESUS CHRIST -- not in your efforts to be good. It is a wonderful and necessary thing to learn from Jesus how to overcome sin. However, that desire and those efforts are not what makes you right with God. Jesus makes you right with God. You must trust him. The Bible says, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, NOT counting men's sins against them." Whom are you going to trust? You and your efforts to live an obedient life -- or Jesus? You must be very clear about this. Always declare, "I am forgiven in Jesus Christ!" Say it out loud. Otherwise, the devil will succeed in discouraging you with your failures. He wants you to quit on Jesus. So do not do it. Jesus Christ will never quit on you.

Jesus saves us from the GUILT of sin as well as from the POWER of sin. So what can you do if you are continually thrown down in failure? Much could be said, but I will try to be brief. Habitual sin is just that -- a habit. CONTRARY habits can and must be formed. Perhaps you fall prey to pornography. Start praying for those you see in those videos -- literally, if you are watching. You do that and something is going to give. Do you lose your temper frequently? Practice saying out loud when in the midst of fury, "I bless you in the name of Jesus!" Again, something will have to give.

These contrary habits will not in themselves heal the deep causes of seeking pornography or frequent outbursts of anger -- but to an amazing degree, they will get you started. Keep track of each day you do not give way and when you have gone 30 days REWARD yourself. Buy that

pocket knife you wanted. Or that dress. Then 30 more days and reward yourself again. It will not be long before you can breathe a sigh of relief and say, "I am free, one day at a time, in Jesus."

The deep causes of habitual sin can be addressed through prayer for inner healing, deliverance from evil spirits, Christian counseling, a prayer and accountability partner, a Twelve Step program, and so on. Of GREAT IMPORTANCE is to develop regular habits of practicing spiritual disciplines, such as solitude, contemplative prayer, praying in the Spirit, reading meditatively in the Scriptures DAILY, and periodic fasting. These practices will break up the pattern of the (usually bodily) habits.

I promise you, having walked with Jesus over 40 years now, increasing victory is possible. I know how painful repeated failure can be. Just do not give up in discouragement. God will not let you go. He is not like that. He did not come into your life because you were worthy, but because he chose YOU. Moreover "God is not a man, that he should change his mind," or can he be unfaithful to his promises. Jesus said, "All the Father gives me will come to me – and WHOEVER comes to me, I will NEVER drive away."