

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 *per se*, and it is not a matter of controlling addiction as it is removing this part of our life altogether. Consider promiscuity, pornography (lust), or intoxication (drugs and alcohol) as things that we cannot learn to control, but need to remove from our life.

Here 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 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, if you are simply acknowledging the danger of addiction, you need to exercise your self-control. Meaning, you need to strengthen your ability to abstain and resist. There is an exercise mentioned 16 times in the New Testament meant to enable us to strengthen our self-control. Jesus taught and practiced it, as did the Apostles. It is FASTING, which is in its

spiritual purpose exercising our ability to have self-control. This is the practice we need to practice to strengthen our self-control. Fasting was primarily towards food, but we see it used in other matters (I Corinthians 7:5). This is God’s instrument of self-control in your life; use it!

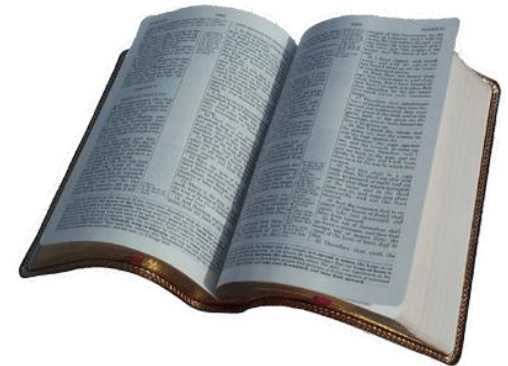
Finally, we need to have frank conversations with our church family about our needs. We are told to bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2) and to confess our sins to each other (James 5:16). Often times addictions are simply too difficult to overcome alone. There is no super-natural power given to the Christian to overcome addiction; instead we are meant to call on the Word of God to ascertain our condition, and call on our brethren to enable us to be victorious.

Proverbs 25:28

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

Prepared by Brian Haines

Dealing With Addictions



1 Corinthians 6:18-20 *Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 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.*

Paul told the Corinthians in I Corinthians 6:18 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. In the Old Testament we are shown that a Temple is a place where prayers can be offered, sacrifices can be offered, and priests can serve God. Thus, if your body is not the sanctified as the Temple of God, you cannot offer prayers (John 9:31), nor would your sacrifices be received (Proverbs 21:27, Isaiah 66:3), and all that they do to serve God is in vain (Matthew 15:9). 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 or do you have a habit?

It might be best to first understand what it means to be an addict in this context. The word addict comes from the Latin word for a slave. We use it to describe a number of habitual behaviors, many of which are not true addictions. For the sake of our points, let us use the word addict to describe the

following:

Addiction – true chemical dependence

Compulsion – psychological addiction

Habitual behavior – repetitive actions

Perhaps to answer this, you also 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

Many of us 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 for these things, etc).

Now that we are defining these things in understandable ways, 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 the word “addict” means “slave”.

Matthew 6:24 *"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.*

1 Corinthians 7:23 *You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.*

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