

Remember: receive the
Sacraments before you
leave the campus.

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Bad Habits; You Can Break Them.

Nine-tenths of the men in Hell, says St. Alphonsus Ligouri, are there because of their bad habits. If your chances of getting to Heaven are made less by your bad habits, it is time that you took them seriously and learned how to cure them.

God gave you your human nature, and, due to original sin, there are in you many disorders, dispositions and inclinations to evil. But God did not give you your habits. These you have acquired. For a habit is born only of frequently-repeated acts. You swear once, and again, and a third time. After a while you find it difficult to keep from swearing. You swear almost automatically. Then you begin to excuse yourself. "I don't mean anything by it," you say.

Just what is your responsibility for the acts that you commit habitually? The answer depends upon whether the habit was acquired knowingly. It is possible that a young lad, due to surroundings for which he is not to blame, has formed habits of speech or action without realizing their malice. Certainly he is not so responsible as another who, before the habit is formed, realizes its badness.

You begin to be responsible for bad habits the moment you realize they are bad. At that moment, unless you begin to do something about correcting them, you are guilty of all the acts which follow. You can't excuse yourself on the pretext that you don't mean anything by it, or that it is too difficult to overcome.

In the face of bad habits God has not left you helpless or hopeless. Too many, because they are oppressed by bad habits, despair of a cure; after a weak struggle, or after no struggle at all, they give up trying to extricate themselves. It is important to realize that God cannot demand of you the impossible. Out of justice, He must supply you with the means to cure yourself.

PRAYERS: (deceased) father of James Fagan, '34; husband of Dr. Ellen Ryan Jolly; father of Vince Hartnett (Alumni). Ill, Father C. Hooyboer, C.S.C.; John Jehle (Dil.); Howard Bowler (Carroll); John Horbett (St. Eds); father of Joseph Judge (St. Edwards); sister of Tom Condon (Walsh); friend of R. J. Martinez (Brownson); father of A.J. Rizzi. One thanksgiving, request of Mrs. Jack W. Reilly. Three special intentions.

If you want to overcome bad habits (1) You must first persuade yourself that a clean break is possible; (2) You must fully disavow the pleasure or satisfaction that comes to you through the habit. "I'm responsible for this habit which is going to be increasingly harder to cure day by day; it may prevent the salvation of my soul; I'm going to get rid of it at all costs."

(3) You must resolve to use efficacious means. It is good to be sorry, but that is not enough. You must have effective weapons and use them.

(4) You have to avoid persons, places, and things that arouse your passions. Continue sordid conversations, go to theatres, dances or recreations which fill your soul and body with bad images, read obscene magazines and books, and expect a relapse.

(5) Don't fear to do physical or moral violence to yourself. Physical pain or discomfort at the moment of temptation diminishes concupiscence.

(6) Be generous in going about the cure. Two students resolve to break a habit of swearing. One says: "Every time I swear I'm going to give a penny to some charity." The other: "Every time I swear I'll give a dime." You know which one will be cured. Don't choose as a means something that costs you very little. The more you pay, the quicker the cure. To say only an ejaculation every time you swear is to stay too far away from a remedy.

(7) Add supernatural means: the sacraments, prayer, fasting, almsgiving. There is something special to note about daily devout Communion. Wonderful cures of long-standing habits of impurity have been effected by frequent, devout Holy Communion.

(8) Don't make a resolution for a long time. Gather all your energy for this day, this week. God will give you the grace to fight when next week comes, if it does.