



NEW LIFE

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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DO HABITS REALLY MATTER?

Do you have habits that are hindering your spiritual growth? Perhaps it is gossiping or backbiting or indulging in unedifying worldly pleasures. Some are habitual liars. Some have the habit of losing their temper at the slightest provocation. Some are addicted to playing videogames and others, to overindulging their appetites. And when confronted about these habits some tend to take it lightly and excuse themselves saying, *"I can't help it. That's just me. It's part of my character and I can't get rid of it."*

Habits DO matter. Whatever comes from our old manner of life cannot remain unchanged. Our manner of life after salvation should be different from the old one. Paul described this in Romans 6:4 as *"walking in newness of life"* and he tells us that this is the result of having died to sin. Consider what he says Romans 6:6,7 – *"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."* The words *"serve sin"* at the end of v.6 really means *"enslaved to sin."* Before Christ saved us, we were all slaves to sin. Sin ruled our thoughts and actions like a hard taskmaster and we were helplessly under its control.

But through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are liberated and delivered from its power. Although sin may still be present in our lives, its power over us is broken. We do not have to serve sin anymore. And so a Christian should never say, *"I cannot help it. I cannot kick these old sinful habits."* To say that is to deny that one has been released from the power of sin! Now that we have seen the necessity of kicking our sinful habits we should consider some means for doing it. Removing a sinful habit is often not easy. Victory may sometimes be immediate but most often it is gradual, and much patience is needed.

1. Never Lose Sight of Their Sinfulness

When a Christian keeps committing the same sin habitually, after some time he loses the sense of its seriousness in God's sight. He no longer feels guilty after committing it. He becomes tired of resisting it and he then excuses it as a personal inborn weakness rather than a sin. Sugarcoating a sin is the easiest way to give the devil a grip in your life by which he can draw you further and further from the Lord.

The guilt feelings that you have when you have sinned is useful, because it functions just like a warning bell, urging you to repent and put away the sin. But when people ignore the warning bell too many times, the conscience becomes dead. This is a dangerous state to be in. The conscience plays a very important role in your life. A building with a disabled fire alarm system will burn down completely. When Christian's conscience is dead his life will show it, and his testimony for the Lord will be destroyed. He will backslide terribly...

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and his prayers will have no power, because the Lord has said, *'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.'* (Psalm 66:18)

Your attitude toward the habit you are trying to kick must always remain the same as God's – Hate it enough to keep on striving to get rid of it. With this attitude, you will be able to carry out the next means for kicking the sinful habit.

2. Make No Provision for Them

Romans 13:14 tells us to *"put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."* A Red Indian chief who became a Christian was asked how he got victory over his old sins. He said, *"There are two dogs inside me fighting with each other – a black dog and a white dog. When the black dog wins, I commit sin. When the white dog wins, I don't sin. To have victory over sin, I starve the black dog."* To starve the black dog is to make no provision for the flesh.

How can you do this? Examine the factors that precipitate your habit – Is there a consistent pattern of circumstances that lead you into it? If there is, then see if any of them can be removed or avoided. Stay away from any place or scene that triggers off the sinful habit. If you surf the Internet frequently, set up a filter to prevent pornographic material from appearing on your screen. In 2 Timothy 2:22, Paul told Timothy to flee from youthful lusts. Joseph did this when he was tempted by Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:12). Don't think that you are strong enough to withstand the tempting sights and sounds. Anyone who deliberately allows himself to linger in a tempting situation is making provisions for his own fall.

3. Cultivate a Mind that is Unfavourable for Them

Keep your mind saturated with spiritual things. A few passages of scripture will help: Isaiah 26:3 – *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."* Colossians 3:2 – *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."* Romans 8:5,6 – *"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."* A mind that is constantly filled with thoughts about God and His kingdom will not have room for thoughts of habitual sins.

4. Overcome Them through Christ

In order to have the willpower and discipline to implement the above steps, you need Christ's power. Jesus Himself said, *"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing."* Paul, in Philippians 4:13, said, *"I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."* The power of Christ who indwells believers is sufficient to kick your sinful habits.

How can we avail ourselves of this power? The power of Christ becomes available to us as we walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:16 says, *"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the desires of the flesh."* Through prayer ask the Lord to let the Holy Spirit empower you and lead you. This prayer may need to be made again and again, because we often tend to take back the direction of our own lives from Him. The ideal situation is to be filled with the Spirit at all times.

It must be emphasised that only those who are saved can experience this power to overcome sin. Those who are not saved will have little or no success in kicking their sinful habits, because they are still enslaved to sin, and are under its power. When the Lord...

