

## ADDICTIONS

(We encourage you to read *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave* by Edward Welch, which inspired much of this study)

We've all heard terms surrounding addictions: *disease, substance abuse, illness, treatments, hereditary, etc.* That is how the world classifies addictions. We need to be careful in all areas that we go to the word of God for our information and direction, rather than to the world or our own opinions.

Ask yourself:

*"Do I believe the Bible is true?"*

*"Is it God's view of things?"*

*"Is God always right?"*

If you answered yes to these questions, then it's clear you are ready to rely on God's Word for your guidance, rather than on your current beliefs or what modern society would tell us.

We don't see the exact term "addiction" in the Bible; it's a fairly modern term. But we do see "drunkenness" listed over and over. Drunkenness was the predecessor to many other types of addictions that we now see in our culture. Here is a partial list of addictions:

<i>Drugs</i>	<i>Alcohol</i>	<i>Cigarettes</i>
<i>Seeking Approval</i>	<i>Sleep</i>	<i>Pain</i>
<i>Television</i>	<i>Caffeine</i>	<i>Sex</i>
<i>Pornography</i>	<i>Lying</i>	<i>Chocolate</i>
<i>Over Eating</i>	<i>Under Eating</i>	<i>Risk Taking</i>
<i>Sports</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Exercise</i>
<i>Sugar</i>	<i>Video Games</i>	<i>Gambling</i>
<i>Success</i>	<i>Spending</i>	<i>Appearance</i>

The list could go on and on. Most of us struggle with keeping things in balance. Some addictions are more apparent than others. Still others, such as drug use, have more visible consequences.

So how does God view addictions? Does He see it as a sickness as our society claims? Is it something we are destined to have? When we look at "drunkenness" in the Bible, it is never listed as an illness, but rather, it is always listed as a sin. One example of this is Galatians 5:19-21:

***“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*** Notice that God did not list any illnesses here, only sins. Drunkenness is clearly a sin from God’s viewpoint. If you will continue to read Galatians 5:22, you will see the contrasts of what happens when we are controlled by God’s Spirit:

***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*** The self-control is a natural by-product of walking in the Spirit, of having a close, committed relationship with God.

Do you base your lifestyle morals on what is acceptable in the world and on television or do you base your standard on what God says? We often think that God’s word is a long list of “do-nots”, but actually, the word is like a fence that a loving Father puts around his children to protect them.

Take sexual relations outside of marriage as an example. Our society says that it is permissible and television even promotes it, but the word of God has put a fence up that says it is permissible only within the boundaries of marriage. Is God just trying to steal our fun? Rather, He is trying to protect His children from sexually transmitted diseases that could kill them, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, abandonment, poverty, etc. Keep in mind that God invented sex! He’s all about having a good time, as long as it is within the framework that He designed. God is a good God!

Think of the Bible as the owner’s manual. God created us. Shouldn’t He know what our emotions and bodies can and cannot handle?

Even if you now agree that addictions are in the “sin” category rather than the “sickness” category, you may be thinking “yes, but that doesn’t take care of what is causing the behavior”. Here are some reasons why people go to excessive behavior:

*“I drink to forget my sinful past”*

*“I use drugs to forget the pain of child abuse”*

*“Over-eating brings me comfort”*

*“Under-eating helps me feel better about myself”*

*“If I didn’t party, I wouldn’t have any friends”*

*“I can’t help but look at pornography, it’s no longer a choice”*

*“I seek approval so I can fit in”*

*“Cigarettes help me handle stress”*

*“Spending makes me feel better about myself”*

*“Getting high helps me handle the loneliness”*

*“I feel so unworthy, the addiction helps me cope.”*

## **Addiction Process**

Let’s walk out the process that happens with many addictions. Your situation and history may vary, but look at the core path. We’ll look at alcoholism as an example:

Whenever you started drinking, you may have had that first drink as a “social” drink. Perhaps your friends were drinking or you just wanted to experiment and see what it would taste like, how it would feel to get high. Are you addicted at this point? No. You have just made a choice. You did not make a choice to be an alcoholic, but rather to take a drink.

You take that first drink and maybe proceed to get high. But regardless, there comes *another* day when you decide to drink again. It’s a choice. You could have chosen not to drink, but you again made that same choice. Weeks go by, months go by, and you continue to make the same choices over and over. When we do *anything* over and over, it becomes a habit. There are good habits (being organized) and bad habits (drug use).

The body has a way of becoming more demanding as we feed it things. For example, if you make a choice to eat desserts every day, your body will begin to crave sugar so that eventually, it will feel like you don’t have a choice in the matter because the craving is so strong. Obesity feels like bondage. But you do have a choice.

