

CHAPTER FIVE
**THE FAMILY SYSTEM
AND ADDICTION**

The complexity of the family system that has become aligned with addiction has some distinct characteristics. Whether or not you are dealing with an addict using drugs actively or entering into recovery, understanding in more details the nature of how the addiction has entangled the entire system is vital. It will also bring clarity as to why the addict's recovery process is not enough to deal with overall problems that have been presented.

Many times family members feel the term “recovery” only applies to the person with addiction or significant problems. However, true recovery refers to bringing something back in alignment with its original purpose. Because the family system has been ravished so significantly, it is vital that the family begin to embrace that they must be in recovery to become what God intended they become in marriage, family and other roles.

Remember, that each situation is unique, thus this is only meant to be used a tool as opposed to a label. Also, it's important to understand that addiction can occur within a healthy family system. The purpose of this chapter is to simply help you understand what God intended for the family, and how that purpose has been damaged when a family's centering point is misaligned. While some families may remain intact, more often than not, significant damage has been experienced.

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR CREATING THE FAMILY SYSTEM

God created the family system to contain different roles that could provide for the physical, material, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of each member. These roles were actually designed to reveal different aspects of God's character towards us as a father, spouse and friend. Each role contains boundaries in their God-given purpose and design; husband, wife, parent, young children, teens and grown children all take on unique tasks and responsibilities. When each member fulfills their part, these roles work together much like an orchestra. Each family member is

uniquely significant in their "sound", yet when synched with the other members, they create a beautiful "song"—a plan that allows them to fulfill God's purpose on earth.

The structure of a family system was designed by God to be based on interdependency, where each member gives depending on their role, and receives according to their legitimate needs. Done in context of God's blueprint for the family, this will allow each member to be nourished of their basic needs for love, acceptance and security.

HOMEOSTASIS AND THE FAMILY SYSTEM

Because the family unit consists of people working together as a committed base, the family members are automatically linked together in such a manner that when one member experiences change, the other members are affected. To further understand this, we are going to look at the family unit as a homeostatic environment. The process of homeostasis refers to multiple different components of the physical body working together to create equilibrium, or a place of centering. This creates an environment of regulation where the body actually resists change, and always tries to return to a point of balance. Whenever the centering is off, the other parts that are interdependently connected learn to compensate and adjust to bring it back to its ideal condition.

In a positive way, the centering point represents the place of health and life. Examples of this include our body temperature. The body seeks to return to the temperature 98.6 after it had fought an infection and was consumed with fever. This is positive. The centering is done to return the body back to good health. But just the same, the body can become adapted to an unhealthy condition, where it can actually resist positive change. A person under the influence of addiction is an example of a faulty homeostatic environment where the body is tricked to want to stay under the influence. In a similar manner, when a person who was living off an unhealthy diet decides to make positive changes, the body will initially resist it. The body will crave the very thing it needs to get rid of because it had adapted so much to that food. Even though it would be in the best interest of the body for the new diet to be introduced, the body will fight and resist the positive change until that new system is established, and it becomes the body's "normal."

Every individual person has a personal "homeostasis" that dictates and mandates a place of centering. However, when the principle is brought into the family system, it grows in complexity. With multiple members brought together to represent different function, the family will establish equilibrium to produce a place of centering. This place of center houses a set of rules, expectations, morals, beliefs and boundaries that dictate the family system. These act as the place of ideal "regulation" in all areas of the family's interactions with God, self and each other.

The centering point can be a positive place or a negative one, depending on what's driving it. But through the principle of homeostasis, the system itself will seek to find that ideal balance, and thus will naturally resist change. As different changes do occur, the other family members adapt and compensate to help return it to its baseline. This in turn means there are distinct and dependent connections amongst the family members.

The goal of learning how the family system is inter-related helps prepare the family for the addict's recovery, and the entire family's opportunity to receive healing. This is not done to point out wrongdoings; rather it's simply to expose the overall system that is operating. This is important, because the family had to adjust and accommodate at many levels to deal with the addiction. Furthermore, it will also have to change again to deal the addict when he or she re- enters the family system through sobriety.

POINT OF CENTER

In a healthy family, the drive to be centered (homeostasis) is formed around God's truth and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Not only does the centering provide guidelines, but it also provides the resources and power of God to love and deal with life's challenges. That's because the Holy Spirit is the source of life, thus without Him in that position, the family will by default experience some level of destruction or sickness. But through Him, the homeostasis represents a place of health, life and significance.

The principle of being centered on God means He isn't just a set of rules, but an active source of love, availability and authentic interaction. In other words, God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are real – and they are engaged with the family in a relational way. Thus family members love each other through God. They are depositing into the other family members based on how they themselves can receive from Him. Just the same, they are receiving the benefit of the other family members depositing into their lives within their respective role.

Families can experience different levels of breakdowns in being able to fulfill a centering on Christ. Some families can have areas that reflect a godly alignment, while others that do not. Typically, families living in the toxic dynamics of an addictive or dysfunctional family system (chemical addiction isn't required for a family to be unhealthy) have developed a faulty centering point altogether. This can lead to a completely opposite purpose that what God intended.

ADDICTION-CENTERED FAMILY SYSTEM

No matter the behaviors that are exemplified, when God's truth and His Spirit are not influencing the center of a family system, a human system is devised to satisfy human needs. The actual person in the controlling role within a family system may vary, and can at times fluctuate. **It may or may not be the person with the actual addiction.** What's important to understand is that whatever is influencing and motivating that person or people will determine how the system itself is devised.

For example, Jack was the leader and controlling influence of the family. This would be perfectly healthy if he was operating by God dependency, but Jack was an alcoholic and emotionally broken, thus he had extreme mood swings that led to violent behavior. On his good days, everyone was allowed to be happy. But when Jack was in a "bad mood," everyone was made

aware of it, and needed to accommodate accordingly. The homeostasis of that family (centering point) rested on the needs of Jack. Everyone else was meant to work around that basic central purpose. Because his leadership style was so unhealthy, it turned the family into a prison rather than a free environment.

In every family system, the person that assumes the central role sets the tone for the beliefs, standards, rules, boundaries, etc. that will be implemented in the home. Usually this system develops through unspoken messages and rules that are not stated, just imposed and expected indirectly. Examples of this can include "we don't talk about our feelings" or "we work hard to make sure dad isn't angry." Unlike the healthy family that can use God's Word as a handbook to understand God's perspective, the unhealthy family system is operating from no direct source other than the person running it. Since that person's mood, emotions and spiritual influences can change, the family's point of reference also is asked to conform to the need. This is one reason why there is such insecurity in an unhealthy family system - no one can actually predict or understand what to expect in a given moment.

Meditation point: Who or what is the source of centering and control in your family system? What unspoken rules dominate my own family system? Does this align with Gods' truth?

UNDERSTANDING LOVE AND CONTROL IN THE UNHEALTHY FAMILY SYSTEM

We will learn repeatedly in this book that the essence of God's love to us is expressed through the free will. God gave us the incredible gift of choice that allows us to decide how to interact with Him and others. Through freedom, we have the capability to make the right choices, and also will struggle when choosing the wrong things. Had God not offered us this relational style, we'd be enslaved to Him by force. We'd be something like a pre-programmed machine, used to perform a function rather than engage intimately and through love.

