

CHAPTER 1:

FACING ADDICTION

Her voice was filled with desperation as she began to disclose the baffling and chaotic five years that led up to her call. It was as if the blond-haired, blue eyed fun-loving boy she had raised was gone. In his place was someone driven by selfish and insane behaviors that were used to maneuver his next high. From lying, to ranting, to manipulating to stealing, he was overtaken by a ferocious foe she had to come to know as his addiction.

Speaking to yet another stranger about her son's problem, Rhonda recited Andy's life story. It quickly became clear the enormity of responsibility she carried for Andy. From a young age, she was a hands-on Christian mother who encouraged Andy to be successful and happy. Married to an alcoholic who she witnessed berate and hurt Andy, Rhonda took on an intense protective role in his life. Rhonda had been Andy's biggest fan and the person to encourage him to have a vision for his future. In many ways, she played the role of both his mother and his father.

Rhonda looked back to the beginning warning signs. When Andy started to drink socially like many high school students, Rhonda questioned his behavior. But somehow Andy always convinced her he was "fine." Rhonda wanted to see the best in him, so she didn't doubt the stories used to excuse his absence at home. Now she knows, much to her heartbreak, that everything he said to her was filled with lies and half-truths that created an ideal far from reality. He had learned from that young age to take advantage of her love and gullibility towards him. He could tell her almost anything and she would believe him. He also knew he could ask her for almost anything, and she would oblige.

The situation spiraled completely out of control when he was expelled from college and sought to build his life around friends and drugs. By now, Rhonda knew he needed help, but the type of help was unclear. She had given him money, bail, food, car—the list never ended. Her efforts to love Andy in his addiction seemingly only made things worse. Yet she felt that she was left fighting for his life because in her own point of view he had given up. But the more effort she placed in helping, begging, bargaining, pleading with him to stop, the worse he got. In truth, Andy controlled Rhonda. And addiction controlled Andy. Thus, they were both insanely brought into the addiction and mutually shared the burden.

While her story was filled with unthinkable pain and chaos, it could have been told a thousand times before. That's because despite the unique situations and personalities that are brought into the cycle addiction, once in full swing, addicts look much the same. They think and behave in similar ways, and the consequences lead them to jails, prisons, hospitals and the streets. At the very least, it breaks

relationships, a sense of integrity, future dreams and the ability to live within God's purposes. Society writes addicts off as hopeless. Churches do what they can, and then accept that they are “lost.” Family and friends shrug and nod their heads in dismay.

DETERMINED TO FIND A SOLUTION

Rhonda’s phone call may have been like many that flood resource hotlines. But even though Andy looked like every other drug addict in America—he was her precious son. She had to combat the reality that she needed to save her son, but the horrific truth it was something she didn’t know how to do. For Rhonda, the mishmash of information, advice and solutions for her son's problem left her with little answers, but many different pathways. And each "professional" opinion seemed to contradict the last. Her confusion grew as she tried to sort and sift through what he needed. Did he have a medical problem? Was it entirely a spiritual need? Perhaps he was mentally sick? And by now she knew, despite what she had been told, that forcing him to program didn't mean he would change.

Despite all that she learned, Rhonda was yet to understand that addiction wasn't just stealing her son's life, but it was stealing her. Her life was consumed with Andy’s needs and problems, and in the process she lost her own hopes and dreams. Rhonda didn't understand the nature of the battle Andy was engaged with, nor did she understand of the enemy at work in his life. She was fighting a battle she had not been authorized or empowered to fight on her own, and was suffering devastating defeat as a result.

Both Rhonda and Andy needed help - desperately. Once Rhonda became equipped with the tools of recovery, she still could not save her son. But she stood the best change of establishing an environment where God could intervene on her behalf.

And so, like anyone who has ventured on the journey of recovery, Rhonda began the journey to understand her son’s addiction, while at the same time understand her own pain and heartbreak. She was able to find a God who was enough – who was sufficiently able to do for her what she could not do for herself. It took time and the willingness to release her best laid plans into the loving and capable hands of God.

IS THERE HELP?

No matter your relationship with addiction, this book is not a gimmick or quick fix. It doesn’t slap a quick and easy solution onto a large and difficult dilemma. But it does provide the pathway that someone like Rhonda needed to go on. And it is written for anyone who has ventured down that road and genuinely wants the help of the True God of the Universe. Our desire in presenting this workbook is to offer families a solution to understand the problem and the cure of addiction by dealing with rooted issues. While some will argue there is never a cure, the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus opened the doorway for every area of sin and stronghold to be defeated.

This book is not being written through a scientific model and not based on specific research in any one area. We are not doctors, nor are we in any way trying to replace the need for medical assistance. Rather, this is the culmination of life experience, professional experience, education, evidence-based treatment, personal redemption and most important the unshakable, unchangeable Word of God. We have witnessed thousands of lives ravished by addiction, and then brought back together through the resources of God. We've also, sadly, seen some people lose this battle. We don't say this to discourage or invoke

fear - but to be real. Addiction is deadly. It's also life-long – a commitment that far too many people in recovery take lightly.

WHY ADDICTION?

No one aspires to be a drug addict. Andy didn't wake up one more morning and make a decision to become hooked on drugs and alcohol. But he did initially make a choice to partake in the "fun" of partying. Andy most likely had no idea what the "innocence" of a high would lead to. Addiction would become his best friend, the love of his life, and what he would serve and invest his future into.

But that was far from Andy's destiny. In truth, he wasn't "born that way." He was born with a purpose—an inner desire to find significance, acceptance and his own personal calling. Yet Andy, like every other human being, was consumed with the inward void of separation from God. Even being raised in a Christian family, there is a good chance that Andy didn't learn how to partake of intimacy with God. Without that filled or satisfied, he was left to attempt to fulfill needs, desires and that gaping hole in the heart with something or someone.

AN ESCAPE ROUTE

But while the spiritual need was at the heart, it also needed to be clear that Andy, and everyone else who is caught in addiction, had a reason for wanting to escape. In his case, Andy most likely had a lot of disconnection and inability to express or feel emotions. With an alcoholic father, he had a critical relationship unavailable to him in many regards. But that is only one example. The reasons why people are vulnerable to drug usage can vary. At New Life Spirit Recovery treatment center, over seventy percent of the program participants have dealt with a level of sexual assault. That statistic is astounding, and can't be negated as a contributing factor to the susceptibility of addiction. Abuse, trauma, neglect, unmet needs or even peer rejection can all create the fertile soil conducive for the introduction of substance.

That's because the addict attaches onto the "high" of addiction as a coping mechanism. It becomes a normal reaction to abnormal situations. Addictions are particularly attractive because of their ability to deliver false strength during times of challenge. However, this strength is counterfeit next to what God has to offer. There is a price to pay for these short lived *moments of pleasure*. They are always followed with pain and suffering that eventually affects everyone and everything in its path.

Bob was only sixteen years old when he saw his cousin shoot heroin for the first time. He was horrified at this behavior and questioned the insanity of sticking a needle through the skin. He also knew that his cousin's life was filled with chaos. But in only one short year he was doing the same thing. In his rationale thinking, Bob knew it was just not logical or right to inject a needle filled with a drug into his own body. But then the conditions of his heart and life began to make the thought of pleasure or the escape of pain quite alluring. Bob was escaping life and pain—even though he was never in touch with that pain enough to understand it exactly. In fact, the frightened boy that wasn't comfortable in his own skin became extremely confident under the influence. It didn't take long for full-blown addiction to manifest.

It's easy to easily label the drug addict as a "bad" person. But anyone who has loved the addict, understands that the manifestation of addiction is quite different from the person behind it. Andy and Bob

were acting out from the compulsive obsession with drugs. It took both their lives in such a manner where their authentic personality and identity was lost by the addiction. Their entire life and purpose became wrapped around finding a way to access a high. People became a means to getting that high. Not only that, the drug use stunted their emotional growth because it literally shut them down. Did that make them bad people? In a behavioral sense, it was bad. Yet deep down, they were hurting kids who were lured to believe that drugs would resolve their inner conflict.

ADDICTION AND BEHAVIOR

Separation of behavior from the person using drugs is one the most fundamental principles we must understand in learning to understand addiction. While some see “bad,” others see the “good” side of the addict, thus excuse the behavior rather than confront it. In truth, the "bad" behaviors of addiction are nothing to condone or accept. In fact, the level of allowance they are given will determine how much that addiction affects those people around it. To help make this clearer in our own life experience, let's address this behavior and how we might have been affected. It's vital to spend some time giving each area some thought.

