

0 (1s):

Two weeks ago, a man in our church came up to me and he said, Matt, I was mad at you for a couple weeks. And I was like, uhoh, what did I do this time? And he said, well, Matt, you said in, in one of your messages, what one thing do you need to give up? What one thing do you need to give up? And he said, and maybe you remember this message. And he's like, so that day I decided to stop smoking after 20 years and I haven't smoked a cigarette since. And he's like, yeah, yeah, praise God for that, right? And he's like, and, and for he's like, for two weeks I was really mad at you, but now thank you, thank you. And I was like, wow, that's cool. Thanks for not telling me during those two weeks that you're mad, but don't you love hearing stories like that? It never goes, goes old.

0 (42s):

When I hear people that have addictions, that have sin, that they've struggled with whatever the thing is, and it's just gone from their life like in a snap that it's gone. And maybe you've experienced this. You've seen somebody who after years and years of alcohol abuse, all of a sudden it can just kick it like that. But then there's the rest of us. Okay? We love when that happens. And it happens. I've seen it happen too many times to not think that God shows up in miraculous ways and delivers people from strongholds. I've seen it. And yet there are so many people, so many among us, including, I would even say that guy who have other things that don't go away like that, that we have bad habits, we have addictions, we have sins that we've been doing sometime for years or decades, and they are really hard to quit.

0 (1m 29s):

So that's what this message is for the rest of us, right? How do we actually break bad habits? So today's message is called Breaking Bad Habits. Breaking Bad Habits. If you have a smartphone, you can follow along on the YouVersion Bible app. You can use that and find our Rice Church Denver event. We're gonna be in Ephesians chapter four in just a little bit. But let me catch you up to speed where we are. If you haven't been here for the beginning of this series, this series Habits started in the first week when we looked at a passage in the Bible where, where we're challenged and we were challenged. The, the big idea was to that we are trained to win, like God wants us to actually try to win the race we're in.

0 (2m 9s):

So train was an acrostic. We learned to take it seriously, like your life matters, take it seriously and try to win the R that you should reach for the reward That's at the end that A, you should act purposefully in the habits you develop. I that you need to internalize self-control. Yes, you can control yourself and n never stop going because it gets hard. It gets hard. Then last week we talked about starting a new habit. How do we actually start a new habit? And I, I think that was really helpful because we looked at the habit loop and, and we talked about what it actually means to do it. And I taught you guys a very simple trick that even though psychologists have named it in the last couple decades, it was actually something invented by God called habit stacking that in the normal everyday aspects of your life, just stack onto it some habits.

0 (2m 57s):

So I challenged everybody to stack on one habit of faith that they wanted to start. And it was amazing. I heard more stories this week about people applying God's word than I like ever have in a week before. I heard from people who were like, yeah, Matt, I'm gonna do what you do. And, and the phone wakes me up in the morning. That's my cue. I'm immediately gonna go to my prayer app or my bible app and I'm gonna start reading. I talked with somebody who's like, yeah, my new habit is I, I set my alarm on my phone in the other room, okay? And I just have an old fashioned alarm next to me, right? And, and so when I wake up, I have to pray and read my Bible because my phone is in the other room, right? Okay. They were breaking a bad habit while they were doing a good new habit. I, I talked with somebody and actually they, they texted me because their new habit was every time they pray for someone, they're gonna text them.

0 (3m 37s):

And I was like, that's an awesome habit. Send me more of those texts, okay? I need those prayers and I love the habits that I was hearing. That's just a few that I've heard from some people. So that was starting a new habit. But this week we're gonna talk about breaking a bad habit. So I want, I want to teach you guys our big idea today before we get into the habit loop. Our, our big idea today is to break a bad habit, be changed by the spirit, to break a bad habit, be changed by the spirit. So we're gonna examine today the habit loop again to what it actually takes practically to break a bad habit. Man, this series is great for people. Even if you're not a Christian, you're gonna learn something good today, okay? You can apply this to your life. I don't care what your faith is like, you're, I'm glad you're here joining us online and in person.

