

Authentic HOPE

FREEDOM FROM ADDICTION



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Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2018

Copies may be ordered from:

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Dr. Tony Evans says that addictions are strongholds in the mind. I agree with him wholeheartedly. What a person believes is hugely important to their quality of life. Whatever our “truth” is will determine our responses, or worse yet, our reactions. It should not be surprising, in light of these facts, that the apostle tells us to be *transformed through the renewing of your mind Romans 12:2.*

Our mind is a powerful tool for good or evil. Jesus said that our deepest thoughts are often what truly defiles us. For out of the heart come evil ideas, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander Matthew 15:19. The things we are addicted to have been established in our minds and we may believe we can't resist temptation or our cravings. Many feel helpless and hopeless.

The good news is – there is hope in God. Jesus came to set us free from our addictions. Consider God's Word from Isaiah 61:1.

The spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has chosen me. He has commissioned me to encourage the poor, to help the brokenhearted, to decree the release of captives, and the freeing of prisoners...

We were all captives of sin and prisoners to our cravings in one way or another. However, Jesus declared God's decree that captives are to be released through Him and prisoners are to be set free through Him.

Can you believe in the hope God sets forth in Jesus? You have new hope on the horizon and your addictions will eventually be behind you.

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free - John 8:32.

Some will say "I fail so often and I can't stop! There is no hope for me."

Your first step must be toward Jesus and the truth of God's word.

Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never send away. John 6:37.

JESUS WON'T TURN YOU AWAY.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23 | There is no one righteous, not even one. Romans 3:10.

NONE OF US ARE RIGHTEOUS WITHOUT JESUS.

Those who are healthy don't need a physician, but those who are sick do. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. Mark 2:16.

JESUS DIDN'T COME FOR THE RIGHTEOUS
BUT FOR US SINNERS.

The tax collector, however, stood far off and would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, God, be merciful to me, sinner that I am! I tell you that this man went down to his home justified. Luke 18:13. | To this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word. Isaiah 66:2

GOD'S MERCIFUL GAZE FALLS UPON TRULY
BROKEN PEOPLE

God's word is true in spite of your feelings of condemnation.

Your second step must be to accept His forgiveness.

Then Peter came to him and asked, Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times? No, not seven times, Jesus replied, but seventy times seven! Matthew 18:21-22.

IF WE ARE TO ALWAYS FORGIVE, SURELY THE LORD WILL GO ABOVE AND BEYOND THAT. HE WILL FORGIVE YOU!

Let the Lord be your secure place. He is still with you.

Your third step is to begin the transformation process by renewing your mind.

His divine power has bestowed on us everything necessary for life and godliness through the rich knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence. 2 Peter 1:3

There are three transformative truths in this passage to give us a foundation for our new freedom.

First, God has given you everything necessary for life and godliness.

- It comes from His divine power that lives in every Christian. It doesn't originate with you.
- Jesus came so we could experience abundant life: John 10:10.
- Addiction will lead to death of some sort:
 - Death of self-respect
 - Death of your marriage

- Death of your career
- Death of your family life
- Physical death

- Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8 (Satan is your tempter and sin coach).
- Jesus forgives all your sin
- Jesus pours the Holy Spirit into your heart (The Spirit of Life – Romans 8:2)
- The Spirit of life sets you free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2)
- Your mind, when set on the things the Holy Spirit desires, is filled with life and peace. (Romans 8:6)
- Christ in you means you are filled with His life! You have peace with God.

Second, the means of experiencing life apart from addiction is the rich knowledge of God.

- Your mind must be retrained now that you are free from your prison.
- You might say ... But I'm not free from my prison! I'm still struggling.
- You still believe you can't resist your addiction.
- A stronghold is in your mind and maybe in your body.

- God's truth will destroy that stronghold and teach you that, as a child of God you have been set free from sin. It no longer has power over you! Isaiah 61:1-2; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Romans 6:14
- Don't give up if you fail. Go to Jesus for forgiveness and continue retraining your mind.
- Deeply entrenched habits may take time to break. God's truth will eventually set you free!
- You need a good, Bible believing, Bible teaching church to become part of.
 - Don't expect everyone to be like you.
 - Don't expect everyone at your church to be without flaws.
 - Establish a habit of attending church and become a learner of Jesus.
 - The people there are your new family.
- The more you learn about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, the more freedom you will experience.

Third, God is glorious and excellent.

- His character is one of perfect honor.
- He is a good father and you are now His child.

- He will care for you.
- *He doesn't treat us as our sins deserve nor repay us according to our unrighteousness. Psalm 103:10*
- He is committed to helping us reach judgment day with peace in our heart. Jude 1:24
- He character is one of perfect excellence.
- Definitions for God's excellence are:
 - Moral goodness
 - Virtue
- He will never turn on you or disappoint you.
- He will always guide you in right paths.
- You can count on Him.

Your fourth step is to begin developing some good habits to replace your addictive ones.

Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:5-8

The rich knowledge of God and Christ Jesus fills us with life as we live according to it. Begin to learn these Christian graces and the Holy Spirit will help you to grow in them.

