



Recovery without Relapse

Sponsor - Helps with Challenge # 3

1. Most Addicts are only seeking **SOBRIETY** instead of complete **FREEDOM** from their addiction.

John 8:32, *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

John 8:36, *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”*

2. What’s the difference between Sobriety and Freedom?

Sobriety is simply staying **SOBER** or **CLEAN** from your addiction for a certain length of **TIME**. Sobriety often means **RIGHT** actions on the outside, but still **WRONG** thoughts on the inside. The **DESIRE** to use can be as controlling and binding as the addiction itself.

Freedom is the state of being **FREE** from the **POWER** or **CONTROL** of your addiction.

*“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new,” (II Cor. 5:17).*

*“That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation **the old man**, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye **put on the new man**, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,” (Eph. 4:22-24)*

Which do you want?

Recovery – Getting **BACK** to what you once were.

Reformation – Becoming **BETTER** than you once were.

Transformation – Being **CHANGED** into something you never were before.

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God, (Rom. 12:1-2).*

*“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such **were some of you**: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,” (I Cor.6:9-11).*

Addiction is a **SYMPTOM** and not really the problem. The problem is the underlying cause that **DRIVES** you to the addiction in attempt to mask **PAIN**.

3. Sobriety deals with **BEHAVIORS**, addressing only the **ACTIONS**.

“Stop Drinking and Drugging!”

Freedom deals with **MOTIVES** behind the behaviors, addressing the **ROOT** problem.

“Why were you drinking?”

“What were you looking for?”

“Did you find it in the bottom of the bottle?”

“Where can you find it?”

4. If you do not **KNOW** the Truth, you will never find complete freedom!

ONLY THE TRUTH MAKES FREE!

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life:

no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6

John 8:32, “*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*”

John 8:36, “*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*”



Recovery without Relapse

Sponsor - Helps with Challenge # 13

Notes from Last week's Lesson: What's the difference between Sobriety and Freedom?

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Freedom is the state of being **FREE** from the **POWER** or **CONTROL** of your addiction.

1. The National relapse rate for all drugs is nearly **80%** and even higher for alcohol or heroin.

2. Ten Reasons Why Clients Relapse

1) They make **sobriety** their only goal. They either don't understand, or don't believe that **freedom** in Christ is possible! **John 8:32, 36**

2) They believe that their only problem is alcohol or drugs, and they forget that there were reasons why they fell into addiction in the first place. If they don't develop a relationship with **Christ** and learn to deal **Biblically** with those issues while they are in the program, they will continue to have problems and eventually go back to their addiction. **Eph. 4:17-24**

3) They enter the program with unrealistic expectations. Years of problems cannot be solved overnight. Salvation is instantaneous, but spiritual growth takes time. If the individual expects results without time, study, diligent effort and much prayer, they are sure to be disappointed.

II Peter 3:18

4) They go to, but do not participate in the RU program. If the only step that the individual takes is to come, sit and listen in the program, they are unlikely to find victory. They are, in reality, still trying to give up alcohol and drugs their own way, using their own strength and willpower. They still believe they know best. **Prov. 14:12**

5) They are still undecided about abstinence. They believe that they will one day be able to use alcohol or drugs safely in moderation. If they are not committed to total abstinence, they are unlikely to find long term success. **Prov. 20:1**

6) They agree to enter the program, but only out of a half-hearted effort to appease someone else. They have no real intention of staying sober long term. They only want to get family, friends or the legal system “*off their case*.” They come because they “have to” not because they “want to” or “need to.” Their heart is not seeking God. **Matt. 22:37**

7) They get sober for a time, but continue to hang around with other addicts. This means that they are constantly being tempted to return to their old life, and the chances are high that one day they will be unable to resist the temptation. This is usually because they have not had the time, or made the effort to make new friends to replace the drinking, drugging crowd they left behind. By the way, not everyone in the RU program is growing spiritually. You have to be watchful of attitudes as well as actions. **II Cor. 6:17**

8) They suffer from depression due to a supposed loss. They believe they are missing out on something they once enjoyed. They only remember the pleasure, not the pain. **Phil 3:8**

9) They give up one addictive substance, but continue to use other addictive substances. They reason like this; *Alcohol is better than heroin. Beer is better than alcohol. Smoking is better than beer. Overeating is better than drinking.* This is a dangerous cycle and it always ends badly.

Rom. 13:14

10) They take on additional burdens too early after a short period of sobriety. They have not learned how to walk as a disciple of Christ and to face problems through Biblical solutions. Therefore, they quickly become overwhelmed and frustrated by jobs, bills, family responsibilities, and other day to day problems. They are unable to cope with it all and eventually relapse. **II Tim 3:14**

*After leaving the program, they stop doing the things that brought them victory. Their relationship with Christ grows cold and they end up right back where they began, or worse.