0 (4m 18s):

You can use this to break a bad habit. And then we have to learn how to change that habit. And then we are gonna talk about the more Christian aspect of it by the spirit to be, to break a bad habit, be changed by the spirit. So let's look again at this habit loop that I introduced to some of you guys last week. So how does a habit work in our life? Well, there's a cue, there's a routine and a reward. So when you have a cue, something that you see or something that you feel or experience, you smell, perhaps when you have that happen, then you have a routine that you do based on that cue in your life and that leads you to have a reward. So I said last week, when you walk by the donuts at the grocery store, you smell them, you see them, your routine is to eat one.

0 (4m 60s):

And your reward is that sugary goodness, right? And what happens with a habit is the reward actually reinforces it. So the next time you go and see and experience that cue, you're gonna want to do it again and again. And it's a cycle because it becomes stronger and stronger, which is great for good habits. The more you open up your phone and use your prayer app every morning and then you check a box and you're like, wow, I got a streak going. It's gonna more and more make you want to pray in the morning. But it's very negative when it's a bad habit because it reinforces itself again and again with something that you don't want to do. And if you've had this loop going for a while, you know how difficult it is to break a bad habit.

0 (5m 39s):

Anybody in here know what I'm talking about? It is difficult to break a bad habit. So last week when we talked about starting a new habit, if, if you just focus on this habit loop, it means that with a cue, you need to make it obvious. Make it as clear as possible. There is my phone there or my workout close. You make it obvious routine, make it easy. It's gotta be something simple that you can do. If it's too difficult, too challenging. If you have to drive to a gym on the other side of town, you're not gonna do it. Okay? You gotta make it easy. And then the third thing is to make it satisfying. How can you make it more enjoyable? So it's even more powerful to make this habit loop continue again and again and again. That's making a new habit stick. So what do we need to do if we wanna break a bad habit?

0 (6m 21s):

Well, it's actually the opposite. Pretty simple, right? Let's do the opposite of this with a cue. We don't make it obvious, we make it invisible. Don't even have your phone in the room, right? Delete that app from your phone, right? If you have goodies sitting out on the counter, don't right? Put 'em away. Make it invisible. So you don't even see that thing. And then with the routine, you need to make it hard. This is why if you're trying to overcome too much drinking, you need to pour your alcohol down the sink so you have none in your house. Because it's very hard now to drive in the snow to the liquor store to buy more alcohol and bring it home, make it adds a step. It's making it harder for you.

0 (7m 2s):

And then the third thing, a reward is that you make it unsatisfying. Make it unsatisfying. So Melissa talked about like chewing her fingernails when she was a a little girl. She said, as soon as I started using nail polish, I never wanted to chew 'em again cuz it's disgusting to chew nail polish. It was very unsatisfying for that habit. So this is a simple way to break a bad habit. So now you guys can go home. Yeah, right? Right. We all know it is way harder than that, right? It is way harder than that. This is the psychology of it. It seems to make it's so simple. And yet we know it's not that simple. So that's what our message is about today. How do we practically do it?

0 (7m 43s):

Well, we're gonna look at God's word. We're gonna examine this with this idea of the habit loop in mind, and we're gonna figure out how we can actually break bad habits to be changed by the spirit. So let's look at Ephesians chapter four together, because the first thing we need to do is realize that those cues are a problem because of the internal desires we have. It's not just about seeing something, it's about something going on inside our lives. So Ephesians chapter four, verse 22 reads like this, Paul says, you were taught with regard to your former way of life to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.

0 (8m 32s):

That's interesting. Right? Now, your desires inside of yourself, inside of you as a human being, are what leads you to do that sin, that habit, that thing you don't want to do. You have desires in yourself. You know it,

right? And they're deceitful. They deceive yourself. You think, oh, it's not that bad. I don't want it that much. I could quit whenever I want. And then you realize, nah, that's not true. It's not true. We lie to ourselves even about these desires and they are within us. So what are we supposed to do? We have to get rid of that form way of life. But in verse 24, it, sorry, verse 23, it says, to be made new in the attitude of your minds, the attitude of your minds, your very internal desires have to change.