Addicts carry common characteristics including:

1. **The need to blame** – Addicts will relentlessly make something or someone else responsible as the reason they are using. This can include statements such as “you make me do this” or “I can't stop drinking when you are around”. As long as another person is willing to accept that burden, the addict is perfectly justified in continuing.

Do you ever feel blamed for someone's using? (If you are the addict, do you blame others?) If you take on that responsibility, how do you feel about it? What specific ways have you dealt with feeling responsible for their problem?

2. **Serious denial of having a problem** – Addicts are unable to see the truth (this is called spiritual darkness), and therefore cannot understanding how dysfunctional and hurtful their behaviour is to everyone affected. They are actually hurting themselves the most.

Does the addict in your life deny having a problem? Do you believe this? If you do, how does that make you feel? How do you specifically react to that denial?

3. **Emotional and mental manipulation (“head games”)** – Addicts will twist and warp the truth to make others carry their shame and guilt. In dealing with addicts, left is right, up is down, and black is white. Everything is distorted and twisted because their own minds are distorted and twisted due to the nature of addiction.

Do you ever feel manipulated by the addict in your life? Explain some specific examples where truth has been changed. When you believe their “truth”, how does that make you feel? How do you react specifically to this?

- 4. Manifestation of anger (through words or violence)** – Addicts can be very hostile, angry and abusive. The chemical is meant to numb their emotions, yet anger often manifests in even greater extremes.

Are you confronted with anger or rage as a result of addiction? Explain how this looks.

How has that made you feel? Explain your method to defend against it?

- 5. Chronic lying** – Addicts lie more than they tell the truth. Their entire world is a lie, thus they can't be trusted under the influence. Having a rationale conversation with a drug addict or alcoholic who is under the influence of substance is absolutely impossible. This can be painful and feel like utter betrayal, but it truly is the symptom of the overall cycle of addiction.

Are you exposed to chronic lying? Have you believed their convincing stories in the past? How do you feel when you are being lied to? What have you done about the lies?

- 6. Defensiveness** – Addicts are seeking to protect themselves and their addiction. They will fight and threaten anyone who comes against their next high. That's because the drug or alcohol is like a passionate love affair. Anyone who comes too close will be dealt with through fierce jealousy.

Have you ever found yourself competing with the drug? Did you ever feel if you confronted it "all hell might break loose?" How did you feel? How did you respond?

- 7. Immoral behaviors** (cheating, stealing, sexual, etc.) – While addiction isn't an excuse for immorality, it is bred directly in the addictive lifestyle. Thus, the natural fruit in an addict's life will be varying layers of immorality.

Have you witnessed or been hurt by an addict's immoral choices? Did you ever feel it had anything to do with you? What did you do about the behaviors?

- 8. Secretiveness** – Addicts hide and keep secrets, mostly to protect themselves and their addiction.

Are their secrets in your home? Do people openly communicate or hide? What do you feel about the secret mentality? How do you respond? Do you comply or resist the need to hide?

- 9. Isolation** – Many addicts end up living a very isolated life, where they are left alone with the love of their lives – the drug. The dependency is so great it actually competes with human relationships. In fact, human relationships are often used only to gain something that can help them get their next high.

Is the addict isolated or alone? Are there stifled efforts to connect at a relational level? How does the addict's isolation make you feel? How do you typically respond to it?

- 10. Unavailability** – Addicts cannot be spiritually or emotionally available under the influence. Thus, all their relationships will be lacking in this area. Even if they are physically present (which often they are not), it will be limited and perhaps an addict could even be described as a "shell of a person."

Do you overall feel the addict is unavailable? Does that unavailability affect you? What do you do to deal with that loss?

If you answered "yes" to even a few of these questions, you have been deeply wounded by an addict. Their addiction has had a direct influence on how you respond and live your life. Being under the influence of someone else's addiction is no small ordeal. *You must seek help.*

One thing to understand is that if you hate the drug addiction, it's okay. If you are angry at the drug addiction, that's okay too. But the person and addiction are two different things. As horrible as it is, that behavior has an influence and reason. Once the influence is removed, that person has the opportunity to be someone altogether different. *People are not their addiction.* Many times Christians vacillate between tolerating the addict for a period of time, and then simply casting them out. The purpose of this workbook is to do neither. Rather, it's vital that we address addiction through God's perspective so we can wage war against the addiction, while seeking to restore the person.

At the same time if we think we can simply give them an ultimatum overnight that will prompt their immediate change, we must understand the depth of the nature of addiction. Sobriety is the beginning of recovery, but it doesn't change the initial problems that caused addiction in the first place. In other words, the reasons people used initially will need to be dealt with, otherwise when they stumble upon those same issues or triggers (seeking comfort, etc.), they will be prone to relapse.

To make better sense of addiction, picture a tree. The tree was planted as a seed. For the addict, that seed oftentimes was produced out of neglect, abandonment, hurt, betrayal, lack of boundaries, feelings of worthlessness, rejection or lack of love. When seeds are planted based on lies (which is anything that contradicts God's truth), roots begin to form, and eventually the leaves and fruit of that seed is produced.

Addiction is merely external behaviors that could be thought of as the fruit in a person's "tree" of life. If the fruit is cut off without the root addressed, the addict will be "changed" in a moment, but that seed will eventually begin to manifest and produce similar fruit. Ridding the fruit itself won't change the production cycle! This is one reason why people oftentimes switch addictions.

Thus, recovery isn't about merely "zapping" the bad fruit off a person's life. Rather it's about dealing with the seed and the roots. This means an addict will require an entirely new system change. In fact, all those "bad seeds" will need to be uprooted, and new seed will have to form in order establish the production of God's fruit – fruit that leads to the abundant life in Him.

GAINING GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

Addiction carries many definitions - from scientific interpretation to the issue of morality, many people have their opinions both on what it is, and how it should be treated. All the while, the families affected by addiction are engaged in their own warzone, and desperately looking to find a way out. As a Christian family, the question must be asked "how does God view addiction?"

When addiction enters into the family system, it is devastating for everyone. But in the darkest and lowest point we are never beyond His grasp. As a Christian, you may know that as a truth, but embracing it as your actual reality is necessary in order for the power of God to be activated. That means it takes faith to believe that God holds the keys and answers to your life, including the person struggling with addiction.

This is very difficult to embrace because we have so much conflicting information in our culture about addiction. Not only that, many of us have been bewildered by the lack of success we may have witnessed through Christian disciplines. That's why we need to take the principles of addiction and recovery and place them under the filter of God's perspective. In fact, we have to be willing for a moment to see this issue not through the scope of someone or something else, but purely through the foundation of His truth.

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

When Jesus walked this earth, he was dealing with people who had affliction and problems of every magnitude. Within his own culture, he interacted with the alcoholics and prostitutes, societies lowest and most mistrusted. This astounded and offended the religious people that held strict restrictions against any form of contact with such conditions. In our own culture, there can be a similar mindset amongst Christian or religious mentalities that say "don't touch them". However, watching how Jesus interacted with these people gives us a glimpse into His heart. In truth, Jesus was unafraid and unaffected by the sin and sickness in the human. When He looked into the eyes of a broken soul, He saw His mission before Him. In fact, His very purpose wasn't to judge sin, but to give people a way of escape from it. Instead of pushing them away, He knelt down and met people at their very point of need. He didn't give them a standard to attain to, lessons to first learn, or a physical prescription to adhere to. He simply did what He came to do - offer them a spiritual remedy that would give them access to a lifestyle of freedom. If they didn't want it, Jesus didn't force and coerce, and just the same, He didn't condone.

Jesus was radical in warning of the devastating consequences of separation from God. He was also radical in declaring and manifesting the incredible benefit of believing in His name. That's because Jesus knew authoritatively that He possessed the power of God to fix, heal, redeem and restore humans. In fact, the Bible is packed with stories of Jesus transacting with societies outcast - those that were mentally, spiritually and physically broken. The issue was never of a matter of what He could do. Jesus knew exactly what He came to do. This issue always rested upon the person who needed what Jesus had to offer. For those that received Him by faith, they gained access to His power. While sometimes Jesus healed people physically in an instant, in truth, most of their inward changes were just beginning. With a connection to God, they now possessed everything needed to be realigned physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. This is what biblically is known as transformation.

