



ADDICTION

frequently, repeatedly, compulsively, obsessively and habitually attaching one's self to anything or anyone other than God for the purpose of seeking pleasure, relief, happiness, security and/or contentment.

The result of addiction: freedom is diminished and focus on God eclipsed
action is essential to addiction

Review: Parts 1 & 2

5 Characteristics of True Addiction

1. Yearning For More: always wanting more of the addictive behavior or object of attachment in order to feel satisfied "If only I could get more, then I'll be fine."
2. Withdrawal Symptoms: body & mind craves the addictive behavior or object of attachment and sends warning signals that something is wrong (irritability, agitation, rapid heart rate, panic)
3. Self-Deception: denial, rationalization, minimizing and other defense mechanisms to perpetuate addictive behavior (hallmark of addiction).
4. Loss of Will Power: trying to control an addiction in your own strength and willpower inevitably leads to failure and leads to lack of motivation so you give up and addiction rages stronger than ever.
5. Pre-occupation: Constantly thinking about the object of attachment or addictive behavior—it kidnaps our attention (thoughts). The addiction becomes more important than anything else.

How people get addicted

(remember the unholy trinity: The Flesh, The World & The Devil)

- **Stage 1: Learning:** we find ways to relieve our pain and experience pleasure
- **Stage 2: Habit Forming:** The conditioned pattern has been established for relief and the inner self yearns for the behavior or object of attachment and it becomes a repeated pattern or habit.
- **Stage 3: Struggle with Dependence (the war within):** the habit is entrenched as a means of relief so that when you don't have the object or are not doing the behavior, your inner self sends out warning signals constantly. If you don't give in there is distress and anxiety.
- **Stage 4: Stronghold of Addiction:** The habit is so strong the person does not have the ability or will power in and of themselves to stop it any longer. The battle is over. Any attempt to block the behavior has adverse consequences that cannot be tolerated—the inner rebel wins because the attachment is deep!

The Apostle Paul struggled with sin: Romans 7:14-25

2 Corinthians: Basics

2 Corinthians 12:7-10: Strength in Weakness

v.7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! NASB

v.8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

v.9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

GRACE: the dynamic ever flowing unexpected love and goodness of God to people without condition nor merit. Grace is the active expression of God’s unconditional and undeserved love demonstrated by and appropriated via faith in Jesus Christ: His death and resurrection.

v.10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

The Way of GRACE

GRACE is our only hope for effectively dealing with ADDICTION

Goal: Salvation that results in Freedom & Life Transformation

Reminder: Grace can't be earned, achieved, purchased nor deserved

Grace is neither a formula nor a program---Grace is a Gift from God

ADMIT: Honestly and openly admit you have an addiction and that you can't handle it on your own. "I am addicted to _____"

REALIZE: know in your heart that God's grace is real and available to you.

"I need God in my life"

EMBRACE GRACE: God has provided The Way for you to experience God's Grace (see John 3:16-18—The GOSPEL)

BELIEVE THE TRUTH: embrace the truth of who God is and who you are in Christ

CHOOSE RECOVERY: take responsibility for your recovery. By an act of your will and by God's grace make the right decisions one step at a time. Our actions must reflect God's Grace!

PRACTICE FAITH & TRUST EVERYDAY

ENGAGE IN COMMUNITY: True recovery involves stepping out and being part of a genuine Christian community. You need the love, support and grace of others!

ACCEPT LONGINGS: We all struggle this side of heaven. We were never meant to be completely satisfied until heaven. We must accept and embrace the struggle and longings in our hearts. (see Romans 8:16-23)

Grace is the Hope for Addiction