0 (9m 17s):

They have to change. The Bible is very clear that we have these internal desires, you can call 'em temptations. These things that we have within ourselves that lead us into that routine that we want to get rid of. That's the problem. If you're just like, well just eliminate the cue. Well, the cue isn't just one thing, it's inside of you. So everywhere you go, you got that cue inside of you. You guys tracking with me on this? So the first thing that I want to challenge you guys to do is to identify what those desires are. Identify what's queuing your bad behavior. I'm gonna challenge you guys today to pick one bad behavior to get rid of this morning before service, I was like praying, which, which of the many bad behaviors do I want to get rid of?

0 (10m 1s):

Right? Okay, but I want you to just pick one. It was hard for me to narrow down and pick one, but what one bad behavior, but one sin. What one addiction do you wanna get rid of in your life? I want you to think about that. So this week, my challenge to you is to identify what are the cues within yourself? What are the moments that you feel that desire for that thing? I want you to take a piece of paper this week or a notepad or maybe your phone, open up a note in your phone. And every time this week you have that desire to do that thing. Write down what the moment is because those internal desires do you respond to other things around us? You can ask simple questions like, who, what, when and where.

0 (10m 43s):

Who are the people I'm hanging out with when I do that thing I don't want to do? Who is that person when they text me late at night? Uhoh problems are happening. Okay, it might be a who whose social media post do I see? And all of a sudden it drags me down to feel that way and do that thing. So who, what, what is the thing you're doing? Is it when you're sitting on your couch? Is it when you're on your computer or on your phone really late at night? Okay, what is the thing you're doing that leads you into the temptation? What when It might be a time of day, it might be late at night, it might be at four 20 in the afternoon. Okay? The same thing happens every afternoon. You get off work, man, I gotta relax a little bit, right?

0 (11m 25s):

Got that habit. Maybe it, it's not smoking a doobie, but it might be drinking a glass of wine every afternoon or that glass of scotch and you're like, man, do I really need that? Every single day you're realizing it's becoming a bad habit and, and it's that time of day, it's the win. Maybe it's the where. Whenever you drive by that place, whenever you are in your boss's office, it makes you very angry, right? There might be a a location. So what I want to encourage you to do is this week really focus on identifying what those cues are.

What is the desire that that you're looking at? And that's part of it, those questions.

0 (12m 6s):

Here's another way you can look at it because sometimes it's not a person, place or thing. It's more something about you that one helpful acronym. Helpful acronym is halt. When you're hungry, when you're angry, when you're lonely or when you're tired. You could even add bored in there. Sometimes habits are just like, I'm bored so I'm not gonna do this thing that you don't wanna do. So halt because here, here's, here's the problem and, and this is why we're focusing on this I idea of desires that lead to the cue because you will be hungry for the rest of your life. You'll get angry for the rest of your life. There will be times when you're lonely for the rest of your life and you will definitely be tired for the rest of your life.

0 (12m 45s):

So what we're trying to do is identify which of those things cue me to do the behavior that I don't wanna do. And it's probably several things. It's probably several things because you've learned that this behavior is kind of a coping mechanism for you and you're going to it again and again to relieve stress or or to feel better about yourself. So you've got to learn to identify the cue. The first time I really put this into practice, I was way too old and and embarrassed to share this. But yeah, I was in college when I was still chewing my fingernails, right? I did talk to someone for service who's like, what do you do if you're 70 and still chewing your fingernails? I was like the habit loop, right?

0 (13m 27s):

Okay, let's see. You just heard the message, now you can apply. But I was like in college and I started dating Melissa and I wanna marry her. And I'm like, I still am chewing my fingernails like a little kid, okay? I was embarrassed by it, right? And I'm like, so what is it? So I began to think about like when are the times that I want to do it? And I noticed it's when I'm bored, it's just something I'm bored and I just start chewing my fingernails. I noticed it's when I'm nervous. If I'm nervous about something, I'm really in there chewing my fingernails. I also noticed another cue was when they just get a little long, I chew my fingernails. So I noticed I had those three cues all the time that were leading me to chew my fingernails. Okay? This is a very simple one, but we can apply these to bigger bad habits. Or maybe that's the bad habit. You want to learn lose too, okay, that's fine. But what I realized is those things were leading me to do the behavior I didn't wanna do, but I had to first identify what the cue was before I ever could think about breaking that bad habit.