2,000 years later, the epidemic of addiction is rampant and the culture is swarming with people plagued by spiritual, emotional and mental maladies. With knowledge-based science, medical breakthrough and more technology than people could have fathomed in biblical times, the problems haven't improved but worsened; yet the source of power to heal and change the broken human hasn't changed. That's because that same Jesus is alive and well. And what He came to bring to earth through the gift of redemption holds the necessary power to overcome the chains of addiction every bit today as it did back then. If Jesus were to walk the earth, the question is, what would He do? How would He engage with those who are afflicted?

The nature of Jesus draws clear lines of choices. He is fierce in His warning and firm in His boundaries. But then woos and draws people in by something even more intoxicating than chemical - the authentic and powerful resources of His love.

Whether you struggle with substance abuse, or someone you love does, Jesus is the answer. He absolutely, undoubtedly can and will bring deliverance to the person that seeks Him with all their heart. But He will not condone, allow or participate in the addict's lifestyle unless that help is requested. That's why your greatest asset to assist someone in bondage is to pray to the One who can deliver them. And for the person that is struggling, your greatest weapon is to call on the name of The Most High.

A Prayer of Deliverance

Lord God,

I invoke and invite you into the situation of addiction that has hurt me or someone I love. I have been deeply affected by addiction, and its left deep and painful wounds on the inside of my heart. Whether or

not I have been able to express it, I admit it to you right now. I don't want to live under the influence of addiction. I want to help the addict (myself or someone else), but not in any way that will allow or condone the addiction. Oh Lord help me! Help me to be free and be able to be who you created me to be!
In Jesus Name - Amen

CHAPTER 2: ASSESSING ADDICTION

It's vitally important that we embrace this journey by understanding what we have believed about addiction thus far. For most of us, being given another injection of information may add to the already cluttered knowledge we have crammed in our head. For others of us, we may be at the starting point. The first thing to understand about venturing into the journey of recovery is that we gain *the mind of Christ* to lead us. If we have the attitude that addiction is a brain disease and needs a medical team of experts to help us unravel the mysteries- our belief system empowers a medical solution. If we enter into this believing the addict in our lives (ourselves or someone else) should stop, change and simply live right overnight, we have imposed expectations that aren't possible apart from God's intervention. The addict cannot and will not change immediately.

Addiction is so baffling to understand because it's not just a physical problem, nor is it exclusively a spiritual problem. It's a problem that affects the whole person - body, soul and spirit. Because each part is damaged and affected, the process of recovery requires attention in each area. But make no mistake - all recovery comes under the authority of God Almighty. As our Maker, Healer and Redeemer - He owns the formula to fix the human being that HE created from His own hand and heart.

Meditation Points:

What have I believed the problem of addiction stems from? What and who have I believed can fix the problem?

BODY, SOUL & SPIRIT

In the next three chapters we are going to look deeper into addiction as to give everyone involved a better understanding of its origin. Also, by identifying with the various components of addiction—physically, mentally, emotionally and behaviorally—we can prepare to understand how intervention and recovery are intended to occur. Education in and of itself can't change the

heart. It is merely knowledge. Yet at the same time receiving information is always the first step in moving towards a solution when it is based on truth. Let's take a deeper look.

THE BODY AND ADDICTION

God designed our bodies with amazing processes. In His vast and incomprehensible design, He offered us systems that could sustain and carry out life functions. However, the reality of sin damaged God's design for our physical life. The same body created with glorious features, now had a fallen and broken system operating at its core. The Bible refers to this as the flesh, or the "natural" man. Not only was it broken, but born separated (disconnected), from God.

Without a spiritual perspective of God as our Creator, and sin as a human malady, we simply become a material creature, left to be comprehended and interpreted through a science model. We see this same mentality in the understanding of creation itself. When you take God out of the equation, you begin to have to find ways to account for life minus His power and ability. Much of modern-day science is trying to describe both God-created functions, and broken fallen realities that occur as the result of mankind's sin. In both cases, it leaves wide and unanswered gaps. Answers that can only be grasped through a spiritual understanding of people. While science can provide a legitimate oversight of how amazing our body functions (or gets sick), it does nothing to resolve the deepest need in each person's life—to be re-established, re-aligned and brought into wholeness with God. That's because the body is able to continue to operate without a spiritual connection; but it will have to manage and deal with a wide variety of deficiencies and problems in the meantime. Humans are designed to be connected to God. Like an appliance without a power source, life without God can only be a shell, not aligned with the purpose for which it was created—to love and worship our Creator. As healthy as the "shell" can become, it will still be fundamentally void.

ADDICTION SCIENCE

The science of addiction in every sense of the word is dealing with that physical shell. While the physical can't explain the deeper roots, it absolutely is important as the body under the influence of addiction has malfunctioning processes occurring in the brain. As we look into this, it's vital that we understand True science IS God—not a replacement theory for Him. Science can't outsmart the One who created human life and everything in it. On the other side of the spectrum, simply pretending the bodily functions aren't real leaves us vulnerable to lacking insight about the power of addiction.

ADDICTION AND NEUROTRANSMISSION

The brain is simply amazing. It houses billions of neurons (nerve cells) that are transported back and forth from one cell to another. These neurons send messages that provide the brain information necessary to perform different functions. While the process is somewhat complex, at a simplistic level, neurotransmitters are chemicals that actually carry these messages from one cell to the next. These neurotransmitters can excite or depress the function of the neurons, depending on their set task. For example, a neurotransmitter called dopamine releases a euphoric or pleasurable response as its job is to inform the brain that something positive just occurred that should be repeated. Medical science calls this our reward system—as it is linked to processes

that drive us to "want more". Eating, for example, is driven by this system so that we will sustain life and nourish our bodies with food. Other neurotransmitters have different chemical purposes and can activate areas of the body associated with mood, emotion, etc. What's important to understand is when we look at the physical side of addiction, these neurotransmitters are often the very area where addiction takes hold in the physical sense.

We need to keep in mind that overall the "reward system" as human beings is fundamentally driven by a fallen flesh nature. The Bible repeatedly tells us to put away the lust of our flesh. Thus the "pleasure" side of our lives can be misaligned without spiritual remedy. It's not that God doesn't want us to experience pleasure, but that pleasure is derived from His touch, not simply our desires.

HOW DRUGS AFFECT THE PRODUCTION OF NEUROTRANSMITTERS

Drugs are chemicals that can trick the body into either mimicking neurotransmitters or causing them to flood the system. This creates an ultra-sense of euphoria. This alteration of the purpose of neurotransmitters creates a wave of problems. Because they are used excessively, the massive stimulation will drain the body's natural supply or cause the body to dramatically slow production. For example, the introduction of cocaine to the brain prompts the body to release a rush of dopamine and give the person using it a euphoric high. The rush of the drug, however, will eventually deplete the body's natural supply of dopamine, thus provoke a crash. The addict will then need to use more drugs to satisfy the depletion and to attain access to a high. The satisfaction is never attained because the body has been tricked from its intended "normal" state. Thus a vicious cycle is set in motion.

For example, Kimberly takes her first hit of cocaine and she experiences a high. Her body responds positively at first, thus she is stimulated to want more. The normal function of her "reward system" is meant to urge her to repeat this activity. However, the drug alters this purpose and provokes an out of control cycle. As she continues to use cocaine, her body lessens the production of its own supply of dopamine. Her body learns to adapt to the sensation of the drug and begins to crave it. The more she uses, the more her body adapts to the drug level, and the more drug it takes to satisfy her. The brain is out of balance, and it now can't find a way to be satisfied by the compensating drug to get high. This is how a 20-year old "nice girl next door" can become a prostitute or thief. It certainly isn't just a chemical issue, but the drug is an instrument from hell that places her into bondage. Her physical body is serving her cravings and addiction.

Now, Kimberly can't even experience pleasure of any sort unless she has the drug. Her body will become physically dependent on the drugs and she will get sick without it in her system. Kimberly will also experience what is known as "cravings" where the very thought of the drug causes surges in the brain chemistry that can drive her to insane efforts to find that "next high."

