

How to Get the Dirty Bone Out of Your Dog's Mouth

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”
Ephesians 5:18

We all have sin addictions, some great and some small. This is part of being human. We always fall short of God's best for us. The best way to overcome sinful habits and addictions is to focus on the positive, not the negative. If you want your dog to let go of that dirty old bone he just dug up in the back yard, you won't succeed by trying to yank it from him. If, instead, you offer him a nice juicy steak, he will drop the old bone in a heartbeat.

If you can get in the habit of rededicating your life to God's service anew each morning in prayer, and remain in a “state of prayer” throughout the day, just one day at a time, you will find yourself replacing bad attitudes and habits with good ones. Start out each day with a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit, and as the day progresses “top it off” over and over again as the level drops. Don't worry about the specifics of how to overcome an addiction or bad habit. Don't worry about how to rid yourself of bad thoughts. Just focus on filling yourself to overflowing each day with the love of God. Understand that God loves you just as much when you fail as He does when you succeed.

It's not easy to curse your neighbor and praise God at the same time. They are mutually exclusive activities. I can assure you that the latter activity is much more pleasurable than the former. Love is so much more gratifying than hate. Freedom is so much more pleasurable than addiction. God is much better company than fair weather friends who tempt you to sin. Keeping busy with the Lord's business is so much more gratifying than sitting around doing God knows what else and hoping for nothing bad to happen because of it.

Finally, don't worry about results. Results will come eventually, sometimes all at once, sometimes a little at a time. Your God is a God of miracles, so don't worry about the “mechanics” or the “how-to's” either. Look within for the help you need. Yes, God is out there, but He is also in you and will give you whatever strength you need to overcome any negative habit.