

# How Do I Get Victory Over Temptation and Stubborn Habits?



Finding answers that work  
from God's Word.

# How Do I get Victory over Temptation and Stubborn Habits?

Is there an area in your life where you just seem to struggle and find yourself committing the same sins repeatedly? Do you ever feel like there is no hope and that you will never be able to overcome that stubborn habit? If so, then know that many Christians face the same struggles that you do and that you can find victory. No matter what you struggle with, God can give you freedom.

## A. Know that God Has the Power to Help You Say “No” to Temptation.

Many people have struggled for so long with giving in to their temptations, that they believe that they can't say “no” to temptation or escape from the bad habits in their lives. This simply isn't true. Yes, we are weak and we can't change our habits by our own power alone. The Bible tells us:

*I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do good what is good, but I cannot carry it out. – Romans 7:18 (NIV)*

The good news is that God has the power to change us and wants to do just that:

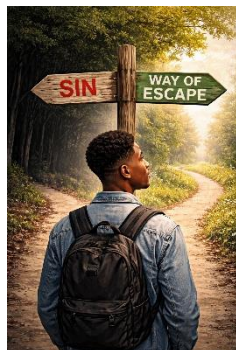
*For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him. – Philippians 2:13 (NLT)*

Did you catch that? God will not only give us the power to do what pleases Him, but God will help us have the desire to obey Him too. God will not force us to change, but he offers us the opportunity to be free if we will choose to submit ourselves to Him and allow Him to change us.

## B. What is Temptation?

Temptation means “enticing to sin”. Temptation is something that encourages someone to sin. Being tempted is not a sin, but giving into temptation is. Jesus was tempted yet He was without sin. (Hebrews 4:15) How we respond to the temptation though, is our choice. We are not automatons that have no choice. Just because we are tempted does not mean we have to give into sin. The Bible tells us that everyone is tempted:

***No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. – 1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)***



God’s promise is that he will help us escape giving into the temptation, if we give Him the chance.

### Reflection Questions:

- Am I willing to allow God to do deep level change in me, rather than just willing to let Him change my circumstances?
- Where do I see God working in my problems to strengthen me?
- Am I working with God in changing me, or am I working against Him?

### Action Steps:

- Where you are facing a struggle, difficulty, or temptation, pause and thank God that He will be with you through this problem, and that God will demonstrate His power and glory through you.

- Ask God what change He wants to make in you that will help you through this situation.

## C. What is the Process of Temptation?

If someone walked up to you out of the blue, and asked you to join them in robbing a bank would you say “yes”? Obviously, you would say “no”. The temptation is too obvious – it has high risk, and you are leery of the person asking you to join them in committing a crime. In the same way, temptation doesn’t come to us in a blunt and obvious way. It instead leads us down a gradual path toward destruction. The Bible shows us the process:

*But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. – James 1:14-15 (ESV)*

### The Process of Temptation

1. A temptation occurs that is appealing
2. A part of our sinful nature chooses to dwell on the temptation (thoughts, emotions) and chooses to keep dwelling on it
3. As we dwell on the temptation, we come to have a desire to act on the temptation (conceives sin)
4. We give in and act on the temptation (sin)
5. We continue this pattern of behavior, allowing it to grow and become more consuming and controlling, until it brings about death

### Reflection Questions:

- Where in your life do you see sin creeping in? Where in your thought life, emotions, relationships, social

activities, social media or behaviors do you observe a tolerance for wrong or a weakening of godly standards?

- If you struggle with a specific sin, what are the triggers, thoughts and actions that seem to happen before you give in to that temptation?

### Action Steps:

- Write down your responses to the Reflection Questions and then pray and ask God to help you to be aware of when you are being tempted.

## D. What are some ways to avoid falling into temptation?

This section deals with how to avoid temptation before giving into it. The best way to avoid falling into temptation is to not step in it in the first place.

### 1. Watch and pray

Jesus told us to pray that we would not be overcome by temptation.

*Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. - Matthew 26:41 (ESV)*

*And don't let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. – Matthew 6:13 (NLT)*



## Questions for Reflection:

- Are you praying for God to protect and deliver you from temptation regularly?

## Action Steps:

- Regularly pray for God to help you not to fall into temptation. Be specific and identify areas where you are vulnerable.

## 2. Take an honest spiritual inventory

*Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord!* – **Lamentations 3:40 (ESV)**

*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!* – **Psalms 139:23-24 (ESV)**

Someone may want freedom from some sin, but they don't want to face the issues that lead to it. They are asking for victory over it, but they are not interested in addressing the underlying issues that trigger their giving in to temptation. Someone may want freedom from anger, but there may be root causes that are behind that anger that they haven't addressed. We may be able to modify the outward behavior, but if we do not address the root cause, sin will manifest itself again.

**"It is impossible consistently to behave in a manner that is inconsistent with what one believes." – Austin Farrer**

Often, in areas of habitual sin there are lies that we believe that make it easier to keep sinning. The lie may be "this isn't really hurting me" or "everyone does it, so it's no big deal" or "God doesn't care, I can just ask forgiveness afterwards anyway". Or there may be other lies that someone tells themselves. Asking

God to show us the lies we tell ourselves and to reveal the truth about them can help break the cycle of sin.

### Reflection Questions:

- Have I asked God to show me those things in me that offend Him?
- If God did show me those areas in myself that offend Him, am I willing to do whatever is necessary for Him to remove that from my life?
- Do I know the root cause of my behavior?
- What lies am I believing that keeps me repeating the same bad habits over and over?

### Action Steps:

- Pray Psalms 139:23-24 as a prayer. Listen to what God is speaking to you.
- Ask God to show you what the root causes of your behavior are.

## 3. Pursue a relationship with God with a passion

It has been said that if you are running after God, you won't be running after sin. Drawing closer to God will make it easier to resist temptation.

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. – James 4:7-8 (ESV)*



It's important to understand our true goal. Our goal is not victory over sin. Our goal is much more substantial. Our goal is to be

more like Jesus. Your desire should be to do what pleases Him. The more we pursue Him, the more he changes us, and the more we reflect His character in ourselves.

*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. – John 15:4-5 (ESV)*

If our goal is to just change a behavior or some other external thing, but it is not to be more like Jesus and to abide in a close intimate relationship with Him, we will never find real lasting victory. We may be able to temporarily modify a behavior, but if we do not allow God to change us on the inside, the habits will return. Remember God's goal for us is not just that we act godly, but that we **be** godly. And that means abiding in Him.

### Questions for Reflection:

- If I were passionately pursuing a growing relationship with God how would my life be different? What would be the same?
- Am I making spending time with God a priority?
- Am I spending time with other believers in a healthy setting?
- Ask "God, what is the next growth step in my relationship with you?"

### Action Steps:

- Ask God what the next step is in growing closer to Him.
- Record what you feel He is saying to you. Then decide to act on what God has told you to do. You may need to

block out time on your calendar or ask someone to hold you accountable for this growth step.

#### 4. You must be convinced that God wants the best for you

If we are not convinced that God wants the best for us, our behavior will not be in accordance with His will. We will never want to change if we believe that God is holding out on us – that He is holding us back and that if we did our own thing we would have a better life. We won't be willing to change unless we are convinced of God's goodness. We must remember that God will never ask us to do anything that is not ultimately in our best interest.

*The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. **My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.** – John 10:10 (NLT)*

*Now glory be to God! **By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.** – Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)*

It is difficult to consistently behave in a way that is contrary to what we truly believe. When the Devil was enticing Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, he told her that she would be like God – knowing good and evil. He left her with the idea that God was keeping her and Adam from true happiness. The Devil first distorted her view about God before he could convince Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. The same is true today, the Devil seeks to distort our views of God to draw us into sin.

