

OVERCOMING STUBBORN SINS

SERVANT LEADERS



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INTRODUCTION:

Before we were born again, we were SLAVES to sin, and we have brought many of our sinful patterns right into our new life. However, God has called us to live a life free from such slavery. (Ephesians 4:17-19)

GOOD NEWS! WE don't have to be slaves.

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

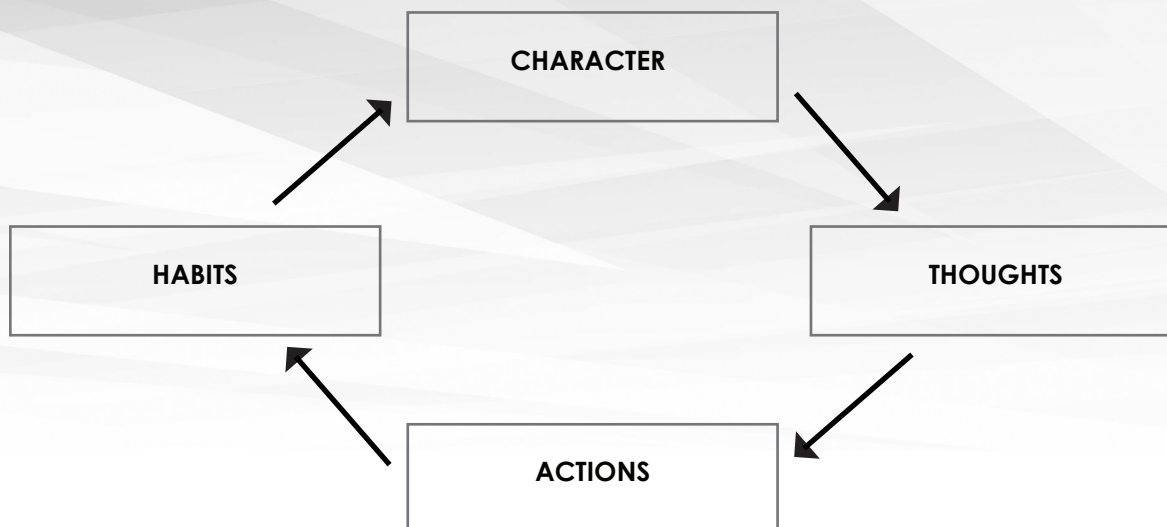
(Romans 6:17-18 & 1 Corinthians 10:13)

17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.



THE BEHAVIOR CYCLE



1. Our CHARACTER controls our THOUGHTS (Titus 1:15)

Ej. Let's say that a man sees a pretty woman who is hoping to get his attention...

a. The man of poor character will think... BOY WOULD I LIKE TO...

b. The man of good character will think... SINFUL PLEASURES WILL NOT BRING ME THE SATISFACTION I'M LOOKING FOR. I WILL BE CONTENT WITH WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN ME.

2. Our THOUGHTS determine our ACTIONS. (Proverbs 17:8, Isaiah 29:15, Matthew 6:7)

3. Our ACTIONS turn into HABITS over time. (Hebrews 10:24-25 & 1 Timothy 5:13)

4. Our HABITS develop our CHARACTER. (Ruth 3:10-11 & Proverbs 31)



THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF ROMANS 1:18-32

Man does not glorify God (v. 18-23)