We can better understand this concept within the context of a government. A free government, like the United States, allows its participants to make decision independent of the government's meddling. While there are guidelines that must be followed to protect the citizens, the basic right to think, feel and make choices is an individual decision.

A dictatorship government, on the other hand, oppresses its people by removing choice. The government itself mandates and dictates the people's rights. Thus, their own freedom has been removed and they are subject to the interpretation of the power structure in place. People under dictatorship rule are essentially in a form of enslavement. They are asked to lose their own will. God did not intend this in any leadership style, thus when it occurs, it will have a very negative affect on those who come under its control.

THE INFLUENCE OF LOVE

The family system is designed to be free, not controlled. However, the family is a much closer and intimate institution than simply living under a government structure. Above anything else, the family system is meant to have love motivate its actions. Where there is love, there is freedom. When love rules, submission directs each member to not only look out for their own need, but to seek the needs of others. Thus, when it moves into action it satisfies the well-being of everyone involved. Love becomes a gluing agent that allows for bonding and affection to promote giving and receiving. Needs are provided intentionally and joyfully.

A lack of love in the family system will lead to an enormous breakdown in this purpose. Its absence will by default be replaced by a control-based system. Since God is the true source of love, all control-based structures by default lack His leading. In fact, love and control cannot function together.

The loss of love and free choice is the most dangerous condition of the family system. It informs the family members as to what and whom their will is to be submitted to in a given situation. Some family members, including the controlling figure, seek to produce an environment where they will have followers who will oblige to them. Others learn to give away their will, seeking to satisfy and abide by whatever the controller has devised. All this is done to gain a need that authentic love is not satisfying. The controller becomes the centering and the point of reference to the will of each individual member.

Control based systems can manifest in two different ways:

1. Aggressive control.

If the leadership is controlling in a dictatorship manner, the family members will be told how to think, feel and make choices. They will not have their individual rights, nor will they be allowed to do anything apart from the approval of the leadership. In the process, the other members begin to serve this unhealthy system, while at the same time have their own unique needs, feeling and personal identity diminished. Thus, in order to survive, they resort to role playing where they learn to hide their authentic self (These roles will be discussed in Chapter 6). The members learn to function in "submission" in order to please and accommodate the person or people in the controlling role, not as a direct result of love.

When one member controls aggressively, the other members form a system of counter-control. They may also opt to rebel against the system altogether.

While it may sound incredibly "evil" and far from anything that might take place in a Christian family, this is simply not true. A Christian who hasn't processed through their own emotional issues, or is under the influence of a substance can take on these characteristics. In fact, many Christians have a spiritual connection, but have never gained access to a healthy soul – thus their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and choices are not aligned to God.

2. Passive control

A control-based system can happen through "good" efforts to help, fix and solve the problems of other members. In this system, there isn't direct dictatorship, but rather the loss of choices and the merging of identities (we will be referring to this as codependence briefly in a later chapter). In passive control, a person's problems and needs become "community property." Instead of that person having to own their own problems, the passive controlling family members take ownership for them. In this system, the person in control is often trying to "love," but instead imposes their own will onto the other members.

For example, Paula loved her daughter April, and had been extremely involved in all aspects of her life. But from a young age and through early adulthood, April wasn't given permission to make her own decisions. No matter what she did, her mom voiced an opinion, and disallowed her own thought and choices to mandate her decisions. When April made a bad choice that opposed her mom's suggestion, she was given shame-based statements that told her she was only successful when she took heed of her mother's advice.

While Paula genuinely thought she was helping, she created a controlling dynamic. She furthermore attached to her daughter in an unhealthy manner by doing things for her daughter that her daughter should have done on her own. April wasn't given the opportunity to be an adult, to take ownership of her free will, and to make decisions and reap the benefits or consequences accordingly. She eventually opted to seize a lifestyle of rebellion and drug use. That didn't make it her mother's fault, but since she felt unable to please or leave her mother's grip, she eventually left altogether.

While good intentions are usually driving the passive controller, we must understand that humans weren't designed to have another human operating their will, thus when that occurs, there will be a toxic reaction to it. Anyone who has this type of control has a misunderstanding of authentic love. It is a condition of the soul that must be re-centered and re-aligned to Holy Spirit love.

It's imperative that we understand the general dynamics of a human-controlled system versus a Holy Spirit-controlled environment. That's because all forms of family breakdowns will be the result of the nature of that control. Just the same, the power of change will happen as individual wills come under the influence of God's will. If you suffer from either form of control, it's not something you can change overnight. However, it is something that recovery will walk you through. In fact, it is where all change begins.

Meditation Points: Do you recognize control in your own family system? How do you feel controlled? Do you attempt to control others?

ADDITIONAL SYMPTOMS OF AN ADDICTION CENTERED

FAMILY

Where an unhealthy system based on control has formed, a variety of fruit will be present. Therefore, we are going to look at the additional ways an unhealthy family system breaks down. This diagnosis is not meant to bring discouragement, fear, shame or hopelessness. Rather, it is meant to reveal. Just as a physical problem needs to be understood before treatment can be prescribed by a doctor, so the family system's problems need to be revealed before we can ask the Great Physician to bring healing.

Symptom 1. The home operates by lies and denial.

In the addiction-centered family system there is an unspoken rule that no one speaks the truth. Usually denial is covering the family to the point that the members simply aren't able to see the reality of what is occurring (biblically known as walking in darkness). For example, David often heard "Davy, daddy has a stomach ache and needs to stay home. Make your daddy some soup." In truth, his dad was an alcoholic and would be passed out to the point of incoherence. For David to function in this system, he was asked to be part of the lie. No one could admit or speak about the addiction out rightly, rather they compensated, adjusted and lived under the power and influence of that lie. This obstructed the ability for David to see truth in his life in general and thought it was normal to make up stories, lie and deny. He also found it a normal relationship skill to work around "wrong behavior" rather than confront or recognize it.

Meditation Point: Do you see lies and denial in your family?

Symptom 2. The home is fundamentally operating by shame.

Shame is the direct residue of sin, thus without a remedy to deal with sin, it will be present and active. Shame is a sense of not measuring up a standard. Shame speaks messages to the family that says "something is wrong with us and we need to hide." The very nature of shame is to cover. Thus, in the case of addiction, there is an unspoken rule that no one talks or allows others to know what's really going on. This leads to isolation.

Not only that, but the shame-based family can also be behaviorally and image oriented. As long as it "looks" good - then it is good. It can promote performance over authentic needs. Members of a shame-based system promote unfair expectations, and constantly feel they don't measure up to each other.

Joseph was a pastor and thus held an image in his church and community. But because he hadn't dealt with own emotional brokenness, he formed a shame-based system in the family system as a whole. It didn't mean Joseph didn't genuinely love and want to serve God, but his own fear of rejection and image surpassed his ability to expose to anyone his struggles. Therefore instead of be able to work through his issues, they were hidden and suppressed. Over time the pressure of the ministry caused Joseph to be more and more consumed by emotional brokenness.

Joseph had fits of rage in his family, all while maintaining an outward image of love to the church community. The family learned to compensate and adjust around Joseph's issues, and began to learn how to play the charade that "everything was fine", when in fact it wasn't. The center of the family, in fact, began to be dictated by Joseph's emotional problems. And at the heart of that the family was asked to live out a lie.

