

What are “Besetting Sins”?

Hebrews 12:1 - “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

What are “Besetting Sins”?

- In the life of every individual, there is a besetting sin that persistently stands between him and God.
- It differs from person to person. What is a besetting sin to one may not trouble another at all.
 - With Moses it was anger
 - With David it was desire for women
 - With Abraham it was fear for his life

What are “Besetting Sins”?

- It is a temptation and sin that one finds it particularly hard for him to resist and often finds himself easily tangled up in it
- The Hebrew writer insists that these sins in particular must be overcome or we will be unable to make progress in our journey to heaven

Defining Besetting Sins

- Easily beset - “εὐπερίστατος: easily ensnaring, obstructing, constricting; that which easily surrounds as a garment that winds around and hinders, clinging closely; easily encircles or entangles, like a loose flowing robe” (*International Critical Commentary*)
- Euperistatos - “a competitor thwarting a racer in every direction; figuratively, of sins that tangle and hinder” (*Strong's*)

Defining Besetting Sins

- Besetting sins are those which cling close to us and are easily committed by us.
- Besetting sins may be those indulged before obeying the Gospel; easily falling back into old, familiar patterns.
- Besetting sins may be those we are drawn to due to temperament, such as pride, laziness, skepticism, or stubbornness.
- Besetting sins may be those we are exposed by our profession.
- Besetting sins may be those we are particularly vulnerable due to weakness, by nature or nurture: smoking, drinking, drug abuse, stealing, bigotry, gossip, attention, pornography

Besetting Sins Of God's People

- Peter had a weakness for impulsive, inconsistent behavior - Matt. 26:33-75
- Moses was beset with impatience - Num. 20:7-12
- James and John were beset with anger and harshness toward others - Luke 9:51-56
- Simon the sorcerer was beset with covetousness - Acts 8:18-21

Besetting Sins Can Be Intensified

- By returning to former associates in the besetting sins
 - 1Cor. 15:33 - “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits”

Besetting Sins Can Be Intensified

- By returning to places that facilitate the besetting sins
 - 2Peter 2:20 - “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.”

Besetting Sins Can Be Intensified

- By failing to fill the void left by besetting sins
 - Luke 11:24-26 - “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, I will return to my house from which I came. 25 And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. 26 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

Besetting Sins Can Be Overcome

- 1Cor. 10:13 - “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”
- Gal. 5:16 - “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

Besetting Sins Can Be Overcome

- The Corinthians overcame their besetting sins
 - 1Cor. 6:9-11 - “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

Besetting Sins Can Be Overcome

- The Colossians overcame their besetting sins
 - Col. 3:5-7 - “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them”

Besetting Sins Can Be Overcome

- Paul overcame his besetting sins
 - 1Tim. 1:12-13 - “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man...”
 - 1Cor. 9:27 - “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

How To Overcome Besetting Sins

- Make no opportunities for besetting sins
 - Rom. 13:14 - “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”
 - 2Tim. 2:22 - “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”
 - Gen. 39:12 - “She caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me. But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.”

How To Overcome Besetting Sins

- Cultivate a mind that is unfavorable for the besetting sin. Keep your mind saturated with spiritual things
 - Isa. 26:3 - “You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.”
 - Rom. 8:5-6 - “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

How To Overcome Besetting Sins

- Overcome the besetting sin through Christ
 - John 15:5 - “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”
 - Phil. 4:13 - “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
 - Heb. 12:2 - “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”

David Wrote A Confession Psalm After Succumbing To His Own Besetting Sin.

- Psalm 51:1-3, 7-12 - <<A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.>> “Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me... 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”