Understanding this awful cycle is not so that the "science" of addiction supersedes the ability for God to bring healing. Instead, we must understand the power and grip it has on a person—leading them into a place of bondage where they lose the ability to make rational choices. Also, once the brain has been altered through addiction, it cannot be healed from a negative reaction to drugs. What that means is the moment substance is reintroduced to the brain, it will immediately place a person who had quit using back under the influence. Basically, an

addict's brain is broken in its ability to say "stop." This is also why it is not wise to "switch" chemicals. For instance, a person who has a heroin addiction may justify the use of alcohol in its place. But because the brain is defective in its ability to say "no" this proves a very unhealthy and detrimental choice. In fact, the only means of assuring a true healing is to never pick up a chemical substance of any sort that has a mind-altering effect—prescription drugs may sometimes even be included in the mix and need strict oversight by a physician. While this is often questioned in terms of God's healing ability, it has been our experience that once a person is an addict, they should never pick up addictive drugs again. As we'll learn this is not only linked to the physical body, but the spiritual ramifications. This is why other activities, including eating, sex and gambling, can also become a source of addiction if not carefully monitored in recovery.

HOW DRUGS HURT THE BODY

We know that the cycle of addiction leads to unthinkable chaos and shatters lives in unimaginable ways. In this chapter, we sought to understand the toxic effects of drug addiction solely in terms of how it harms the physical body. As we've learned, the brain is deeply impacted and led into bondage. However, the devastation of addiction doesn't end there. Different drugs wear and tear on different areas of the body, from the lungs, to the heart, to the various internal organs. The purpose of this book is not to assess and assign medical advice in any way. However, if you are dealing with a certain type of drug in your family member's addiction (or your own), it's a good idea to do specific research to understand the physical implications. Some drugs have a long-term impact on the physical body, while others can lead to an immediate fatal overdose. This will help you gain a sense of the seriousness of the addict's condition.

Most people will experience positive changes immediately upon detox physically, and the body will typically begin to heal with the absence of the drug. But this process can be painful and difficult. Coupled with the fact that the brain may be flat and dull without the injection of the drug, the addict will find a difficult time learning to adjust drug-free without a spiritual remedy.

Many programs treat addiction with other drugs to offset the uncomfortable periods of detox. As Christians, we believe this can happen for a very short period of time, but ultimately the goal is for people to allow the Spirit of God into every area of their lives. In this chapter, we are only assessing the physical side of addiction. People that don't seek out the whole picture of addiction will usually stop right here, and conclude that a medical solution must be exclusively sought. What we desire you gain is to see the entire person suffering from addiction in order to assign a total solution.

APPLICATION

To put this chapter into a context that helps you gain perspective of your own situation, it's imperative that we link the physical side of addiction to the situation or person dealing with addiction.

Using the charts on page 14 and any research you have done on the drug you are aware of in the addict's life, write in this body outline what may be some present symptoms and warnings. For example, a cocaine user may experience cardiac or cardiovascular complications, stroke or seizures. In black or blue, write out the symptoms that you have witnessed (or experienced). In

red, highlight the potential dangers of those drugs and what may occur if continued. Keep in mind, this book is not meant to replace or diagnose your needs. This is applying general and well known information regarding addiction. Please see a doctor immediately if you are suffering from any acute or long-term symptoms. If you are related to someone with symptoms, you will have to determine the level of seriousness in terms of how or if you should perform intervention. We'll discuss this in detail in a later chapter. Above all, remember that God is the author of the human being and has a remedy to sustain and re-align all things that are imbalanced or broken. He can use doctors and medical systems at times. And other times, He can transform the inner life that will in turn directly alter the physical body. He is the author of life. Thus, in looking at the overwhelming nature of the science of addiction, don't get so lost in details that you forget to seek His face. He reigns.

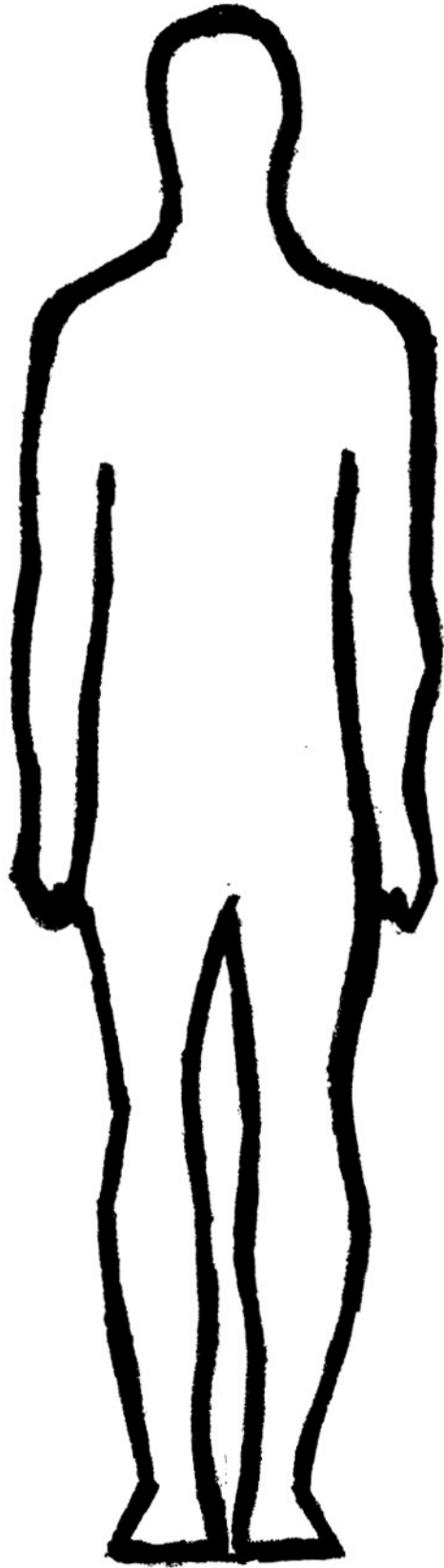


Chart 1.1 – Drugs, Effects and Health Risks (extracted from the National Institute on Drug Abuse)

Drug	Street Name	Effects	Health Risks
Alcohol	Liquor, beer and wine	Low dose: Euphoria, relaxation, lowered inhibitions. High dose: drowsiness, slurred speech, nausea, emotional volatility, loss of coordination, visual distortions, impaired memory, sexual dysfunction, loss of consciousness	Increased risk of injuries, violence, fetal damage (in pregnant women); depression; neurologic deficits; hypertension; liver and heart disease; addiction; fatal overdose
Marijuana	Blunt, dope, ganja, grass, herb, joint, bud, Mary Jane, pot, reefer, green, trees, smoke, sinsemilla, skunk, weed	Euphoria; relaxation; slowed reaction time; distorted sensory perception; impaired balance and coordination; increased heart rate and appetite; impaired learning, memory; anxiety; panic attacks; psychosis	Cough, frequent respiratory infections; possible mental health decline; addiction
Heroin	<i>Diacetylmorphine</i> : smack, horse, brown sugar, dope, H, junk, skag, skunk, white horse, China white; cheese (with OTC cold medicine and antihistamine)	Acute Effects - Euphoria; drowsiness; impaired coordination; dizziness; confusion; nausea; sedation; feeling of heaviness in the body; slowed or arrested breathing	Constipation; endocarditis; hepatitis; HIV; addiction; fatal overdose
Opium	<i>Laudanum, paregoric</i> : big O, black stuff, block, gum, hop	Acute Effects - Euphoria; drowsiness; impaired coordination; dizziness; confusion; nausea; sedation; feeling of heaviness in the body; slowed or arrested breathing	Constipation; endocarditis; hepatitis; HIV; addiction; fatal overdose
Cocaine	<i>Cocaine hydrochloride</i> : blow, bump, C, candy, Charlie, coke, crack, flake, rock, snow, toot	- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, metabolism; feelings of exhilaration; increased energy, mental alertness; tremors; reduced appetite; irritability; anxiety; panic; paranoia; violent behavior; psychosis	Weight loss, insomnia; cardiac or cardiovascular complications; stroke; seizures; addiction; Nasal damage from snorting
Amphetamine	<i>Biphetamine, Dexedrine</i> : bennies, black beauties, crosses, hearts, LA turnaround, speed, truck drivers, uppers	- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, metabolism; feelings of exhilaration; increased energy, mental alertness; tremors; reduced appetite; irritability; anxiety; panic; paranoia; violent behavior; psychosis	Weight loss, insomnia; cardiac or cardiovascular complications; stroke; seizures; addiction;
Methamph-etamine	<i>Desoxyn</i> : meth, ice, crank, chalk, crystal, fire, glass, go fast, speed	- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, metabolism; feelings of exhilaration; increased energy, mental alertness; tremors; reduced appetite; irritability; anxiety; panic; paranoia; violent behavior; psychosis	Weight loss, insomnia; cardiac or cardiovascular complications; stroke; seizures; addiction; Severe dental problems
PCP and analogs	<i>Phencyclidine</i> : angel dust, boat, hog, love boat, peace pill	Feelings of being separate from one's body and environment; impaired motor function; - Analgesia; psychosis; aggression; violence; slurred speech; loss of coordination; hallucinations	Anxiety; tremors; numbness; memory loss; nausea

