

If You Really Want to Be Free From Sexual Sin, This Bold Habit Can Help

I remember being in Bible college and crying out to God, fasting, praying, and begging to be set free, only to fall again and repeat the same plea week after week, month after month for all four years.

I had been radically saved. My alcohol and drug use fell off at that point and I've never had a desire for them since, but I couldn't get free from sexual addiction. I was learning about God and the Bible. I was part of a vibrant, passionate church that had great worship, where people got saved every week. I sang in the choir. I did evangelism. Nevertheless, my secret addiction held me in chains.

What's wrong with this picture? If you're an addict of any kind, you know exactly what I mean.

I want to assure you, your prayers and pleas have not gone unanswered. Sadly, for me there was no addiction recovery in the church, no recovery workbook, no 12-step programs, not anything. I had to learn recovery from the Lord and he taught me well.

I'll never forget it. After spending some time in recovery, I worked in a psychiatric hospital in the addiction unit. I was a seminary student at the time. Part of my job was to take alcohol and drug addicts to their addiction classes and 12-step meetings. I spent years in smoke-filled rooms with people sober from alcohol and drugs, but not nicotine or coffee! Early on in that job, I decided to sit in on the addiction class. I threw my book bag down next to my chair. The counselor began facilitating a discussion on recovery with the patients, but I soon found myself attracted more to what was

on the wall than the conversation the counselor was leading.

I found myself reading the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. I thought back to the long road to healing Jesus had personally taken me through, to when I truly began to get free from my addiction. I want to share with you some biblical principles so that you can see that recovery for everyone is greatly rooted in biblical truth. He is the author of our own freedom. He has given us all that we need to be free. We just need to know what these truths and principles are so we can go from struggling to recovery.

I want to share some powerful truths with you about who you are. You are a son or daughter of the Most High God. You are precious, wise, resourceful and capable. You have a divine mission to break these curses off your life and clean up the damage from your past choices. God has chosen you to take the journey to recovery. Millions of people are saved, yet still addicted to many things, including relationships. Of all the people in pain who are crying out to God for help and freedom, God chose to give you the opportunity for recovery.

Recovery for Everyone is an opportunity. You decide what you do with this opportunity. You can push it away, do just a little to get out of a current crisis, or you can be consistent, do the work, become free, stay free for a lifetime and be a part of seeing others get free and stay free as well.

Through Christ, God has already decided you are worthy of total freedom from every addiction. For me, that meant alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography, caffeine and sugar. I know recovery, so I know that if you are ready, God wants you to be free. I just thought you should know that Father God thinks you're awesome and is very proud of you for taking this journey we call recovery.

In Bible college, I cried out to God and constantly looked for Scriptures to help me get free. Early in my walk with Jesus, I

found a very familiar Scripture that anyone who fails again and again can cling to for forgiveness. Here is what I found:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”(1 John 1:9).

When I messed up, I did what you probably did as well. I knelt down, sometimes crying for Jesus to forgive and cleanse me. Like you, I experienced true forgiveness. I felt the forgiveness of Jesus. I believed His blood had more power than my sin in which I was choosing to participate. I felt cleansed and this would last for days or weeks until I acted out in the sin again; then wham-o! The guilt and shame came back and I would be forgiven again.

I think you get the picture. Most of you lived the same movie: act out in your addiction patterns (sin), ask for forgiveness, and do it all over again. This pattern is all too familiar for most of us.

I was confessing my sin to Jesus. He was forgiving me. Why wasn't I getting any better?

Why wasn't I getting free? Why wasn't God helping me? Why was I falling again and again? Well, quite simply, I was using the wrong principle to get the result I truly needed.

My desire for alcohol and drugs left me at my salvation commitment at 19 years of age, though I first accepted Christ as a youth in a Salvation Army camp (thank God for the Salvation Army!). I struggled with my sexual addiction. I was in seminary, working on my master's degree, preparing to go into full-time ministry.

I had a roommate in my dorm who was slightly different from me; a really awesome and gracious man of God. One day, I genuinely felt the Lord tell me to let my roommate know every time I sinned in a sexual way. I was not excited about this at all, but my deal with God was to do 100 percent of what he

told me to do, so I told my roommate what the Lord told me to do, and he was OK with it.

Not even a week later, I needed the courage to tell my roommate I had fallen. I never felt so humiliated in my entire life. He graciously forgave me. About a week or so later, I fell again and felt really humiliated when I told my roommate. However, something wonderful happened after that second time. I genuinely did not want to do the behavior anymore. The desire to act waned greatly. I had a few more slips, but they were many weeks apart.

After I married, I always told my wife when I slipped. A few months into our marriage, being totally honest broke my addiction. I began living in real recovery.

I have not participated in ungodly sexual behavior or pornography in decades. Occasionally, I even take a polygraph to verify my recovery. I got free and stayed free, and God has used me to help others get free and stay free.

What made the difference? I started using the biblical principle in James 5:16 (NIV):

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

“If” is really a critical part of this verse. This means “if” I confess, I can be healed or made free. If I don’t confess, I am guaranteed to stay sick, or in my case, addicted. I was utilizing the principle of confessing my faults (acts or behavior) to another Christian of the same gender, so recovery and healing came to my life and stayed.

If you truly want to get free and stay free from your addiction behavior, be it alcohol, drugs, sex, codependency, work, carbohydrates, sugar, nicotine or caffeine, you *have to* confess to another person. To be free, you have to be

honest and accountable to another person of the same gender. Check back for biblical principle two and three. {eoa}

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