

CHAPTER 1: A PLAN FOR VICTORY

Lesson 2 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)

Today, our world is filled with many differing opinions concerning addiction. The most popular thinking is that those who are addicted to something have a “disease” or are “born that way.” Contrary to what people think, an addiction is a choice.

The Bible says, “Don’t you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living” (Romans 6:16 NLT).

First, let’s define the words *addiction* and *sin*.

Addiction: An addiction is a habitual dependence on a substance or practice that is beyond voluntary control.

Sin: The original translation of the word *sin* means *to miss the mark*. The *mark* in this case is God’s standard of perfection. In other words, when we sin, we are missing God’s very best for you and me.

GOD’S WAY OR MAN’S WAY

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

When we believe the philosophy that addiction is a disease, or that it is just the way we are, we minimize the need for personal responsibility or change. It also conveys hopelessness—once an addict, always an addict. This belief is contrary to 1 John 1:9.

Another translation puts it this way, “If we acknowledge our sins, then, since God is trustworthy and just, He will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing.”

True confession involves a commitment not to continue in sin. We wouldn’t genuinely be confessing our sins to God if we planned to commit them again and just wanted temporary forgiveness. When I sincerely confess my sin, God is faithful to cleanse me from sin. God is faithful to eliminate my addiction.

There is no question that we have cravings and urges, but behaviors can be overcome. Even when withdrawal symptoms occur, a person still has to make a choice: to take that temporary fix or to endure through the temptation. Do you believe that God can help someone overcome addiction? Or have you come to the conclusion that those who have addictive or compulsive behaviors desperately want to stop but cannot?

ONE STEP: COME TO JESUS AND ADMIT YOUR ADDICTION.

First, I must realize that I am a sinner by nature.

1. Write 1 John 1:8.

In order for God to help me, I must admit I need help. I need to admit my addiction is not God's best for me and that I need God to help me choose His plan, instead of continuing in my addiction.

2. Write Romans 5:12.

As descendants of Adam, we inherited a sin nature. He sinned first and we followed suit, and now we are prone to sin. And because of sin, death spread to all men. Not only physical death, but also spiritual death. And death to God's perfect plan for our lives.

3. Write 1 John 2:1-2.

Even as it took only one man to pollute the gene pool, so it would take only one Man to make it right. Sin and death spread through the first Adam; but forgiveness and life spreads through Jesus Christ. His righteous act of sacrifice brought the free gift of forgiveness to all who will trust in Him. We are related to Adam, but we also have the opportunity to be related to Christ. One Man makes all the difference in the world.

When it says that Jesus Christ is the "propitiation" for our sins, that means He took the blame. Christ removes our sin. In Him we are forgiven and purified.

No one, no matter what kind of an addiction plagues someone, is beyond forgiveness. All a person has to do is turn from their addiction, receive Christ's forgiveness, and commit his or her life to Him.

4. Write 1 John 4:9-10.

Having a relationship with Jesus will help us abstain from sinning. Jesus will help us from relapsing in an addiction.

Take time now to sincerely pray and ask Jesus to help you with addiction.