

## Breaking Free from a Stubborn Habit (Pt. 2)

(July 7, 2019)

### Ground Rules for dislodging a long-term pattern:

*“Put off, concerning your former conduct ... and put on the new man which was created according to God...” – Ephesians 4:22-24*

1. From last week: Believe that God is good, and He wants the best for us (James 1:13-14, 16-17).
2. Our desire to change must be greater than the convenience and enjoyment of the negative habit.
  - ✓ All negative habits are addictive.
    - Example: explosions of anger.
      - Anger frightens others, and the sense of empowerment is addictive.
      - The surge of adrenaline which accompanies angry outbursts is addictive.
  - ✓ It is near impossible to change if we don't experience the downside of the habit.
    - King Saul's habit: stretching God's Word to make it fit his convenience.
    - Samuel told Saul that God was sending him to totally destroy the Amalekites.
      - God's decision in Noah's day (Genesis 6:12-13).
    - Saul's habit had benefits which always seemed right to him.
    - Samuel's drastic response to cut off Saul's habit: 1 Samuel 15:33b.
    - We're really not ready to break a habit until we're willing to hack it to pieces.
3. Own the habit.
  - ✓ When God confronted Adam, he blamed “the woman whom You gave to be with me” (Genesis 3:12).
    - Adam was blaming both God and the woman.
  - ✓ Repentance only comes when we own the habit.
  - ✓ It took a year before David was ready to own his sins: adultery, murder and lying.
  - ✓ Until we own the habit, we will continue giving it a nice name.
    - This practice keeps us from repentance and freedom.
  - ✓ One example: the habit of racist thinking.
    - A heart test: can we give each person of a certain race a clean start with no stereotypical characterizations?

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4. If at all possible, include another person in your freedom strategy.
  - ✓ Ideally, someone other than your spouse. Why?
    - Our spouse tends to give us flexibility, or...
    - Our spouse is so weary with our life pattern that they fail to give us the benefit of the doubt when we are improving.
  - ✓ Proverbs 27:9b
    - “Hearty counsel”—not “wimpy counsel”.
  - ✓ Our coaching must always be motivated by a desire to restore and strengthen (Galatians 6:1).
    - “Overtaken” = caught
    - “Restore” = mend, as mending a net
  - ✓ It is sometimes helpful to bring together a group of wise coaches in order to give the best possible counsel (Proverbs 11:14).
  - ✓ Church must be a safe place to have and overcome a difficult problem.
- We are called to two places of commitment.
  1. A commitment to try again in an area where we have tried and failed.
  2. A commitment to be a true helper and coach to those who need a workout partner.