Some believers have a distorted view of God that allows destructive behaviors to permeate their lives and keep God from helping them. An example would be, a believer who has

developed a regular habit of some sin and in his mind justifies it by saying, “all that matters to God is that I’m saved. It doesn’t matter to Him if I sin. If I ask for His forgiveness everything is OK. I don’t even have to change my behavior or even want to change. All I have to do is ask Him to forgive me.” This distorted view of God keeps the person from experiencing God’s power in their lives.

Some have struggled with either habits or destructive thoughts for so long that they have begun to believe that there is no hope for them and that they can’t be free of their issues. Recognize that is a lie. Because Christ’s Spirit lives in you, you do not have to give in to sinful behaviors or controlling thoughts.

*But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) And Christ lives within you, ... Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, **you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do.** – Romans 8:9-12 (NLT)*

### Questions for Reflection:

- What does my behavior reveal about what I really believe about God?
- What distorted views about my sin, or God, might I have?

### Action Steps:

- Repent for any wrong attitudes that you may have about God not caring about you.
- Memorize Bible verses that talk about God’s promises to us such as: Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 16:3; Isaiah 41:13; Psalms 32:8; Psalms 37:3-5; and Ephesians 3:20-21.

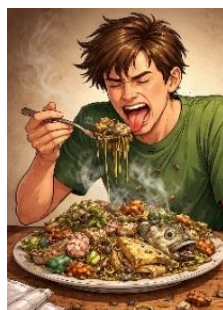
## 5. Control What You Take In

This especially applies to controlling your emotions and thoughts.

*A wise person is hungry for knowledge, while the fool feeds on trash. – Proverbs 15:14*

**(NLT)**

*Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts. – Proverbs 4:23 (GN)*



### Reflection Questions:

- What “trash” am I allowing into my life or collecting? (Review your thoughts, social media, entertainment, attitudes, relationships, etc.)
- What do I need to remove from my life that is causing a negative influence on me, or in other words, what trash needs to be taken to the dump?
- How is your thought life? Do you find yourself engaging in unhealthy or destructive thoughts frequently? Are you controlling what you consciously think about?

### Action Steps:

- Identify what needs to be removed and then ask God to help you to identify a plan to remove it. Your plan should contain specific steps, some form of accountability to another and a timeline of when certain actions will happen.

## 6. Stay away from those who negatively influence you

*Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'* – **1 Corinthians 15:33 (ESV)**

*My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us ambush the innocent without reason"; my son, do not walk in the way with them; hold back your foot from their paths. –*

**Proverbs 1:10-11,15 (ESV)**

### Reflection Questions:

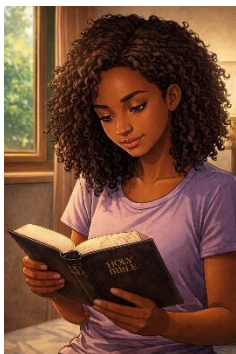
- Who in my life is a negative influence on me? Why am I allowing them to influence me?
- Am I willing to lose a friend to resist doing what I know is wrong?

### Action Steps:

- Identify who negatively influences you and then limit their influence or access to your life.

## 7. Read God's word and act on it

Regularly reading God's Word will remind you of what He is doing in your life. It will give you spiritual strength and encouragement.



*I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. – Psalms 119:11 (ESV)*

*He must always keep that copy with him **and read it daily as long as he lives.** That way he will learn to fear the Lord his God by obeying all the terms of these instructions and*

*decrees. This regular reading will prevent him from becoming proud and acting as if he is above his fellow citizens. **It will also prevent him from turning away from these commands in the smallest way...** – Deuteronomy 17:19-20 (NLT)*

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. – James 1:22 (ESV)*

If you aren't regularly taking in God's Word, there is a good chance that you will forget or ignore it.

### Reflection Questions:

- Am I regularly reading and studying God's Word?
- How am I regularly acting on what I have read in God's Word?
- Do I read or listen to God's Word with a heart to change and act on it?

