

What to do when you want to cheat

By Steve Reynolds

sermonaudio.com

Preached on: Tuesday, February 28, 2012

Capital Baptist Church

3504 Gallows Road
Annandale, VA 22003

Website: www.capitalbaptist.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/capitalbaptist

[music]

We are going to talk about what to do when you want to cheat and this is just really heavy on my heart and this is a talk that I have been crafting for several months and I want to expand on it tonight. And I just want to review it with you and I want to try to just really get this in your life, because I am telling you. What I am sharing with you is huge tonight. And if you can really grasp this and really apply this to your life, I mean, it can so accelerate your health and really, really greatly improve your overall health. And so tonight I want to talk to you about what to do when you want to cheat.

Now when you think about how to tame temptation specifically when it comes to food, we have to realize that temptation involving food started with Adam and Eve and continues now with us. I mean, to me that is an incredible thought. I mean the very first temptation, at the very center of that temptation was a temptation involving food. And in Genesis chapter three verse six, speaking of Eve it says:

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for what? Good for food and that it was what? Pleasant to the eyes. And a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat.”

I mean, every temptation starting with Adam and Eve here in this passage, I mean, much of our temptation deals with food.

Now she was having to deal with eating fruit which is a little bit different than most of us, right? You know, Eve struggled with eating fruit. She wanted the fruit and couldn't have it. Our struggle is not to eat fruit. We can have the fruit, but we don't want it. So it is a little bit different, isn't it, ok? I mean, she wanted the fruit and couldn't have it and we can have the fruit and we don't have it. That is an interesting thought.

But think about it tonight. This has been something that human beings have struggled with since the beginning of mankind. The battle of the bulge, we struggle with the battle of the bulge. And that is none of your stomachs. I know some of you are looking put here wondering if we took a picture of you, but we didn't, ok? But this is a battle that we face. It is a battle that we deal with in our lives. And the battle of the bulge is a challenging battle to win because we are creatures of habit. Our bodies resist new changes and easily

revert back to our old ways. I mean, you have got to just put your brain on it and think about it. Why is this such a difficult challenge?

Well, the answer is because we are creatures of habit. I mean, we get used to doing things the same way. I mean, for me my background, my addiction was ice cream. Why? Because from the time I was a child, I mean, for 48 years all the way up to age 48, I mean, I doubt if I went to bed 10 times in most of those years without eating ice cream. I am a creature of habit and you are a creature of habit.

However, the good news is our temptation to cheat will grow less over time as our bodies adapt to new healthy habits. I mean, think about it. I mean, the hope that we can have—and I shared this with you because I am telling you. This is the big time. We have more people that will drop out about now than any other time in the program. And the reason is because we are trying to make these changes and it is hard and it is difficult and I just want to give you hope tonight that you can change and that it is going to be an easier and easier and easier as you go.

When I first started out, a big thing I did was I had a cheat meal. Again, I emphasize meal. I did not say day, a cheat meal. And what I would do is when I had a craving I might get a craving on Tuesday for pizza or whatever and typically I made my cheating meal Friday night, not always, but most of the time. And I would take that craving and say, “Man, I really want some pizza.” And, you know, I would think, well, you know, I am going to save that up and Friday night, that is going to be my cheat meal.

And, folks, that was a big help to me. But honestly these days I don’t need to even do that. I don’t want to do that. I don’t need to do that. What is different? I have changed. I am different. My appetites are different.

And the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 9:27:

“I keep under my body and bring it into subjection.”

We have to tell our body what it is going to do and not let our body tell us what we are going to do. We have to bring our body into subjection. We have to tell our body what it is going to do, rather than letting our body tell us what we are going to do.

Now think about it. Just think about all the things in the world and I share this with you just to again emphasizes how that, you know, tastes are developed. You might not have a lot of taste tonight for water. You might not have a lot of taste tonight for vegetables. You might not have a lot of taste tonight for fruit. But do you know what? You can develop a taste for these things. Tastes are developed. I mean the reason you like the things you like is because you have become a creature of habit.