0 (14m 17s):

And yes, I have broken it. Yes, I have broken it. So that's the first thing. You need to identify what the cues are. But like I said, with that halt a acronym, you are probably going to have those cues for the rest of your life. So here's some bad news before we get to the good news. Here's the bad news about breaking a bad habit. You may have those cues for the rest of your life. You cannot actually extinguish a bad habit. Charles duh Higgin, his great book, the Power of Habit talks about this. He calls it the golden rule of habit change. You can't extinguish a bad habit.

0 (14m 58s):

You can only what? Change it. You can't extinguish a bad habit. You're going to always have that cue that would start the habit loop. The cue might be there for the rest of your life. Sometimes you can get rid of that person in your life. Sometimes you can get rid of that, that thing that you see, that you don't have to go to that location like you can do some of those things. But if it's a habit that's been around for a long time, those cues may be there forever. So you can't extinguish that. But you can change the routine you do in response to the cue tracking with me on this. You can change the routine. You can be changed by the spirit. It's interesting in our passage that we're looking at in Ephesians chapter four, if we continue on in this passage, we'll start back at verse 22 again.

0 (15m 46s):

It says, you were taught with regard to your former way of life, life to put off your old self. And then in verse 24 jumps in and to put on the new self, you put off the old, you put on the new created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. This is actually a phrase Paul uses multiple times in different letters to all the different churches. He's like, you've gotta put off the old self and you've gotta put on the new one. It's actually a clothing metaphor. If you didn't pick that up, okay, you put off the old clothes, you take off the dirty, stinky things you don't want anymore, and you put on the new better looking clothes that are clean and fresh and make you look nice.

0 (16m 26s):

Okay, take off the old, put on the new. No one should be naked. In other words, okay? I think this is a big deal because whenever Paul says get rid of the old self, he's always saying, put on the new self. I focused so much in my early years as a Christian trying to get rid of some sins in my life. Like get rid of it, get rid of it. I focused on those cues like I gotta stop doing that thing, stop doing that thing, stop doing things. So focused on it. I didn't realize that I was struggling because I wasn't putting on the new. So focused on killing the old rather than adding on the new. And I'm telling you, if you wanna replace or if you wanna get rid of a bad habit, you wanna break it, you have to be changed by the spirit.

0 (17m 7s):

That clothing change, that life change, that behavior change has to happen. I, I picked this passage because Paul gives a bunch of examples. Let me just point out a few of them. In Ephesians chapter four in verse 25, he gives an example. He says, therefore each one of you must put off falsehood and put on speaking truthfully to your neighbor. So he's saying, if you're lying and if you're a deceitful person, don't just stop lying. You need to start speaking the truth. You need to start speaking the truth. Another example in verse 28, he says, anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer.

0 (17m 47s):

So you put off the old self and he says, you must do something you, you must work doing something useful

with your own hands that you might have something to share with those in need. You don't just stop stealing and taking for yourself something that isn't yours. You need to start working so that you can share. Stop stealing so you can share with others. The reason why you need to work is so that you can be generous. Stop stealing and taking what isn't yours. Put off the old, put on the new. He goes on more examples, verse 29. He says, do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs.

0 (18m 29s):

So he's saying, Hey, you're saying things that are negative, that are breaking people down. Maybe it's bad language, maybe it's criticism. It's breaking people down. Don't just stop doing that. What you need to start doing is building other people up. If you find yourself being very critical with the words you're saying to other people, maybe you need to start saying positive things and encouraging things to those people. That person you can't stand and all you can think of is bad things to say to them. Think of one good thing you can say about 'em. Maybe it's like, I like your shoes. Or maybe it's just, well, your shoes are really practical. Okay? There's something that you can say to that person instead of breaking them down, put on building them up, but on building them up.

