

**“Why Do I Do What I Don’t Want to Do?”**

**Text: Romans 7:15, 21-25**

May 4, 2008

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What is it that’s out of control in your life, that you have a hard time controlling?

- Your temper? One wife said, “My husband is so temperamental! Ninety percent temper, ten percent mental.”
- Spending? Bumper sticker: “The person who says money can’t buy happiness just doesn’t know where to shop.”
- Eating? My moods? Drinking? Sexual desires? Procrastinating? Bad habits?

**Read Romans 7:15, 21-25 & PRAY!**

The next seven weeks we’re going to be in a series I’m calling “Breaking Free.” It’s about how do you get rid of, how you let go of the hang-ups, the hurts, and the habits that mess up your life.

This morning I want to lay a foundation. I want to look at the problem. Why can’t I change? And then God’s promise of freedom and the procedure for getting started.

**I. THE PROBLEM**

- A. Paul summarizes it in Romans 7:15-16, 18 (Living Bible), *“My own behavior baffles me. For I find myself doing what I really hate, and not doing what I really want to do! I often find that I have the desire to do good, but not the power. I don’t accomplish the good I set out to do, and the evil I don’t really want to do I find I am always doing!”*
- B. Can you relate to this? He’s saying all the things I don’t want to do I end up doing and all the things I do want to do I end up not doing. I want to do what’s right, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what’s bad, but I do.
  1. The cowboy who became a Christian said, “I feel like there are two horses pulling in opposite directions in my life.” Which one wins? “Whichever one I say ‘Giddeup’ to.” We’re in a civil war. Part of me wants to do what is right. Part of Me doesn’t want to do what’s right. It’s a clash like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.
- C. Jesus said in Mark 14:38, *“The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”* If you’ve felt this way, have I got good news for you! You can change. The power is there. The next seven weeks are for you. The Bible makes the principles very clear.

## II. GOD'S PROMISE

- A. "Jesus said, ... *'When you know the Truth, the Truth will set you free.'*"  
"Set you free." Notice that the secret to personal change is not will power. Will power doesn't work. It's not fat farms, pills, resolutions, gimmicks. Jesus said that the way you break free from a hurt, from a hang up is by knowing the Truth. How?
- B. The way you think determines the way you feel. The way you feel determines the way you act. If I'm acting depressed it's because I feel depressed; if I feel depressed it's because I'm thinking depressed. Most of us try to work on the actions to change the external behavior – I'm going to force myself to quit. God says you start with the way you think. And when you know the truth, it shows in your life. Bad beliefs cause bad behavior. Every thing you do, good or bad, is based on a belief. If you want to change the way you act, you have to change the way you believe, the way you think. You've got to have the truth. And behind every self-defeating behavior is a lie that I believe.
- C. Jesus said, *"When you know the Truth, the Truth will set you free."*
- D. In the next seven weeks we're going to expose and uncover and challenge the untruths and faulty misconceptions and misperceptions that keep you hung up, that keeps you from being free. I believe this will be a liberating series.

Today, I want to give you three foundational things you need to do to get started. First, we need to lay the foundation before anything else.

## III. THE PERSCRIPTION – Three things you need in your foundation.

### A. ACKNOWLEDGE the root of my problem.

1. This is the starting point to breaking free. Whatever you want to change in your life you must first acknowledge the root of the problem. Most of us have some vague feeling, "Something's wrong with me. I don't know what it is. But something's wrong." God says the basic problem is the basic attitude you have toward life, toward God, toward yourself. This attitude has a name that no one likes to hear or talk about...
2. **S-I-N.** That's the problem. What is sin? Sin is not getting stoned on cocaine, getting drunk or running off with somebody else's wife – these are the result of sin. Sin is an attitude that says, "I'm in charge and I don't need God." That's the basic attitude. It's the root of all our problems. No matter what our problems are, behind it all is a bedrock belief that says, "I'm in charge and I don't need God." It's humanity's oldest problem. It's been around since Adam and Eve. "I'm going to ignore God and do my own thing."
  - a. 1 John 1:8 (Living Bible), *"If we say we have no sin we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth."* We make things worse when we pretend it's not a problem. Nobody's perfect. The only one you're fooling when you say, "I've got it all together" is yourself. You don't have it all together. Nobody does.