I mean, just think about it. For example, in Mark one verse six, talking about John the Baptist. It says:

“John was clothed with camel’s hair and with a girdle of skin about his loins.”

And what did John the Baptist eat? He ate locusts and wild honey. Any of you want some locusts? Raise your hand if you want some locusts. I don’t want any locusts. Why? Because that looks gross to me.

But I guarantee you if we brought John the Baptist in here and said, “John the Baptist, you want some Breyer’s chocolate chip ice cream?” He would go, “Yuck. What is that stuff?”

You know, you want a quarter pounder with cheese, John the Baptist? Oh, gross. Who wants any of that?

I mean, just think about the different cultures of the world. You go to Thailand. You want some insects? How many of you like insects? There is Johnny cockroach right there in the middle, ok?

Unhatched chicken Filipino food. Dog in Vietnam. Wait, ok? Ok?

In a few weeks I am going to be preaching: Are there going to be animals in heaven? Well, that dog might be heaven tonight. You just never know, ok?

And then who knows. Maybe your local carryout tonight, ok, or whatever. No telling what you might have there. But there are places in the world that they love cat. I mean, you know, and a lot of you are from different backgrounds and different situations and I share that. It is humorous, but what it tells us is we develop taste.

And tonight in all your thinking you might think, “You know, I don’t know if I will ever like water. I don’t know if I will ever want vegetables. I don’t know if I will ever want fruit.”

You know what? You can develop a taste for those things. And do you know what? If you keep building those healthy habits in your life, you will develop a taste for those things. So hang in here. And you tell your body what it is going to do and quiet letting your body tell you what you are going to do.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10 verse 13:

“There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful who will not suffer or allow you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it.”

Think about it tonight. God promises you a way of escape for every temptation. God will give you a way of escape. And tonight what I want to tell you is I want to talk to you about what I do. This is a personal testimony night. I am sharing with you out of my own

life experience three things that I do when I want to cheat, three things that I want to do when I want to cheat.

I want us to look at these tonight and I want us to think about these things and I hope over the past week maybe you have thought about some of these things and maybe you have started practicing some of these things in your life, because these are very easy, transferrable concepts. These things helped me and I am telling you. They can help you.

Number one tonight, you have got to pray consistently. You have got to pray consistently. We have to understand that the part of overcoming temptation involves prayer. We have to pray about these things. We have to see the Lord about these things.

In Luke 18:1 the Bible says this. Jesus said that men ought always to pray and not to faint.

See, God gives us two choices there. You can pray and gain strength to be victorious or you can not pray and not have that strength and you will faint. In other words, you can be victorious or you can fail. And the Bible says that the antidote for failure for thing is that we ought always to pray. We have got to pray about this. We have got to seek the Lord about this. You have to pray about your eating and exercise habits that you will eat and eat less and you will exercise more. I mean, ask God. Say, "God, please help me. I am no longer looking for that potion. I am no longer looking for that pill. God, I am willing not face the facts that if I am going to lose weight, I have got to eat less and I have got to exercise more and, God, I need your help to make that happen."

Pray about it.

See the flesh is weak, the Bible says. The flesh is weak, but God through prayer can help you to be strong.

In Matthew 26:41 Jesus said:

"Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Man we have got to watch and pray so that we don't enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing. Your spirit is willing. That is why you are here. That is why you are part of losing to live. Your spirit is willing. You are wanting to so bad to change your life. You know, your spirit is in the right place, but your flesh is so weak. And God's Word says we have got to watch and pray. Pray for your health not just your sickness. Be proactive in praying about this matter.

You know, the Bible says in James 5:16:

"Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that you may be healed."

We have got to pray for each other and we have got to pray for healing.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

You see, when it comes to our health the reason I say, “Be proactive” is because we don’t approach this from a positive standpoint. We approach prayer for our health from a negative standpoint. If we open things up tonight and said, “Let’s have a prayer time.” And I said, “Ok, I am done this. I have been pastoring this church 26 years. I have done this hundreds of times if not thousands of times.”

