

ONE STEP TO FREEDOM
CHAPTER 1: Planning For Victory

Lesson 4
IS ADDICTION A SIN?

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Our world is filled with many different opinions concerning the abuse of drugs and alcohol. The most popular thinking is that those who are drug addicts or alcoholics have a “disease.” However, according to the Word of God (the Bible), drug abuse and alcoholism are not diseases but sins.

GOD’S WAY OR MAN’S WAY

God has warned us about the wisdom and philosophy of man. He said, “Don’t let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ” (Colossians 2:8 NLT). God also said, “Your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:5).

With the philosophy that addictions are diseases, man tells addicts that they are not responsible for their actions and they're hopeless. This philosophy says that addicts can never be cured of their disease, and therefore must label themselves as addicts forever.

If this is your belief, please consider the following: What other diseases or destructive processes of the body are self-inflicted and by choice? Is it not true that a substance abuser always has a choice not to partake? There is no question that the body learns to crave abusive substances, but this can be overcome. Even when withdrawal symptoms result, the person always has two choices: to take that temporary fix or to endure the withdrawal symptoms.

Even if you do not believe in the *disease* philosophy, you may be tempted to believe that drug and alcohol abuse is some kind of physical addiction that God cannot help people overcome—along with pornography, homosexuality, gambling, eating disorders, anger issues, or some other compulsive behavior. Have you come to the conclusion that those who have addictive or compulsive behaviors desperately want to stop but cannot?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR

The following lessons are written to present a biblical perspective of addictive habits and refutes that such behavior is a disease.

First, we must realize that we are all sinners by nature. That is to say, we all fall short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23) or we miss the mark of God’s perfection (Psalm 19:7, 18:30). Although few of us like to admit we are sinners, most of us would agree that we miss the mark of God’s perfection. We deceive ourselves if we say we have no sin (1 John 1:8).

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Romans 5:12 says, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” This Scripture says we inherited our sinful nature from Adam. As Adam’s descendants, we are prone to sin.

God’s Word tells us that we serve this sinful nature by seeking to satisfy our physical desires (Romans 7:15-24). In Galatians 5:19-21, there is a list of physical desires that are sinful. Three of the listed items are idol worship, sorcery, and drunkenness.

Let us look at these things, beginning with idol worship or idolatry, and how they relate to the person who has addictive and compulsive behaviors.

WHAT IS IDOLATRY?

An idol is anything that takes the place of God in a person’s life, taking top priority and attention. Drugs, alcohol, pornography, gambling, eating disorders, and other types of addictions are false gods that rule a person’s life. Instead of living for the Creator and Savior, a person bows down and worships to these idols as god. The Scriptures clearly indicate this is a type of idolatry.

WHAT IS SORCERY?

Now let us look at sorcery (witchcraft). The original Greek word for sorcery is the word *pharmakeia*, from where we get the word “pharmacy.” Back in the time of Christ, sorcerers and witches used these mind-altering drugs to tap into the powers of the demonic realm.

WHAT IS DRUNKENNESS?

An excessive use of alcohol causes drunkenness. Throughout the Bible, drunkenness and intoxication are condemned, and numerous examples are given where alcohol led to immorality. Drunkenness is associated with loss of control of one's senses or actions. Ephesians 5:18 tell us to be filled with the Spirit and not to be drunk.

WHO IS AN IDOLATER?

Galatians 5:21 defines an idolater as one who **practices** such things. To practice means “to frequent or make a habit of.” The first two of the Ten Commandments say that we are not to have any other gods before the Lord our God, and we are not to bow down or worship them (see Exodus 20:1-17). This is very important to God and Galatians 5:21 states that idolaters will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Are you practicing idolatry, sorcery, or drunkenness? If you are, God has a better plan for your life. He does not want you to be excluded from receiving your inheritance. He wants you to enter in victoriously, through faith in His Son Jesus Christ.