GOODNESS - Your foundation of faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins must lead to goodness.

- You must start living better. Reject the wrong things in this world and do the right things.
- You will have the Holy Spirit helping your conscience guide you to do right things.
- The more you learn of God's Word, the more you will know what is right and what is wrong.

Try this exercise (Exercise in morality)

Obey your boss or anyone else who is in a position of authority in your life.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except by God's appointment, and the authorities that exist have been instituted by God. So the person who resists such authority resists the ordinance of God. Romans 13:1-2

You are testing and proving the will of God and declaring with your life that you love God more than yourself. It may be difficult but remember, you are retraining your mind to think the way God thinks. He has changed your desires and now you want to please Him.

KNOWLEDGE – Your new life in Christ must have more knowledge of God for you to thrive.

- Knowledge of God comes from the scriptures or the Bible.
- Buy a good bible that is easy to read and understand.
- Get a reading plan and follow it regularly. Remember – you are establishing new habits.
- Join a solid, Bible believing church and sit under the ministry of your pastor.

Assignment: Find someone or a group to discuss the Bible with.

SELF-CONTROL – The knowledge of God you are gaining needs to be put into practice.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, if anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever

loses his life for my sake will find it. For what does it benefit a person if he gains the whole world but forfeits his life? Or what can a person give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. Matthew 16:24-27

- Self-control always results in a better life.
- We are spared from much regret by controlling ourselves.
- The world around us is not dictating our mood or behavior, we have chosen to live like God.

Excellent exercise of spiritual discipline:
Practice fasting for a period of time. When you fast, take time to seek the Lord.

PERSEVERANCE – The self-control you are asserting needs to become a habit. Keep practicing it.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:8

- Growth requires repetition. The Bible term for repetition is PRACTICE.

- Whatever we practice becomes our lifestyle.
- Periodic episodes of obedience are wonderful yet we are exhorted to PRACTICE obedience.

Consider a Bible truth you have recently learned. Focus on that truth (and obedience to it) for a month. Perhaps you could even keep a log of your experience. Habits are often formed through practicing something for a month.

This exercise is not meant to become a “legal requirement” for you but a tool to help you practice perseverance.

GODLINESS – Growth in your personal relationship and devotion toward God.

Godliness is different from moral excellence. We live increasingly righteous lives because our heart has been changed by God. Perseverance in obedience demonstrates our love for God and Godliness is the expression of a heart that longs for God.

- A Godly heart longs for God.
- A Godly heart is loyal to God.
- A Godly heart reveres God.

The best exercise I can recommend for growing in Godliness is devotional prayer. Spend time with your Father in heaven. Practice a regular prayer time for a month. Keep a journal. The Lord will undoubtedly speak to your heart.

BROTHERLY KINDNESS – The second greatest commandment is to love our fellow man the way we love ourselves.

In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 7:12

For genuine brotherly love to grow in our lives we need to grow as God's children. This is why this grace is near the top of the list. Our heart is transformed through the renewing of our mind and a change in our lifestyle.

The power of Godliness is that our life changes from the inside. Our desires are different which makes our behavior different. (2 Tim. 3:5 is a negative example)

INTENTIONAL EXERCISE: Seek an opportunity to treat a neighbor the way you would want to be treated. Choose 5 people over the course of a month to treat kindly. Keep a journal.

LOVE – The apostle Paul lists three Christian graces that are eternally enduring.

Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor. 13:13 NLT

The word translated love in this case is the greek word – agape. Jesus used it to describe the greatest love there is in His kingdom.

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13

- This love is unselfish.
- This love is a choice regardless of how another treats you.
- Characteristics of this love are listed here.

Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Ask God for His help so you can live in love. Commit these to memory and let them guide your actions. You will have to deny yourself and choose this love. God will empower you to love.

When you fail, don't run from God but run to Him. He forgives wickedness rebellion and sin.

Then the Lord passed by in front of him (Moses) and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; Exodus 34:6,7a

- *When we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9*
- Overcoming addiction is not our task alone. The Lord is on our side to make sure we succeed.
- *For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6*
- You will succeed because of Christ. You will also have the benefit of brothers and sisters in Christ to support you when you are weak.
- Remember, the Lord will not abandon you!
- He came to set you free.

Love you all, Brad

Bradley Hunt is an ordained Assemblies of God minister with over thirty years of pastoral experience. In 2006 Brad began CrossTrek World Ministries at the call of God and began travelling to India to train poor village pastors.

God has blessed these efforts and close to ten thousand church leaders have been revived through CrossTrek World Ministries.

Brad has authored The Spirit Filled Life seminar which he has taught in India for years. Indian Bible Schools are now using The Spirit Filled Life workbook to train their students in Holy Spirit collaboration. The Spirit Filled Life Seminar is now in e-book format and can be downloaded for free from Brad's website www.crosstrek.org.

This booklet is written in response to the Lord's prompting. The hope it portrays is real and the goal is freedom for the oppressed.

May God Bless you as you read this and give you the freedom he died to procure. God be with you all.

Brad Hunt



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