Who has got a prayer request? I have got a prayer request. Well, pray for this and pray for that. And 90 percent of those prayer requests it sounds like an organ recital. Oh, this organ is hurting me here and this organ is hurting me there and pray for this organ and pray for that organ and listen. If I have a problem physically I am going to be the first to ask you to pray for me. But I would love to come to a prayer meeting and somebody say, “Man, I know I should be drinking more water. Pastor, I know I should be drinking more water. Would you all pray for me that I will drink more water?”

“Yes, brother, we will pray for you. Yes, sister, we will pray for you.”

“Pastor, man, I had number three all week long at McDonald’s this past week. Would you pray for me?”

No, you wait till you get the cancer and then you say, “Oh, I got cancer. Pray for the cancer.”

Well, maybe if you had prayed for the water and prayed of the number three at McDonald’s you wouldn’t be praying of the cancer. Let’s be proactive in our prayers. But let’s catch these things on the front end and not wait until the back end. Pray consistently. You have got to make this a matter of prayer. You can’t do it by your own willpower. You can’t do it of your own strength. You need God to help you.

Number two, shop carefully. The Bible says in Romans 13:14:

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” And listen to this. “Make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.”

The Bible says, “Don't make provision for your flesh so in doing so to fulfill the lust of thereof.”

The rule of thumb is this. If food gets near you, it will eventually get in you. So we have to understand the battle ground is not your kitchen. The battleground is at the store. If you are going to be able to deal with cheating, you have got to begin with dealing with cheating at the grocery store, because if food gets near you, it is eventually going to get in you. So you have got to shop for your health, not your happiness by keeping unhealthy foods out of your grocery basket, because if you keep it out of your grocery basket, you

will keep it out of your car. If you keep it out of your car, you will keep it out of your kitchen. And if you keep it out of your kitchen, you are going to keep it out of your stomach.

But if you wait to say, “Oh, Lord, help me. You know, here I am, Lord. I mean, Lord, those potato chips they are up in the cupboard there, but, Lord, I know you are going to give me the strength, Lord, not to touch those potato chips. Oh, Lord, help me.”

Man the time you pray for those potato chips is when you are in aisle number 12, ok? And say, “Lord, this cart is trying to go down aisle number 12. But, Lord, I want to keep it on the outside where the living food. So I am going to keep being...”

More than once I got up to the grocery store and, man, I had a moment of weakness, threw something in my car that I shouldn't have and I said, “Oops. I don't know what I am going to do with this, man, but, sir, would you help me with this? I don't want to buy it. You want me to take it back or whatever?” I mean, I right there, you know, said, “Man, I can't walk out of here with this stuff, because if it gets near me it is going to get in me.”

What does that mean to shop carefully? Number one, eat before you go into the store. And, man, when you go in a store hungry, everything looks good.

Now if you can't do that, because honestly a lot of times I can't do that. I am just very much aware that I am hungry and everything is going to look extra good. But if you can eat before you go in, that is even better. That is even better.

Secondly, pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit as you walk into the store. I mean, one of our verses, “Walk in the Spirit, you won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” Pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit. Honestly when those doors swing open and I go in that store, honestly I pray, “Oh, God, fill me with your Spirit right now that as I walk through this door I will be walking in the Spirit because I don't want to fulfill the lusts thereof.”

Buy the majority of your things from the outside of the store. Why? Because on the outside of the store is the living food. Living food is primarily on the outside of the store. Death food is primarily on the inside. The more you shop on the outside of the store, the healthier you are going to be. The more you shop up and down the aisles the less healthy.

Read all labels. I mean, I don't buy anything without reading the label. Know what you are purchasing. Know what is in there. And we ought to talk all about reading labels. I won't go into that, but, man, don't ever pick up something without reading the label. Know what is in what you are buying.

And then purchase some healthy snacks. Now that is individual. My favorite snacks are almonds. Hey, I love almonds. They have got a lot of good types of fat in them. You can take a few of those things. They pull you up real quick. And then I also like fruit. But, you know, find some snacks that are healthy for you and have those available to you

when you get hungry. Shop carefully. You have got to shop carefully. You can't wait till you get home to deal with this stuff.

