

# God Overcomes Our Hang-Ups | Outrageous #3

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We all deal with different types of hang-ups that hold us back. These may be addictions to substances or pornography. They might be bitterness or unforgiveness, unhealthy cycles of negativity and anger or a million other things. All of these hang-ups can lead us to feeling stuck and hopeless, like we're in bondage to our own choices and we can't break free. But none of these are so powerful that God can't overcome them!

If you doubt this, take a look at a man who was stuck in a sort of worst-case scenario life back in Jesus' day.

**Luke 8:26-27** *So they arrived in the region of the Gerasenes, across the lake from Galilee. As Jesus was climbing out of the boat, a man who was possessed by demons came out to meet him. For a long time he had been homeless and naked, living in the tombs outside the town.*

## Our hang-ups lead to pain, loss, and isolation

We don't know what led this man to this point, but we know the consequences. He was an outcast in every way; broken, poor, ashamed, alone and controlled by evil within him. He seemed hopeless. And his hang-ups led to ever-increasing dysfunction and pain. Hopefully you're not at this point yet, but if you allow your hang-ups to persist unchecked in your life, these are the inevitable results. The more we ignore our hang-ups the more pain we will experience, but the sooner we seek change, the sooner freedom will come.

## Human efforts have limited power to change us

Many people had tried to help this man, but to no avail. Their efforts and strategies contained him for a time, but couldn't provide lasting transformation.

**Luke 8:29** *This spirit had often taken control of the man. Even when he was placed under guard and put in chains and shackles, he simply broke them and rushed out into the wilderness, completely under the demon's power.*

Our world today is filled with endless self-driven attempts to deal with our hang-ups. From self-help books and seminars, to yoga to BuzzFeed lists online, there is no shortage of opinions. Some of these strategies may be helpful to a point, but on their own, they can't ultimately change us because our hang-ups have a spiritual root, and human efforts can't solve spiritually driven problems. But there is hope.

## Jesus' power is greater than your worst-case scenario

While your hang-up might not be the worst it could possibly be yet, if you continue down that road, it may soon well be. But even in that scenario, the power of Jesus is big enough to overcome and set you free.

**Luke 8:30-33** *Jesus demanded, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, for he was filled with many demons. The demons kept begging Jesus not to send them into the bottomless pit. There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby, and the demons begged him to let them enter into the pigs. So Jesus gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and*

| entered the pigs, and the entire herd plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned.

In powerful fashion, Jesus demonstrates his power to overcome even the biggest challenges. He shows that he not only has the power to deal with underlying spiritual issues but also to change a person's life in very practical, tangible ways. Whatever your facing, Jesus can and wants to set you free.

## **Our hang-ups can propel us toward a meaningful future**

After this man was set free, his future completely changed. His former struggles weren't a liability anymore, but now an asset to be used for God's glory.

**Luke 8:35-39** *A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been freed from the demons. He was sitting at Jesus' feet, fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid... Jesus sent him home, saying, "No, go back to your family, and tell them everything God has done for you." So he went all through the town proclaiming the great things Jesus had done for him.*

You might think your hang-up, even if you overcome it, is always going to hold you back, but it doesn't have to. God wants to use your past and your pain to not only give you a new hopeful outlook on life, but also to help others who may be struggling as well.

The best part of this story is not just that the man was freed from his hang-ups, but that he moved to a point of spiritual maturity where he became passionately engaged in helping others. Whatever your issues may be, God can do the same thing for you!

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.
2. Share an example from your life about a hang-up that brought you unnecessary difficulty.
3. Read [Luke 8:26-27](#). Describe some of the consequences that this man was facing from his condition. How would his community have treated him?
4. Make a list of some of the common hangups in our culture today. What are some of the typical consequences of these hangups?
5. Why do people resist change even when they know the consequences for not changing are so negative?
6. Read [Luke 8:29](#). How did people try to help this man? What were the results? What does this teach us?
7. What are some of the most popular "human efforts" at breaking free from our hang-ups?
8. Read [Luke 8:30-33](#). How did Jesus overcome this man's spiritual problem? What can we learn from this, even if we're not dealing directly with demonic power?
9. How did Jesus help this man very practically? Who do you think Jesus sent the demons into the pigs?
10. Read [Luke 8:35-39](#). Describe the transformation of this man. Do you think Jesus has the power to make this same kind of change with people today? Why or why not?
11. Why do you think Jesus wanted this man to go and share what had happened to him rather than following him around?
12. Write a personal action step based on this conversation.