### Action Steps:

- Establish a daily time of reading God's Word.
- Become involved in a group Bible study.

## 8. Take sin seriously, even a "small" one

Make up your mind ahead of time not to sin – no matter what the temptation.

*Don't give the devil a chance. – Ephesians 4:27 (GNB)*

*And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two*



*hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. –*

**Matthew 18:8-9 (ESV)**

Jesus is not advocating a literal amputation. He uses this extremely hyperbolic language to point out that getting rid of sin should result in decisive action on our part. We are not to “live” with sin. We must “amputate” it.

**Reflection Questions:**

- In what ways do I encourage, or permit sin in my life?
- What’s my real attitude toward sin?

**Action Steps:**

- Ask God to reveal areas in your life where your attitude about sin is not what it should be and then submit to every change God wants to make in you.
- Commit to God to act quickly and decisively to remove sin, even a “small one” from your life.

## 9. Realize how much sin costs you

The Bible tells us that there is pleasure in sin for a while. (Hebrews 11:25) If there was no enjoyment in sin, we wouldn’t do it. Yet, most people do not stop to consider the long-term consequences of sin. David did not consider the devastating effects of his affair with Bathsheba, but it cost him dearly. (2 Samuel 12:5-14)

David’s sin cost him:

1. His household would always be at war with themselves and with others.
2. Just as he had taken someone’s wife, his wives would be taken by another.
3. He would be a national disgrace.
4. He began to despise the Bible.

5. He hated God.
6. His conscience became hardened.
7. His son would lose his life.
8. His lineage as king would soon end.
9. Other nations would mock his country and laugh at him.
10. His own son would betray him.

Until we realize that sin has a heavy price, we may not be willing to pay the price for change. When we realize the cost, we will be willing to allow God to change you.

### Reflection Questions:

- What is your sin costing you now and what will it cost you in the future?
- What are the costs of changing?

### Action Steps:

- Identify the costs of continuing to sin. Be honest. Consider the effects to yourself, your relationship with God, to your family, to your friends, to your finances, to your reputation, to other believers, and how non-believers will view you if you do not repent.

## E. What are the biblical steps for finding lasting freedom from bad habits?

1. Admit your sin and confess your powerlessness to change on your own

*For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, **but not the ability to carry it out.** For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. – Romans 7:18-19 (ESV)*

a. *Stop the blame game*

Who is responsible for my sin? I am. The Bible is emphatic about this:



*For we are each responsible for our own conduct. – Galatians 6:5 (NLT)*

*Don't point your finger at someone else and try and pass the blame! – Hosea 4:4 (NLT)*

*So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. – Romans 14:12 (NLT)*

There will be no change in your life as long as you are blaming something or someone else for the problem. When we take responsibility for our choices and decisions, only then can God move in our life.

b. *Know that when you blame others for your sin, you are ultimately blaming God.*

*The man [Adam] said, 'The woman **whom you gave to be with me**, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.'* – **Genesis 3:12 (ESV)**

Adam not only blamed Eve for his sin, but He also blamed God. Anytime we say we are not responsible for our sin we are either expressly or implicitly telling God that He is to blame.

**Excuse:** "That woman was too beautiful to resist."

**Implicit Accusation:** "God if you had been a better creator, you wouldn't have made her so irresistible, made her uglier, or you would have at least kept her away from me."

**Excuse:** "I'm only human."

**Implicit Accusation:** "God, you made me this way, so it's really your fault."

**Excuse:** “The devil made me do it.”

**Implicit Accusation:** “God, you either don’t care about me or you are too weak to guard and protect me.”

When you say you couldn’t resist temptation, you are really saying that God wasn’t faithful and that just isn’t true.

*No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. **God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.***

– **1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)**

*c. When we refuse to admit our sin and our inability to change ourselves, we restrict God’s grace from helping us.*

*Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. –*

**Proverbs 28:13 (ESV)**

### **Reflection Questions:**

- What excuses do I make to justify my sins or to refocus the blame on others?
- When has it been hard to admit my mistakes or that I need help? What were the underlying causes?