When a son began using drugs, the family responded to addiction like it responded to Joseph's own emotional challenges - they denied. Hiding, pretending and using rage to try to bring the son "in line" led to a family that was fundamentally broken - causing members to hide, to fear, and be unable to articulate their honest thoughts, feeling and needs.

Meditation points: Describe how shame affect your family?

Symptom 3. Loyalty to People Equals Loyalty to Sin

In the dysfunctional family, loyalty doesn't promote the safety, security and love meant to bind the members together. Instead, it ends up protecting the very things that are hurting it. In a dysfunctional system, the loyalty can be "never call the cops" after a family member is badly beat. It can say "never talk to anyone about my family problems" to the teenage girl whose world is falling apart. Or it can pronounce "stand by my husband when he needs me to call him in sick."

Because the family is centered on the person they are serving, not God's truth, bad behaviors are acceptable, and lies become an acceptable method of functioning. For example, Betty's mom's alcoholism became "normal" and Betty assuming the role of a mom for her 4-year old sister also was "normal." Betty's world was filled with a faulty system that dictated how she should respond. But Betty learned from an early age to be loyal to her mom and the code of the family to "never talk" about what was wrong. She served the "center" place of mom's needs, and her role was to adapt and compensate anything that was missing. Utter loyalty was rooted deeply, and Betty would defend and protect her mother at any and all expense, even as a grown adult.

Meditation Point: Have you ever been loyal to the addict, even when their behavior was wrongful or unhealthy?

Symptom 4. The roles of the family are misappropriated and confused

When the family is dysfunctional, there is often distortion of roles, thus everyone's purposes get misaligned. As we already discussed, this can lead to a misalignment in the overall system of homeostasis. Children can be in adult roles. Adult can be acting more like children. Husbands can take on the roles of wives, insisting to be provided for and not required to be responsible for the needs of the family. Wives can be controlling and in an authoritative position. The family as a

whole can develop compensation and adaptive roles to cope and learn to survive. We'll be discussing these in detail.

Symptom 5. Lack of Intimacy and Identity

Intimacy is the ability to see into someone, and let them see into you. It validates and affirms the personal identity of someone. When the family system breaks down, intimacy is replaced with role performance. What happens on the outside covers over what is going on the inside. Instead of sharing authentic thoughts, feelings and needs, families who lack intimacy end up developing their own coping mechanism and live their inner lives apart from their outer lives. Within the family system itself, being who you are isn't considered okay - a person must be what the family system itself says you should be. This cuts to the core of finding a personal sense of identity.

Meditation point: Does your family have intimacy problems? Can people share and love from the heart, or is there distance, isolation and avoidance?

Symptom 6. Unhealthy Dependency Styles

When unhealthy dependency is present, the family members need each other based on fear, guilt, fear and fulfillment of personal needs. Unhealthy dependencies feed into the weaknesses of the other members, leading to a "you can't live without me" mentality. They can also encourage unhealthy mentalities, by being empowered by the others person's "neediness." This is called codependence, and it will be introduced in a later chapter.

Symptom 7. Tainted View of God

There are many ways a family can operate apart from the Spirit of God. Sometimes, God is blatantly disrespected and unwelcome in a household. Thus, His presence and influence isn't allowed. But in Christian families, God can be discussed to a degree, but used in a way that is shaming and rule-oriented. When spirituality is displayed by invoking God's name to guilt, shame, control or inflict fear, it is not coming from the Holy Spirit. That's because the Holy Spirit operates through love, grace, peace, and holiness. False spirituality is just as toxic as no spirituality at all. It creates a version that can totally oppose the heart and character of God.

Meditation Point: What is your own perspective of God? How has He been represented in your own family experience past and present?

WHAT TO DO

Understanding that you function within the context of an unhealthy family system can prepare you for re-alignment. This will not necessarily be an easy process, but it can bring personal freedom and redemption, as well as begin to orchestrate a process for the family system as a whole.

You may recognize portions of these symptoms. You do not have to experience all of them in order to be living with unhealthy residue. In the next chapter, we will look at how the individual roles break down within this system. But for now, take some time to invite God into your own situation.

A Prayer for my Family

Lord Jesus,

I pray over the center of my family. I pray that we would submit ourselves to you at an authoritative level. If I'm in the position, please grant me the strength and ability to give that position to you. If I'm in a supportive role, help me be to true you despite the other system at play. Teach me how to do this.

In Jesus name – Amen

CHAPTER SIX
THE FAMILY IN SURVIVAL
ROLES OF COMPENSATION

Most of us are familiar with the television show *Survivor*. It was a reality game show that essentially sought to see who could withstand the brutal and threatening environments of the raw outdoors. People were forced to deal with nature minus modern-day resources and technology. The purpose was to see who was “strong” enough to survive the elements of weather, terrain and all sorts of dangerous circumstances.

The popularity of the show shows us that oftentimes surviving can be applauded by society. It can seem as if the goal of survival is to be the greatest and the strongest. But in God's world, survival is never a goal. That's because He didn't create the human race to find methods of survival. He created us for relationship, intimacy and connection. Relationship with Him is based on security of the highest magnitude, thus no one who claims to be His son or daughter has the need to “survive.” But it goes even further. We need not “survive” without resources because we have everything we need in and through Him (Philippians 4:13).

The mentality of survival rests around our inability to be walking in God security. When our own family system has been unhealthy, we will be affected, and can transport that mindset onto God. Survival roles are toxic because while they defend from some levels of harm, they prevent us from living with our true potential and identity in Christ. In this chapter we will break down the survival roles that are developed to deal with an unhealthy control-based system. While each system is entirely different, we can draw some similarities. Be sure to apply this information to your own personal circumstances.

ADDICTION AND SURVIVAL

As we learned in the last chapter, when the homeostasis of a family is unhealthy, the centering place or "normal" state can in actually be destructive or toxic. To make better sense of this reality, we might visualize the site of a catastrophic tornado that tore through a neighborhood. Debris, rubbish and destruction would rest in the very places meant to house a community. As a

result, the foundational purpose of that neighborhood would be destroyed. A rebuilding process would be necessary in order to realign it back to its intended purpose.

Now, imagine if families remained in that storm site. Instead of cleaning and rebuilding, they tried to survive off the remnants of their destroyed possessions because they didn't want to face the difficulty of the loss. For them, living with the former had a comfort, thus they didn't have any interest in rebuilding.

It may seem radically insane, but in many ways, the family system operating with an unhealthy addictive-based center does just. Instead of a place ordained by God to represent connection and safety, a disaster site is erected. And where a safe-haven was meant to provide security, survival in "raw" conditions requires adaptive skills. Anyone living in this manner will take on a survival mindset – where the lack of necessities must be overcome by alternative strategies.

WHEN SURVIVAL TURNS DANGEROUS

Survival mode has an instinctual purpose. God gave our physical body survival instincts of sorts to deal with major traumatic events that require extra resources. However, survival is not meant to become a way of life. FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) provided temporary housing to people following the horrible storm Katrina. These homes allowed families to survive when their own homes had been destroyed. In the midst of the crisis, it was a better alternative than having to live in the street. Yet these homes were meant to be used strictly through the crisis, they weren't intended to be a long-term lifestyle. However, tragically some families couldn't afford to purchase another home and remained living in this temporary shelter for several years. Over time, the very homes meant to support an imminent crisis apparently became toxic. Reports indicate that the occupants of the housing a few years later complained of breathing difficulties, nosebleeds and persistent headaches. U.S. health officials admitted that tests found potentially hazardous levels of toxic formaldehyde gas provided by the agency. What is the lesson? The homes had a purpose, but the adaption to them as a lifestyle was never the intention. And when it was used in that manner, it created an entire new level of problems.

