

Dealing With Addictions

. . . or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. — 1 Corinthians 6: 18-20

The Lord's spokesman Paul said here that a Christian no longer has control over his or her body; it now belongs to God. God has said He intends to use your body as a Temple, a place to dwell.

Therefore, it matters what you do with your body, and it matters how you use your body.

So with this point understood, let's ask a question: Do you have an addiction?

It might be best to first understand what it means to be an addict. The word *addict* comes from the Latin word for a slave.

We need to find out what kinds of things are addictions. From multiple sources on the internet, a top ten list (not in any order) can be found that usually look like this:

- Gaming
- Gambling
- Compulsive shopping/
spending money
- Pornography
- Food addiction

- Alcoholism
- Heroin
- Marijuana
- Nicotine
- Entertainment
- Physical appearances issues
- Self-mutilation
- Sexual promiscuity

We may engage in activities on this list. Some of them are sinful per se, but many are not sinful of themselves. This does not mean it is not sinful to become *addicted* to doing them. If we are honest, we might acknowledge how easy it is to become obsessed with such activities.

How do we know then when we have become addicted?

From a secular standpoint, addictions are revealed by our personal condition: not sleeping, depressed, anxious, exhaustion, anger, boredom.

From a spiritual standpoint, it is easy to see that there are spiritual failings we experience. Many are willing to lie or deceive in order to hide their activities or actions. Perhaps they put these things above their spiritual priorities (as example, they miss worship services to engage in some of these things, they fail to lay aside for the Lord because of these things.)

Now that we are defining addictions, let us ask the next most important

question: Is it a SIN to be an addict? There are several verses that may answer this if we remember that "addict" means "slave".

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

—Matthew 6:24

You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

— 1 Corinthians 7:23

Clearly, we cannot be a servant of Christ and a servant of the flesh. As Paul said in Galatians 5: 17:

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

So if you have come to realize you are an addict, or in danger of being an addict, how should you proceed to think and act?

For one thing, it matters what type of addiction we are talking about. Some things are sinful in themselves, and it is not a matter of *controlling* addiction as it is *removing* them from our life altogether. Consider promiscuity, pornography (lust), or intoxication (drugs and alcohol) as things that we cannot control, but must remove from our lives.

Now we want to address the idea of addiction itself and learn how to overcome. We are speaking about things that might be acceptable (entertainment, finances, dining, etc.)

but when they become addictions they render us slaves.

First, you must determine if you are an addict, or merely in danger of becoming one. If you are a slave to your habit or compulsion, you must apply the words of Jesus:

And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell.

—Matthew 18:9

You cannot live with an addiction. You must remove from your life that which has control over you.

Second, claim the help that God offers to every believer. When salvation through Jesus name was offered for the first time in Acts 2, Peter included these words:

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Verse 38)

Every baptized (immersed) believer has a measure of the Holy Spirit. How does this help?

That . . . he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being . . .

—Ephesians 3:16

The Spirit is in every believer, so ask for the Lord's help every day.

Finally, we need to have frank conversations with our church family

about our needs. We are told to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

We are also to confess our sins to each other (James 5:16).

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Call on our brethren to encourage us to victory.

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Using the Lord's Help

Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit.

Proverbs 25:28

