



# Freedom!

**From Hurts, Hang-Ups, and Habits**  
*Matthew 5:3-10*

Welcome to this timely study on overcoming the hurts, hang-ups, and habits that keep us from experiencing the life God created us to live. You are right where you need to be!

\*Notes from this study adapted from “Life’s Healing Choices” by John Baker

# Freedom 1- Limitations

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit..."- Matthew 5:3*

## I. Reality of Limitations

We are all broken and imperfect people.

- Do you ever stay up late when you know you need sleep?
- Do you ever eat or drink more calories than your body needs?
- Do you ever feel you ought to exercise but don't?
- Do you ever know the right thing to do but don't do it?
- Do you ever know something is wrong but do it anyway?
- Have you ever known you should be unselfish but were selfish instead?
- Have you ever tried to control somebody or something and found them or it uncontrollable?

Many today are captive to hurts, hang-ups, and habits.  
God wants us to be free!

## II. Root Causes of Hurts, Hang-Ups, and Habits

### Our Tendency to Do Wrong.

From the very beginning, God told Adam and Eve they could go anywhere, do anything, except eat from this one tree. What did they do?

Why did Adam and Eve do the one thing God told them not to do? How does this relate to some things that you do even though you know it's wrong? \_\_\_\_\_

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*"I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong... but I can't help myself...."- Romans 7:15-17*

Can you relate to the Apostle Paul? Can you think of a recent time when you found yourself feeling the way Paul did, or found yourself saying, "What's wrong with me?!" \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Our Attempt to Control.**

### **We try to control our image.**

“We don’t want them to know what we’re really like. We play games; we wear masks; we pretend; we fake it. We want people to see certain sides of us while we hide others... We don’t want people to see the real us.”

### **We try to control other people.**

“Parents try to control kids; kids try to control parents. Wives try to control husbands; husbands try to control wives. Coworkers vie for office control. People try to control other people. And along the way we develop a lot of tools to manipulate each other... Some use guilt and shame; some use praise and affirmation. Others use anger, fear, or an old favorite- the silent treatment. All in efforts to gain control.”

### **We try to control our problems.**

“‘I can handle it,’ we say. ‘It’s not really a problem.’ ‘I’m okay, really. I’m fine.’ Those are the words of somebody trying to play God. When we try to control our problems, we say, ‘I don’t need any help, and I certainly don’t need counseling.’ ... When a TV repairman was asked about the worst kind of damage he’d ever seen to a television set, he said, ‘The kind that results from people trying to fix their TVs on their own.’ The more we try to fix our problems by ourselves, the worse our problems get.”

### **We try to control our pain.**

“Have you ever thought about how much time and effort you spend running from pain? Trying to avoid it, deny it, escape it, reduce it, or postpone it? Some of us try to avoid pain by eating or not eating. Others try to postpone it by getting drunk, smoking, taking drugs, or abusing prescription medications. Some try to escape through sports, traveling, or jumping in and out of relationships. Others withdraw into a hole and build a protective wall of depression around themselves. Still others become angry, abusive, critical, and judgmental. We’ll try almost anything to control our pain. But the real pain comes when we realize, in our quieter moments, that the pain is still there.”

Which area(s) of control can you most relate to? How have you seen this played out in your life or in someone else’s life? \_\_\_\_\_

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### III. Consequences

#### **Fear**

“We are afraid somebody will find out who we really are- that we’re fakes and phonies, that we really don’t have it all together, that we’re not perfect. We don’t let anybody get close to us because they’ll find out that we’re scared inside, and so we fake it. We live in fear, afraid someone will reject us, not love us, or not like us when they know what we are really like. We believe they will only like the image we work to present. We are afraid.”

#### **Frustration**

“That machine (Wacka Wacka) is a parable of life. We whack down one relational conflict and another pops up. We whack down one addiction or compulsion and another one pops up. It’s frustrating because we can’t get them all knocked down at the same time.”

#### **Fatigue**

“Denial requires enormous amounts of emotional energy- energy that could be used in problem solving is actually diverted into problem denying, problem hiding, and problem avoiding.”

*“My strength evaporated like water on a sunny day until I finally admitted all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them.”- Psalm 32:3*

Which consequence(s) can you most relate to? How does this play out in your life or in someone else’s life? \_\_\_\_\_

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### IV. Cure

#### **Admitting Poverty**

I admit that I am powerless to change my past.

I admit that I am powerless to control other people.

I admit that I am powerless to cope with my harmful habits.

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”- Matthew 5:3*

Why is it difficult for us to take the medicine of admitting our poverty? \_\_\_\_\_

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How do you think admitting our poverty could make a difference in our testimony?

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What are some practical ways admitting our poverty (or the poverty of others) could set us free? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **True Humility**

“I’m not God, and I don’t have it as together as I’d like everybody to think.’ If you admit that truth to someone else, he or she will not be surprised. Others know it, God knows it, and you know it. You just need to admit it.”

Humility is acknowledging our humanity, and calling out to God’s divinity.

*“Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”- Romans 7:24-25*

What are some practical ways that having true humility can help us and set us free?

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## **V. Application**

### **1) Pray about it**

#### **Pray Psalm 23**

#### **Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr**

God grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change;  
Courage to change the things I can;  
And wisdom to know the difference.

“Dear God, I want to take the first step to healing and spiritual health today. I realize I am not You, God. I’ve often tried to control my problems, my pain, my image, and even other people- as if I were You. I’m sorry. I’ve tried to deny my problems by staying busy and keeping myself distracted. But I’m not running anymore. I admit that I am helpless to control this tendency to do things I know are unhealthy for me. Today I am asking for Your help. I humbly ask You to take all the pieces of my unmanageable life and begin the process of healing. Please heal me. Please give me the strength to choose health and freedom. In Your loving and able name, I pray. Amen.”

## 2) **Write about it**

Take time to journal and reflect on the following questions.

- What people, places, or things have you been attempting to control?
- Describe how you try to control your image, other people, your problems, and your pain.
- Write down how the fear, frustration, fatigue, and failures have affected your relationships with God and others.
- What specific hurts, hang-ups, or habits have you been denying?

## 3) **Share about it**

Share with someone who is nonjudgmental, trustworthy, and willing to also share.

- Share your reflections from “Write about it”.
- Ask help in surrendering control and trusting God.
- Ask help in overcoming specific hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

*“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!.. Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”- Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12*

*“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”- James 5:16*



*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”- Matthew 5:3*