In the same manner, when trauma or unhealthy centering harms a family, some survival skills may be required simply to get through the situation. But when this modified system becomes the long-term lifestyle, everyone will get sick. Compensation roles are essentially like a FEMA house being used in the midst of the rubbish. The purpose and reason they are used is perhaps perfectly legitimate and needful. However, the long-term remedy and the power to build back the beautiful home that was lost can only happen through the hands and heart of the Creator of the Universe. It is not a human process at all; it is a process that requires Divine power.

Family members have often learned how to survive in various unhealthy ways. Most people who have adapted unhealthy coping mechanisms don't even recognize them as such because they have become accustomed to them. The first way to evaluate whether or not unhealthy compensation (survival) roles exist is to determine whether or not their fruits exist. Like the physical symptoms that were present as a result of the FEMA housing, we can recognize toxic residue within by the manifestation of their symptoms. When present, we experience shame,

guilt, fear, loss of identity, anxiety, panic, anger, burn out, control, and the hardening of the emotional life. We furthermore are problem-oriented, and chronically aware of the needs that are absent.

ADAPTIVE/SURVIVAL ROLES IN THE UNHEALTHY ADDICTION-BASED FAMILY SYSTEM

In understanding the site of your own storm site, you too need to see how and if you entered into a survival role. At first this can be difficult to recognize, because oftentimes these roles complement aspects of our authentic personality. But one of the sure signs this role exists is when a person ponders and can't answer the question "do I know who I am?"

The purpose of this next section is merely to identify, not to point, blame or label. By assigning each family member (or close relationship) a survival role, we can begin to identify the patterns of balance, control and unhealthy coping. We can see the cause and effect one family member's role has on all the others.

To visualize this, refer to the *The Addiction-Based Family System* on the next page. Imagine this diagram being an actual mobile with hanging parts that work together to produce a centering. The linked family roles have methods of compensation or survival that affects the system as a whole. We are going to take a closer look at each role.

Behavioral/Chemically Addicted Personality

Behaviorally/chemically Addictive Personalities (BCAPs) do not necessarily refer to people who are actively using drugs or alcohol. In fact, addictions come in many forms—including anger, rage, sex, religion, etc. Just the same, people who are chemically addicted can possess characters of other roles we will be mentioning. Because so much emphasis has been given to the "addict" under the influence or in recovery, it can be confusing to understand how that person may or may not fit this role description.

BCAP's usually take the position of centering, thus all other roles adapt around and seek to align with its needs. This personality can be dominating, angry, and controlling yet charming, sensitive and kind. BCAP's typically have a manipulative personality that will accommodate whatever is needed to keep them in control. They have often gained a sense of entitlement within the family system, thus feel perfectly justified to have the other members "serve" their needs. BCAP's have broken issues at the core, but have learned to attach to a substance or other coping mechanism to deal with it. They are not able to love or be intimate in a healthy way.

If BCAPs have "sobered up" without authentic recovery, they can be even more challenging to deal with as they are typically very unhappy, depressed, angry and detached. BCAPs need help, but the system of control and domination will need to be confronted, and this can be a very difficult task. If or when this person does enter recovery, it will by default cause a deep disturbance in the family system as a whole since this was a controlling figure of the entire home. This could lead to a positive change if brought under a centering in Christ.

BCAP's greatest need will be to process emotional pain and effectively heal through the process of recovery. Sobriety will be imperative for this occur, along with a Christ-centered approach.

“Chief Enablers”

Where there is an addict, typically an enabler has also sprung up to deal with their needs and deficiencies of the “storm site.” This personality is typically very controlling and ultra-responsible. Chief Enablers learn to adapt around people who are unavailable. Thus wherever needs exist, Chief Enablers “fill in the gap.” Chief Enablers usually carry the driving force behind the family to “keep it afloat”. They can work three jobs, run a household and participate in ministry all at the same time. However, they are usually extremely out of touch with emotions, and thus live in deep denial. Their external life oftentimes does not connect with their inner life. They may be bitter, angry and resentful. They may, on the other hand, be sweet and accommodating.

Chief Enablers are in desperate need of recovery in order to understand that their seemingly “good” deeds are in fact a danger to themselves and others. The imbalanced mentality of Chief Enablers usually seeps into all aspects of life, thus compensating becomes a lifestyle. Therefore, Chief Enablers will carry an unhealthy perspective of relationships in all facets of life. This is also known as codependency. They will believe that they are meant to do the giving, but usually get nothing or little in return.

Through recovery, Chief Enablers will learn to assert boundaries, and stop taking ownership of other people's problems. Their greatest need is to get in touch with their own feelings, attitudes, beliefs, thoughts and motivations. Most important, they will need to reclaim their authentic identity. In essence, they will need to have their will detached from a people-centered influence to a God-centered position.

It’s important to note that this person is prone to becoming chemically addicted, and could even at some point leave this role and take on the characteristics of a BCAP.

"Good Ones"

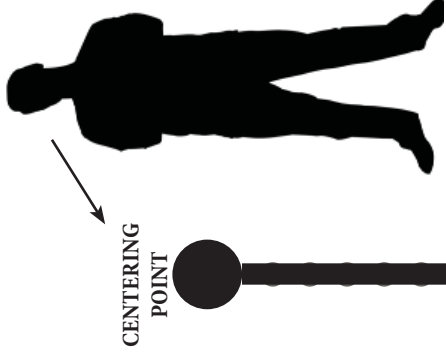
In a dysfunctional family system, a common adaption entails an ultra-responsible role. Good Ones usually go to great measures to do everything right, please everyone and make the family “look good.” While Chief Enablers manage everything, “Good Ones” are very rule oriented and legalistic. They live their lives with a measurement stick. While they may truly be achieving this role at an external level, “Good Ones” never feels validated or “good enough.” Shame begins to coat Good Ones identities, driving them to try harder.

People in this role are usually prone to find unhealthy relationships that continue to perpetuate their own position of “being good.” They unknowingly attract people who are “less than” in order for them to stay elevated in their position.

This personality needs recovery (codependency) in order to break free from these destructive patterns. That's because their entire lifestyle is usually formed around shame. If left

THE ADDICTION-BASED FAMILY SYSTEM

Picture the family as a mobile, with each member bearing individual weight within their respective role in order to bring the family to the designated centering point. During addiction mode, the family assumes roles of survival to deal with the unavailability, problems or deficiencies within the system itself.



BEHAVIORALLY/CHEMICALLY ADDICTED PERSONALITY (BCAP)

This role is the centering point of the family system, therefore all other roles are responding to it. The BCAP can be charming, but is normally controlling and seeking to satisfy a personal agenda. The BCAP is prone to various addictions, which has replaced the ability to be relationally intimate.



INVISIBLE ONE

Invisible and silent family member who is not actively engaging in the family system. Can live in isolation because the attention is focused on other problems.