0 (19m 12s):

And another example, he, he just kind of gives a whole catch all at the end of this passage in, in verse 31, he says, get rid, put off all bitterness, rage and anger. Brawling and slander along with every form of malice. What do you do instead? Put on to be kind and compassionate to one another. Forgiving each other just as in Christ, God forgave you. If you're struggling with being angry and fighting with people, maybe fighting with your spouse, stop doing that. And what you need to put on is kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. That might be the hardest one of the whole list that we've looked at today, right? You can't just, I, I'm not gonna hurt that person. No. You've got to positively forgive them. And if you actively do this and, and I've done this in my own life, somebody that I'm really mad at, I like pray all the time, like God help me to forgive that person.

0 (19m 59s):

The cue happens again. I run into that person when I wasn't expecting it. You feel that anger again, right? Instead of lashing out in that anger, I've gotta replace it with God. Help me to forgive them and be kind to them in this moment, you take off the old and you put on the new, nobody should be naked, right? Okay. The habits need to change. They need to be replacing. And that's why you can't extinguish a bad habit. You have to replace it with a good new habit. One of the, the most effective organizations that helping people overcome habit, bad habits and addictions is Alcoholics Anonymous. And in the book, the Power of Habit, it talks a lot about this.

0 (20m 40s):

So as I was reading and researching for this, I went and hung out with one of my neighbors who has been

11 years sober and has been in the program. Yeah, awesome. So I was like, dude, I just wanna pick your brain. I'm hanging out with you, but I'm gonna interview you like I'm asking you a bunch of questions. So we hung out for a while and I was like, so tell me about how AA works. And, and like part of it is, you know, you have all these different steps, but what happens in the steps? E even unbeknownst to people that they're identifying some of the cues in their life. As you talk about why this person made you angry, which drove you to drink some more, you realize, oh, that was the cue. You began to identify more and more of these cues. And what he told me, he's like, what's even better is that you replace it with a new habit.

0 (21m 21s):

Like you have to call someone, you have to go to group and share about your experience. So every time you're feeling the temptation, instead of going to drink, you're going to call somebody. And he said what people do when they first start calling you is they're like, my life sucks and this happened and I'm so angry at my ex-wife and all this different stuff. And he said, but what he always does, cuz you have to retrain a person, you start telling 'em, Hey, well can I tell you about my life? And he's like, I don't need to talk to them about my life, but I'm gonna tell 'em all about my mother-in-law. Because then they start getting out of their own head and start listening to me and caring about another person. And when they begin to stop thinking about themselves and how can I help another person, how can I care about another person?

0 (22m 1s):

It helps them begin to develop a good habit. They're calling someone, they're getting help, they're getting a reward through that conversation and they're replacing it with the habit of listening, encouraging and helping another person. And he said, it's a powerful retraining because you can't extinguish some of those cues. They're gonna be there forever. The ex-wife might be there for the rest of your life, right? And yet you can replace it with a new good habit. But here's the thing that anyone figures out an AA and in your life you identify the cues, that's great. You start that new habit behavior that you're trying to replace the routine with that works for a while.

0 (22m 42s):

It really does. You could leave here from this message right now and you're gonna be pretty good, might help you for years. But it eventually stops working because we have major stressors in our lives. We find out somebody that we love got diagnosed with cancer, we lose our job. And for a lot of people, that drives them right back into the bad habit that they thought they had kicked years ago. Some of you experienced this, you driven right back to the thing you thought was gone. This happens again and again and again. And what Alcoholics Anonymous has figured out and what researchers who have studied Alcoholics Anonymous found out is that there is a secret ingredient to make habit change stick.

0 (23m 27s):

This is fascinating because researchers were looking at all this and they were like, Hey, just practically speaking, we can train people to identify cues to replace the habit, but we cannot on our own, figure out how



to get people over that hump when something really bad happens in life. And what they actually need they discovered was God. And researchers hated this because how can secular researchers study God is hard, they don't want to do it. But in 2005 there was a group of researchers, it was actually combined with UC, Berkeley Brown University and the National Institute of Health. They got some funding that they could start asking people in Alcoholics Anonymous about their religious faith.

0 (24m 8s):

So they added some questions into the surveys they were doing. And what they found after years and years of asking these questions was a pattern that emerged again and again and again. The people that were able to make a bad habit gone than addiction overcome for a lifetime were the people who had a higher power, the people that had a higher power. Charles Duhigg, in his book, as he summarizes the finding of this research, writes this. He says that identifying cues and choosing new routines is important, but without another agreement, the new habits never fully took hold. The secret the alcoholic said was God was God.

