

Why Acknowledging This Truth About Addiction Will Set You Free

This is the first of a series about addiction of all forms. We are going to look at this difficult situation through the eyes of truth found throughout God's Word. Today, we are going to look at this and ask ourselves what is it? Is it as the world says—a disease? Or is it something else?

Is addiction a disease? This is a good question. The world claims that it is, but what about God? What does His Word have to say about this? Let's search out the Scriptures to find out.

Let's begin with the basics. The dictionary definition of "addiction" is "the state of being enslaved to a habit or practice or to something that is psychologically or physically habit-forming, as narcotics, to such an extent that its cessation causes severe trauma."

The world of psychology believes that addiction is a disease. Here is a direct quote from the American Society of Addiction Medicine, "Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations. This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors.

Addiction is characterized by inability to consistently abstain, impairment in behavioral control, craving, diminished recognition of significant problems with one's behaviors and interpersonal relationships and a dysfunctional emotional response. Like other chronic diseases, addiction often involves cycles of relapse and remission. Without treatment or

engagement in recovery activities, addiction is progressive and can result in disability or premature death.

I agree with most of this explanation except for the following words: "chronic disease of brain reward" and "like other chronic diseases." The world has pridefully removed God from life, except when there is a tragedy, then they remember God and place the blame on Him, which in essence is refusing to accept responsibility for your wrongdoing and placing the blame on someone or something other than yourself.

This same scenario took place back in Genesis when Adam and Eve's lust for the forbidden fruit was manifested and found out. Neither accepted the blame for their own disobedience to God's rules, but instead passed the blame to someone else. This is interesting and still happens today.

Then they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. The Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard Your voice in the garden and was afraid because I was naked, so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What have you done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Gen. 3:8-13).

The chain of blame holds people in bondage, as we see here. Adam blames Eve for giving him the forbidden fruit, but in reality blames God for giving him the woman in the first place. And so often we will hear people jokingly blame it all on Eve, but as we study out the Scriptures, Adam was there when she ate of the fruit. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasing to the eyes and a tree

desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave to her husband with her, and he ate" (Gen. 3:6). Adam could have rebuked Eve and told her no, but he did not. He was an accomplice to this crime before he ate of the forbidden fruit for himself. And then we look at this passage again and think, "Wow! That's very arrogant of Adam to speak so disrespectfully to God and tell Him that He's responsible for this mess."

Allow me to challenge you with this common response, "I will not accept the fact that the devil put this sickness upon me. I refuse to say that I was overtaken by the devil, but it was God who permitted this, and this is the reason why I am sick." Just like Adam, people blame God for their troubles all the time.

Let's go back to Adam's first crime, and where did it begin? Sin begins in the mind, in the realm of our thoughts. And if we do not do as the Word instructs us, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is complete" (2 Cor. 10:4-6).

Satan planted the seed of temptation to disobey in Adam's mind with negative words, and he dwelt on this thought, acted upon it and sinned against God.

The Bible tells us in James 1:14, "Each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed." Ponder upon the way this verse is written in the Amplified Version of the Bible, "But each one is tempted when he is dragged away, enticed and baited [to commit sin] by his own [worldly] desire (lust, passion)."

Now, let's backtrack just a bit. It wasn't just Adam who did

not accept the blame for his sinful actions, Eve did the same. When God asked her why she had committed this sin, she blamed the serpent who tempted her. "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Gen. 3:13b). How often do we hear people say, "The devil made me do it!" No, Satan did not make you sin. Yes, he tempted you, but you made the decision to sin all on your own. You are responsible for your sin.

1 Corinthians 10:13 clears this matter up of about who is responsible here, "No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, and He will not permit you to be tempted above what you can endure, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it."

I can hear your contradicting thoughts, you argue, "That's easy for God to say, He's God. He's a supernatural being. He doesn't know what it's like for us here on earth." And I respond to you and say, "You are wrong. He does understand exactly what you are going through." Hebrews 4:15 explains how Jesus was tempted when He walked this earth in human form, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who was in every sense tempted like we are, yet without sin."

Do you think the temptations Jesus had to overcome were somehow easier than what you need to overcome? Back in Jesus' day there was rebellion, lying, cheating, stealing, murder, prostitution and other sexual sins, drunkenness, and this list goes on and on, just as it does today. Not only did He show you by personal example that it is possible to overcome temptation, He loved you so much that He took it a step further in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was about to enter into His final hours on this earth, and be slaughtered because of our sin, to redeem us from it and its consequences, such as sickness and disease and other forms of the curse. Let's read this portion of Scripture from Luke 22:41-44:

He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." An angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

As we study this, we see that Jesus was being tempted by the enemy, Satan, not to fulfill the plan of atonement for us. And I personally believe this was the greatest temptation of all time, but even though He was being tempted, He did not sin. And what I teach people with this portion of Scripture is that it was at this point that Jesus overcame the human will so that we could overcome it as well.

We are talking about biblically overcoming addiction in this series of articles, and no matter what the addiction is, whether it is an addiction to drugs, alcohol, sex, pornography, gambling or food, you have the ability with God to overcome any and all forms of addiction. But we must look at addiction through the eyes of truth. According to the Word in John 8:32, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." Blaming others, and bad situations in life does not help, and calling addiction a disease does not set you free either. In the natural, disease needs medicine or medical treatments; you do not overcome addiction by becoming addicted to something else. And calling addiction a disease does not set you free; it gives you an excuse to continue in the choice of your sinful addictive behavior. {eo}

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