COUNSELOR

Bears the weight of the emotional needs of the family, trying to entertain, distract or comfort the members from the crisis or problems it faces.



CHIEF ENABLER

Makes up for deficiencies of the BCAP and all other roles. Takes on core of family responsibility to offset anything that is lacking or missing. Maintains structure and uses counter-control tactics with the BCAP. The Chief Enabler is not able to express emotional needs.



GOOD ONE

Feels responsible for bearing a positive image and providing moral structure, guidelines and order in the midst of chaos and wrongful behaviors. Ture and control of family system.



PROBLEM CHILD

Bears the weight of responsibility for the problems that are visible. Family shifts blame and focus on this child and uses this role to distract from other problems that are present with the BCAP dyamic. The problem child oftentimes is prone to drugs, drinking and sex at a young age.



without recovery, "Good Ones" can continue down the pathway of performance, perfectionism and status. However, it should be noted that "Good Ones" can sometimes check out with substance use after becoming exhausted with failed efforts. Thus, can end up doing the exact opposite of what this role originally entailed.

“Family Counselors”

Oftentimes a family member can sense the deep pain and hurt occurring in the family system, and feel obligated to change it. Family Counselors work in a variety of ways to try to help fix what’s wrong. Unlike the other roles, they are especially in tuned with emotional needs. Thus, this compensation role may try to entertain and make the family “happy” by joking or always trying to find comedy relief to distract the family. On the other hand, they can resort to a more serious role of assisting in supporting the emotional needs of each member. A child in this role can actually be the one the parents rely on to talk about the problems. But because this role places the weight of the problems onto that member (especially a child) in an unhealthy way, many negative symptoms will result. Family Counselors are responsible for the needs and problems of others thus will begin to incorporate this as a normal interaction in relationships.

Usually Family Counselors go into the service industry – or enters into a professional role of caregiving. While focusing on the needs of others all the time, they are unable to take care of self. This can lead to physical, emotional and spiritual problems of every magnitude.

“Invisible Ones”

This role hides from the family system through outward activities or inversion. By being unavailable and swept away in a fantasy land, "Invisible Ones" don't have to feel or deal with reality as it is. While "Invisible Ones" don't cause many problems, they are often like a bomb waiting to explode. The lack of relational skills leaves this role very vulnerable to extremely unhealthy behavior. This can include pornography, addiction, violence and even unexpected outrage. They are more prone to suicide than the other personalities.

Invisible Ones can sometimes be the most difficult to access. Their reality can be built around the world of media, video and television. The lack of intimacy and relational skills make it even more difficult to communicate and understand. They desperately need help, but oftentimes will refuse it.

In the family's homeostasis, Good Ones don't offer much to the family one way or another. Thus, this role is somewhat neutral. Although quiet, this role is unpredictable and is prone to create chaos at any given point.

“Problem Ones”

The Problem Ones opt to not follow the system of the family, resorting to rebellious behaviors and attitudes. It becomes easy for all the other family members to therefore blame the Problem Ones, when actually they are usually acting out the dysfunction the family contains (Of course this is not always the case). The basic mindset of Problem Ones is to resist authority and create

their own rules. Thus they often struggle in school and get in trouble with the law. The Problem Ones almost always are engaged in a chemical lifestyle, and usually are involved in sexual relationships that are unhealthy. While they leave the family system, they often attach to friends in a family manner. The loyalty of friends becomes extreme, and in many ways replaces the function intended for the family of origin. Problem Ones can absorb the family's attention, or can compete with the primary addict's position. Children in this position can oftentimes become the family's center, and have the potential to become future BCAPs. If there is another addict in the home, it can create even more chaos as two different addict mindsets are both trying to absorb the center role.

Problem Ones are acting out, and while seeming "bad" they actually have inner wounds that need to be addressed. It is not uncommon for them to be very sensitive and caring, despite the wrongful behavior. Problem Ones learns a very, very unhealthy way to deal with pain. Oftentimes that pain is legitimate, but the method of coping and survival creates toxic patterns. They will have unlimited and unthinkable pain and suffering without intervention - prone to patterns of addiction throughout their lifetime.

SEPARATING A PERSON FROM BEHAVIOR

One of the more difficult tasks for family members to learn is how to separate an addict or other family roles from the actual behavior he or she is producing (Refer to Chapter 1, page 4). The fruit in an addict's life can and should be hated. But the addict is under the influence and needs to be loosed from the addiction's grip. But this isn't only true for the BCAP, it's also true for all the other roles. The adaptive roles have an influence. Thus, even when they produce seemingly "good" behavior, they can in fact be toxic underneath.

To make better sense, imagine each role we learned about as an actual costume that gets put on in order to function in the home. Costumes provide a covering to create a separate reality for the purpose of performance. For example, Disneyland houses many different characters that come to life through the people in costume. As well as they perform their role, at the end of the day that costume is removed, and they return to their authentic selves. Who they are and the roles they play are entirely different, although some of their natural characteristics do complement the role.

Addiction (and all adaptive roles) are not much different – but they aren't connected quite as simply as something you can put off instantly. Everyone ends up wearing a costume that projects a reality different from their authentic identity. Eventually, it becomes normal. An environment is produced where only their "costume" would be considered acceptable. Thus, they can't escape wearing and functioning in it.

RESCUING US FROM COSTUME

God created us for freedom and wholeness. He knows who we really are, because He created us for purpose and significance in His image. In some way, when we live apart from Him by focusing on alternative "centering point", He sees us in these dreadful costumes that were

never authorized by Him. Knowing us as His beautiful and precious children, His heart weeps and cries out for us to return to Him. He longs to return us to the original design. God's love is tender, but it is willing to break down those toxic costumes. To do this, He works with us with intentional and loving methods. But as we will learn God's love is tough, and will use the weapon of pain to break through those faulty survival roles and rescue us individually.

From here on out, we will focus on removing and rescuing the people in an unhealthy family system from their survival roles. We will also learn more about the redemption process of the central addict. It's impossible to fix anything unless you understand that it is broke. Just the same, once you see it isn't working, it can be overwhelming to know how to make it right.

The family won't be able to use any personal effort to change the system. The system that has been aligned with a faulty center has only one solution – to have that centered removed and replaced by the Spirit of God. Because human beings naturally resist change, this usually is a more long-term process. At the same time, we've seen families transition this center point fairly quickly. It depends on two variables: where the family is right now, and how much each member is willing to move towards a new center based on Christ Jesus.

We will be looking at the principles of intervention next, but for now, take some time to embrace your own family homeostasis roles.

Application Points:

1. Explain what your role was/is in the crisis mode of addiction?
2. What was your role as a child in your own family system? Can you see any similarities?
3. What has your emotions displayed during this crisis?
4. Can you define any behaviors you recognize were used to gain control or find a way to cope?
5. Write down anything negative you recognize happening inside you right now. This could include depression, anxiety, fear, anger, resentment, etc. Be as honest as possible.
6. Using the chart in this chapter, personalize it and see if you can identify an overall pattern of control. If you feel that your family is centered on Christ, state is accordingly.