Christian Families in Recovery

LSD	<i>Lysergic acid diethylamide</i> : acid, blotter, cubes, microdot yellow sunshine, blue heaven	Altered states of perception and feeling; hallucinations; nausea; increased body temperature, heart rate, blood pressure; loss of appetite; sweating; sleeplessness; numbness, dizziness, weakness, tremors; impulsive behavior; rapid shifts in emotion	Flashbacks, Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder
Inhalants	<i>Solvents (paint thinners, gasoline, glues); gases (butane, propane, aerosol propellants, nitrous oxide); nitrites (isoamyl, isobutyl, cyclohexyl)</i> : laughing gas, poppers, snappers, whippets	Stimulation; loss of inhibition; headache; nausea or vomiting; slurred speech; loss of motor coordination; wheezing	Cramps; muscle weakness; depression; memory impairment; damage to cardiovascular and nervous systems; unconsciousness; sudden death
Barbiturates	<i>Amytal, Nembutal, Seconal, Phenobarbital</i> ; barbs, reds, red birds, phennies, tooies, yellows, yellow jackets	Sedation/drowsiness, reduced anxiety, feelings of well-being, lowered inhibitions, slurred speech, poor concentration, confusion, dizziness, impaired coordination and memory; euphoria, unusual excitement, fever, irritability/life-threatening withdrawal in chronic users	lowered blood pressure, slowed breathing, tolerance, withdrawal, addiction; increased risk of respiratory distress and death when combined with alcohol
Benzodiazepines	<i>Ativan, Halcion, Librium, Valium, Xanax</i> ; candy, downers, sleeping pills, tranks	Sedation/drowsiness, reduced anxiety, feelings of well-being, lowered inhibitions, slurred speech, poor concentration, confusion, dizziness, impaired coordination and memory	lowered blood pressure, slowed breathing, tolerance, withdrawal, addiction; increased risk of respiratory distress and death when combined with alcohol
Sleep Medications	<i>Ambien (zolpidem), Sonata (zaleplon), Lunesta (eszopiclone)</i> ; forget-me pill, Mexican Valium, R2, Roche, roofies, roofinol, rope, rophies	Sedation/drowsiness, reduced anxiety, feelings of well-being, lowered inhibitions, slurred speech, poor concentration, confusion, dizziness, impaired coordination and memory	lowered blood pressure, slowed breathing, tolerance, withdrawal, addiction; increased risk of respiratory distress and death when combined with alcohol
Codeine	<i>Empirin with Codeine, Fiorinal with Codeine, Robitussin A-C, Tylenol with Codeine</i> ; Captain Cody, Cody, schoolboy; (with glutethimide: doors & fours, loads, pancakes and syrup)	Pain relief, euphoria, drowsiness, sedation, weakness, dizziness, nausea, impaired coordination, confusion, dry mouth, itching, sweating, clammy skin, constipation	slowed or arrested breathing, lowered pulse and blood pressure, tolerance, addiction, unconsciousness, coma, death; risk of death increased when combined with alcohol or other CNS depressants; less analgesia, sedation, and respiratory depression than morphine
Morphine	<i>Roxanol, Duramorph</i> ; M, Miss Emma, monkey, white stuff	Pain relief, euphoria, drowsiness, sedation, weakness, dizziness, nausea, impaired coordination, confusion, dry mouth, itching, sweating, clammy skin, constipation	slowed or arrested breathing, lowered pulse and blood pressure, tolerance, addiction,

			unconsciousness, coma, death; risk of death increased when combined with alcohol or other CNS depressants
Methadone	<i>Methadose, Dolophine</i> ; fizzies, amidone, (with MDMA: chocolate chip cookies)	Pain relief, euphoria, drowsiness, sedation, weakness, dizziness, nausea, impaired coordination, confusion, dry mouth, itching, sweating, clammy skin, constipation	slowed or arrested breathing, lowered pulse and blood pressure, tolerance, addiction, unconsciousness, coma, death; risk of death increased when combined with alcohol or other CNS depressants; used to treat opioid addiction and pain; significant overdose risk when used improperly
Fentanyl & analogs	<i>Actiq, Duragesic, Sublimaze</i> ; Apache, China girl, China white, dance fever, friend, goodfella, jackpot, murder 8, TNT, Tango and Cash	Pain relief, euphoria, drowsiness, sedation, weakness, dizziness, nausea, impaired coordination, confusion, dry mouth, itching, sweating, clammy skin, constipation	slowed or arrested breathing, lowered pulse and blood pressure, tolerance, addiction, unconsciousness, coma, death; risk of death increased when combined with alcohol or other CNS depressants; 80-100 times more potent analgesic than morphine
Other opioid pain relievers: Oxycodone HCL, Hydrocodone Bitartrate Hydromorphone, Oxymorphone, Meperidine, Propoxyphene	<i>Tylox, Oxycontin, Percodan, Percocet</i> ; Oxy, O.C., oxycotton, oxycet, hillbilly heroin, percs <i>Vicodin, Lortab, Lorcet</i> ; Vike, Watson-387 <i>Dilaudid</i> ; juice, smack, D, footballs, dillies <i>Opana, Numporphan, Numorphone</i> ; biscuits, blue heaven, blues, Mrs. O, octagons, stop signs, O bomb <i>Demerol, meperidine hydrochloride</i> ; demmies, pain killer <i>Darvon, Darvocet</i>	Pain relief, euphoria, drowsiness, sedation, weakness, dizziness, nausea, impaired coordination, confusion, dry mouth, itching, sweating, clammy skin, constipation	slowed or arrested breathing, lowered pulse and blood pressure, tolerance, addiction, unconsciousness, coma, death; risk of death increased when combined with alcohol or other CNS depressants; muscle relaxation/twice as potent analgesic as morphine; high abuse potential
Amphetamines	<i>Biphetamine, Dexedrine, Adderall</i> ; bennies, black beauties, crosses, hearts, LA turnaround, speed, truck drivers, uppers	Feelings of exhilaration, increased energy, mental alertness;	increased heart rate, blood pressure, and metabolism, reduced appetite, weight loss, nervousness, insomnia, seizures, heart attack, stroke; rapid breathing, tremor, loss of coordination, irritability, anxiousness, restlessness/delirium,

Christian Families in Recovery

			panic, paranoia, hallucinations, impulsive behavior, aggressiveness, tolerance, addiction
Methylphenidate	<i>Concerta, Ritalin; JIF, MPH, R-ball, Skippy, the smart drug, vitamin R</i>	Feelings of exhilaration, increased energy, mental alertness;	increased heart rate, blood pressure, and metabolism, reduced appetite, weight loss, nervousness, insomnia, seizures, heart attack, stroke; increase or decrease in blood pressure, digestive problems, loss of appetite, weight loss

CHAPTER THREE

UNDERSTANDING OUR SOUL: THINKING, FEELING AND DOING

The reality of the outer body's addiction is quite an overwhelming reality. It can be enough in and of itself to make us uncomfortable enough with addiction to want it immediately removed. If you are facing an urgent need or crisis, please seek help immediately. But if you are just getting starting to research and understand addiction, it's vitally important to learn more about the inner working of a person's bondage. That's because the physical body is not its own entity. It is linked and houses entire processes that can be fed by Spirit life, or by the flesh. Apart from God, the human on addiction only has the resource medical science can offer. But as children of God, we have access to the Healer and the One who can re-align our lives from the inside-out.