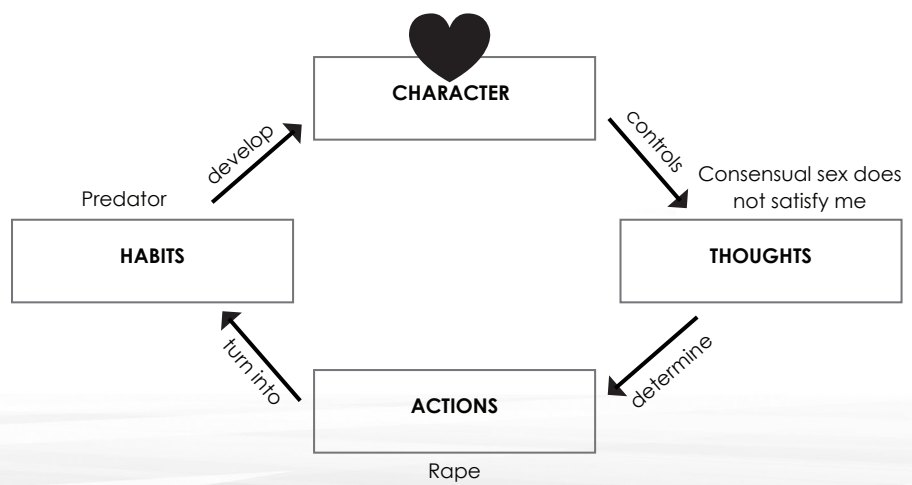
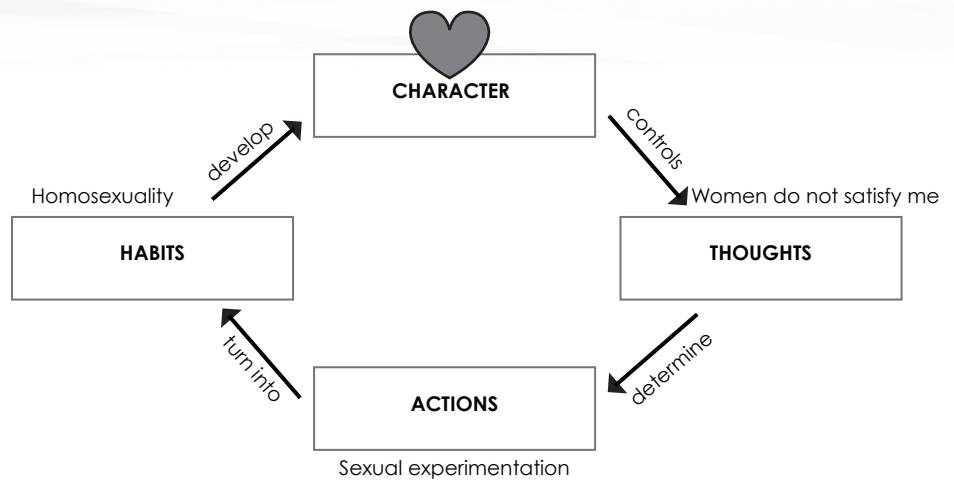
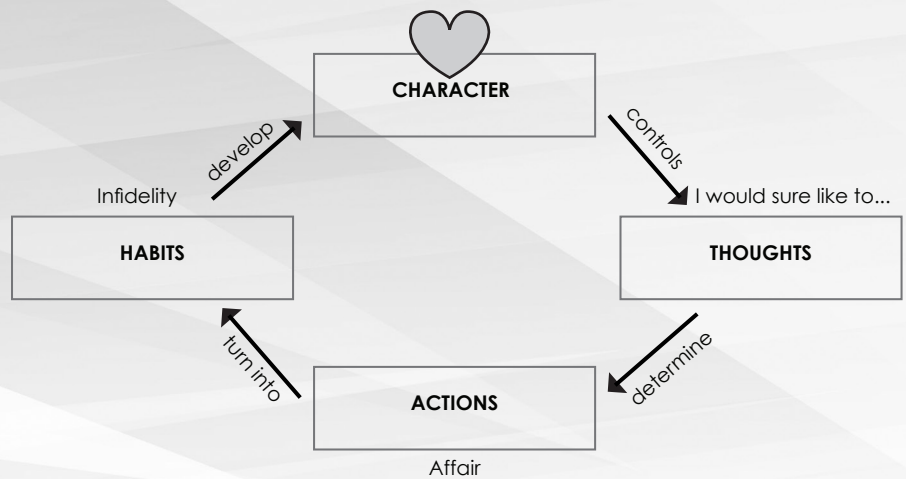
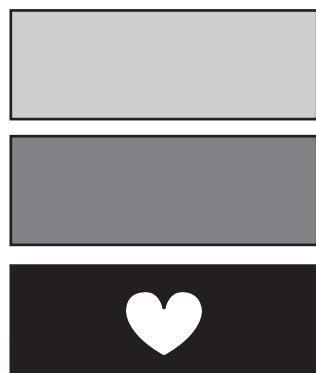
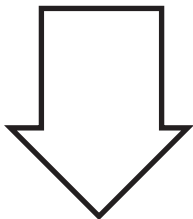
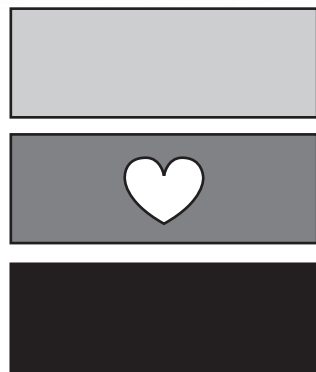
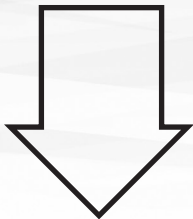
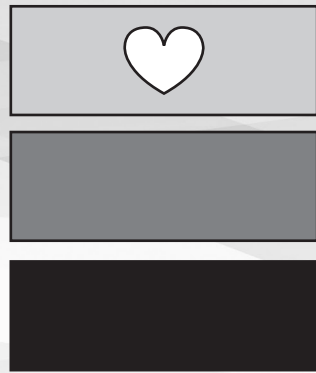
Man follows his natural desires (v. 24-25)

Man follows after shameful lust (v. 26-27)

Depraved mind / filled with every kind of evil (v. 28-32)

How does this relate to the Behavior Cycle?