CHAPTER 7

INTERVENTION

When the family has been entwined in the unhealthy addiction centered dynamic, finding an end to it can be difficult. Trying to control, mandate or make an addict stop bad behavior won't work. In fact, most families have exhausted every avenue trying to convince the active addict to stop using. Or, in some cases, the family has stopped even seeking resources, and has adapted to the addiction as a normal way of life. Still others simply give up and leave, never to return or be involved with the addict again.

You are most likely reading this material because you want to see changes and you believe that God can bring healing. Learning how to intervene appropriately in the addict or BCAP's life can be a difficult task. That's because authentic intervention requires two realities: real love for the person under the influence, and hatred of the addictive behavior itself. If either are compromised, intervention is impossible.

Some family members love the person in an unhealthy way, thus allow the addiction and make excuses that allow them to continue to use. We call this enabling, and we will discuss this in detail. Other family members begin to hate the person under the influence of addiction. Deep resentment drives them to punish the addict or inflict injury onto them. This creates a rebellious atmosphere that by default makes intervention unwelcome. It can also just simply end the relationship altogether.

In order for authentic intervention to occur, an atmosphere must be created that allows God to orchestrate redemption, and deters the sinful stronghold of addictive behaviors. Learning how to develop this can be the challenge of a lifetime. Truthfully, as humans we have proven our inability—even through the massive advanced healthcare system—to overcome addiction. We need a power that is greater than the addiction and greater than our effort—we need Gods' power to intervene.

In order for the Lord to be welcome into the scene of our own dynamics, we first should seek to understand His heart and methods of intervention. In other words, if He was dealing with an addict, what would He do? From there, we can gain some tools to understand how to apply it in the situation with the addict. But we must not expect a "how to" list to fix our situations. God doesn't operate through behavioral modification program. He is a heart transformer - He needs full access to both remove what is not of Him, and inject His own life and resources into the needs of the family.

GOD'S INTERVENTION: THE PRODIGAL SON

The best way to gain access into God's intervention style is to read an example directly from His Word. The story of the prodigal son provides a deeply insightful look into the heart of God. It tells of a loving father who honored his son's right to make choices. This son had asked for all his share of the inheritance so that he could have his freedom and live a life his way. Truthfully, this request was foolish and perhaps even disrespectful. But despite that, the father honored his request, and did not hold him back from receiving his portion at that time.

God obviously places a high amount of value on freedom to use such a radical example. That's because it is a hallmark representation of God's system. Therefore the gift of choice as offered, knowing full well he was probably going to fail.

As the prodigal ventured into foolish and careless living, the Father didn't chase the son down. He didn't issue him "I told you so" statement. He also didn't join the son's world and try to make him stop. The Father's own centering remained intact. Instead, He released him and let him face the ramifications for his own choices. However, the father most likely actively prayed for his son—waiting and anticipating his return.

When the son wasted his living and faced an enormous famine, he began to grow weary. His poor choices had few benefits, as he was degraded to the point of having to serve pigs and eat pig food. The pain of his choices began being real. In that broken place, the son carried inside him the knowledge of the place he knew as home. His father didn't forsake him, he forsook his father. As he thought and meditated on his horrible circumstances, he resolved he'd rather return home, even if it required that he be a servant status. The pain he experienced in that moment prompted him to desire and crave to be made well again. The Bible says he had a "come to his senses moment." This was the place where his pain awoke him to the reality that he needed help. Finally, at the point of nothingness and brokenness, the son bit his pride, got up and returned home.

All while this happened, the father's love remained. The father continued to love his son in bad choices, never removing his designated position as a son. In fact, his son had a permanent position in his home, not based on his behavior, but based on his unconditional love towards him. We might picture the son's room being untouched while he was gone – like a hotel room waiting for its reservation to arrive.

As the story goes, the father caught a glimpse of his precious son from a distance venturing to return home. Without hesitation or even the slightest resistance, he ran to greet him with open arms and placed a ring on his finger to symbolize honor. The father even went as far as to throw a party in honor of his son's return.

The significant thing to know about this story is that the son's return represented the act of repentance. The son didn't just physically return to a physical home, but he spiritually returned to a God-base. Since the father's main concern and prayer was for this to occur, when it did in fact happen it was a celebration – an answer to what he had been waiting for and desiring.

APPLYING PRINCIPLES

While the prodigal son is most likely a bible story we've heard over and over again, it provides clear and distinct revelation regarding intervention. These principles will help us form a better understanding of how we can develop our own intervention appropriately.

The father's homeostatic family system was based on freedom. Members could come and go. They had right to make choices, even if they were wrong. The contrast of this would be a system based on control. It would have tried to restrain the son and hold him back. As a result, the son most likely would have rebelled.

The fathers love didn't dependent on behaviors, it loved even in sin and brokenness. But his love didn't condone wrongful behaviors either. Wrong choices didn't in any way sway the father's heart of his deep and steadfast love for his son. His wrong choice hurt him, but didn't change the status of their relationship. In contrast, in the unhealthy family system love is oftentimes skewed or lacking. There might have been a slamming of the door on the son who disobeyed, essentially disowning him as a result of his negative choices. Love would only be offered again after it had been "earned." Just the same, he could have loved his son in an unhealthy way, and entered into an enabling role.

The father allowed the son's choices to take root -he didn't have to follow him, track him down and get him to see his choices were wrong. The father remaining at his home is really a very telling revelation of Gods' heart. He too will not hover, hunt and force our return to Him. Had the father done this, it would have resulted in the constraints of control. The contrast of this would have been the father's obsession to rescue his son, or find what he was doing. If this had happened, the father would have began to center his life around his son's problem. He would have entered into the insane roller-coaster of his son's behavior. His control would have only pushed the son farther away.

The father never once tried to intercept the natural consequences of a bad choice from occurring. As we will discuss in greater detail, God loves us enough to let our bad choices hurt. It becomes teachable moment. In this story, the father had to endure his own pain as he was watching and waiting for the news. The contrast of this would have been a father who bailed his son out from the "come to his sense moments". Imagine the father bringing grapes, cheese and soft pillows into the pig pen. Imagine the father paying for an apartment to "rescue" him from his

awful living environment. Had this occurred, the son would have had no incentive to return home. The story would not have ended in redemption.

The father's heart remained pure and clear from resentment. He was most concerned about his son's wellbeing and the overall condition of his heart. He knew his son would have to learn lessons on his own. Had the father harbored deep bitterness and resentment, his own heart would have become sick. He would have not only had the problems of his son, but now he would have lost his own freedom. Resentment makes the heart sick like nothing else can.

The father endured through faith and hope. While we aren't given the specifics of this, more than likely the picture of the father waiting for return represents the faith he had that he would come back home. When faith and hope are removed, deep depression and discouragement can plague those under its influence. Through faith, the centering point relies more on God's ability than on the bad choices of the addict.

The father was never ashamed of his son – there wasn't even the slightest thread of shame in his approach to his son's return. In fact, quite opposite, the father honored the son's choice to return. This showed that the father placed a higher stake on the redemption than he did on the sin in the first place. Had there been shame, the father would have been embarrassed of his son's return. He would have dishonored him and subjected him to the status of a servant. The family would have functioned under the toxic dynamic of a shame-based system where wrongs outweighed and had more force than forgiveness. No one would have been able to be free.