### **Action Steps:**

- Admit my sin and be willing to submit to every change that God want to make in my life.

## 2. Realize that God can help you change, if you allow Him

*For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him. – **Philippians 2:13 (NLT)***

God will give us not only the desire to obey, but the power to do so.

*He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. – **Isaiah 40:29 (NLT)***

*Since he himself has gone through suffering and temptation, he is able to help us when we are being tempted. – **Hebrews 2:18 (NLT)***

### Reflection Questions:

- Do I really believe God can change me?
- If you aren't sure God can change you, why do you think God wouldn't be able to help you change?

### Action Steps:

- Give thanks to God for His power to change lives.
- Read and memorize verses in the Bible that address God's power and willingness to help you.
- Repent for any doubts you may have about being able to change with God's help.
- Acknowledge your dependence upon God for change.

### 3. Make the decision to turn over your life and will to God

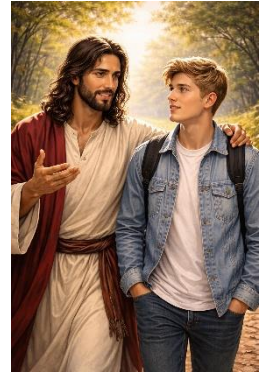
a. *This means repenting of my sin.*

The word “Repent” means more than saying “I’m sorry”. Repent means to “turn away from” sin. You must desire to turn from your habit and turn toward God.

*...Oh, **turn from your sins** while there is yet time. Put them behind you **and receive a new heart and a new spirit...** – Ezekiel 18:30-31 (TLB)*

b. *This means willingly submitting to every change that God wants to make in my life.*

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If any of you wants to be my follower, **you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.**’ – Matthew 16:24 (NLT)*



***Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you...** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. - James 4:8, 10 (ESV)*

***Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!** – Psalms 143:10 (ESV)*

c. *This means I allow God to change my thoughts and emotions*

*Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly **by a complete change of your mind.** Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect. – Romans 12:2 (GNT)*

*Be careful how you think; **your life is shaped by your thoughts.** – Proverbs 4:23 (GNT)*



*Those who are dominated by the sinful nature **think about sinful things**, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit **think about things that please the Spirit.** So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. – Romans 8:5-6 (NLT)*

*Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, ‘**Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?**’ – Matthew 9:4 (NIV)*

A lot of the battle we have over temptation and controlling habits deals with what we choose to think about and dwell on.

- i. You have a part in how you think. You must choose what you think about.

**A. Don't feed on trash.**

*“A wise person is hungry for truth, while the fool feeds on trash.” – Proverbs 15:14 (NLT)*

**B. Meditate on God's Word**

Meditate means to reflect on and go over repeatedly in your mind.

*“I will meditate upon them and give them my full respect. I will delight in them and not forget them.” - Psalms 119:15-16 (TLB)*

**C. Replace bad thoughts with good ones**

*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” –*

**Philippians 4:8 (ESV)**

It is not enough to not think about sinful desires; we must replace them with positive thoughts.

*“**Turn your back** on lustful desires and **give your positive attention to** goodness, integrity, love and peace in company with those who approach the Lord in sincerity.” – **2 Timothy 2:22 (PH)***



To replace a thought in your mind, you must focus and think about something else. It is not enough just not to think about the temptation. Your mind must be engaged in thinking about something or else it will return to what you were thinking about before.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- Do I really want to change (repent)?
- Am I willing to submit to every change that Gods want to make in my life?
- What “trash” am I feeding on? What things in my life do I need to take to the “dump”?
- How is my thought life?
- What area of my thought life does God want to address right now? What is God calling me to do?

## Action Steps:

- Identify Bible verses to memorize that address the area of your life you are wanting victory in.
- Ask God what changes He wants to make in your life. As He answers, obey each step.
- Identify a strategy of replacement. When tempting thoughts begin, determine how you will replace them with positive thoughts.