The Law of Diminishing Returns:

When a pleasure is gained illegitimately, the joy that it produces will diminish with time and repetition, never reaching the level of the first experience. In attempts to continue experiencing joy, one must delve further and further into the activity until there is no joy found at all. - David Graef

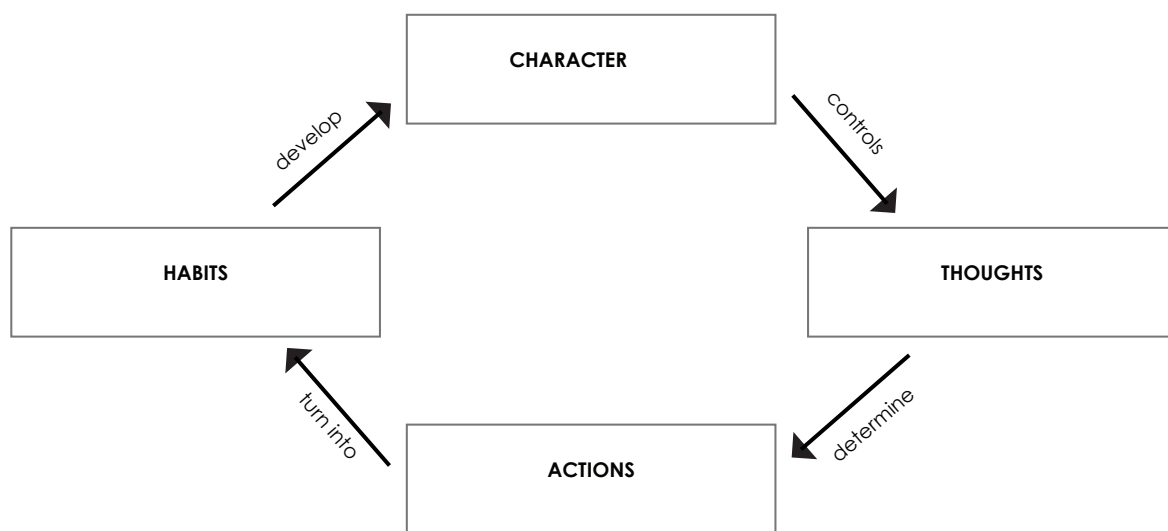
Example: Roller Coasters

Example: Remember your first kiss?

A romantic kiss can produce a sense of joy and pleasure, even if it is not a pure expression of RELATIONAL INTIMACY. If it is not, over time it will lose its MEANING. Usually, the couple will experiment with even deeper expression in order to receive the same level of pleasure. Why?

Because... The Law of Diminishing Returns.

HOW DO WE BREAK THE CYCLE?



1. "Changing our Character" is DECEPTIVE. (1 John 1:8, 1 Corinthians 3:18 & James 1:21-22)
2. "Changing our Habits" is IMPOSSIBLE. Sin tends to GROW, not shrink. (Hebrews 11:25)
3. "Changing our Actions" is USELESS. Eventually, the heart will reveal itself. (Proverbs 4:23)
4. We break the cycle by RENEWING THE MIND. (Ephesians 4:17-24)

Underline every word that has to do with the mind.

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 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; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

3 STEPS

1. TAKE OFF OUR DIRTY CLOTHES / LIES WE BELIEVE.
2. WASH OUR CLOTHES / RENEW THE MIND WITH TRUTH.
3. PUT ON CLEAN CLOTHES / ACTIONS BASED ON TRUTH

Examples: Ephesians 4:25-29

Put off	Renew your mind	Put on
Falsehood	We are all members of one body.	Speak truthfully
Anger to point of sin	Sinful anger gives Devil a foothold	Timely forgiveness
Stealing	There is joy in work and honor in giving	Work/Share with the needy
etc.	etc.	etc.



PRACTICAL STEPS FOR OVERCOMING STUBBORN SINS

1. Determine the SIN you need to overcome.
 - Start small and WORK YOURSELF UP.
 - Let the Spirit guide you via CONVICTION.
 - Let your mentors guide you via CONFRONTATION.
2. Determine what LIES you believe when you are committing the sin.

Example: Pornography

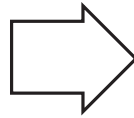
If I look but don't touch,
no one gets hurt.



Matthew 5:28

28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

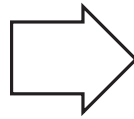
I'll just look...nothing
more. It will stop there.



James 1:15

15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

God has not provided all I
need to be satisfied.



Philippians 4:19

19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

3. Find Scriptures that CONTRADICT the lies, and write them on 3x5 cards.
4. MEMORIZE & MEDITATE in the Scriptures until you BELIEVE them.

