

One of my sons-in-law was addicted in his youth. After he received Christ as His Savior, alcohol and drugs dropped off, but the tobacco remained for several years. As we talked about it from time to time and his frustration grew, his question became increasingly, "Should I just wait on the Lord to take it away, or should I decide again I'm going to try to quit?"

Each time he had decided to quit, he ended up returning to smoking and feeling worse than before. At length he became thoroughly convinced that it was harmful and he had to be rid of the habit. He recognized he wasn't able to do it by his own willpower.

He kept pictures of terribly blackened, smoke-damaged lungs in highly visible locations. Then he ordered one of those quit smoking programs. But by the time it arrived, he scarcely needed it. The Lord had won the day in his heart.

Through the Difficult Delays

Often we need to learn to rest patiently in the Lord while we wait for His deliverance, believing He'll deliver us in His way and time. Such patient trust may be needed concerning our slavery to people and their opinions, to self-will, to passions and appetites, to selfish expectations, and to idolatrous covetousness.

We are morally incapacitated. We simply can't quit! Before His deliverance comes, God must work His changes within. He may need to sicken us of displeasing Him, bring us to the end of any hope in ourselves, and convince us that victory is only in His life. He may sometimes need to do for us what He did for me twice, make us mortally afraid of displeasing

Him. In this fear I found, not continuing terror, but the release of mutual love, a rich desire to please my Lord, and the joyful freedom of deliverance.

Don't be satisfied to continue feeding your natural desires. Instead, long for God's enabling to starve them as you have been accustomed to starving your spiritual desires. Let your focus go to Him and to what pleases and glorifies Him. Choose gladly to die to all that feeds or encourages the selfish desires of the flesh.

Let God Do It

Whenever you sense that you're rushing, pushing, shoving, impatient, remember that God's children don't have to. Instead they can they are able to. Slow down, withdraw into your spirit, and recommence your peaceful communion with God in the Spirit. When He's in charge, there's no need for the hurry that's accompanied by tension and anxiety.

Whenever you sense your independence reestablishing itself, reasserting your self-reliance, look to the Lord in rest and peace. Receive His freeing grace. In that grace, die to the claims of the flesh to competence.

Depending on God and not on yourself is reflected in an attitude of simple gratitude that God is right now doing His pleasure without any need of your interference, whether it seems so or not. When we get out of the way, God is most free to work in us. Our anxiety, our necessity, our independence, our hurry, our seeking the credit, our pride, our self-effort, all limit the extent to which God can work His perfect will in our lives and circumstances.

Write to us and request more copies to share.

Transformed Living Messages by Pastor Marr
ChristLife
PO Box 1033, Niagara Falls, NY 14304
Ph: (716) 622-7320
E-mail: Christlife@Christ-like.net
Visit us at www.Christ-like.net



By: Pastor Ron Marr

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offence. It is good neither to eat meat nor to drink wine nor anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin."

Romans 14:17, 19-23

I trust you're seeing some real changes both inside and out. I hope you're responding increasingly to the desire God has put in your heart to live moment by moment in as close harmony as possible with Him: centering your focus on Him, worshiping Him, communing with Him, letting Him teach you to love and trust Him, relying on Him to bring good to you through every circumstance of life, rejecting any claim of the flesh to independence from Him, repeatedly turning inward to Him in rest and peace until you learn to abide in Him continually, dying to all that is not Him, accepting

WALKING IN LIBERTY

His power to give you new desires and responding to them by that same divine power, and seeking to relinquish all else that you might have Him more fully.

Hopefully, your focus and love is shifting away from yourself and the things of this life to Him. He can then draw you into His rest and peace, causing the struggles to abate, the fears to diminish, and your needs to be met in Him. You then become willing to be nobody apart from Him, immersed in Him and His love, seeking His praise rather than your pleasure.

Be Sensitively Responsive

Let's seek to respond sensitively to every sign of the new desires that the Lord gives us: desires to be drawn close to Him, to please Him, to honor and glorify Him, to live only for Him and what is eternal and spiritual. Let's be increasingly prepared to pay the price of obedience: repeatedly rejecting the claim of our flesh to independence from Him.

If we're concerned that any habit or practice we permit in our lives doesn't please the Lord, we need to seek His help to lay it on the altar. Yes, the golden secret of a Christianity that really works is resting in the Lord and His peace so He is free to do His work in us. But surely it's obvious that God's work in us will be greatly hampered unless we let Him teach us and enable us to do less and less often what we know displeases Him, and more and more often what pleases Him.

Deliverance and Direction

We can know more of His deliverance from

even those things of which we're in doubt, for "whatever is not from faith is sin." At the same time, we can learn to listen more carefully to His positive guidance in even the little things and reap amazingly large benefits.

The Lord was speaking to me about catching up on our giving. I agreed to do whatever He enabled. Immediately, guess what He did? He revealed a mistake in our bookkeeping that reduced our tax liability by the amount of the tithe checks I especially wanted to write.

We need to learn to be sensitive to whatever He says to us. In order to develop our sensitivity to Him, we may have to go seemingly overboard. For instance, to not do apparently harmless things forbidden by an over-sensitive conscience is better than to harden our hearts by ignoring that still, small voice. This, too, is applying the cross to our idols. By proceeding with any matter while we're still in doubt, we sin and grieve God's Spirit. We'll never learn to walk as well as we would like in moment by moment loving, open-hearted fellowship with the Lord until we learn to do happily without whatever is doubtful. Our peace, rest, and joy will be limited.

Seek by the grace of God in glad self-sacrifice to do the difficult, the costly, rather than the easy, the naturally desirable that you're doubtful about. Let the Spirit teach you to do it, not to escape God's displeasure or earn God's approval, but to give Him pleasure.

Depend on Him

If you seem unable to release a doubtful thing immediately, tell the Lord so. Confess your incapacity without surprise, remembering the depravity of

your sinful heart. Then return to looking in quiet trust and dependence to Him. Look to Him confidently and patiently to cause you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Let Him teach you to depend on Him alone for deliverance.

Years ago I had an experience similar to my TV experience. I'd become enslaved by a very bad habit. One evening when I was engaged in it, the Lord gave me such a sudden revulsion and fear that I wanted to be rid of that habit then and there. I didn't have to promise never to partake in it again as I had done so often. The fear of it, the absolute necessity to be free, said it all. From that day to this, the temptation has got short shrift whenever it appeared, but that was only after years when deliverance seemed unobtainable.

How To Quit Bad Habits

The number of well-meaning Christians who are still enslaved by such habits as smoking tobacco, drinking alcohol, and ingesting other drugs is much larger than many of us recognize. The effect on their spiritual lives is sometimes quite devastating. Once they come to believe the habit to be wrong, it limits their spiritual growth just as does any other cause of a guilty conscience.

We'll never know while here below why God chooses to take such habits away from some people instantaneously, as He did from my father when he received the Lord as His personal Savior, and why, on the other hand, some struggle with these habits for years. Not knowing the answer does not excuse us from dealing with addictions and other sinful habits.