



## BREAKOUT 7

### UPHOLD Your Freedom

It is so easy to relapse. And when we relapse we can find ourselves even more deeply entangled in the hurt or the hang-up or the habit. Being entangled again can often be even more difficult to escape. The causes of relapse are like roadside hazards. They are there. They are real. There are things we can do to avoid them. This week we'll talk about four causes of relapse and what we can do to keep from getting sidelined in our journey to break free.

#### **CATCHING UP**

Road Trip! You know what it's like to jump in the car and head out on an adventure? Maybe for you it was that vacation out east you took a few summers back. Or that spontaneous Sunday drive that opened up an afternoon of discovery. What road trip have you experienced that was a memorable adventure?

#### **MEMORY VERSE**

"God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 5:9

#### **VIDEO NOTES**

## How To Guard From Relapse

### 4 Areas to Avoid

1. \_\_\_\_\_ – I'm getting too comfortable.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ – Maybe my struggle isn't a big deal.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ – I can dabble in this.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ – I'm entangled again.

2 Corinthians 13:5 "Test yourself to make sure you are solid in the faith. Don't drift along taking everything for granted. Give yourself regular checkups." THE MESSAGE

We can \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves.

### THE FOUR GAUGES

1. \_\_\_\_\_ - What is my body telling me?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ – How am I feeling, really?

**H** - Am I hurting?

**E** - Am I exhausted?

**A** - Am I angry?

**R** - Am I resentful?

**T** - Am I tense?

3. \_\_\_\_\_ – Do I really believe that God loves me?

Am I feeling distant from God?

Am I feeling like God doesn't love me or doesn't care?

4. \_\_\_\_\_ – Are there people in my life who are helping me follow Jesus well?

John 8:36. "So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free."

**UPHOLD YOUR FREEDOM!**

## **STUDY**

For today's study, let's look at four causes of relapse. These causes are warning signs to us that we may be headed for trouble. As you look at these causes, consider your own recovery journey and what you can do to steer clear of these roadside hazards.

NOTE: All Scripture references in this study are NLT unless otherwise indicated.

### **Four Causes of Relapse**

#### **1. Reverting to \_\_\_\_\_.**

READ: Galatians 3:3. *"How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?"*

#### **Galatians – a battle of willpower vs. righteousness by faith**

One of the key issues for the churches in Galatia were: How do people become acceptable to God? What do people really need to earn God's favour? How do people become members of God's family? For Paul (the author of Galatians) the answer was simple: There is nothing we can or need to do. Only Christ could do – and has done – what must be done to make people acceptable to God. So we should simply receive this gift, gratefully thank him for what he has done, and trust in him. Source: NLT study Bible. Righteousness By Faith

The battle of willpower is won as we move from thinking, "I can do it" to "Christ has done it". We are to respond to what God has done for us and accept it and live in that reality rather than thinking and acting like we are the ones who have enough will power to make ourselves right and win the struggles in our lives. Jesus has won our sin battle for us. He is the one who has the power to help me to stay free rather than relapsing back into sin.

- When you were growing up was the main message you heard, "I can do it" or "Christ has done it"? How has this impacted your battle with willpower today?
- Imagine you are meeting with someone for coffee who has become discouraged about their efforts to stay free. This person says to you, "I keep trying to do the right things, but I keep falling back into the same sins!" What might you say to encourage this person?

READ Romans 3:21-26

- What does "righteousness by faith" mean?
- If we are made righteous with God through faith alone, what role does our willpower have in following God?

READ the following quote:

“When it comes to living a successful Christian life, and resisting the power of temptation, simply saying ‘No! No! No!’ won’t suffice. We must learn to say ‘Oh! Oh! Oh!’” Dave Smith

- Dave Smith is saying that in order to resist temptation, rather than saying, “No! No! No!” we must learn to say, “Oh! Oh! Oh!” In other words, we must shift our focus from *willpower* to *worship*. When we are caught up in who Jesus is and what he has done for us, the temptations of sin begin to pale by comparison to Him. What helps you to worship and stay focused on Jesus throughout the week?

FOCUS THIS WEEK ON WORSHIP – Go from “No! No! No!” to “Oh! Oh! Oh!”

IDEAS:

- Begin each day with a praise song to God. Add worship songs to your playlist. Allow the words of the song to speak to your heart about who God is.
- Read Scriptures that focus on worshiping God. Ex. Psalm 100, Psalm 150
- Walk in the woods or somewhere to appreciate what God has made. Thank Him for the wonder of creation.

## 2. Ignoring one of the \_\_\_\_\_.

READ: Galatians 5:7 *“You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth?”*

- As you look back through the first six steps we have taken, which have you found easiest to ignore or downplay in your journey of recovery?
- What might it look like for you to pursue this step?

**B** – BE HONEST, I’m Not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable.

**R** - REMEMBER, I matter to God. I earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.

**E** – ENTRUST my life to God. I consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ’s care and control.

**A** – ADMIT my faults. ACKNOWLEDGE my hurts. I openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

**K** – KEEP close to God. I voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.

**O** – ORDER my relationships. I evaluate all my relationships, offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me, and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.

### FOCUSING ON THE STEPS: Running the Race Well

#### IDEAS:

- Each day this week, read back through the step you want to focus on.
- Ask God what you can do this week to move ahead with the step.
- Ask your LifeGroup members to pray for you with pursuing this step.

