Avoiding and Overcoming Bad Habits and Addictions

- **Intro:**
  - at some point in life, everyone has to overcome bad habits, possibly addiction
  - Rom. 6:16-18
  - lesson: avoiding and overcoming bad habits, addictions
  - note / caution: not talking about obsessive behaviors from neurochemical disorders

- **Difference between habit and addiction – simplified, brief**
  - The principal characteristic of addiction is a loss of control and freedom, while a habit is something that is donned or assumed, perhaps often, but that can nevertheless be removed if desired. (Britannica.com)
  - addiction is always bad
    - illus.: addiction to prescription drugs vs. proper use – pain killers
  - habits can be good or bad, depending on weather the activity is good or bad
    - illus. good habit: Acts 17:2 Paul, Thessalonica, reasoned with Jews three Sabbaths according to his custom
    - illus. bad habit: Heb. 10:25 “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some”

- **All Addiction is Sinful**
  - addiction to unlawful behaviors is sinful:
    - sin because behavior in sinful, because addicted
    - illus.: illegal drug addiction sinful because of behavior and addiction
    - illus.: pornography, fornication, alcohol
    - all sinful behavior is wrong, whether it is an addiction or not
  - addition to lawful behaviors is sinful:
    - 1 Cor. 6:12 lawful behaviors, sin if is your master (has power over)
      - illus.: 1 Cor. 6:13 obsessive eating, addition to food, is sinful – gluttony
      - illus.: coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, caffeine, video games, internet, work, school, sports, recreation
    - if a lawful behavior becomes an addition, it is sinful — good behavior becomes a sinful behavior if it becomes an addition

- **Stay Away From Sinful Behaviors and You Won’t Become Addicted to Then**
  - 1 Th. 5:21-22 examine carefully, hold fast to good, abstain from every form of evil – grey area
  - Rom. 12:9b abhor evil – you will abstain from every form
  - 1 Cor. 15:33 stay away from evil influences – don’t be deceived
  - illus.: there’s never been an alcoholic who didn’t take the first drink – don’t take first drink, never become alcoholic
    - pornography, illegal drugs, abuse of prescription and OTC drugs
  - language: “I want a soft drink” vs. “I need a soft drink” - one communicates desire, the other communicates addiction
    - if you ever say, “I need” regarding a behavior such as eating, recreating, etc. play close attention, change language, make sure not addicted
We Must Exercise Self-Control to Avoid and Overcome Bad Habits / Addictions

- Matt. 16:24 we must deny ourselves of sinful behaviors, all addiction – take up cross
- Acts 24:25 Paul’s sermon Felix – self-control necessary to be a Christian
- Matt. 15:17-20 control mind to control body – habits, addiction
  - illus.: college, weight
- illus.: 1 Cor. 9:24-25 athletic metaphor – must control mind, to push body, to win race – spiritual
  - exercise strict control over good behaviors that are potentially addictive behaviors
  - illus.: eating a bowl of ice cream every night


- Gal. 5:16-24 walk by the Spirit, no bad habits or addictions – crucified – R - Gal. 2:20
  - solution to avoiding and overcoming. . .
- 2 Pet. 1:3-8, 10a power of God’s word will be present in our life – 1 Th. 2:13; Rom. 1:16
  - knowledge, godliness, divine nature, all diligence, self-control, increasing, fruitful, eternal life
- 1 Pet. 3:10-12 power of answered prayer present in our lives
- Eph. 3:20 result: inner power, strength – Phil. 4:13

Summary / Inv.
- walk according to the Spirit / avoid sinful behaviors / exercise self-control and avoid addiction
- inv.: walk according to the Spirit, the manner commanded by God through the Holy Spirit in His Word