

Trade Your Destructive Addictions for True Deliverance—This Truth Sets You Free

Everyone needs to be loved. It's God's will for us to know and experience His unconditional love and have a personal relationship with Him (see John 3:16 and 1 John 4:16). He created us for acceptance, not rejection, and connection, not separation and abandonment.

When we receive God's love, we can become stable, mature, healed, whole and vibrant individuals and have the great lives He wants us to have. But when people don't get unconditional love, they end up with damaged emotions, trying to function day to day in their brokenness. And often, the result is an addictive behavior.

Understanding Addictions

An addictive behavior is a habit that's gone wild or something you can't do without. We can get addicted to just about anything, from alcohol, cigarettes and drugs, to food and eating disorders. People can also be addicted to pornography, hoarding, gambling and exercise. Then there are addictions to behaviors like worrying and being indecisive or the need to be approved by others.

When people become addicted to something, they are usually trying to feel good about themselves or latch on to something that makes them feel they have worth. But addictions are actually bondages that keep us enslaved to a behavior that is destructive.

The key to true freedom is knowing who we are in Christ and

that we are valuable because Jesus died for us. Ephesians 2:4-5 (NKJV) says, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

The truth is, you are valuable because God loves you. And He loves you because He wants to—not because of anything you've done or can do to earn His love.

You've Got What It Takes to Overcome

If you're struggling to overcome an addiction, the good news is you can do it with God's help. The first step is believing God's Word more than you believe what you think or feel.

As a believer in Christ, you are "a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17 NKJV). And you "can do all things ... through Him who strengthens and empowers" you; you are "ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses [you] with inner strength and confident peace" (Phil. 4:13 AMP).

See, when you received Christ as your Savior, a seed of everything God is came into your spirit. When a person is born again, 1 John 3:9b (AMP) says, "God's seed [His principle of life, the essence of His righteous character] remains [permanently] in him."

For the seed of God's nature to grow, we must water it with the water of His Word. When we do this, the fruit of the Spirit develops in our character: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (see Gal. 5:22-23).

Having self-control means God has given us the ability to control ourselves. We can discipline ourselves to do what we know we should do, even when we don't feel like it or want to do it. But we have to stop saying things like, "I can't

control myself. I just can't help it—it's my problem."

Because God's Spirit abides in us, as born-again believers in Jesus Christ, we can confidently say, "I have self-control, and I can do whatever I need to do through Christ who strengthens me!"

I realize it's not always easy. When I wanted to quit smoking, it was hard to do, and I had to start over several times before I made it. But through it all, I learned that anytime we're willing to do what's right and we depend on God, His grace is activated in our lives to do it. We just can't give up!

Trade Your Addiction for True Freedom

I really want to encourage you to be determined to have the abundant life Jesus died to give us. If we want the freedom He promises in His Word, then we need to set aside time to study the Word and spend time with Him.

Many times we fail because we're trying to do what we need to do in our own strength, leaving God out of the loop. We have to stop trying and start depending on God for everything. Don't try to do anything without praying, "God, I can't do this without You. Help me. I need You."

Remember, there's nothing more valuable to you than your personal relationship with God and the time you spend with Him. Put Him first, and you'll find that the power of God's Word will always prevail over the messes in your life. You don't have to settle for a life in bondage to any addiction, because in Christ, you can do it!