And then, number three, think correctly. And I want to expand on this tonight. Think correctly. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says:

“Casting down imaginations...”

We have imaginations about food, don't we? I mean, we get food in our mind and we just have these imaginations. We call them cravings. We start craving things. We just start imagining these things. These things start going through our mind and we start thinking about them. And the Bible says we have to cast down those imaginations and any high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, anything that is in rebellion to God. You know, every sin begins in the mind. Do you understand that? Every sin begins in the mind.

Do you know what the biggest sex organ is in my body? It is my brain, ok? Every sexual sin started in the mind. Every sin begins in the mind. And what we have to do is we have to, the Bible says, bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. We have to take those imaginations that are out there and telling us to do this and telling us to do that and eat this and eat that and you don't want to go exercise. You are too tired tonight. You can do it another time. And don't worry about that. And you are probably part of the 10 percent that loses weight without exercise anyway, so why don't you just sit here and not worry about it, ok?

Ten percent of the people can lose weight without exercise, but nobody can be healthy without exercise, nobody.

You have got to bring into captivity every thought. And here is what I think that this is the biggest thing that helps me of all not to cheat, right here. Think short term pleasure is not worth long term pain. You have heard my talk about making the most of your health and I talk about this in my story and the history that I have experienced in my life. And, you know, my long term pain before was diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, all kinds of different things. I was digging my grave with a knife and a fork. And I had to come to the point where I realized that, you know, short term pleasure is not worth long term pain, meaning, yes, that will be nice of the short time, but what is it going to do to me in the long term?

The incorrect way of thinking is Esau thinking. Now here is a biblical example of how so many people, Genesis 25 says:

“And Jacob sold pottage and Esau came from the field and he was faint. And Esau said to Jacob, ‘Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage, for I am faint.’ Therefore was his name called Edom.

“And Jacob said, ‘Sell me this day thy birthright.’”

Now I want you to think about the birthright. Let me tell you about the birthright. Esau, the elder son enjoyed particular privileges in the ancient patriarchal household. During his father's lifetime he took precedence over his brothers. After his father died, he received a double share of the inheritance and became head and priest of the family. He could lose these rights if he committed a grave offense. For example, Reuben committed incest and he lost his birthright.

And so Jacob says, the younger says to Esau the elder, says, "Sell me this day your birthright."

And listen. Esau said, "Behold I am at the point to die. I am going to die. I am so hungry I am going to die. What is this birthright going to do for me if I die?"

Do you think he was really going to die? He felt like he was going to die. Have you ever felt that way? If I don't get something to eat I am going to die.

Jacob said, "Swear to me this day," and he swore to him and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

And the Bible says:

"Jacob gave Esau bread and the pottage lentils and he did eat and drink and he rose up and went his way, thus Esau despised his birthright."

And over in the book of Hebrews listen to what Hebrews chapter 12 says. God didn't let this rest. God brought this up again in the New Testament in Hebrews chapter 12 verse 16.

"Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."

How did he do that? He viewed short term pleasure as worth long term pain. The birthright was a very valuable thing which would have allowed Esau to experience some special opportunities. Like I told you, being the elder with the birthright. He had all kinds of special opportunities. He gave up these opportunities by thinking that short term pleasure with food was worth long term pain.

Your health is a very valuable thing. And if you take care of it, you will be able to experience some special things. Are you losing these opportunities by thinking like Esau that short term pleasure with food is worth long term pain? You know it is not good for you. You know it, but you eat it anyway. Why? Because you are thinking, hey, this short term pleasure is worth long term pain. You can't do that.

This morning we had a man in our pulpit preaching today talking about all he wanted so much to be a lifeguard when he was young and he got out there and became a lifeguard

and sat out there watching the waves and I am sure he didn't say anything about that girls, but he probably was watching them, too, but and he got a real bad sunburn. And here is now as an adult dealing with skin cancer.

Short term pleasure. Is it worth long term pain? Don't think like Esau.

