

Addiction

By Steve Stutzman

Perhaps one of the more debilitating effects of addictions is the shame they bring. We try and try to quit – but we feel helpless. The helplessness makes us feel bad about ourselves, and we turn to our addiction for comfort, strengthening the addiction.

Addictions come in all kinds of forms; alcohol, drugs, medications, tobacco, pornography, immorality, gambling, depression, cutting, suicide, and even more socially acceptable forms like perfectionism, anorexia, bulimia, gossip, coffee, accusation, workaholism, hunting, fishing, shopping, over-sleeping, over-spending, over-saving, and the list could go on. All of us do some of these things to some extent. Here are a few things to think about as you consider your own life.

Do I control this thing, or does it control me?

Can I stop if I want to, even on a temporary basis? If not, why not? Identify the emotion you feel if you try to quit.

Is this “drug” affecting relationships in my life adversely?

What does my grip on this thing, or its grip on me, look like to God in the face of Eternity?

What feeling am I trying to get or get away from?

Addictions are primarily built on a desire deep inside that is not being met. Of course, the body can build up a chemical dependency, but the situation begins with a desire to feel loved. This desire is the strongest motivational force in the human psyche.

When a baby feels loved, chemicals, called dopamine, are released in the brain that gives a “loved” feeling. As humans, we crave that feeling. When we find, or believe we can find, that dopamine rush in an activity or substance, we turn toward it again and again, seeking to feel love. We try again and again, and it teases our desire without ever truly fulfilling. That is the true nature of addictions.

- Do you have an addiction?
- The actual substance or activity is almost never the real issue. You are, absolutely responsible for whatever you do...but the thing you are addicted to is not the focus. The root cause is what we are after. That root cause is almost always an injury or a lack from the past. It is this element of need, or drive, that we seek to uncover and bring to Christ for fulfillment and healing.
- Is someone you love suffering from addictive behavior?
- Often we do not see our own addictions. Even when we do, we are already persuaded we cannot get out, so we no longer try.
- Pray for the one caught in the trap. Love them; love never fails. Show them understanding. Try to begin conversations with them regarding the actual deep things they feel. Be gentle, but expect resistance – they have been busy burying this feeling for awhile, and may not want to dig it up. Try to connect them, over a dinner or pie, with someone who had the same problem and is now free. This inspires hope that there is a way out, in a non-condemning way.
- Bring them with you to a conference. This is also a non-confrontational way to get the truth to start soaking in. Bruce Lengeman's book 'To Kill a Lion' is about sexual addictions, but helps people see the roots of problems are much stronger than the surface.

Many times addictions are a complicated mess of spiritual, physical, and emotional issues that take time to untangle. For this reason, we advise against quick fixes. Instead, we would like to invite you to come to a conference and with us, attack the many layers of lies that cling to us. We have found many addictions fall off as we examine carefully the foundation of our own personal life. [Click here for TBYL](#)

The bottom line is, most real addictions actually involve a demonic strong hold. This spirit will not give up without a fight, and there must be a repentance somewhere of allowing that addictive spirit to control what belonged to God. Do not confuse the individual, or their choice, with the spirit driving them. II Timothy 2 :25-26 'In meekness instructing those that opposed themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.