SOUL LIFE

The soul is referred to throughout the scriptures. It refers to our inner life - how we think, feel and make choices (mind, will and emotions). It also entails our unique personalities and the detailed and intricate ways that we are given a personal identity. We know from the Word that our souls are the part of us that is eternal. Even as our physical life ceases, our soul will carry throughout eternity. Introducing this concept is where our faith and belief in God's truth must prevail over scientific and material-based thinking. That's because science simply cannot affirm or understand the unseen realm. Once we step out of tangible realities and into faith-based spiritual principles, it requires that we have the Holy Spirit living in us to be able to comprehend and understand. Let's see what the Word says:

But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. - I Corinthians 2:14

If we adapt a scientific understanding of addiction (which is easy to do based on the tangible nature of addiction) and negate the Christian worldview, we too will be limited to the few benefits that a medical community can offer. But as God's children, this should never be the case. God is powerful and while He can certainly manage the processes of the brain and body - He has the power to remove addiction, to change the heart and set a person free internally. This freedom entails a transformation process where the body, soul and the spirit are re-aligned and brought back to the purposes of God.

In order to gain access into the recovery and healing process, we need to understand the purpose and function within our soul in greater detail. Let's look at each part of the soul: the mind, the will and emotions.

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND

The mind is housed and functions within the brain. Just as a computer has hardware and software, our brain functions much like the hardware of the computer. As we already learned, the brain houses the physical part of our being - meaning it is the actual piece of flesh functioning inside our body. On the other hand the mind consists of the actual data that is used to think, feel and decide. Thus, it could be thought of software that processes data.

No scientist can see the data itself in a book-like format. In other words, they can't pop in a disc and download the different pieces of information that reside within the brain. That's because as we already learned, the mind is separate and exists in a place where it can't be seen directly, just experienced by the person under its authority. It's also why a brain transplant is impossible. Even if a doctor were physically able to perform such a procedure, that implant couldn't give a person someone else's data. These are the baffling mysteries of human life that can't be explained without knowing our Creator.

HOW THE MIND WORKS

While the Bible makes no mention of the brain, it references the mind over eight hundred times! Actually, it's the target that God's after - the place where change begins. So how exactly does it work?

Throughout the duration of life we receive data into our mind through our five senses and life experiences that form beliefs, which translate into information that is stored in our minds as a sort of database. Over time, we acquire more and more data. Our brain is faster and stronger than any computer - and thus can process data at a super, super speed. Once data is recognizable, our mind can instantly recollect something we learned. This means we don't need to relearn things over each day.

When the data that is fed into our mind is true and accurate, it can help us to become a more functional, mature person. At a basic level, we learn that chairs are to sit upon. Green lights mean to go. And so on and so forth. There are thousands and thousands things we do all day long without having to strive to think. They are based on acquired information that instantly is accessed and used to respond to in a given situation.

We can build off acquired information and get smarter and wiser with time. However, when that data is not based on truth, the same mind meant to help us can hurt us. This especially happens when we believe our fleshly mind-sets are accurate, the standards of the world and culture around us are true, and the messages and labels that people impose on us define who we are. There is a battle in this regard—truth and lies can get entirely muddled where we can hardly distinguish one from the other.

The goal of the Christian life is that we are to "renew our mind" and receive the "mind of Christ." This is referring to a process of being realigned to how God thinks. How does this occur? Through direct access to the Holy Spirit (we will discuss in the next chapter). In truth, our minds will either be driven by the flesh, or will be driven by the Spirit.

So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. – Romans 8:6

In the case of addiction, the body is in complete bondage, and the mind is responding to it. It will require the mind be released from the body's desires, and be retrained to think upon the truths of God. This is what recovery is based upon.

THE DAMAGE OF LIES

Lies can creep into massive areas of our lives, and deposit deep-seated levels of shame and pain. Not only does our physical body lie to us with lusts and desires, but we have an actual enemy, Satan, who strategically tries to sabotage and blind people so they can't see or perceive of truth. The blinding of truth is not just the covering of the Word of God - it's also the inability to see ourselves accurately. In sum, the addict's body is chemically addicted, but the soul is often driven by lies and faulty data.

For example, little eight year old Johnny repeatedly heard the words "you'll never amount to anything" from his father whenever he was disappointed with him. He heard those words over and over again. Rather than receiving help and encouragement, he received a message of hopelessness that he eventually succumbed to, giving him a "what's the use of trying" attitude. The words he received and eventually believed negatively affected his perception of self and others. Johnny "checked out" of life and began the devastating road of addiction. Addiction led him on the pathway of insanity, and he in essence became exactly what his dad said he would become. It's not that his father knew this would happen, but rather that a seed (based on a lie) had rooted, and that belief system took on its own form. Johnny would be held in bondage in his mind until he would be able to form a new way of thinking - starting with his idea of God, self and others.

Even though initially as small children we are taught about life through a limited filter, as we get older those belief systems can change. Thus no one is forced to think anything. However, when beliefs are imposed into us and become our truth, even though they are based on the lie, we develop what's known as an unhealthy stronghold. We live out the belief system in our thought life as if it were the truth. The bad news is that the lies are extremely toxic and destructive and break us down in ways we can't comprehend. The good news is that those lies can be replaced with truth and we can relearn and retrain our mind to think right. That's very simply because we can choose what to believe. In fact, the knowledge of truth won't help anyone with addiction. They can have a stack of Bible to the left and right, and listen to Bible teaching morning, noon and night. The only way to change a person is when truth is received and accepted into the belief system. We'll be referring to this in great detail when we maneuver through the principles of recovery. In fact, it's what Christianity is based upon - the renewing of our mind.

EMOTIONS

Emotions are an automatic response to the data produced in the mind. That means emotions are the actual by-product of thoughts, producing an instant reaction emotionally. For example, the alert of a job promotion would instantly lead to a feeling of happiness and excitement. Just the same, the news of being fired from a job would produce feelings of sadness and despair. Whether good or bad data is received, the emotions are not the actual problem, but an expression of that information. In fact, they are a part of our being that allows us to experience and process different events. Without emotions we'd be

nothing more than a robot or appliance. Emotions are a God-given method to express our heart and to deal with what is occurring in our lives.

In the case of the addict, his or her emotional system becomes extremely misaligned. The addict has learned to avoid and not process pain effectively, opting to medicate emotions rather than deal address the source. This means that any pain that is felt as a result of data (information) is pushed aside, and the chemical becomes a quick fix to overcome that pain. While this seemingly alleviates the problem, it has a very distinct and unhealthy consequence.

That's because the thought of pain can warn us to defend against things that could permanently harm us. In fact, pain is often what keeps us from doing foolish and potentially dangerous activities. We carefully use a knife so we don't cut a finger. We avoid sticking our hand through a glass window because we don't want to be cut. Not only does pain help us avoid bad situations, it also helps us to seek healing. In the physical body, pain drives us to take action. If we are bleeding and hurting, we jump into action and understand that we need to get our injury stabilized. Our body even produces its own pain fighting chemicals to assist us in the process.

The absence of pain altogether would actually not be good in the case of injury, unless we were so wounded we could not help ourselves. In fact, with enough trauma, the body will naturally shut down to utilize the least amount of resources. But when injuries are not at that level, they throw us into a mode of survival so we will seek to fix the problem. Thus, in our daily, normal activities, feeling pain is actually a good thing.

There are rare medical conditions where people have no ability to physically feel pain. Because this so deeply damages that person's perceptions of danger and consequences, they can wind up with terrible injuries or illnesses that are left unidentified, and thus can lead to infection and even death. What seems like a gift, is actually a removal of a natural system of response designed to in some way protect that person.

In the same way, our emotional pain is designed to signal what is happening internally. It is in every sense of the word an alert system. The fact that we have pain indicates there is something in us that needs to be addressed. While pain is never comfortable, it is intended to cause us to seek solution. Because God is the owner of our soul, He is in the only One capable of fixing its brokenness. He allows human beings to feel pain in a world that is fundamentally corrupt to both protect them from the dangers that lurk, and to remind them of their utter need for dependency, healing and comfort in Him. It's not that God wants pain to exist, but rather that it is just what naturally occurred in this world's fallen condition. Thus, He intended that we learn to use pain to teach us healthy survival. That's why feeling "pain" is not removed for the child of God. At the very same time, that pain has a healing source – God Himself. Like an ointment on an infected wound, He comes to deal with the very thing in our soul that gets sabotaged.

