

# Acknowledging Your Need – Dan Hitz

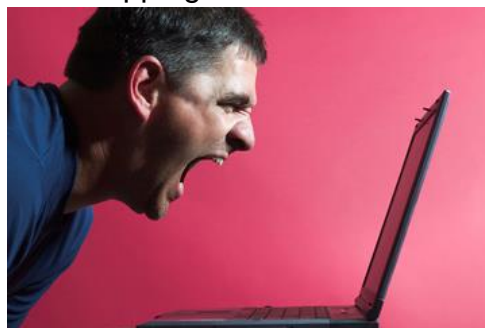
*Dan Hitz is the Executive Director of Reconciliation Ministries of Michigan, a member ministry of the Restored Hope Network dedicating to bringing freedom to men, women, and adolescents struggling with sexual and relationship issues. For more information contact Reconciliation Ministries at 586.739.5114, or visit us on the web at [www.recmin.org](http://www.recmin.org). This article is based on Chapter Two of the Living Waters manual by Andrew Comiskey.*



Most of us struggle with some sort of habitual sin that we seem to have a tough time stopping. For some of us it's pornography. Others struggle with drinking or smoking. For some it's overeating, lying, or stealing. No matter what your specific sin is, you probably already know the basic idea of how to stop. You tell yourself that you'll never do "it" again, but somehow you just haven't been able to quit. Almost everyone at a 12-step group knows the principles, but many still struggle to break their habit.

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden they immediately sought to cover their nakedness with fig leaves and hid from God. They completely missed the heart of the issue. They were now fallen people with a propensity towards sin. They were helpless to solve this problem on their own and hid from the only One who could truly help them. The very coverings they used to cover their nakedness (fig leaves) secreted irritating oils that caused even further problems. They failed to acknowledge their true need.

If you've made a New Year's resolution to break your sinful habit, it's important that you focus on the deeper issues than the sin you're trying to avoid. What's the issue in your heart that you're trying to "numb" by your sin of choice? Yes, we sin because we are sinful creatures in need of a Savior, but we also sin to escape emotional pain. We may look at pornography to avoid feelings of loneliness or fear of intimacy. An alcoholic drinks to avoid emotional pain. It helps to view sinful habits as our illegitimate "solution" to a legitimate problem. That legitimate problem is our true need. Our success in overcoming any struggle is to come out of hiding and bring that legitimate need to Jesus so that He can give us His holy answer. We may be successful in stopping one sinful addiction through sheer willpower, but if we don't address the true need in our hearts it will likely surface through a different struggle. Addressing the true need empowers us to avoid the temptations with much more success than sheer willpower alone.



The next time you're tempted to (fill in this blank with your sin of choice), step back emotionally and ask yourself what it would feel like if you never engaged in that sin again. Your immediate answer may be that you would be filled with overwhelming joy at the thought of never doing "it" again. If that were actually true in the depths of your heart you wouldn't struggle with that sin at all. To understand your true need search your heart for the negative feelings that you would have if you didn't view pornography, smoke, overeat, etc. When we stop numbing ourselves with our sinful drug of choice, we then have to face the emotional pain we have been trying to avoid. The good news is that we can take that emotional pain to Jesus and He can help us deal with our pain. Like He did with Adam and Eve, Jesus can help rid us of our sinful solutions –

the fig leaves we used to cover our nakedness – and give us His holy solution. As the Lord walked with Adam and Eve and discussed the consequences of their sin, He also laid out His plan of salvation and provided a sacrificial covering for their nakedness.

As you begin to consider the true need that drives your sin, you will be faced with a choice. In the *Living Waters* guidebook, author Andrew Comiskey describes it like this. We can choose to deny our neediness and keep trying to break our sinful habit through our own willpower and logic. We can choose to run from God and others in the fear that our true need will be found out and sin to cover up our pain. Or, we can acknowledge the sin and true need that is in our lives and ask the Lord to touch our hearts and begin to heal the brokenness in our foundations. Only in reaching out to the Lord and trusted Christians can we find peace and begin to resolve the deeper needs in our hearts.

I began to use this principle many years ago. There was a time when I began to be bombarded mentally with nasty, aggressive sexual images. I felt shame as I was tempted to focus on these fantasies which were outside of my usual struggle. Instead of taking my own advice and calling my accountability partner for prayer and support, I tried to resist them on my own. After two exhausting weeks of fighting fantasy, I finally stopped and told the Lord that I couldn't fight this on my own. I asked Him what the deeper issues were in my heart that I was tempted to avoid through fantasizing about the aggressive sexual encounters. He showed me that I was feeling anxious and overwhelmed with many of the responsibilities that I was walking through at the time, and that I was subconsciously looking for a strong masculine force to "help me cope" with the pressure. I was convicted and repented that I was not handling the situation properly and not embracing the responsibilities that the Lord had given me. I asked Him what His holy answer was and He showed me a picture of a strong right arm with a little mini-me tucked away inside the arm. I immediately knew the arm represented the Lord's righteous right arm and that He was offering to be my strong masculine strength to equip me to deal with the challenges that I was facing. Within 15 minutes of my prayer of repentance and acceptance of the Lord's holy answer, the temptations that I had been battling for two weeks had resolved. Acknowledging my true need empowered me to receive the true answer from the Lord and equipped me to overcome the temptations I was facing.



If you are struggling with a habitual sin I encourage you to stop, calm your heart, and ask the Lord to show you your deeper need. Reach out to safe trusted others for help. Contact your pastor or the pastoral care department of your church and share your heart. There are many groups like Living Waters and Celebrate Recovery that provide assistance and support. Reconciliation Ministries also provides individual counseling and prayer ministry to help you navigate through the process of learning to acknowledge your need and walk away from your illegitimate answer. You can learn to embrace and exercise the Lord's holy answer. The journey may seem overwhelming or impossible at first, but allowing the Lord to resolve the true need in your heart is well worth the effort. I encourage you to reach out for help and call Reconciliation Ministries at 586.739.5114. You'll be glad you did.