

- Video Clip

You watch that and it's funny. Until you realize the truth of what is being said...and how devastating that reality is when what you are struggling with is a substance abuse problem, with some kind of drug, or a behavioral problem, with some other kind of addiction. That reality is very different. Not funny any longer!

- Read Addicts Statement

You see, what we learn from the bible is that there are three things in this life that are out to get you. They want to destroy you, tear you down, ruin you, your family, your relationships, and your future. Every single one of us face an ongoing, unending battle with all three of them. And, left unchallenged, they will destroy you.

The World, the Flesh, The Devil

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful **flesh** and following its desires and thoughts. Eph 2:1-3 THE WORLD, THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL*

Today I want to talk with you about Overcoming Addiction: Start by saying as Pastor Orin did last week, this is NOT a one time, listen to a sermon, pray a prayer, and experience immediate overwhelming victory. That happens for some people...but it is NOT the norm. Sometimes God does it immediately. Most often we battle for victory...not easy. But, and here is the KEY. This is a battle that CAN be won...if you fight in the right way. That is what I want to do today, lay out a strategy for you to BEGIN to follow. PRAYER

DEFINITION: What is the problem. Addiction is our the word we use to define what happens when the world, the flesh and the devil are winning the battle, and we can't seem to get victory.

- A. Exhibiting a compulsive, chronic, physical or psychological need for a habit-forming substance or activity.
- B. Craving something intensely, having a loss of control over its us, and continuing involvement despite adverse

Two Kinds of Addiction:

- A. Physical: *Drugs or alcohol, some other habit forming substance*
- B. Behavioral: *Gambling, Sex, Internet, Video games, Shopping, Food, Exercise, Work, Tattoo, Pornography*

How do you know that you have moved from sin...which we all struggle with...to addiction? Fine line:

SIGNS HELP YOU RECOGNIZE ADDICTION

- Spending the majority of your time engaging in the behavior, thinking about or arranging to engage in the behavior, or recovering from the effects
- Becoming dependent on the behavior as a way to cope with emotions and to “feel normal”
- Continuing despite physical and/or mental harm (hospital addict)
- Having trouble cutting back despite wanting to stop
- Neglecting work, school, or family to engage in the behavior more often
- Experiencing symptoms of withdrawal (for example, depression, irritability) when trying to stop
- Minimizing or hiding the extent of the problem

3 C's Of Addiction

- Control: Loss of control over the amount and frequency of use/involvement
- Craving and compulsive using/participation
- Continued use in the face of adverse consequences (young man in hospital)

SO WHAT DO YOU DO...WHERE DO YOU FIND HOPE?

1. Acknowledge You Have A Sin Problem Bigger Than You Are!

Rom 7:14-25

- Take personal responsibility for your actions
- Name it what it is: Sin
- Admit you cannot overcome it by yourself

In today's world we want to shift blame, point finger, make excuses, give rationale's And, be clear, I am not minimizing the impact of heredity, or circumstances, trauma that predisposes you toward these things. What I AM saying is that along with all of those we have responsibility for our actions. You are not the ONLY one predisposed toward alcohol...and others just like you have been victorious!

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." 1Co 10:13

2. Bring Your Problem Out Of The Darkness And Into The Light Of God's Love.

Eph 5:11-14

- Addiction and Sin GROW in the darkness and die in the light!
- In order to overcome you have to drag it out into the light and let God deal with it (Illus: Best cure for mold...mildew Sunlight!)
- As long as you hide it, keep it secret, don't admit it, try to deal with it all by yourself...lose battle
- Wake up, bring it out into the light of Christ's love...let Him shine on you!

Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Eph 5:11-14

3. Recognize Where Your Help And Victory Will Ultimately Come From.

Rom 8:25

- God: *I lift up my eyes to the hills, From where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1-2*
- Prayer: *I call on the LORD in my distress, and he answers me. Ps 120:1*
- Word: *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Heb 4:12*
- Holy Spirit: Eph 5:18 *Be filled with Spirit* Walk in Spirit not fulfill flesh Gal 5:16
- Church: One another's (32 or more) Love, Encourage, Pray for, Support, Devoted, Accept...

4. Ask For And Accept The Help Of Others.

Here is what you have to come to grips with. IF this problem is bigger than you are, you will NEVER win the battle and overcome it by yourself. As long as you hide it, hold on to it alone, refuse to share it with others and ask for and take their help, you will never win the battle.

- God: This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. Ps 34:6
- Accountability Partner: *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Gal 6:1-2*
- Therapist/Counselor: *Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance. Pr 20:18*
- Someone Who Has Walked Same Path in Victory: *2Co 1:4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

As we Conclude I want three Quick Notes:

- 1. Not going to win the battle of Addiction alone. (Without help you will not overcome)**
Ec 4:12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
- 2. You can't fight or win the battle for someone else. You can help...or hurt...they have to want it**
Ga 6:1 Carry each others burdens ...
Ga 6:5 for each one should carry his own load.
- 3. In the beginning usually not uninterrupted victory. Series of progressive forward steps**
Heb 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

CONCL: **Addiction is real...and powerful...and ultimately deadly...**

But God is more real...and more powerful...

and He will bring you life...if you will do things we said.

You CAN OVERCOME Addiction Let's Pray

COMMUNION

If you are lucky enough to NOT understand addiction, then good for you.

I hope you never have to.

I hope you never see someone you love disappear before your eyes, while standing right in front of you. I hope you never have to lie away all night praying the phone doesn't ring, yet hoping it does at the same time. I hope you never know the feeling of doing everything you thought was right and still watch everything go wrong. I hope you never LOVE and addict.

I hope you never know what it means to live afraid of yourself. To never trust yourself. To fight a raging war inside your own mind every moment ...to feel unwanted and unworthy. To NEED something that you know is destroying you and be willing to do anything for it. To trade yourself, your life, your soul for it, and still end up broken and alone. To give away everything and everyone you had. To have NO answers. To always question. To have NO CHOICE yet have to CHOOSE to fight your battle. I hope you never have to live as an addict.