- b. In order to stop defeating myself, I must first stop deceiving myself, pretending that my hang-ups and hurts are not a problem. The root problem is “I think I’m in charge and I don’t need God.” We weren’t made to live that way. If you go to Alcoholics Anonymous the very first step of AA is “Admit that I’m powerless to control my situation and my life has become unmanageable.”
- c. Unfortunately, for many of us we have to hit bottom before we admit anything.
  - 1. Psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors—biggest problem? People often wait too long to get help.
- d. Jesus said in John 8:34, *“Everyone who commits sin is it’s Whatever you refuse to admit enslaves you. The first step to breaking free is to admit it. You say, “I have the desire to change but I don’t have the power. Is there any hope?” Yes. Step 2.*

**B. BELIEVE that Christ can change me.**

- 1. Romans 7:24-25, *“Who can free me from this prison...? I thank God there is a way out through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* Paul is saying the answer is a person. God has the power you are lacking. You don’t have the power to change, but God does. God’s got all the power in the world. Christ wants to help you change. He wants to help you over those hang ups and habits. But you have to believe that Christ can change you.
- 2. I read a story about a Chinese Christian who came to America to share his Christian testimony: “I’d walked through the road of life and I’d fallen into a great ditch of sin. Mohammed came along and said, ‘you’re not really in that ditch. You just think you’re there.’ Buddha came along and said, ‘Here are seven steps by which you can get out of the ditch. If you climb and struggle you’ll come out.’ I strove but I could not get out. Confucius came by and said, ‘Here are ten steps to self-attainment by which you can get out of the ditch. If you’ll come half way, I’ll come the other half way and help you out.’ Struggle as I would I was still in the pit of sin of hopelessness and helplessness. One day Jesus Christ came by. Jesus saw my condition. Without a word of advice, He stripped Himself of His regal robe, got down into the ditch, into the muck, into the sin. He got down and lifted me up. Thank God, what I could not do for myself, Christ did for me.”
- 3. That’s the good news. That’s exactly what Paul says in this next verse here, Romans 8:2, *“For the new spiritual principle of life in Jesus Christ lifts me out of the old vicious circle of sin...”* There is a way out. *“He lifts me out.”* God wants to give us power to lift us out of our *“old vicious circle of sin.”* Jesus said, *“The truth will set you free.”* And In John 14:6, Jesus said, *“I am the Truth.”* Truth is a person, Jesus Christ. That brings you to step 3.

### **C. COMMIT all I am to Christ.**

1. This is foundational: Commit all I am – the good the bad, the ugly, the hurts, the habits, the hang ups to Jesus Christ. You say, “Give me one good reason why I ought to do that.” Because you’ve tried everything else and nothing else works (shopping, food, revenge, movies, TV, fantasizing, books, sports).
2. Why don’t you try Jesus? When I see the choices people make, I make no apologies to stand before you and say Jesus Christ is the answer. There are millions and millions of people throughout history who are living proof that He changes lives and nobody else does.
3. 2 Corinthians 5:17, *“When anyone becomes a Christian, they become a brand new person inside. They are not the same anymore. A new life has begun!”* This is real change. You plug into God’s power.
4. My question to you is, Are you tired of trying to force yourself to change and coming up short? Will power does not work! My advice to you is Stop Trying and Start Trusting.

This is not all there is to change. But this is the foundation. You’ll have no power in your life to break free until you’re plugged into God’s power. I want to give you that opportunity now, to get connected, plugged into God:

#### **PRAYER**

**Would you just quietly say a prayer in your heart to God and open your life to power and His love, by committing yourself to Christ. It doesn’t matter what you say. What matters are the very thoughts and intentions of your heart.** *“Jesus Christ, I want to acknowledge the root of my problem. I admit that I’ve been trying to live my life without God. I’ve done a lot of things on my own and I’ve made a lot of mistakes. Yes, I’ve sinned. The Bible says we’re only fooling ourselves if we try to pretend we’re perfect. I ask You to forgive me. Jesus Christ, I want to believe that You can change me. I want to believe the truth that can set me free. Now, as much as I know how, I commit myself to You. Help me to understand it more. I want to take the first step today.”*

**If you prayed this simple prayer, I believe God heard you. You’ve taken the first step in the long journey of the Christian life.**

**Those of you who are already Christians and renewed your commitment, the greatest lesson you have to learn is that you cannot live the Christian life in your own power and strength. You must let God’s Spirit do it through you.**

**Let’s pray:** *“Father, thank You for Your word. Thank You for the Bible, that it is practical and relevant. It applies to our life. We pray that this series will set many people free to become all they want to be and all that you want them to be. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”*