The drug addict has disrupted the very purpose of pain. Rather than feel it and face it, thus identify its potential danger, the addict has learned to become emotionally numb. Not only that, but their "reward system" is sabotaged. They momentarily feel "good feelings" for taking the drug. Thus the body and the emotions respond pleurably. But because this is an obstruction of the system, and deeply sabotages the purpose of God's distinct design for both pleasure and pain (consequence and rewards), the addict is in an insane and self-destructive pattern of chaos.

Numbing pain makes things that are dangerous nonthreatening. There are no natural consequences in place for wrong choices when the feelings themselves are removed. Not only that, there is no motivation to fix what's broken, thus there is no need to turn to God. Instead, the false comfort of the drug cuts the addict off, and places them in danger. False pleasure creates a perverted illusion of what

constitutes “feeling good.” They reward their own addiction, and kill their own opportunity to allow the pain to motivate change. This important dynamic is also critical for the family to understand.

Emotions need to be put in their rightful place in order to for the addict to heal because their emotional life has been deeply damaged. This has also caused the addict to be emotionally stunted, having no awareness of the actual God-given purpose of emotions. Thus, they have learned to not feel or process at all.

Ironically, in recovery, pain will need to be felt and validated, not ignored. But emotions are not stand alone. In other words, emotions aren't what are wrong, they are the symptom of what's wrong. Just as a gaping cut produces pain, the injury of the heart needs to be validated in its source. This will require the mind to be understood, and events, trauma, neglect, rejection, fear, etc. be processed.

God doesn't just remove pain. He returns pain back to its original purpose – to reveal the problem. In recovery, dealing with emotions will be centered around the stabilizing of belief systems where both pain and God's redemption will be seen in their proper perspective. When injuries of the heart occurred because of pain and violations of others, God will have to lead the addict through those offenses so they can be offered a spiritual remedy. Facing truth, however, will never mean that pain will go away. In fact, addicts will be asked to face the pain they weren't able to deal with before they sought the comfort of the bottle, the pill or the needle. Emotional healing will occur when the addict is allowed to feel feelings, grieve and rely on the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Maturity and growth emotionally will begin at whatever level the addict checked out through drugs. Thus, a child who begins to medicate with drugs will have stopped learning to process emotions at that level of maturity.

In truth, only by feeling pain can the true remedy be prescribed. This is a key aspect in recovery, and can't be bypassed as emotions are always the area of the deepest vulnerability. We'll discuss this in greater detail.

WILL:

God gave all people a *free will*, allowing each of us to choose how we want to live our lives. However, that freedom is subject to what or whom is under its authority. In addiction, the will is completely succumbed to the drive of addiction. The addiction is served in slavery format, and the addict will do anything to satisfy its drive. That is not freedom at all, but something called bondage.

When we talk about freedom in Christianity (and in addiction recovery) we don't just mean we can do whatever we want to do. Rather, it's about a condition of being aligned with God - where our will is being activated in accordance to His will. When we are free, we are living within our true identity, calling and purpose. We are free from the toxic chains of shame and guilt. In addiction, it is impossible to live in this purpose, and an addict's life is consumed with shame. Thus the will is being tricked, deceived by its wrongful desires that lead to self-sabotage.

That's why understanding the relevancy of God - the power of the Holy Spirit - is essential. His job is to consume the will, and replace our affection with His affections. While it may seem a relatively simply transaction, it is the fight of a lifetime. And for the addict, it is sometimes a fight for life.

What we must understand is that while we are promised that the Spirit is powerful, there is a war. But once that drive of addiction is overcome by the Spirit, the addict can be transformed.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:1

In everyday life the will is acting out the thoughts and feelings that are happening inside us. Some of that involved normal, daily tasks, like getting a drink of water. However, it's the places where wrongful behavioral patterns are taking place that is a cause of concern. God isn't just behaviorally-focused, rather, He is concerned about what we submit to. Everything in the will has an influence - and that is either derived from God (truth) or Satan (lie.). Learning this blatant truth prepares us to better understand how God comes to redeem our lives.

To summarize what we've learned, let's review;

- The mind processes the belief as a thought - it receives it as information by which it needs to be responded.
- The emotions react to the thought - they produce feelings attached to the nature of the data. This could produce happiness, sadness, fear or pleasure, depending on the nature of the thought.
- Finally, the will is the decision maker. Typically the thoughts and especially the feeling motivate the decisions we make. Thus, the actual action that is taken in the situation is the final product of how that initial belief was processed.
- Whatever choices are made can affect the body, reinforce the belief of the mind, and create more emotional reaction. This can lead to a vicious cycle - a pattern almost impossible to break without intervention.

Understanding the inner working of the addiction itself helps us clearly see that trying to force behavioral change will not work! In fact, behaviors represent these deeper problems. The nature of Christ-centered recovery injects the power of God through the Holy Spirit into the very places of dysfunction. As we'll learn, this means the Holy Spirit has the resources to reverse the effects and restore a person to wholeness. All this can occur when we learn to fight this battle as a spiritual war, not merely a physical, mental or emotional problem.

A prayer to understand

Lord God,

Grant me the ability to understand the magnificent way I have been created. Help me also to understand the addict in my life so that I can recognize there are deeper things happening than meets the eye. Prepare and equip me so that I may know how to serve you in this situation right now.

In Jesus Name – Amen

CHAPTER 4:

A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE OF ADDICTION

Hopefully by now you understand that addiction is a form of enslavement. Watching a person serve the enemy of addiction is unthinkable. And learning where to find true solution requires an aggressive look at what is needed and necessary to overcome the force and power of addiction. As Christians, there is a time and place for practical wisdom and understanding regarding addiction. There is a need to know and learn the physiological realities of addiction. There is also importance in understanding how the soul is sick and under its toxic influence. But with all that background in place, we must be willing to unveil in fullness the force of the spiritual drive of addiction. Even as we understand the battle of the body and soul, true addiction originates in the spiritual realm and is authored by Satan. The Bible says "The thief comes to steal and to kill and to destroy I have come that they might have life" (John 10:10). In everything that has brokenness and destruction is the reality of life apart from God. Addiction is a very obvious pattern of damage and death. Everything in the addict's life is wrecked including healthy, emotional wellness, relationships, dreams, ambitions and hope.

At the very same time, no matter how far an addict can fall, it's never beyond God's grip. The character and purposes of God are redemptive in nature - they are to "bring life." In fact, everything that is touched by God that was under the destructive force of addiction can be reversed and brought into alignment and wholeness in Him. We'll begin to address the process of recovery in Chapter __. But for now, it's important to know that Jesus conquered sin and death - including addiction. And this is not merely in Christian rhetoric, but in the actual reality that He authoritatively sits above the forces of darkness. But the key to access this freedom is wrought under very specific circumstances - the willful choice to let God have His way.

Before we can understand the magnitude of this reality and how God's intervention occurs, we first must prepare to understand the nature of the battle and the character of the enemy.

FRAMING THE BATTLE

By now hopefully you can see that addiction is not mere willful sin and disobedience, but bondage. This means the addiction is holding the person in captivity. While the addiction itself seemingly overtakes a person's life, in truth, addiction is being influenced by a spiritual force. Satan is the enemy of the human

race and sets forth to oppress and sabotage people's minds so that they cannot know God, experience freedom and live in the radical promises of what God offers. He is a fierce, blood-thirsty opponent who strategically develops ways to lure humans into his devices. Without calling out his tactics or acknowledging his role in addiction, we will be ignorant and prone to defeat. We will also be more willing to label addiction as a physical or emotional problem, and thus limit the actual remedy.

Satan is behind the forces of addiction, however, that doesn't mean he's walking around with fangs or horns revealing himself as such. In fact, when we say Satan is our enemy, there are actually three different places he manifests.

Enemy One: The flesh (sinful nature) - we've already learned that essentially our broken flesh is actually part of the corrupt system under the dominion of Satan. It doesn't mean that we are actually possessed, but that the body is fundamentally operating under that sick, sin system (See chapter 2). This is true for believers as well as unbelievers. All the malfunctions of the body basically steals the gift of our life and turns it into an instrument of death. In addiction, the body is under the influence of the body's own broken condition. Without a spiritual remedy, this reality is dim for the addict. However, as Christians we have access to the Holy Spirit. As we'll learn later, the addict and all Christians will need to be conquered by the Holy Spirit.