THE OTHER BROTHER MENTALITY

While the Father was healthy, the story displays a brother who had taken on adaptive role. This brother wasn't quite as happy about the prodigal's return. There is a good chance he was required to accommodate his brother's absence somehow. In his own mind, he reasoned that good behavior should have been honored; and bad behavior should have been considered shameful to the family name. But ironically, and very astonishingly, the father did just the opposite. He honored repentance, and didn't reward good behavior. It wasn't that he didn't appreciate the "good" brother, but the mindset he had was missing his very own heart. God rewards repentance and brokenness, not effort and religious activity. Thus at the point of addict's return to Him, God will reward. Not when the addict has "first cleaned up."

If you have participated in your family role as the Chief Enabler, Good One or any other role of having to compensate for the addict, it should be of no surprise to find that you too will have a difficult time rewarding repentance if or when it occurs. You might want to receive honor for the position you took on, and hold on to resentment for the wrongs the addict committed. We will be discussing this mentality in a later chapter, as it poses a stumbling block to the family's

recovery. It's not that God doesn't understand and love you for what you have done, but His heart is always moved and motivated through repentance, not human effort. Thus, at any point, any family member can lay themselves before God and say, "help me, Lord. I can't do this, and I don't want to do this. I want to return my entire being into your care." This motivates the heart of God like nothing else can. We will discuss these issues in much greater detail in a later portion of the book.

A Prayer of Repentance

Wherever I have been, on the road of rebellion, or have been attempting to be the "good one", I need help. Lord God, this life isn't about me. It isn't formed around what I can or can't do right. It's built around the fact that you have a room reserved in Your heart for me, and I belong to you. I want to return there if I've left or gone astray. If someone I love has left, I ask in that you teach me to wait, to pray and to anticipate their return. Help me rely on your tools, not my own. Help me to see the power and precious resources of pain. Please protect _____ from harm and danger other than for it to be used to draw them back to You.

In Jesus Name – Amen

TOOLS OF INTERVENTION

In our own dealing with addiction, none of us will do it perfectly. Family members do many things out of survival (See Chapter 6) – and most of them have good intentions. But their own efforts are equivalent to trying to come against a full-force hurricane. As the storm is breaking everything apart, family members are clinging to the broken pieces and trying to glue things back together. Thus, their efforts fail, and their hope of healing plunges.

How God wants to enter the scene of addiction is entirely different from our own attempts. The insanity of trying to glue a broken house together while it is being ripped apart will need to get swallowed up with one reality: God can! Yes, it is impossible for us. Yes, we will fail. But God will not fail! He reigns above the storm conditions. He has resources that can directly be used to speak "stop" in the middle of the storm. These are different from our own resources, however, and therefore we must be equipped with understanding.

Using basic principles we have established through God's Word through the prodigal son, we are now ready to develop new tools—tools that reflect His heart, and more important, tools that will put Him in charge. It must be understood that God's way lead us to create an environment that allows Him to intervene and cease the storm. There is nothing we can ever do directly to change a person's heart. In many ways, it is easier to feel we are in control and can assist and stop the addict. Thus, learning how to respond through God's method of intervention

will require inner work in our own hearts. This is why recovery is needed for all family members, not just the person struggling with addiction.

#1. A full surrender must occur where family members acknowledge their inability to change the addict. In essence, family members must see the storm, and face the fact they cannot conquer its power. This is perhaps the most important step of any. As we see in the story of the prodigal, the Father lived in a position of surrender. Freedom allows the gift of choice. God cannot operate where we are attempting to control. When we release the addict to Him, we give Him permission to use His strategies. We get out of the way and allow the God of the Universe to intervene.

Surrender sounds easy when it is written in black and white as solution. However, it needs to occur in the heart. It is not easy to surrender when you have maintained a sense of control. It will be something that you must individually work out between the Father and yourself.

True surrender occurs when we stop looking to manage outcomes. This means we release any effect to manipulate or change how the addict thinks, feels or makes choices. It means we entrust their needs to Him, and we officially “fire ourselves” from any direct management role. That won’t mean we do nothing, it means whatever we do will be under Gods’ mandate, not our personal efforts.

A Prayer to Surrender

Lord God,

I struggle with release because I know no other way. I have done everything possible to manage and deal with the problems of my family. I have carried the weight of responsibility, including _____. I have tried to love, even though it wasn’t done in the proper context. It seems that surrender means I have lost the battle. But in trust, I’m not willing to give up. I’m giving it to you. I acknowledge that you are worthy to direct the needs of _____. I admit to you that I can’t. I humble myself before you and ask you to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Come into our situation and be our God.

In Jesus name - Amen

#2. Declare your love towards the person under the influence. Love wants the addict removed from the bondage of addiction. Love isn't condoning the behavior or helping the addict when they make bad choices. It is common for family members to be disillusioned about how to love. There are many reasons for this. If you are angry or feel the need to punish the addict, your own heart needs to be healed. Thus, when you move forward in any form intervention, you might inflict injury into the process. That doesn't mean your pain is not legitimate. It absolutely is. But you will need a separate process inside your own heart to deal with this.

#3. Understand the purpose of pain. Back in Chapter 3, we learned that addiction had distorted the purpose of pain. Rather than use pain to deal with its source, the addict medicates over it and copes with pain by not facing it. But the wound that produced the pain never left. And more and more layers get created in the process. Pain therefore will be needed, as was the case of the prodigal son, for the real drive of addiction to be understood.

Pain is not bad. It has a blessed purpose. Pain asks us to get help. In fact, all recovery is based on the addict's ability to face pain. If this has not yet happened, you want to learn to partner with God and allow the pain to have its perfect work. Here are some highlights from His Word to assist, but there are many, many more:

Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. - 2 Corinthians 7:9 (NLT)

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. Hebrews 12:11 NLT

#4. All forms of enabling the addiction must end. At a very basic level enabling is a system that is created that unknowingly promotes addictive behavior by allowing it or cushioning any negative consequences that should be the natural effect of poor choices. Enabling reinforces bad behavior, while offers no benefit or reward for positive change. It ends up doing the exact opposite of what is necessary - it allows the addiction, and hurts the addict.

That's not to say that family member can't ever assist the addict. Certainly, there is a time and place, especially when we understand the extreme bondage they are under. But that "help" must support the addict's recovery, not make them able to function comfortably in the addiction itself.

The most common forms of enabling come in very subtle and disguised forms. This can include:

- **Removing the consequences from the addict's bad behavior.** This means rather than have to deal with the reality of a bad choice, a family member removes the consequence altogether. Jeff kept spending money to support his habit. While his mother was aware of his addiction, she continued to be manipulated. When he couldn't pay his rent, or afford to buy his favorite concert ticket, Jeff's mom paid it for him. Jeff had no motivation to quit. He had the best of both worlds.