The incorrect way of thinking is that way, but the correct way of thinking is Moses' thinking. In Hebrews chapter 11 the Bible says:

“By faith Moses when he was born was hid three months of his parents because they saw he was a proper child and they were not afraid of the king's commandments.”

Remember this? Moses the guy that as a little baby and he was part of the Jewish nation and the Egyptians found him and it says:

“By faith Moses when he was come to years refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.”

Now he could have been there in Pharaoh's palace. And, as I write in the notes, living with Pharaoh would have allowed Moses to have access to lots of really good food, right? I mean, just think about what he could have eaten in the palace. I am sure it was the very best of food. But Moses chose to give this up by thinking that short term pleasure was not worth long term pain. The Bible says he walked away from all that choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy what? The pleasures of sin for a season.

Listen. Don't ever let anybody tell you sin is not fun. If somebody tells you that, they just never have sinned. Sin is a blast. Don't look at me that way. You know it is. Man, sin is one great thing. But only for a season.

You have got to realize, Moses says, “You know what? I am going to suffer. I am going to choose. I am going to make a choice.” What was his thinking? Short term pleasure is not worth long term pain.

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt for he had recompense, respect unto the recompense of this reward.”

He was able to walk away from all of that because he had the right thinking. He thought this short term pleasure is not worth this long term pain. Living in America allows you to have access to lots of really good food. We live in Pharaoh's palace here in America, don't we? Amen? We live in Pharaoh's palace. Man, I have traveled the world enough to know how blessed we are in this country with all kinds of food. In the midst of plenty you must think that short term pleasure is not worth long term pain.

And I will look at food and I will say, “You know what? That looks really good. And I know it will be so good, but it will only be good of the short term. And do you know what? I would rather feel good all the time.”

And do you know what? You can feel good all the time, too. You knock off 100 and something pounds and see if you don't feel better. And some of you, thank God, you don't even lose that much weight. You are a better story than us 100 pound losers, man. The best story is not to have to be a 100 pound loser, ok? That is a better story. But people aren't too excited about those stores, are they? Ok?

In the Christian culture you have got to kill somebody, take dope or do something to get any attention, ok? We are crazy, man. Christians are nuts, ok? Get somebody to get a... well, I never sinned very much. Sit down, man. We don't want to hear that stuff. That is the most boring testimony in the world. Man, we are whacked out, aren't, ok?

Folks, I am telling you. What I have shared with you tonight is from my heart and I know I have went over and I apologize to you [?]. But I am telling you, I am burning up with what I share with you guys. I am burning up with it.

Folks, we can do it. But we have got to pray, ok? We have got to pray and we have got to shop and we have got to think. Pray, shop and think.

Remember.

You say, “Well, I didn't pray much this week and I didn't shop very good and I thought horribly.”

Well, remember, failure is not final. If you cheat, learn from it. Man, when I cheat, I always think, “How did I get in that situation? What was it? I mean, how did that happen to me?”

That happened to me one time this week. I messed up. I thought about it. How did that happen? And then what do you have got to do? Get back on track. Just get back on track.

The Bible says in Proverbs 24:16:

“The just man falls seven times, but they what? They rise up again.”

Rise up again and stay at it.

Folks, you are still here. Ninety percent of life is showing up and you are showing up. Don't quit. Finish this competition. Finish this competition and get signed up for the next one because one competition is not near enough.

Let's pray.

Father, we come and we consecrate ourselves to you afresh and anew tonight. And, God, we thank you for prayer. Thank you that we can pray for this sin. It is an honor to pray for somebody when they are sick, but, Lord, help us pray for health and not just sickness. And, God, help us, Lord, in this country, Lord, as we go out and shop, Lord, God, just help us, Lord, just to be so wise as we shop. And, God, may we tonight, Lord, may we have the thinking of Moses and not of Esau? May we not sell our birthright for food, Lord? May we not sell our health for food? And, God, just continue to bless us and use us and, Lord, may this group here tonight do more than any other group in the history of losing to live when it comes to losing weight. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[music]