3. What are the Dangers in Relapse?

1) If you return to alcohol or drug abuse there is no guarantee that you will ever be able to stop again. It hard to deal with the misery of addiction after you have tasted a bit of freedom.

2) Many people find that when they relapse after a period of sobriety their situation deteriorates. Family, friends, employers and legal representatives lose patience, trust and hope in those who continue to relapse. Addiction destroys relationships. Relapse adds to the destruction.

- 3) Relapse is a **disappointment** for family and friends. They will have already suffered enough, and now the addict has to watch them suffer all over again. This is often **harder** for the addict to cope with than them.
- 4) Over time, the **physical** life of the addict also tends to deteriorate. Health problems contribute to the addict's frustration, depression, loss, inability to obtain work, and a host of other problems.
- 5) Relapse tends to lower a person's **self-worth** and drain them of lasting **hope**. This may make it harder to achieve sobriety in the future.
- 6) If the individual **failed**, especially during their attempt at sobriety, it may reinforce the idea that recovery is a **waste** of **time**. They don't realize that the problem wasn't with the program but with their approach to it.
- 7) Some individuals become extremely **depressed** to find themselves back in the midst of addiction. Some may even be tempted to take their own **life** as a result.

**It should therefore be obvious that Relapse is not part of Recovery
and can be very harmful!**

4. Staying Sober and Free is a natural byproduct of Discipleship, (walking in the Truth of Jesus Christ).

The more you become like **Him**, the less you will be like **you**.

That is "*being conformed to the image of his Son,*" (Rom. 8:29).

Freedom is not a destination: it is a way of life!



Recovery without Relapse

Sponsor – Lesson on “Triggers.”

A **trigger** is any form of stimuli that initiates the desire to engage in **addictive** behavior. These **triggers** may tempt you to relapse and use a substance or engage in a behavior that you otherwise are trying to avoid. The Biblical term for trigger is **temptation** (that which stimulates the desire to indulge in sinful pleasures or pursuits).

I Cor. 10:13, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

James 1:14, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”

Matt. 26:41, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Types of Triggers (Temptations that lead to Sin)

Emotional Triggers

One of the most common triggers is the experience of real or perceived negative emotions. Rather than dealing with the cause of these emotions, individuals will often turn to drug or alcohol use in order to try to avoid the experience. Clients with sexual or gambling problems may turn back to their addiction in an effort to find some temporary happiness. Any of these emotions can lead to a relapse because for them they represent a coping mechanism.

Some emotional factors that can become triggers are: stress, fear, frustration, anger, depression, loneliness, guilt, self-pity, boredom, anxiety or loss. To avoid or minimize the chance of a relapse, you must learn Biblical principles in order to help you cope with negative emotions. Your attitude, (your way of thinking) will determine if you resist or relapse.

Physical Triggers

Another common trigger for clients is being in the physical presence of people, places or things that remind them of using. The senses of sight, smell, sound and even touch can bring back images and ideas that excite your emotions and trigger a desire to once again indulge in that which you know is sinful and destructive.

Opportunistic Triggers

Free Time, substance availability, perceived secrecy, and an influx of cash may also trigger a relapse. Complacency, lack of motivation, overconfidence, or resistance to change in these cases will increase the risk of relapse.

How Triggers Work

The emotional feelings, the physical senses or the perceived opportunity leads to a thought life that begins to “fire off” exciting and happy memories of past experiences in hopes of recovering the experience or escaping the present situation. These thoughts lead to cravings or desires that become powerful and almost overwhelming influences for the client. If not dealt with through proper Biblical reasoning, these cravings will result in a return to the addictive activity.

TRIGGER ➡ THOUGHT ➡ CRAVING ➡ ACTIVITY

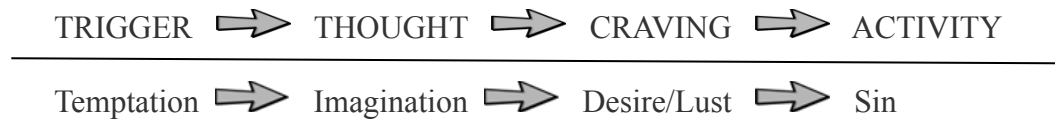
During a craving, the body and brain are looking for an excuse to use again. You must realize that if you give into the craving produced by temptation (a trigger), it will not make things better. It will only temporarily mask what you want to be different and eventually will serve to make the situation worse and the negative emotion stronger.

