

# Resolving Sinful Habits

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As sinful people living in a fallen world, all of us have developed flesh patterns—ways we seek to get our needs met independently of God. These patterns can develop into strongholds which bring destruction in our lives. At the root of these strongholds are lies about who God is, who we are, and our true identity in Christ. When seeking to resolve these strongholds, many people do not get free because they address only the outward behaviors. It is only as we grow to understand our identity in Christ and deal with the lies behind our flesh patterns that we will find true freedom from sinful habits.



## How We Get into Bondage and Why We Don't Get Out

1. Our greatest needs are to be accepted (loved) and have worth (value). This is what drives us to do what we do. It is the motivation behind all behavior. *God made us that way and His design is that He will meet all our needs when we look to Him.*
2. As we grow up, have problems, and learn about life, we get various messages about who we are. These messages shape the way we see ourselves and who we believe we are.
3. *As a result we all develop a false identity about who we are.* This false identity comes from the world (family, environment, hurts, trauma), our flesh (ways we try to live life in our own resources), and the devil, who constantly accuses us and tells us lies about ourselves, God, and what we need in life. This perception shapes all of our life and everything we do.
4. We begin to try to meet our needs for acceptance and worth the best way that we can—in our own resources (flesh). As a result we develop ways of living as we attempt to cope, escape, defend ourselves, and succeed (or avoid failure). *These are flesh patterns or ways that we learn to live life independent of God.* We develop these patterns based on how we perceive ourselves, what we believe about God, and how we think life works.
5. A flesh pattern is simply a way that we have learned to meet our needs independent of God. All of us have them because none of us were born Christians, and none of us look to God to meet all our needs all the time. We wrongly think it is just the way we are. *One of Satan's biggest lies is that what we do determines who we are.*

6. Some of these flesh patterns are considered unacceptable, such as irresponsibility. Some are very bad such as drug and alcohol addictions. But some are considered “acceptable,” such as perfectionism and drivenness to succeed. *We need to remember that anything that we do to meet our needs apart from God is flesh.* It could be good, right, noble, and even spiritual-looking, but if we are trying to meet our needs independent of God, it is flesh.
7. Some of these patterns develop into strongholds, such as drug addiction, which cause a lot of problems in our lives. As we seek help, more than likely the counsel is to look at the wrong behavior. ***This is the reason we don't get free.*** The root problem is not the behavior. The root problem is the unbelief behind the behavior. As long as a person believes lies about himself, he will never get free, no matter what he does.
8. Alcoholism, addiction, eating disorders, etc., are not the problem. The problem is the lies we believe about who we are that cause us to try to meet our needs in our own resources.
9. When a person learns that he is not a failure, an addict, unloved, insecure, inferior, and guilty —BUT is forgiven, accepted, competent, complete, righteous, and secure in Christ, he will begin to change and experience freedom. *A person who understands who he is in Christ will not engage in self-destructive, addictive behavior as a lifestyle.*
10. The reason few are finding freedom today is that they are trying to change their behavior. They may be trying to change it through spiritual disciplines, but that is nothing but Christian behavior modification. *A person will always act in accordance with how he perceives himself.* If we really want to help people, we must help them understand who they are in Christ to see any real lasting change and freedom.

## **The Basics of Recovery from Sinful Habits to Freedom In Christ**

1. Give up on self and its resources.
  - It's not about what you do but about what God has done.
  - Everything else is just information until you do this.
2. Submit to God — give up rights, expectations, self, all.
  - Most have not given up on agendas, goals, and theology.
  - Give up rights to have a good job, spouse, ministry, etc.
3. Resist the devil.
  - You can't get free from addiction without it.
  - Satan's only weapon is the lie.

4. Accept that there is no more condemnation, guilt, punishment.
  - You are not a product of your past but of the cross.
  - What are you the most aware of when you fail?
    - God's grace and covering, or your failure?
    - Our failure cannot overcome God's grace. Truth is still truth; God is still God.
  
5. Understand co-crucifixion — that the old person I was died with Christ.
  - Knowing I'm not who I used to be is truth that sets free.
  - Believing we are dead to sin is the key that enables us to appropriate our identity.
  
