

Missing Out on the Good Life

February 11, 2021

Overcoming Bad Habits and Addictions — Part 1

“Everything is permissible for me, but not all things are beneficial. Everything is permissible for me, but **I will not be enslaved by anything [and brought under its power, allowing it to control me].**”—1 Corinthians 6:12 (AMP)

In Psalm 81, God makes a very sad statement of regret about how much His people miss out on in life, and the wonderful things they could enjoy if they would only change their ways and obey Him:

"My people, Israel, if only you would listen and do as I say! **I, the Lord, would quickly defeat your enemies with my mighty power.** Everyone who hates me would come crawling, and that would be the end of them. But I would feed you with the finest bread and with the best honey until you were full."—Psalm 81:13-16 (CEV)

God has given us the words of life in the Bible. When we obey and do what He instructs us to do, we find life and peace. We enter into all of the good things that God intended for us. In His Word, the Bible, we find answers for life's questions. We also find solutions that can empower us to defeat the enemies in our lives, including bad habits and addictions that rob us of the good life that God intended for us to experience.

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the full knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence. Through these he has given us his precious and wonderful promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, seeing that you have escaped the corruption that is in the world caused by evil desires.”—2 Peter 1:3-4 (ISV)

When we read, obey, and follow God's instructions in the Bible, and believe the promises that He gives to us, we can experience joy, peace, and freedom from bad habits, addictions, and their cravings. We can experience absolute and complete freedom!

Bad habits and the cravings that keep us bound to them are forms of sin and lust, regardless of whether the habits are chewing our fingernails, Internet pornography, cigarettes, alcohol, or crack cocaine. Sin and lust destroy our potential. They rob us of the fullness of life that God dreamed of and planned for us before we were born. Instead of fulfilling our life purposes and entering into all of the richness of life that God provided for us, lust and sin divert our lives off the path of fulfillment and lead us into lives of loss,

disappointment, devastation, and even premature death. This was the experience of Samson in the book of Judges. This was also the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

“But they hastily forgot His works; they did not [earnestly] wait for His plans [to develop] regarding them,

But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness and tempted and tried to restrain God [with their insistent desires] in the desert.

And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls and [thinned their numbers by] disease and death"—Psalm 106:13-15 (AMPC)

None of these people entered into the Promised Land that God had prepared for them. You have a "Promised Land" prepared for you by God, but you have a choice. You can read and obey God's instructions to you in the Bible, following Jesus with a clear conscience. In doing this, you can enter into all that God has prepared for you, which is much, much more wonderful than you can ever imagine, as we are told in 1 Corinthians 2:9:

"But it is just as the Scriptures say, 'What God has planned for people who love him is more than eyes have seen or ears have heard. It has never even entered our minds!'" (CEV)

Or you can allow lusts, sins, bad habits, and addictions to steer you down a very different path in life. It will be a path where you will experience some temporary pleasure, but you may also experience lasting disappointment, regret, and loss of what you were born to become and what you were born to accomplish in life. Your life's purpose may be lost, and along with it, you may lose those things that are most valuable to you in life. Bad habits and addictions can cost you your health, your career, your family, your reputation, your possessions, and your eternal destiny.

Jesus spoke about this in the parable of the sower:

“And the ones sown among the thorns are others who hear the Word;

Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and **the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless.**”—Mark 4:18-19 (AMPC)

You Must Make a Decision

The first step that you must take to overcome, once and for all, the habits and addictions that have made you their slave is to make a decision.

This is the only life you have. What do you want for your life? Do you want to spend your life as a slave to your habits and addictions, or do you want to experience complete freedom from all bad habits, addictions, and their cravings so that you can become all that you were born to be and accomplish all that you were born to do? Do you want to live your life for the momentary pleasure that these habits give you, or do you want your life to count for something much, much greater?

“Today I am giving you a choice of two ways. And I ask heaven and earth to be witnesses of your choice. You can choose life or death. The first choice will bring a blessing. The other choice will bring a curse. So choose life! Then you and your children will live.”—

Deuteronomy 30:19 (ERV)

Moses made a decision that he would sacrifice temporary pleasures in order to gain eternal rewards.

“Then after Moses grew up, his faith made him refuse to be called Pharaoh’s grandson. He chose to be mistreated with God’s people instead of having the good time that sin could bring for a little while. **Moses knew that the treasures of Egypt were not as wonderful as what he would receive from suffering for the Messiah, and he looked forward to his reward.**”—Hebrews 11:24-26 (CEV)

What will you choose? You can hold onto your habits and addictions and have nothing to show for them at the end of your life, or you can choose, once and for all, to turn from these bad habits and addictions, fully dedicate yourself to overcoming them, and finally begin to live the life that you were born to live.

“Whoever tries to keep his life will give up true life. But whoever gives up his life will have true life.”—Luke 17:33 (ICB)