### 3. **Trying to recover without \_\_\_\_\_.**

READ: Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

*“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.”*

We're not make to go it alone! Support is a place where we find accountability, belonging and care. These things are absolutely necessary for our recovery journey, but we must be willing to embrace them. To do this means we need regular connection with our support group. We need to be willing to be honest and vulnerable with this group about our shortcomings and we need to be open to receiving their feedback and help.

Which of the following statements would you say describe you when it comes to breaking free from hurts, hang-ups and habits in your life?

- I am a rock. I am an island. (thank you, Simon and Garfunkel!)
- I see the value of support but I have a hard time asking for help.
- I fear being open with others about my shortcomings so I resist support.
- I want support but I'm having a tough time finding it.
- I don't know what I'd do without the support of my group.

## SEEKING SUPPORT: Finding Accountability, Belonging and Care

### IDEAS:

- Find a running partner. Connect to one person in your LifeGroup or church who can support you in taking the steps to break free. Agree to connect at least once a week for the next 4 weeks with a focus on the steps.
- Share your stories in group. Take 20 minutes in LifeGroup for the next 3 or 4 weeks for group members to share their story. Answer this question: What key people and events have shaped my life to make me who I am today?
- Pray for one another in pairs: After the study each week, partner together in pairs to pray. Ask God to work in each other's lives to help you break free.

### 4. Becoming \_\_\_\_\_.

READ: Proverbs 16:18 - *"Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall."*

There is good pride and bad pride. Bad pride is what can lead us into relapse.

Read the following definition of pride that can make us relapse.

Why is pride so sinful? Pride is giving ourselves the credit for something that God has accomplished. Pride is taking the glory that belongs to God alone and keeping it for ourselves. Pride is essentially self-worship. Anything we accomplish in this world would not have been possible were it not for God enabling and sustaining us. "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" ([1 Corinthians 4:7](#)). That is why we give God the glory—He alone deserves it. SOURCE – Got Questions – What is Pride?

- What kind of statements might we think or say that would reflect unhealthy pride when it comes to our recovery journey? Ex. "I don't need anybody's help. I can do this on my own."

READ: 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

*"If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure."*

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- What has made you feel like you are standing strong when you might not really be in relation to your sin?
- What does it look like to “be careful not to fall”?

PURSUING HUMILITY: Moving away from Pride.

IDEAS:

- Read Philippians 2:1-11. How does Jesus’ example of humility speak to how you can be humble?
- Serve someone in a unique way this week. Do something unexpected to serve a neighbour or a family member. What does this experience teach you about humility?
- See myself as God sees me. Read Scriptures that speak to who you are in Christ. Ex. Romans 8.

**FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS TO DO AS A LIFEGROUP OR ON YOUR OWN**

To Avoid Relapse, Avoid the Sin Environment that Drags You Down

READ: Romans 13:13-14

“ ... Don’t participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don’t let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.”

- “Don’t let yourself think about ways to indulge your sinful desires” – often we are far more confident in our ability to resist temptation than we actually are. When we put ourselves in an environment where we are tempted, we are far more likely to fall. What places, people, or situations trigger your desire to sin? Do the common sense thing. Avoid those road hazards and stay out of the ditch. What practical steps could you take this week to avoid the sin environment that drags you down?

Stay Alert! You are in a Battle!

READ: 1 Peter 5:8-9

“Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith.”

- A key to avoid relapse is to stay alert. We must stay alert to the danger of temptation and the reality of relapse. Peter reminds us that this is not just an internal battle for us. We have an enemy, Satan, whose mission is to take us down. How do we defeat this enemy? We stand firm against him, not in our own power, but in the power of Jesus. We stay strong in our faith by staying in God's Word and meeting with other believers. Remember, you are in a battle. Your enemy is real. So stay alert! What can you do to sharpen your battle skills this week?

### Only Jesus' Power can help me Overcome Sin

READ: 1 Corinthians 15:56-57

"For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives birth to sin's power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ."

- Are you struggling with a besetting sin? Do you get frustrated that you just can't seem to break free? Jesus' death and resurrection have brought to an end the dominating power of sin and death! Our best strategy for overcoming sin is tapping into God's power to overcome it. What might you do to lean into God's power rather than your own to overcome your sin?

### Jesus will Keep Me from Falling away from God

READ: Jude 1:24

"To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – "

- In our battle with sin it is easy to become discouraged. When we find ourselves entangled again in the same sin, we can think, "God has abandoned me. I am no longer worthy of heaven." Jude reminds us that God will never let us go. By his power and because of what Jesus has done on the cross for us, He will never let us go! How does this truth encourage you in your battle with sin?

### To Avoid Relapse, Stay Focused on Jesus



READ: Psalm 119:9-11

“How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. I have tried hard to find you – don’t let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

- The root of the word *relapse* is *lapse*. To lapse in this case is to forget, to forget the danger of sin and to forget the call of God on our lives. How do we avoid this? There are two powerful keys in Psalm 119. First, desire purity. We must ask ourselves this tough question – “What do I desire more, really? Do I desire my sin, or do I desire God?” God can align our desires with his as we ask Him to help us. A second powerful key to avoid relapse is to dive into God’s Word and stay there. A regular habit of reading and thinking about and absorbing God’s Word is key to walk in victory. What practical steps can you take this week to follow the teaching of Psalm 119 and stay focused on Jesus?