

Avoiding and Overcoming Bad Habits and Addictions

➤ Intro:

- **at some point in life**, everyone has to overcome bad habits, possibly addiction
 - **Rom. 6:16-18**
- **lesson:** avoiding and overcoming bad habits, addictions
 - **note / caution:** not talking about obsessive behaviors from neurochemical disorders

➤ Difference between habit and addiction – simplified, brief

- **The principal characteristic of addiction is a loss of control and freedom**, while a **habit is something that is donned or assumed, perhaps often, but that can nevertheless be removed if desired.** (Britannica.com)
- **addiction is always bad**
 - **illus.:** **addiction** to prescription drugs vs. proper use – **pain killers**
- **habits can be good or bad, depending on whether the activity is good or bad**
 - **illus. good habit:** Acts 17:2 Paul, Thessalonica, reasoned with Jews three Sabbaths according to his custom
 - **illus. bad habit:** Heb. 10:25 “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some”

➤ All Addiction is Sinful

- **addiction to unlawful behaviors is sinful:**
 - **sin because** behavior is sinful, because addicted
 - **illus.:** **illegal drug** addiction sinful because of behavior and addiction
 - **illus.:** pornography, fornication, alcohol
 - **all sinful behavior is wrong, whether it is an addiction or not**
- **addiction to lawful behaviors is sinful:**
 - **1 Cor. 6:12** lawful behaviors, sin if it is your master (has power over)
 - **illus.:** **1 Cor. 6:13** obsessive eating, addiction to food, is sinful – **gluttony**
 - **illus.:** coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, caffeine, video games, internet, work, school, sports, recreation
 - **if a lawful behavior becomes an addiction, it is sinful — good behavior becomes a sinful behavior if it becomes an addiction**

➤ Stay Away From Sinful Behaviors and You Won't Become Addicted to Them

- **1 Th. 5:21-22** examine carefully, hold fast to good, abstain from every form of evil – **grey area**
- - **Rom. 12:9b** abhor evil – **you will abstain from every form**
- - **1 Cor. 15:33** stay away from evil influences – **don't be deceived**
 - **illus.:**
 - there's never been an **alcoholic** who didn't take the first drink – don't take first drink, never become alcoholic
 - **pornography, illegal drugs, abuse of prescription and OTC drugs**
 - **language: “I want a soft drink” vs. “I need a soft drink”** - one communicates desire, the other communicates addiction
 - **if you ever say, “I need”** regarding a behavior such as eating, recreating, etc. pay close attention, change language, make sure not addicted

- **We Must Exercise Self-Control to Avoid and Overcome Bad Habits / Addictions**
 - **Matt. 16:24** we must deny ourselves of sinful behaviors, all addiction – **take up cross**
 - - **Acts 24:25** Paul's sermon Felix – **self-control necessary to be a Christian**
 - - **Matt. 15:17-20** control mind to control body – **habits, addiction**
 - **illus.: college, weight**
 - - **illus.: 1 Cor. 9:24-25 athletic metaphor** – **must control mind, to push body, to win race – spiritual**
 - **exercise strict control over good behaviors that are potentially addictive behaviors**
 - **illus.: eating a bowl of ice cream every night**

- **Solution: Walk According to the Spirit – not adopt bad habits / addictions – overcome existing. . . .**
 - **Gal. 5:16-24** walk by the Spirit, no bad habits or addictions – **crucified – R - Gal. 2:20**
 - **solution to avoiding and overcoming. . . .**
 - - **2 Pet. 1:3-8, 10a** power of God's word will be present in our life – **1 Th. 2:13; Rom. 1:16**
 - knowledge, godliness, divine nature, all diligence, self-control, increasing, fruitful, eternal life
 - - **1 Pet. 3:10-12** power of answered prayer present in our lives
 - - **Eph. 3:20** result: inner power, strength – **Phil. 4:13**

- **Summary / Inv.**
 - **walk according to the Spirit / avoid sinful behaviors / exercise self-control and avoid addiction**
 - **inv.:** walk according to the Spirit, the manner commanded by God through the Holy Spirit in His Word