

Life With God In Recovery

ADDICTION AND THE WHOLE PERSON



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Some Core Beliefs Underlying Addiction:

- No one really knows me or cares about me.
- I'm not safe.
- I don't have what I need.
- I'm no good.
- I can't be forgiven.
- There's no hope.
- No one understands me.
- My needs are never met when I depend on another.
- I need "this" to feel good and I deserve to feel good.

Addiction affects the whole person – physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. To actually live well in recovery, we have to examine our whole person, not just the substance we used in active addiction. We need to discover the root of the underlying pain we are trying to cover and the default reactions which come out when thoughts and feelings are challenged. What false beliefs do we still carry about who we are and what we need when we are faced with frustration and pain?

In recovery, as we come to know the living God, the true power greater than ourselves, we find strength to change our deep-seated thought patterns and feelings. God brings us into a safe, nurturing relationship with Himself and with others. In the depths of our being we long to be the person God created us to be but becoming that person seems almost impossible. On our own we just don't know who that person is or how to make the necessary changes. The good news is that with God all things are possible.

The tools of our trade aren't for marketing or manipulation, but they are for demolishing that entire massively corrupt culture. We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 MSG)

Addictions and dependencies are not specific to alcohol and street drugs. We often switch to new expressions of our addictive personality when we leave one set of behaviours behind. To really break free and finally experience life, we need to come to God and let Him heal us in the deepest areas of our being, areas where we've been wounded, where we carry shame, where we are afraid to trust. Only in the presence of God's unconditional love and dependable help can we begin to take steps to face real problems. God has been drawing us close and as we respond to Him this is His promise to us:

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

<p>SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco</p>	<p>BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Anger/Rage/Bullying Cutting Crime Eating Disorders: Bulimia, Anorexia, Binging, Obesity Gambling Hoarding Sex/Pornography Verbal Abuse: Gossip, Lying, Accusing Blaming, Condemning Violence (physical, verbal, cyber)</p>
<p>SOFT ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Digital Use: (Time or Content) TV/Phone/Tablet; video games, Social Networking; Cyber-bullying; Online shopping; Gambling, Pornography Exercise Food (See Eating Disorders) Isolating/Sleep Money: Debt/Fraud Religion Shopping Sports Work/Achievement</p>	<p>RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Abusive Relationships: Includes: Intimidation, Isolation, Domination, Blaming, Humiliation, Withholding, Forcing acts against one's will Approval dependency Attention Seeking Codependence/Rescuing Power/Control</p>

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for Me wholeheartedly, you will find Me.”
 (Jeremiah 29:11-13 NLT)

From the beginning of time God knew that we could not fix ourselves. Life is a gift from God. Healing is a gift from God. Our commitment to the work of God in our lives is to believe on Jesus, the one God sent into the world to give us new life. Our response to Him should be “Jesus, whatever, whenever, wherever, and however You want to change me, my answer is YES”. Do we dare believe that God can give us this new quality of life to experience and enjoy and sustain it in us?

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:8-10 NIV)

God knows each one of us and created us to live at a specific time, in a specific place, and for a specific purpose. We were destined for a better life than we have previously experienced. Jesus said: *“I have come that they may have life and that they may have it to the full.”* (John 10:10 NIV)

It is God’s desire that we turn away from the existing chaos of our lives and enter into the life He planned for us. In each area of life, physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social, God will meet our needs. His plan is individually shaped for each of us. This is His promise: *“God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.”* (2 Corinthians 9:8 NLT) To have new life we have to leave behind our way of meeting our needs and allow God to show us His.

If our desire is to end the cycle of addiction and enter into a new life of freedom and hope, we will: **1)** rebuild our system of beliefs; **2)** allow God to counsel and instruct us through His word in the Bible; **3)** humble ourselves and pay attention to the direction of the Holy Spirit as He guides us into the knowledge of all truth; **4)** pay attention to those around us who offer support; **5)** believe the truth of God’s word no matter what our unreliable feelings tell us; **6)** enter into a life of dependence and trust in the God who created us, who loves us, and who breathes life into us each day so we can do the good works He has prepared in advance for us to do.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV)

The question we need to truthfully answer is, “Do I desire to be a whole person with life in every area of my being or do I want the source of my addiction to control my life and being?”

Questions for Reflection and Group Discussion

1. What harmful core beliefs keep me cycling through one addictive behaviour after another?
2. What practical strategies and plans do I need to put in place so my default becomes reliance of God rather than returning to my addiction?
3. In each of the 4 areas of addiction and dependency, where do I see evidence of my brokenness?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 – In my own words, what does God say needs changing in my thinking?
5. What’s my response to the statement that God’s love is unconditional and his help is dependable?
6. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 – If life and healing are a gift, what is my part in getting well?
7. What particular way of meeting my own needs do I need to stop so God can show me His new ways?
8. There are 6 suggested action points given in the process of ending the cycle of addiction. Where am I at with each of these 6 actions?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, Thank You for pursuing us with Your love when we were completely helpless. Help us to come to know You and to trust Your wisdom and guidance in every area of our lives. Help us to let go of those things that bind us to the past and help us to forgive others as we have been forgiven by You. We are forever grateful that You sent Jesus into the world to pay the price of all sin and wrong doing. Where we have doubt, help us to believe in Your mighty power to restore us to sanity. Strengthen us in body, mind and spirit. We are forever grateful that You care for us. AMEN