Let’s take a more severe illustration. Let’s say you began smoking pot. You continued to make the choice to smoke pot until your body began to crave it. You then made a choice to move up to cocaine for a more dramatic high. Your body will develop a craving for that as well. We have heard people say that they were totally addicted to crack cocaine the very first time they used it. We agree that crack is a very powerful substance and it can produce cravings in the body that you might think could not be overcome, but look at the progression. One choice was made after another choice. The choices were made until they became habits. When you feed your body habits, your body will crave them, good or bad. The

person did not start out as an addict. They did not have a sickness like the flu that “came on them”. Their situation is the result of bad choices, made over a period of time. The body’s response to different substances will vary; some responses are more difficult to overcome than others.

## **Idolatry**

Idolatry may sound like an old-fashioned Bible term and it may remind you of small statues that people worshipped in their homes. You may also remember the false god Baal who many worshipped in Bible times. Here is the Webster’s Dictionary definition of an idol: “*the worship of idols or excessive devotion to, or reverence for some person or thing.*” Did you notice the words worship/reverence/devotion? In other words, an idol is anything that we worship or hold in the high position of devotion that exclusively belongs to God.

Drug addicts will be the first to tell you that their behavior consistently produces results that escalate. They may go through their income and savings at first to support their habit. They may then resort to stealing and prostitution; many end up in jail or homeless. It never ends well. One could argue that if they could help it, if the drugs weren’t an uncontrollable illness, they would never end up in that situation.

But what if what was really going on was the fact that you continued to bow down to your idols? How many times have you over-eaten and ended up loathing yourself later? How many times have you given in to short-term satisfaction with drugs or sex, only to pay the terrible consequences later? How many times have you broken your word to family members that you would stop a certain behavior just so you could have short-term satisfaction? How many times have you “worshipped” that addiction, giving it the supreme place in your life?

When we go outside of the “fence” that God has established for our safety and protection in His word, we are in sin and therefore, open to the resulting consequences. That is not what God wants for His children. He wants us to be healthy and whole, filled with peace and joy. Not exactly the description of an addict.

If we refuse to stay within the fence, we open ourselves up to what is in the world. ***“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8).*** The fence is there to protect you from destruction. We all have an enemy who lurks just outside of the fence.

Keep in mind, ***“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph. 6:12).***

Satan knows which buttons to push. He will make sure that temptation comes your way and he knows exactly how to bait the hook for each fish. Unfortunately, satan only shows us the front-end of sin such as the excitement or the rush. He never shows the consequences down the road such as the damage to the body, the divorce and the depression.

Here’s a possibility for you to consider that lines up with the word of God. When you put anything (food, alcohol, drugs, shopping, TV, etc.) in front of God, it is idol worship. The very first commandment that God gave was “You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Exodus 20:3). You probably did not have a conscious thought of “I’m going to worship drugs”, but the truth is, you put your wants and your desires in front of everything else, particularly God. Many of us have been taught that the problem (addiction) is from without, but the true problem is within (will we worship ourselves rather than God?).

What would happen if you put God above everything in your life, just as He has asked? Jesus said, ***“Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, all of your mind, all your soul, all of your strength.” (Matthew 22:37).***

What if loving God first and foremost had dictated all of the decisions that you have made up until this point? Wouldn’t your life look remarkably different?

Do you believe God is a loving God? ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16.)*** God gave up everything for you!

Do you believe God WANTS to deliver you?

***“The thief (satan) comes to steal, kill and destroy, but I (Jesus) have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)*** We clearly see God’s intention toward us. It is to have a life full of joy and peace, free from all addictions.

Do you believe He CAN deliver you?

***“For with God, nothing will be impossible.” (Luke 1:37).*** God gives numerous examples of miracles in the Bible to show us that nothing is impossible for Him. You have not sinned outside of His reach.

## What Next?

Go to God. Ask Him to forgive you for the idols you have allowed in your life. If you have ever blamed God for your addiction, ask Him to forgive you. Ask Him to forgive you for any damage you have done to others or yourself. Ask Him to forgive you for abusing your body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit (if you are a Christian). If you are not a Christian, go to the [Salvation](#) link.

Make a total commitment to God. Unless you are sincerely ready to make a total commitment, the idol will probably keep control. You may be able to do a certain amount with sheer willpower, but God is the only one who can change you from the inside out, to give you freedom in every area of your life (that includes freedom from fear and worry).

Receive the power of the Holy Spirit to give you the power you will need for deliverance (go to the [Holy Spirit](#) link). This is an important step.

Commit this addiction to God. You are in a spiritual battle. You need to fight this spiritually. Tell God your sincere desire to be delivered from the addiction. Devote time to God every day, studying the Bible and praying. As you have devoted much time/energy/resources to your addiction, now channel that to God. Put Him first. Examine your life. Ask God to show you every thing in your life that you have exalted before God (those things could even include *good* things like your children or your spouse). Click on the tabs for [Faith](#), [Prayer](#) and [Healing](#). Make a decision that nothing will come before God and He will help you. We have heard many wonderful testimonies how God delivered people from decades of addiction. We hope to hear about your testimony soon!



***If you make God your number one priority, everything else in your life will fall into line. Your future does not have to look like your past. God has a good plan for your life, but once again, it is your choice!***