

Study Guide: Overcoming Bad Habits and Addictions

This study guide is designed to facilitate a deep dive into the biblical principles regarding overcoming bad habits and addictions. Based on the "Missing Out on the Good Life" series, it explores the connection between obedience to God's Word and the attainment of a fulfilling life, free from the enslavement of destructive behaviors.

Part 1: Concepts and Principles

The Foundation of Freedom

The journey to overcoming habits begins with understanding the nature of liberty. According to **1 Corinthians 6:12**, while many things are permissible, not all things are beneficial. The core danger lies in being "enslaved by anything," allowing a habit to exert power and control over one's life.

God's Desire for His People

As outlined in **Psalms 81:13-16**, God expresses a "sad statement of regret" regarding His people. He desires to:

- Defeat their enemies with His mighty power.
- Bring an end to those who oppose them.
- Feed them with the "finest bread" and "best honey" until they are satisfied.

However, these blessings are contingent upon listening to God and obeying His instructions.

The Role of the Bible

The Bible is described as containing "words of life." It serves three primary functions in the context of overcoming habits:

1. **Instruction:** Providing the path to life and peace.
2. **Solutions:** Offering the power to defeat internal and external "enemies" (bad habits and addictions).
3. **Divine Participation:** Through God's promises, individuals can participate in the "divine nature" and escape the corruption caused by evil desires (**2 Peter 1:3-4**).

The True Nature of Habits and Lust

The source material defines bad habits and cravings—ranging from minor habits like biting fingernails to severe addictions like alcohol or narcotics—as forms of **sin and lust**. These behaviors are not merely physical or psychological issues; they are spiritual diversions that:

- Destroy human potential.
- Rob individuals of the "fullness of life" God planned for them.
- Lead to loss, disappointment, devastation, and premature death.

Part 2: Lessons from History

The text provides two primary biblical examples of the consequences of allowing lust to dictate one's life:

Example	Action Taken	Consequence
Samson	Followed a path of lust and sin.	Experienced devastation and the loss of his life's purpose.
The Israelites	Lusted in the wilderness; did not wait for God's plans.	"Leanness into their souls"; thinned numbers by disease/death; failed to enter the Promised Land.

Conversely, **Moses** serves as a positive example. He made a conscious decision to:

- Refuse the status of a prince (Pharaoh's grandson).
- Endure mistreatment with God's people.
- Prioritize eternal rewards over the "temporary pleasures" of sin.

Part 3: Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition based on Source Context
Enslavement	Being brought under the power of a habit or addiction so that it controls the individual.

Divine Nature	The state of being that believers can participate in by believing God's promises and escaping worldly corruption.
Sin/Lust	Destructive desires and habits (ranging from minor to severe) that divert a person from God's path of fulfillment.
Leanness of Soul	A spiritual condition resulting from insistent, selfish desires that lead to a lack of fulfillment, even if the person receives what they requested.
The Thorns	A metaphor for the cares, anxieties, distractions, and cravings for "other things" that choke out the Word of God and make a life fruitless.

Part 4: Discussion Questions

For Reflection and Application

1. **Defining Enslavement:** 1 Corinthians 6:12 suggests that something can be "permissible" but still "enslaving." How can a seemingly harmless habit eventually gain "power" over a person?
2. **The "Good Life" vs. Temporary Pleasure:** Contrast the "temporary pleasure" mentioned in the life of Moses with the "good life" God describes in Psalm 81. Why is the latter often harder to pursue?
3. **The Promised Land:** The text suggests everyone has a "Promised Land" prepared by God. What does "missing out" on this land look like in a modern context?
4. **The Decision Point:** According to Deuteronomy 30:19, choosing life or death is a personal decision. Why is a definitive "decision" the necessary first step in overcoming addiction?
5. **Choking the Word:** In the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:18-19), what are the "thorns" that specifically target the effectiveness of God's Word in a person's life?
6. **The Cost of Habits:** Beyond spiritual consequences, what are the tangible, real-world assets (e.g., career, reputation) that the text warns are at risk due to addictions?

Part 5: Answer Key and Facilitator Guide

1. How does the text define the "Good Life"?

- **Answer:** It is a life of peace, joy, and fulfillment found through obeying God's instructions. It is characterized by being "full" (Psalm 81:16) and entering into a "Promised Land" of potential and purpose that is greater than anything one can imagine (1 Corinthians 2:9).

2. What is the spiritual consequence of "insistent desires" as seen in Psalm 106?

- **Answer:** Even if God grants the request of those with insistent, lustful desires, the consequence is "leanness into their souls," disease, and death. It results in missing out on God's best plans.

3. What are the two choices presented in Deuteronomy 30:19?

- **Answer:** The choice between Life and Blessing, or Death and a Curse.

4. Why did Moses choose suffering over the "treasures of Egypt"?

- **Answer:** He knew the treasures of Egypt were temporary and that the reward for suffering for the Messiah was far more wonderful and lasting.

5. What is required to experience "absolute and complete freedom" from cravings?

- **Answer:** Reading, obeying, and following God's instructions in the Bible, and believing in His promises.

6. What is the paradox of life mentioned in Luke 17:33?

- **Answer:** Whoever tries to keep (cling to) their life will lose true life, but whoever gives up their life (surrenders to God) will find true life.