From Temptation to Addiction

<u>James 1:14-15</u>	<u>Depth of Involvement</u>	<u>Mode of Progression</u>	<u>Result</u>
“Every man is tempted”	1. Temptation (external)	Sin is presented as attractive	The Mind is Awakened
<u>Reactive Response – Yield to or Resist</u>			
“When he is drawn away of his own lusts”	2. Attraction	Sin is seen as desirable	The Flesh is Awakened
“when he is... enticed”	3. Consideration and Imagination (internal)	Sin is considered pleasant and imagined as deserved	The Mind is Aroused
“Then lust” Aroused	4. Stimulation	Sin is lusted after and desired The body yearns for gratification	The Flesh is
<u>Proactive Response – Indulge or Deny</u>			
“Hath conceived” Indulged Deceived	5. Meditation and Deception	Sin is committed in the mind The intellect is temporarily shut down	The Mind is and
“It bringeth forth sin” Indulged	6. Connection	Sin is committed in the flesh The flesh is temporarily satisfied	The Flesh is
The first step in the Engulfed “finishing” process	7. Distraction	Sin is habitually meditated upon The mind dreams of it continually	The Mind is
The second step in the Engulfed “finishing” process	8. Continuation	Sin is habitually committed The body demands it regularly	The Flesh is
<u>Addictive Response - Surrender to the flesh or to God</u>			
The pathway to “death”	9. Addiction	Sin in total control It dominates the thought life	The Mind is Surrendered
“it bringeth forth death”	10. Consumption and Destruction	Sin in total control It systematically destroys the body	The Flesh is Surrendered

A **trigger** is any form of stimuli that initiates the desire to engage in **addictive** behavior. These **triggers** may tempt you to slip-up and use a substance or engage in a behavior that you otherwise are trying to avoid. There is a great deal of wisdom in preparing for the temptation

before it occurs. A trigger is the very **START** of the addiction cycle, so it is at that point when it has the least power and momentum. Therefore this is the place where the addictions loop is most easily **STOPPED**.



Prov. 22:3, “*A prudent man foreseeth (looks ahead to see) the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple (foolish or deceived) pass on (keeps right on going), and are punished.*”

Prov. 14:16, “*A wise man feareth (is rightfully cautious), and departeth (moves away) from evil: but the fool rageth (charges ahead), and is confident (trusts in himself).*”

I Peter 5:8, “*Be sober (in control), be vigilant (watchful and prepared); because your adversary (enemy) the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (swallow up).*”

Preparing ahead of time by identifying your triggers will allow you to avoid temptations and be better equipped to resist them when they occur. It is possible to get victory over some triggers so that they no longer become an overwhelming temptation. However, we must never grow confident in ourselves or our own willpower. We must **HAVE** and **PRACTICE** a successful strategy to obtain lasting victory. God has outlined such a successful strategy in the Bible, and if that strategy is properly followed, it will give you spiritual victory.

God’s Fivefold Plan for Victory

1. Practicing **THOUGHT** Captivation
2. **AVOIDING** or **ESCAPING** Temptation
3. Recalling Past **CONSEQUENCES**
4. Enlisting an **ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER**
5. Remembering the Principle of **CONTENTMENT**

I. Practicing Thought Captivation

As we recognize a trigger and the thought generated by it, we must **CHOOSE** to meditate on God’s Word. We have a tendency to meditate (think on) negative thoughts. We must teach ourselves to refuse to dwell on them. Instead we must learn to “cast them down.”

II Cor. 10:4-5, “*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (fleshly), but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*”

When those thoughts come into our mind, we can choose to believe the lie that is “*exalting itself against the knowledge of God*” or choose to “*bring our thoughts into captivity to*

the obedience of Christ” and believe the Truth. A craving usually starts off small and then gains momentum. The best way to allow God’s Word to “pull down the strong holds” in your mind is by meditating daily on the seven things He tells us to do in the Bible.

1. Daily SEARCH the Scripture. That means reading, studying and memorizing the Scripture. **Acts 17:11**, *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*

2. Daily PRAYER. **Psalm 86:1-3**, *“Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.”*

3. Daily DIE to SELF. **I Cor. 15:31**, *“I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.”* **Rom. 8:12-13**, *“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”*

4. Daily Perform Your VOWS. **Psalm 61:8**, *“So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.”*

5. Daily PRAISE God. **Psalm 119:164**, *“Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.”*

6. Daily Take Up Your CROSS. **Luke 9:23**, *“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”*

7. Daily EXHORT Others. **Heb. 3:13**, *“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”*

When triggers or temptations come, (and they will come) they will not have the influence they once had if you are **DAILY** practicing these seven Biblical commands.

A PRACTICAL NOTE: You can handle triggers better when you are eating and sleeping well, exercising, and remaining aware of your emotions. Remember the anagram “**H.A.L.T.**”, which stands for: **HUNGRY, ANGRY, LONELY, and TIRED**. These four things enhance triggers and make the temptation more attractive. When you are taking care of yourself **SPIRITUALLY** and **PHYSICALLY** it is easier to identify triggers and therefore avoid them.