6. Develop a true concept of God.
  - You can't come to God and bond with Him without it.
  - *"The only lasting freedom from self-consciousness comes from a profound awareness that God loves me as I am and not as I should be."* —Brennan Manning
  
7. Believe that you are not under law, but under grace.
  - If you don't know you're already dead to the law, you'll spend your life trying to make it true.
  - Embracing God's grace is the only thing that will get you off the performance treadmill.
  
8. Walk in truth regardless of feelings or circumstances.
  - The key to a victorious Christian life is acting on the basis of truth.
  - I must act on truth regardless of my feelings.
  
9. Know your position in Christ—that you are not a victim, but a victor.
  - We are seated with Christ in the heavenly places.
  - We have been given the victory and are conquerors.
  
10. Renew your mind and take every thought captive.
  - There is no consistent victory and freedom without it.
  - The alternative is bondage.

# Overcoming Temptation in My Life

*“...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith....” (Hebrews 12:1-2)*

Possible temptations: bitterness, rejection, pride (control), addictions, anger, anxiety/worry, fear, lust/pornography, rebellion, condemnation, self-pity, temporal values, negative thought patterns, hypocrisy, depression/discouragement, lying, stealing

**Temptation:** \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Satan’s Goal for Destruction</b></p> <p>In what ways does or can Satan bring destruction into my life through this temptation?</p>	<p><b>God’s Purposes</b></p> <p>What is God wanting to change in my life through this temptation? What Christ-like character is He after in my life?</p>	<p><b>Scripture to Memorize/Mediate</b></p> <p>What Scripture do I need to memorize and meditate on to help me address this temptation?</p>	<p><b>Prayer</b></p> <p>Write a personalized prayer to use when needed and in your prayer times.</p>

# Tearing Down Strongholds in My Thinking

*“For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.” (2 Corinthians 10:4-6)*

<b>Satan’s Goal for Destruction in My Life</b>	<b>False Beliefs, Lies, and Vows I Made</b>	<b>Truth as Revealed in Christ and His Word</b>
	I renounce.....	I choose to believe the truth...

# ABC Bible Study

A vital aspect in developing intimacy with our Heavenly Father is learning to hear Him speak to us. God speaks to us through His Word and His Spirit—who enlightens our hearts and minds to understand the Scriptures. As we read and study the Word of God, our Father speaks His truth to our hearts in a deep, personal way.



*Are you learning to hear God speak to you? Are you responding to His Word in faith and obedience?*

One tool that can help you grow in your ability to hear and respond to God’s Word is the ABC Bible Study. The ABC study is a simple outline designed to help you dig into a passage of Scripture and understand how to apply it to your life. The outline consists of three parts: the analysis, best verse, and commitment.

## **Analysis:**

After an initial read-through, go back through the passage and create an outline or summary of its basic message. Ask yourself, *“What is the passage saying? What’s the point?”* Restate the major truths of the passage in your own words.

**The A part of the study allows you to grow in your ability to think Biblically by internalizing the truths of the Scriptures.**

## **Best Verse:**

From the passage you read, choose the verse that is most meaningful to you. Ask yourself, *“Which verse best expresses the truth that God is speaking to my heart?”*

**The B part of the study helps you focus in on one particular truth that God is teaching you from the passage.**

## **Commitment:**

Reflect on how this truth applies to the state of your heart and your day-to-day life. Ask yourself, “*How does God want me to respond to what He is saying to me in this passage? What does He want me to do about it?*” Write down your commitment to the Lord, making it as specific as possible, and seek by His grace to carry it out. You may want to write your response to God in the form of a personal prayer.

The C part of the study helps you apply the truth of God’s Word to your life in real and meaningful ways.

**Six questions** to help stimulate your thinking as you respond to God’s Word:

1. Is there a **SIN** for me to forsake?
2. Is there an **ERROR** for me to avoid?
3. Is there a **COMMAND** for me to obey?
4. Is there a **TRUTH** about God or myself for me to internalize?
4. Is there an **EXAMPLE** for me to follow?
5. Is there a **PROMISE** for me to claim?

# ABC Bible Study

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture Read:

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## **Analysis** (What is the passage saying?)

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## **Best Verse** (Which verse is the most meaningful to me?)

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## **Commitment** (What is God wanting me to do?)

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