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Jesus saves you, you will be dead to sin, and the power of sin over you will be broken. This does not mean however, that you will stop sinning instantly and effortlessly at the moment you are saved. You still need to use the above means for kicking your habitual sins. Besides them there is one more that we must consider.

5. Replace Them with Good Habits

Every Christian ought to develop new habits that are spiritually healthy and good. These new habits should become part of your life, as Ephesians 4:22-24 instructs – *"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."*

The verses that follow the above show us what sinful habits need to be replaced. Habitual lying is to be replaced with the habit of speaking truthfully (v.25). Learn to pause and think before you speak – are the words you are about to utter true, based on truth and a true reflection of your intentions? Let your prayer be according to Psalm 141:3 – *"Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."*

Habitual losing of one's temper is to be replaced with the habit of controlling one's anger and resolving it before the day ends (vv.26,27). James gives 3 useful points on this subject: *"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."* (James 1:19)

Habitual stealing is to be replaced with the habit of working for an honest living and habitual giving to help others (v.28). Christians are to be givers, not takers. The Lord Jesus said, *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."* (Luke 6:38)

Habitual cursing and swearing is to be replaced with the habit of speaking edifying words that minister grace to others (v.29). This may seem unnatural at first, but after some time with the Lord's help, you will get used to it. John Bunyan, the writer of *Pilgrim's Progress*, was the most foul-mouthed tinker at Bedford – he became notorious for his terrible cursing and swearing. But after he was saved, his speech gradually changed to become wholesome and edifying to those who heard him – and soon he was even able to preach the Word of God and bring sinners to Christ!

Habitual revenge must be replaced with habits of returning good for evil, being kind and forgiving toward others – *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* (vv.30-32)

These are habits of the Christian life that you should develop so that they may replace all your old sinful habits. Get yourself addicted to them and they will help you to kick your old habits. May your heart be challenged by what God's Word says in Hebrews 12:1 – *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."*

May the Lord enable you to keep pressing on the upward way, getting rid of every sinful habit in your life and replacing them with wholesome habits that are good for your soul.

Rev Charles Seet, Life B-P Church, S'pore
(adapted from Life B-P Church bulletin dated 27 July 2008)

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

CHURCH THEME: WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING. (Philippians 2:12)

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	<i>Today: 31/08/2008</i>	<i>Next Week: 07/09/2008</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Frank (AM), Carol Greenwood and Sebastian & Priscilla (PM) to our worship services last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mark Chen	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	
<i>Message:</i>	Believers can have Warped Perspectives too	I Will Sup With Him	
<i>Text:</i>	Ruth 1:19-22	Revelation 3:14-22	
<i>Organist:</i>	Joy	Mark	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	Pr Mark Chen	<p style="text-align: center;">NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lord's Supper: Next week, we will be observing the Lord's Supper. Please come with your hearts prepared. • Pray for Journey Mercies: Sophia & Grace (Jul-Sep, Singapore), Rachel (departing to China), Daniel & Maureen & Anthony & Helen (Aug/Sep, Malaysia & Singapore), Mok & Carol (Aug/Sep, Israel & Singapore), Douglas (3 months, Ghana), John & Sharon (Iceland), Fung (Hungary). • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas (knee pain), Maria (ankle and joint pain), Constance (shoulder pain), Josh's grandma (stroke), Hazel (wrist injury). • Those serving on the Lord's Day for both morning and evening worship services: Please gather behind the pulpit area at 10.30am for prayer. • Book Table: Please feel free to browse the book table for materials that are of interest to you, especially some new books that have just been displayed. Please note that materials without price tags are free.
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mark Chen	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	
<i>Message:</i>	Squandering on Jesus	Liberating Promises	
<i>Text:</i>	Matthew 26:6-13	2 Peter 1:1-4	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Hubert	Joy	
Other Duties			
	<i>Today: 31/08/2008</i>	<i>Next Week: 07/09/2008</i>	
<i>Ushers</i>	Jonathan / Evelyn	Josiah / Yetta	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Hui Min	Hui Min	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Constance	Constance	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	No Bible Study	No Bible Study	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 5 Sep	7.30pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Prayer Meeting	
Sat 6 Sep	4.00pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Pr Mark Chen	
<u>Last Week's Worship Service Collections</u>			
Offering: £256.66		Lunch: £30.50	
<u>Memory Verse</u>			
<i>Last Week (August 08 Wk 4): Psalm 139:17</i>			
How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!			
<i>This Week (August 08 Wk 5): Psalm 139:17</i>			
If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.			