

THE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY SERIES

WHAT IS GOD'S HEART ON
**HABITS &
ADDICTIONS?**

Excerpt from
KEYS FOR LIVING LIBRARY



HABITS & ADDICTIONS

Success in Self-Control

What Is God's Heart on Habits and Addictions?

Habits are learned patterns of behavior or attitudes repeated so often they become typical of a person. Addictions are a compulsive, enslaving dependence on something, resulting in detrimental patterns of thinking and behaving. You can control a habit, but with an addiction—whether it's drugs, alcohol, pornography, shopping, gambling, or something else—it controls you.

The Lord encourages you to *"give careful thought to your ways"* (Haggai 1:5). This simple command is an invitation to examine your attitudes and behaviors to see what is positive and negative, what is healthy and what is harmful. As you examine your own life and look to God's Word for guidance, remember . . . the Lord can help you break any enslaving addiction and empower you to develop positive, healthy habits.

*"For I am the LORD your God
who takes hold of your right hand and says to you,
Do not fear; I will help you."
(ISAIAH 41:13)*

Habits can be beneficial and profitable.

"Blessed are those who keep my ways" (PROVERBS 8:32).

Habits can be evil and destructive.

"They get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to" (1 TIMOTHY 5:13).

Habits can be passed down from generation to generation.

"The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the ways of his father David before him" (2 CHRONICLES 17:3).

Habits can reflect devotion to God and God's character.

"I have kept the ways of the LORD; I am not guilty of turning from my God" (PSALM 18:21).

Habits can increase consistency and strengthen character.

"The righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger" (JOB 17:9).

Habits are a choice—a function of the will—but they can also be influenced by the mind and emotions.

"What you decide on will be done, and light will shine on your ways" (JOB 22:28).

Habits can be a positive witness to others.

"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (MATTHEW 5:16).

*"The Lord can help
you break any
enslaving addiction
and empower you
to develop positive,
healthy habits."*

Addictions are not just a choice, but the result of a bad choice that has been repeatedly made over an extended period of time.

“They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for ‘people are slaves to whatever has mastered them’” (2 PETER 2:19).

Addictions lead hearts astray and hurt the cause of Christ.

“Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute” (2 PETER 2:2).

Addictions hold people captive and cover them with a canopy of darkness.

“I will keep you and will make you . . . to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness” (ISAIAH 42:6–7).

Addictions enslave people, but freedom comes from the Lord who delights in breaking the yoke of slavery.

“They will know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them” (EZEKIEL 34:27).

Addictions hold mastery over us, but God is to be our only Master.

“I have the right to do anything’—but I will not be mastered by anything” (1 CORINTHIANS 6:12).

Positive habits can be developed and addictions overcome through Christ.

“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one [Jesus] who is in you is greater than the one [Satan] who is in the world” (1 JOHN 4:4).

Go Deeper

Keys for Living Books

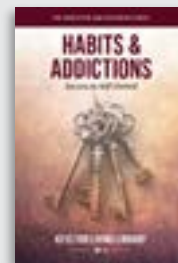
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Check out our *Lifeline to Hope* Topical Video Course on this topic. These videos provide biblical insights and practical guidance on specific emotional, relational, and spiritual issues.

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4 POINTS OF GOD'S PLAN

Whether you're trying to make sense of your past, trying to overcome something in the present, or trying to make changes for a better future, the Lord cares about you. He loves you. No matter what challenges you or your loved ones are facing, no matter the pain or difficult feelings you may be experiencing, no matter what you've done or what's been done to you, *there is hope*. And that hope is found in Jesus Christ.

God has a plan for your life, and it begins with a personal relationship with Jesus. The most important decision you can ever make is whether you will accept His invitation. If you have never made that decision, these four simple truths can help you start your journey together with Him.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.’”*
(JEREMIAH 29:11)

God's Purpose for You: *Salvation*

What was God's motivation in sending Jesus Christ to earth? To express His love for you by saving you! The Bible says, *“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”* (John 3:16–17).

What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To forgive your sins, to empower you to have victory over sin, and to enable you to live a fulfilled life! Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10).

The Problem: *Sin*

What exactly is sin? Sin is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is wrong and doing it anyway—also knowing what is right and choosing not to do it. The apostle Paul said, *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway”* (Romans 7:18–19 NLT).

What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, eternal separation from God. The Bible says, *“Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God”* (Isaiah 59:2). Scripture also says, *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

God's Provision for You: *The Savior*

Can anything remove the penalty for sin? Yes! Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in (entrusting your life to) Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father. Jesus said, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). The Bible says, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . .”* (Acts 16:31).

Your Part: *Surrender*

Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him. Jesus said, *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”* (Matthew 16:24–26).

Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of earning God’s approval. The Bible says, *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Has there been a time in your life when you know you’ve humbled your heart and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—giving Him control of your life? You can tell God that you want to surrender your life to Christ in a simple, heartfelt prayer like this:

*“God, I want a real relationship with you.
I admit that many times I’ve chosen to go my own way instead of your way.
Please forgive me for my sins.
Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins.
Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.
Change me from the inside out and make me
the person you created me to be.
In your holy name I pray. Amen.”*

What Can You Now Expect?

When you surrender your life to Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit who empowers you to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible says, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life . . .”* (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus assures those who believe with these words:

*“Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me
has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”*
(JOHN 5:24)

The information in this resource is intended as guidelines for healthy living. Please consult qualified medical, legal, pastoral, and psychological professionals regarding individual concerns.

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

God gives us His Word not just for information but for transformation. The Lord wants you to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Romans 12:2). This isn’t something you do alone, but something God does in you by His Spirit.

The following questions are designed to help you reflect on the biblical truths in this resource. Take a moment to pray and ask God to settle your mind and quiet your spirit as you reflect on His truth.

“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”
(2 TIMOTHY 2:7)

What are two key truths, Bible verses, or “takeaways” from this resource that you found helpful—or that you simply needed to be reminded of?

In relation to this topic, what behavior(s) do you need to *begin*, *change*, or *stop* in order to help you grow into the person God created you to be?

In relation to this topic, what is the biggest obstacle you need to overcome in order to move forward?

What might your life look like a few years from now if you do *not* make changes regarding this issue? How might your life be different if you *do* make changes?

Is there anyone in your life who needs help with this topic/issue? How can you pray for them, and what is one thing you can do to encourage them?

What can you give thanks to God for today?

*“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself
and God our Father, who loved us
and by his grace gave us eternal comfort
and a wonderful hope,
comfort you and strengthen you
in every good thing you do and say.”
(2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 NLT)*

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