

You Can Be Free

If your hang-up or habit 1) affects your thinking, your attitudes and your behavior for the worse; and, 2) if you are trying as hard as you can, but still haven't been able to break free, you are in bondage.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, . . . He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners . . ." Luke 4:18 (New International Version)

Three keys to freedom in the Christian life:

- **Key #1: SELF-AWARENESS AND SURRENDER**

They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. 2 Peter 2:19 (English Standard Version)

Being enslaved means that I am habitually overcome by a habit or hang-up and feel powerless to permanently stop it.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. ⁴Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Psalm 51:3-4 (NIV)

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. ¹⁴He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. Colossians 2:13-14 (New Living Translation)

Surrender = the moment when we admit to God and to ourselves, "I'm powerless to stop this on my own."

At one time you surrendered yourselves entirely as slaves to impurity and wickedness for wicked purposes. In the same way you must now surrender yourselves entirely as slaves of righteousness for holy purposes. Romans 6:19 (Good News Bible)

- **Key #2: ON-GOING INNER TRANSFORMATION**

Freedom from bondage is going to mean a high degree of internal change.

Three Strategies to Help Promote Inner Change

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:22-24 (NIV)

- Develop actions steps that will help you say "no" to destructive choices.

"Put off your old self" = stop submitting to your old nature

- Identify the concrete signs that indicate you are vulnerable.
- Identify specific choices you can make when you are tempted.

- Over time, renew the attitude of your mind. (See Colossians 3:10)

- Challenge your thoughts and beliefs and replace them with biblical truth.
- Reprogram your brain's limbic system.

The limbic system stores highly charged emotional memories, and these memories are categorized by the limbic system as either pleasure or pain. When you experience pain, this part of brain tells you how to survive.

The way to change the deep limbic system is to change your behavior, so that part of your brain starts to get new information, new experiences, new emotions and becomes reprogrammed.

- Make new, godly choices that replace what you've been saying "no" to.

- **Key #3: TRANSPARENCY WITH GOD'S PEOPLE**

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. James 5:16a (NIV)

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)