0 (24m 52s):

So when I met with my neighbor, I asked him, I'm like, is this true? Like, have you found this to be true? That you need God, you need a higher power? He's like, absolutely, a hundred percent. He said he was working with one guy, he, he was a sponsor for a guy who was an ardent atheist. And the guy at first was like refusing to have a higher power. He's like, no, I don't need it. I don't need it. But my neighbor knew you did so. So after trying to convince him, the guy's like, I don't believe, he said, well, do you believe that I believe in a higher power? And the guy was like, yeah, of course I do. And he said, and and do you believe that that higher power has helped me change my belief in that higher power? And the guy's like, yeah, I believe that. So he said, well why don't you share my higher power?

0 (25m 33s):

Just believe that. I believe for a while. And what he found was amazing is this guy not only was able to overcome alcoholism and is sober today, but now he has a higher power for himself. And I love that. I was like, yes, that's so true. We need that higher power. We need the strength. If we want to put off the old and put on the new and make it stick to break a bad habit, be changed by the spirit. Notice how I don't say you change your routine. You need to be changed by the spirit of God inside of you. Now if you're not a follower of Jesus, you can apply whatever higher power you want right now.

0 (26m 16s):

But if you're a follower of Jesus here, I wanna tell you we've got the best higher power. We have the Holy Spirit who lives inside of us, inside of us, to empower us and strengthen us, to put off our bad habits, to beat them and to walk with God. Do you realize who the spirit is that lives inside of you? Do you realize it's the same spirit that was there when there was nothing in the universe? Says in the beginning the spirit of God hovered over the surface of the deep. That spirit was there before anything was created and it helped all creation come into existence. Did you know that spirit inside of you is the same spirit that was with Moses on

the mountain?

0 (26m 59s):

So that when he came down his face was so glowing and radiant, he had to wear a veil cuz no one could look at him. It was the same spirit who came into the temple and had a powerful glorious cloud that made people fall down because it was so amazing. It's the same spirit that was inside Elijah and Elisha. So they could perform miracles. They came into the prophet so that they could speak and empowered David so that he could sing. It's the same spirit that came down in the form of dove on Jesus when he was baptized. So from that moment on, he began to perform miracles and that he was able to heal the sick, make the lame walk and the blind to see it's the same spirit that was with Jesus when they hung up on a cross and he breathed his last, they stabbed him in the side to make sure he was dead.

0 (27m 49s):

Then they took him down, put him in a tomb, sealed it with a heavy rock. And for hours and days his body was dead. But on the third day, it was the same spirit that raised him from the dead so that he could appear again in human form, walking, overcoming death by that spirit. The spirit who lives in you is the one that Jesus promised would come to be with you to the very end of the age, that he would lead you into all truth and convict you of sin and righteousness. It's the same spirit that Paul tells us will develop fruit inside of us so that we'll have character, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control.

0 (28m 30s):

It's the same spirit that gives us gifts so that we can do things supernaturally that we can never do on our own. It's that spirit that empowers you and gives you the strength you think your little habit, your little sin, your little addiction is anything compared to that spirit. He can help you overcome it. So you wanna break a bad habit, be changed by that spirit inside of you, be changed by the spirit. Paul makes this very clear in Romans chapter eight, I love this in Romans eight 10, Paul says, but if Christ is in you, the spirit of Jesus Christ, the spirit of God, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, you have desires, you have temptation, it leads you to sin.

0 (29m 16s):

The spirit gives life because of righteousness. I love this verse, verse 11. He says, and if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his spirit who lives in you. And in verse 13, I love this verse, verse 13, for if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. To break a bad habit, be changed by that spirit, his spirit living in you, that's how you can break a bad habit for a lifetime.

0 (29m 60s):

So I'm telling you guys, some of you need to start praying every single morning for the Holy Spirit to come

inside of you and give you power to overcome that addiction. You need to pray for that spirit every day and every moment that temptation comes again because that is the power that will lead you to do it. Not your own strength but his power living in you. Be changed by the spirit. Be changed by the spirit. So I want to offer two ways to respond to this message today. And the first is gonna be for people who, who aren't followers of Jesus yet. And the second one is gonna be for those of us who are followers of Jesus. Cuz I want to tell you this. There are some of you in here who are not followers of Jesus And you really don't know the higher power.