- **Continuing to own the problems of the addict rather than allow them to own their own problem.** Family members are sometimes more concerned about the addict's situation than the addict. In the addiction cycle, addicts are oftentimes numbed and unaware of the complete chaos and insanity they create. When Julie received a drunk-driving ticket and was put in jail, her mother was hysterical. She drove four hours to claim her car, tow it to have fixed, and post bail money. As Julie came out of jail, she was disrespectful and rude, with no appreciation for her mom's efforts. She immediately went drinking, all while her mother secured an expensive lawyer to bail her out of her bad choices. Julie didn't need to have problems, because her mother carried them on her behalf.
- **Allowing the addict's denial to dictate reality.** Denial is a powerful force that asks everyone to respond to it. Rather than deal with addiction as it is, denial forces members to view it through the perspective of the addict. Tom's addiction was ruling the home, as he terrorized the family with all things they were doing wrong. The focus and blame was continually placed on them throughout the day, giving Tom permission to continue to use. The family obliged and agreed with him, thus helped perpetuate that denial. That's because they were too afraid and beaten down to come against Tom. Outside help was needed for them as well as for Tom.
- **Filling in the gaps for everything the addict can't or won't do.** While the addict can do irresponsible things, usually they are failing to do what is their God-given duty. From work to home, often the addict doesn't need to fulfill their role because someone else is already doing it for them. Marilyn worked two jobs to support her husband. He had no ambition to find a job, and said he was entitled to be at home. He lived off the benefits of his wife's income, all while offering very little in return. Marilyn did everything for her husband, and he didn't have any incentive to learn to carry his weight, or certainly to stop his addiction. Marilyn unknowingly created adaptation that perpetuated rather than ended the addiction cycle.
- **Excusing the addict's behavior, blaming something or someone else.** When the addict has a family that supports their behavior, the family will actually look for ways to protect that member from even having to admit a problem in the first place. In fact, this is the most common error that parents and close family members make. In their own idea of "love" they see "a good heart" underneath the addict, thus they don't ever deal with the wrongful behavior. This protection can become so extreme, that if anything or anyone threatens that person, the family can actually lie and manipulate in the same manner as the addict. Frank was in denial over his wife's problem, and didn't want to do anything that would hurt or disrupt her. Thus, when people tried to convince him he needed to get her help, he was defensive. He excused and justified her behavior to the point that he lied and covered for her. In doing so, he was protecting the very bondage she was under. He was serving her addiction every bit as much as she was.

Usually when the addict comes to the end of their resources and feels the pain, they are ready to say “help.” Again, this is not guaranteed, but more often when the negative effects of the addiction far outweighs the benefits, the addict stands a very good chance to want assistance. At first, however, a war might break out. If the addict is accustomed to getting his or her needs met, when those needs aren’t accommodated, the response could be quite volatile. You should always seek outside assistance if violence or excessive threats could potentially harm you or the addict. It's also important to make adjustment in the tone of love, not shame. In fact, if shame is present, it needs to first be dealt with before healthy intervention can even occur.

Some of the scenarios where addiction becomes intolerable, and produces more pain than benefit includes:

- Addict is forced to feel ramifications of bad choices. This means his or her own decisions cause problems, and no one is available to bail the addict out or remove those consequences.
- Addict deals with overwhelming loss as a result of the lifestyle and choices. Oftentimes everything the addict once loved or values begins to slip away.
- Addict faces the potential of a marriage loss. A spouse may tolerate the addiction up to a certain point, and then opt to leave the marriage.
- Addict faces the potential of a job loss. The addict may lose functionality to the point that he or she is unable to function in the work environment. It should be noted that places of employment are required to accommodate substance abuse treatment. Thus this doesn't need to occur, but can when the addict isn't willing to get help.
- Addict faces serious health problems. The physical body can be worn down and sick to the result of serious health issues or even the potential of death.
- Addict faces serious criminal and legal problems. Both jail and prison can be the "come to the senses" moment.
- Addict has a spiritual encounter - conviction by the Holy Spirit. It's possible for an addict to hear a message or read the Word and receive conviction directly from the Holy Spirit.

As we look at this list, one thing should be clear: pain is a necessary and needed ingredient. What may seem “unloving,” when we are trusting in God (not our own efforts), allowing these breaking points is the most loving acts we can offer. That’s because the addict needs the toxic addiction released from him or her like a literal chain. The addict is blinded to addiction and serving it. But underneath is a precious person that you love. A person that has the opportunity to live, love and be free.

Does this have a risk? Of course. Addiction does kill. That's why when help is wanted, it should always be offered to the struggling addict just so long as it aligns with his or her sobriety and healing. But it is loving to not participate in the addict’s life under denial in any way, shape or form.

#5. Actively Pray and Seek God for their return. Surrender and the removal of enabling may be a stark contrast for a family member who had been doing the hands-on role of caring for the addict. The most important change will not be a totally passive role. Rather, the active role of the family member seeking intervention will revolve around prayer and supplication. As we will learn more about recovery, this process may be intended for the addict, but in turn will bring radical transformation to the family member. That's because prayer creates a dialogue that begins to assert God's authority. It creates a dependency on Him, and thus moves our own centering point to Him. This will have enormous ramifications. Family members will be able to experience God, to know Him and begin to absorb His character. They will begin to experience personal change and the ability to see self and other through His perspective. This will be a process and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 11.

#6. Place a holy standard (boundary) that protects your own heart from wrongful behaviors. The story of the prodigal son is one of healthy boundaries, yet the adherence of personal rights. The father gave his son his own rights, without hindrance. In the same manner, he gave his son his own consequences, without interference. While the family system is meant to unite each other, this is meant to occur under a formula of love, respect, intimacy, acceptance, grace and holiness. Each person within a healthy family system is validated in their unique rights to think, to feel, to make choices and to engage with God and each other. Wrong choices that hurt another bear a consequence of some sort. That consequence is meant to validate the sacredness of the person or people who were affected. We see this mentality in our legal system. If we break the law, we will face some sort of penalty. The governance of boundaries in a healthy way isn't to control, but to protect.

Boundaries also allow family members to live a life centered on God rather than on addiction. Through boundaries, family members can keep out the addictive behavior and set consequences for wrongful choices that attempt to sabotage their own heart.

Boundaries will include:

1. The opportunity for the addict to be free to make choices (not control)
2. The communicated standard of allowance in the home (what is okay, what is not okay). This standard can't dictate someone else's behavior (which would be control). Rather, it acts as a protective fence that determines what is given access.
3. A clearly designated and reasonable consequence (if you drink, this will happen)
4. A willingness to follow through on the consequence if it is breached. If consequences are not followed through, then the boundary itself no longer has any value
5. A loving intent to allow the addict to repent and return at any point, where he/she can be welcomed with open arms when recovery occurs
6. A loving intent not to be manipulated when the addict wants to return under any other circumstances (blame the program, blame treatment, say they don't need help, etc.)

#7. Implement a Personal Intervention Plan

We will discuss this in great detail in Chapter 11. It's important to understand that a separate recovery plan will deal with the detailed nature of everything discussed in this book. Since this book is pointing towards a solution, that next step needs to be sought. Recovery is about getting our own heart right, and making sure we have the tools to make healthy choices and stop the insanity. *It is not about directly changing or fixing the addict.* Through recovery you can rid any toxic resentments, bitterness, as well as heal from the trauma you have faced. We will discuss this in great detail. For now, it's important to not lose hope. God loves you.

A Prayer of Intervention

Lord God,

How often I fought and sought advice on how to save _____. How often I believe that if that problem was resolve, I would also be okay. It is clear that I've entangled in this process too, and that my real need it become untangled. Show me how to be free from anything that has caused me to not see clearly. And from there, I ask for wisdom, authentic wisdom to make decisions that can establish an environment conducive to your redemption. Help me Father! I need you!

In Jesus name - Amen