## 4. Confess my faults to God and someone I trust

### a. Confess your sins to God.

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. – 1 John 1:9 (ESV)*

Enlist someone you can confide in and share with them your struggles. Find someone who will support you in prayer and who will hold you accountable.

*Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. – James 5:16 (ESV)*

***Two people are better off than one, for they can help each***

***other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble... A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer.***



*Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. – Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NLT)*

This person should be someone who can help you in a crisis and will be straight with you, encourage you, and pray with you. Meet regularly with that person. It is recommended to meet at least bi-weekly.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- Am I in an accountable relationship where I am asked the hard questions?
- Who could I enlist to be my accountability partner (same-sex, growing relationship with God, will ask the hard questions and can be trusted)?
- Have I confessed all my sins to God? Have I hidden any sins because of pride in my life?

### **Action Steps:**

- Confess my sins to God.
- Find someone I can be in an accountable relationship with.

## **5. Forget the past and embrace the future**

This does not mean we do not allow ourselves to learn from past mistakes. We just don't want to allow our past to dictate our future. You don't want to allow your past mistakes to keep you from being successful over temptation in the future.

*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. – Isaiah 43:18 (NIV)*

*Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: **forgetting***

***what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. – Philippians 3:13-14 (ESV)***

This includes forgiving oneself, which, for some, is one of the hardest things to do.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- Do I allow past failures at change to hinder God from helping me change now?
- Have I forgiven myself for my past?

### **Action Steps:**

- Ask for God's forgiveness for past sins.
- Out loud, verbally forgive yourself.

## **6. Forgive and seek forgiveness**

### *a. Forgive Others*

*If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. – Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT)*

*Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, **so you must forgive others.** – Colossians 3:13 (NLT)*

*"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD." – Leviticus 19:18 (ESV)*

Forgiveness is not an emotion. If that were the case, many would never forgive because we never felt like forgiving the person who hurt us. Instead, forgiveness is a choice.

Forgiveness not only frees the other person, but it frees our spirit also. Unforgiveness is like a trap that keeps us caged.

*b. Ask for forgiveness and make amends*

*[He] shall confess his sin that he has committed. And he shall make full restitution for his wrong... – Numbers 5:7 (ESV)*

### Reflection Questions:

- Am I resentful toward anyone or unwilling to forgive anyone?
- To whom do I need to be reconciled?
- Who have I sinned against? To whom do I need to make restitution?

### Action Steps:

- Make restitution to those whom you have hurt.
- Forgive those whom have hurt you. Verbally express your forgiveness to them.
- Refuse to entertain thoughts of unforgiveness.

## 7. Establish a daily time with God for prayer, Bible reading and self-examination

*Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. – Mark 14:38 (ESV)*

*Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other... – Colossians 3:16 (NLT)*



*Pray continually.* – **1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NCV)**

A daily time with God will not only help you address stubborn habits, but it will also change other areas of your life as well.

**Reflection Questions:**

- When would be the best time and where would be the best place to meet each day with God, to read the Bible and pray?
- What steps do you need to take to set myself up for success at having a daily time with God?

**Action Steps:**

- Establish a 15 minute period each day when you pray and read the Bible.

## 8. Don't become overconfident or let your guard down

When you start to see progress, don't get overconfident and think that you can't fall back into old patterns again.

*So be careful. If you are thinking, 'Oh, I would never behave like that'—let this be a warning to you. For you too may fall into sin.* – **1 Corinthians 10:12 (TLB)**

*So Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.* – **Galatians 5:1 (NLT)**

## Closing Encouragement

When you are struggling with destructive thoughts or overcoming bad habits you can feel overwhelmed. Feelings of guilty and depression can swell up. You can become so down on yourself. Know that God understands what you are going

through, and He wants to see you victorious, even more than you do yourself.

If you stumble, then get back up. Know that God forgives and will help you find lasting victory.