But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? - Romans 7: 23-24

Enemy Two: The world - the system of the world fundamentally opposes God. Our current culture around us has all but kicked Him out of the public square, while welcoming and embracing principles and truths that oppose Him. Thus, the world system (not referring to all the people, but overall mindset, attitude and beliefs) is an enemy of God. When we are surrounded by a culture that is seduced by lies, it is very hard to live in truth ourselves. We will need to make a diligent commitment to know exactly what God's Word says and stay firm in His promises. When bankers are taught to find fraudulent bills, they don't study the different versions. Instead, they intensely study the authentic bills so they will easily spot one that isn't quite right. That's how it is with the Word. Obviously this is an area of much vulnerability.

For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. - 1 John 2:16

Enemy Three: Satan and his demon - As uncomfortable as the reality of an actual demonic realm may be, we are told in the Word that this is taking place. Satan and his army of demons function with strategies, much like a physical war game. He works through people just like God works through people. He gains access into people's lives through their belief systems and thought life, which can affect their feeling and overtake their will (choices.) The baseline of everything he does is to lie and blind people from God's truth.

Let's read what Gods' Word says about Satan's role:

Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4

For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. - Ephesians 6:12

You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil--the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. - Ephesians 2:1

SEDUCTION

The formation of all sin comes through seduction of a lie. The difference with the drug addict is that the bodily stronghold of addiction can cause a physiological addiction and changes in the chemistry that make it very difficult to combat. In fact, the moment chemicals "trigger" the brain reaction; the vicious cycle quickly spins out of control. Why some people are biologically prone to the brain aspect of addiction, while others seemingly aren't isn't something we may be able to answer directly. But the idea of being motivated to find pleasure or remove pain is normally the drive. And that's where we should focus. It's also important to note that there are many other ways we can seek that other than chemical use. People use food, relationship, sex, work and many other vehicles in the same manner.

In essence, the seduction of addiction is the instant gratification of false comfort, happiness and power. None of these promises can actually be delivered by the allurements they offer. In fact, they are a counterfeit version based on a lie that stands in direct competition to what God provides. Not only are they void of delivering long-term solutions, but once a person takes the bait and falls into the trap, Satan delivers exactly the opposite. All his offerings lead to devastation, pain and loss.

A biblical example of this occurred in the Garden of Eden. God had provided Adam and Eve with absolutely everything necessary to be happy, fulfilled and blessed. But he required that they be obedient to Him and listen to Him as the voice of authority. He warned them of a forbidden tree in the garden, and that if they partook of its fruit, they would "surely die." After God's warning, Satan appeared to Adam and Eve in the form of serpent. At that point in history, it probably wasn't shocking to hear a snake talk because they engaged in conversation. If they had thought that was bazaar or if he appeared with horns, surely they would have fled the scene. But instead, this snake had a seductive way of offering them something "more" than what God had to give. Not only that, the snake distinctly claimed that God had lied to them, and that they could attain something better if they ate from the very tree God was trying to keep away from them. As the historical account tells us, Adam and Eve took the bait, based on the desire that they have a deeper knowledge than what God authorized to give them. And as a result, they became in the process because ensnared in a trap of death. They disavowed the authority of God, and thus empowered Satan's system.

While that may seem to be an ancient and impractical story, it can't be any more relevant in understanding the enticement of Satan. He works through the exact same strategy - luring people in with His lies and promises, and then hammering them with the devastation of what that choice brings. He then

drags them away with his authority system - where guilt, shame and fear prevail and offer no hope of betterment.

CAN A CHRISTIAN BE AN ADDICT?

Many people believe and even teach others that a Christian cannot be an addict. The claim that a person who lives with such rebellion and immorality couldn't possibly have given their life to Jesus at one point. It's always possible that a professing believer didn't make an authentic conversation of faith, but many times that simply isn't the case. That's because the attraction of addiction is the lure - the seduction of the lie. If Adam and Eve, in a state of perfection could be seduced, surely one of God's children can be as well. At New Life Spirit Recovery, many of our clients enter program as Christians. In fact, we often have pastors, ministry leaders and teachers of the Word who love and served God that fell into the chains of addiction. They sincerely loved God, but had areas of vulnerability and weaknesses. The enemy promised "something more" in his own methods that directly competed against God. The moment they stopped seeking God for comfort, power and needs, and choose to believe that a substance could deliver the instant benefits they wanted, they were tricked. In essence, they "ate the apple", something that appeared attractive and could deliver momentary pleasure, but later resulted in massive and horrible consequences.

Because the behavior of an addict is so negative, it's easy to believe that they must not really know The Lord. However, that person, even a child of God, is influenced by a system that is rooted in the kingdom of hell. Thus the effects of their lives look as such. Once brought back, that same person will be able to love and serve God. We are encouraged to help a brother who has stumbled with a firm warning:

Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. Galatians 6:1-3

But dealing with the addict is no easy task. That's why you need to be equipped to understand first the nature of addiction, and then learn later how it can be effectively dealt with. Family members won't necessarily be prone to the temptation of using the drug, but are more likely to fall into the trap of believing the lies of the addict (we will address this in Chapter ____).

TO THE NON-BELIEVER

A non-believer struggling with addiction has a world of hope awaiting them. They do not yet know or haven't experienced the power of grace and the love God. However, the battle to find Jesus will be fierce. Just as they were motivated to use a substance to gain a benefit, they will need to feel enough pain of the addiction to seek other options and be open to a spiritual solution.

The 12 step programs work effectively because they are actually spiritual principles. However, the program itself can't replace the need for Jesus Christ. It can however assist a person to receive sobriety initially because the principles work. However, a person who gets sober without Jesus cannot be transformed - they might be able to stop the insane influence of the addiction for a season, but long-term,

they will have a much more difficult time finding the anchor of their life. Prayerfully through the 12 steps they could be introduced to Jesus Christ. But if they do not, sobriety will also not account for their eternal soul.

ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY

While it's helpful to understand the nature of bondage, at the very same, the understanding of addiction doesn't negate the addict's own responsibility. Even as we learn to target Satan as the instigator of addiction, the addict has a free will. The problem arises is that the will is so caught by the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of addiction, that simply stopping the addiction by choice is very difficult to do. In fact, most often the addict will need to experience more pain than benefits to desire change.

Realizing that the addict's greatest weapon against addiction will come as they make the decision to stop because the addiction is causing more harm is important. But this is no easy truth to grasp. If you are a concerned family member or friend, oftentimes you have done everything possible to make them stop or to protect them from hurting themselves. However, we will need to learn to understand that if we prevent them from realizing the nature of the problem and taking ownership of it, we can also prevent them from arriving at that place where the addiction is not worth the pain it induces. In fact, if we merely victimize the addict, coddle them, care for them and give into their requests because we understand they are "sick", we will encourage the very dynamic we seek to dismantle (see Chapter ____).

Understanding the struggle of the addict can help us have more compassion, but at the same time, it puts the need for true battle to emerge. The battle against addiction is not directly against the person who is suffering—but against the overall system that has been created in their life. It furthermore can't be waged using human techniques, but spiritual weapons:

We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. - 2 Corinthians 2:3-

That's because Satan's strategies, system and devices are beyond our ability to thwart. The need to gain the wisdom of God therefore is vital. Family members carry their own hurt and guilt in the addiction cycle, but understand that everything God uses to combat addiction will be coated in grace. God is a Redeemer, a Rescuer and a Restorer. His truth will offend initially. It will even be uncomfortable. But He will bring truth into the life of the addict and their family in order to release them from Satan's strategies and devices. That's because as Satan is exposed, and his system is revealed, people have a clear choice: to continue to live the lie, or to accept and live out the truth. That simple truth lies at the heart of the beginning of all change:

You will know the truth and the truth will set you free. John 8:32

A prayer for wisdom

Lord God,

I see this battle that I have been fighting is not against the addict in my life, myself or even an addiction. It's against the enemy. I don't exactly understand how this is possible, but I desire to be equipped to see

and know how to handle each situation as it arises. First of all, I make you my Mighty Warrior and my King – I place you above all my own efforts, and ask that you secure me with your weapons of love, grace, truth, and forgiveness. Give me eyes to see and perceive the spiritual realm, and then fight in the strength of your might.

In Jesus Name - Amen