

WORD

There are so many wonderful things about the Bible. One is that it never paints the heroes of the Jewish and Christian faiths as perfect saints. The Bible reveals their issues, their failures and the lack of self control. What is wonderful though is that it also shows God's continued love towards them. It tells of God's grace at work in their lives to move them beyond their struggles.

There are also many wonderful things about being a follower of Jesus Christ. For me, one of them is that following Jesus starts with us recognizing that we need help. It is so freeing when we recognize and admit that we are not perfect, that we sin, that we cannot overcome the fears and struggles in our lives by ourselves and that we need God's forgiveness and help. It is also freeing to realize that all other Christians had the same starting point. We are no different. Regardless of where we are on our journey of faith in Jesus our starting point was the same. We have struggles and therefore we need Him. The truth is this never stops being true. We only become more experienced at relying on Him the more we walk with Him.

APPLICATION

1. Be honest about the areas in which you struggle.
2. Really think about what makes you struggle in those areas.
3. As you identify why you struggle, ask yourself how you can avoid or remove those triggers that make you struggle.
4. Remember you cannot do it alone. You, like me, need God's help.

Prayer: Lord, thank You that You don't condemn us for our struggles, but instead You help us. Help us this week to begin to take control of our struggles. Help us to take the steps necessary to overcome them. Thank You that with Your help we can. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Freedom Groups were created with the belief that we are all on a journey through life and that our heart's desire is to be free to be all that we can be. We all want to find effective ways of living and be successful. Trying to find these effective ways to overcome the challenges we face by ourselves just does not work well. We are all the same, no one is different. We need others to help us successfully walk our journey to effective living. Everyone is invited to freedom groups so we can journey together. Join in!



Self Control

NOTES

WARM-UP

- What is one thing that you really do not like doing that you have to do on a regular basis?
- Why do you not like doing it?
- How could you start liking it better?

I don't like getting my hair cut. I never have. It is strange because it was never a big deal for me to get my hair cut as a I grew up at home. My mom was a beautician. She could cut my hair anytime day or night that she or I wanted. It was free too! Her beauty shop was attached right to the back of our house. So it was not like we had to drive anywhere, wait in line, be around other people or even pay a fee.

The earliest issue I can remember with me getting my hair cut was that I was so ticklish. As my mom worked on the hair around my neck and ears I would giggle, laugh, squirm around in the chair and worst of all jerk. I was most ticklish when the razor was on my neck. I could not stand it because it tickled so much. I would cringe as I heard the razor getting close. I would try to prepare for it but inevitably when it got right next to my skin I could not help myself. I would giggle and sometimes jerk in anticipation.

On more than one occasion my jerking caused my head and hair to be in a different location than my mom anticipated and the razor would gouge into my hair messing up my hair cut. It would irritate her so bad. She would flick my ear or tug on my hair trying to get me to sit still. On more than one occasion one of my siblings would try to hold my head still but that was not effective either. My mom would tell me to control myself and it would all be over soon. Somehow as a kid I just could not do it. So the beautician's son was her worst client and would sometimes end up with the worst hair cut. It was my own fault because I could not control myself.

Not until later in life did I ever think about how my self inflicted bad hair cuts made her look and feel. She was the beautician and her son had the messed up hair cut. All I knew at the time was that it tickled real bad. Later I started coming up with other reasons I did not like getting my hair cut. From the hot cape to the prickly feeling of cut hair on my neck and shoulders, I just did not like it.

When my wife and I lived in California the issue then became the cost of a hair cut. It was outrageous. Yet another reason not to like it. So my wonderful wife began cutting my hair for me. At first she had to put up with the same wonderful lack of self control that I gave my mom. It is a lot better now that I am all grown up and used to it. Now the trouble is that with all those years of bad memories around getting my hair cut I just don't want to get it cut until I have to. So inevitably my wife will end up telling me I am getting too burly for her. That is motivation I need for me to get my hair cut, even though I still don't like it.

Self Control Can Be Hard

Sometimes controlling ourselves can be so hard. None of us likes to admit that we cannot control ourselves. Usually the areas in which we lack self control are not areas in which we desire to have no control. For some it is as harmless as laughing or giggling, but at times that "harmless" laughing or giggling can be at very inappropriate times and hurt others. For some the lack of self control can clearly be much more harmful. Having a short temper, being harsh towards others, being critical, over eating, having negative feelings or thoughts, consuming sexual desires, smoking, or not being able to control drugs or alcohol can have serious and damaging effects in our lives. All of us struggle to gain control in one area or another.

Being honest with ourselves about areas in which we lack full control is the first step. It is how we begin to take control in that area. It is important to be honest with ourselves and others. This can be a big step but it leads to freedom from a lack of control. Hiding our struggles only gives them more power in our lives. When we are honest about our struggles, we can begin to be honest about why we have those struggles. Once we know why we have the struggles we have then we can begin to take control in those areas of our lives. We can begin to unravel the questions as to why we are the way we are and then we can find the answers we need.

There Are Reasons Why And There Is Hope!

Be honest, in what area or areas do you struggle for self control?

Why do you think you struggle in that area or those areas?

Can you feel the struggle coming on? Can you tell when you are starting to lose control?

Can you identify the triggers that make you lose control?

How could you avoid or take control of those triggers?