0 (30m 45s):

If you don't know Jesus, he's the way, the truth in the life. And no one comes to the Father except through him. And everyone calls on his name will be saved. And if you want that SP spirit living in you, the spirit that rose Jesus from the dead to empower you, you've gotta invite him into your life and he will live with you and be with you to the very end of the age. So I wanna give you the opportunity to say a simple prayer and receive that spirit and receive that power to be with you for the rest of your life. So if everybody could close their eyes right now, and I'm gonna give you a simple prayer to repeat after me. If you're already a follower of Jesus, say this prayer out loud to give courage to somebody around you who needs to pray for the first time. Please repeat this prayer after me.

0 (31m 26s):

Dear God, I'm a sinner. I need a savior. Save me. Forgive me in faith, I declare Jesus' Lord, give me the gift of eternal life. Fill me with your spirit. Empower me with your spirit and help me to follow you and be changed by the spirit. Now with eyes closed, if you today for the first time made Jesus your Lord and Savior, we wanna just celebrate with you. So on the count of three, could you lift your hand into the air?

0 (32m 7s):

1, 2, 3, put your hand high. We'd love to celebrate. Praise God. Let's celebrate with those who made that decision? Awesome. You made an incredible decision. The spirit is living inside you. You have power now to overcome sin and you have eternal life in his name. Lord Jesus, I pray for all of us now. Give us the power to overcome our sin, our bad habits, our addictions, so that we can walk out if you're changed and be changed every day until the end when we see you face to face. Amen. I told you there there was another application. If you're here in person, there is a note card on your seat. I want you to pull it out right now.

0 (32m 47s):

If you're online, there's gonna be a QR code behind me. You can follow that link because we want you to participate online as well. And what I'm gonna encourage and challenge every single one of you to do is whatever the bad habit is, and even if you're not a Christian, fill this out. Okay? Cuz you got a bad habit you wanna get rid of. It might be biting your fingernails or it might be a terrible addiction that you're struggling with. Whatever that thing is that you wanna overcome, I want you to write it down on that note card. Pick one. I know you might have a bunch that you want to get rid of. I do two, but pick one and write it on that

card. And I'm gonna invite a couple of our elders to come forward. Mike, Jeremy, if you guys could come over and they're gonna be here at the front and we had said we're gonna put off, but you also gotta put on, right?

0 (33m 32s):

So what you're gonna do is drop your card there and you can fold it up. Nobody's gonna see these, okay? If you're filling out online, they can be anonymous. Don't worry. We're not going to look at what your sins are, okay? That's not what this is about. It's about putting it off. You can put that card right there on the top of the table and then we have these little wristbands that you can put on, right? And these wristbands say changed by the spirit. So as you wear this and you look at it, you can be reminded that I have the power to change that Holy Spirit who rose Jesus from the dead is living in me. And you can have that with you to keep wearing it and to remember that you are changed. And then what we're gonna do is we're gonna collect all these cards after everybody's brought 'em up and we're gonna burn 'em outside.

0 (34m 12s):

Okay? So on your way out, you're gonna see 'em burning, okay? And if you send it online, we are going to print those out and we're gonna burn 'em this week. And we will mail you one of these wristbands cuz we know some of you are watching from the east coast. And we would love to send you one of these. So I'm gonna say a prayer for our times right now, and then I'm gonna invite you guys to come forward. We're also gonna have the prayer team available here. If you need a, a longer prayer for something that's awesome, we want to pray for you. Our prayer team will be up here on the sides to pray for you. Let's pray. Lord God, we, we need your spirit. We need your power because that's the only way that we can be changed. We need a higher power and you are our higher power. So we call on your name to strengthen us in this moment.

0 (34m 53s):

Let this be the moment we look back on and say, finally that addiction was over. Finally, I overcame that sin by his power, Lord, we want many testimonies like that today. Pray for your power. In Jesus' name, amen.