

CHAPTER EIGHT

# THE ADDICT IN RECOVERY

When Jesus came to walk the earth, He was fully aware of its condition. Like walking onto the scene of wreckage after a storm, He felt the despair of what was broken. He did not expect things to be right, beautiful or whole. In fact, like a disaster relief expert, His very reason for being placed here was to fix and redeem the site of the storm.

The Word of God introduces us to this radical, loving gracious Jesus who had no expectations, no self needs to satisfy and imposed no criteria for His involvement other than an invitation. We are told in John that He did not come to judge the world, but to save it (John 3:17). Therefore, He didn't seek to find people in a righteous state, and most certainly didn't merely chastise them for their own heart condition. The Jesus of the Bible stooped down, went into the mess and met people directly at their point of need. To those that received Him, He was able to dissolve brokenness and orchestrate a powerful re-ordering. That's because when His life and power were injected, everything would be made new. The price He paid at Calvary bore everything necessary to bring things back to life.

That same Jesus is alive and well, residing inside us through the Holy Spirit (if we have invited Him.) Understanding His agenda and overall nature puts our own situation into the proper perspective. He too is waiting to be summons to scene of our own storm. Despite the mess, entanglement and damage, He comes with every resource in the power of grace to redeem and restore us at an individual level. However, in God's kingdom, seeing is not believing. Instead, faith will require that first we believe before we can see. Both the addict and family members will need to learn individually how to connect and understand how to relate spiritually to Him through a personal relationship.

It is amazing how many times Jesus comes calling and knocking on the hearts of addicts and family members alike, only to be continually refused entry. Within the stronghold of the addictive system, family members can have an almost compulsive need to problem solve, and thus diminish God's role. The addict avoids Him altogether.

Yet our merciful God stands ready and waiting to be dispatched and sent to perform the task of rescuing, redeeming and rebuilding. But first the family and the addict must believe He is fully competent. Sometimes, this requires a process in the heart.

### **A Prayer to Invite God**

Dear Father,

I hire you. I hire you because You are competent and able. I hire you because I believe you can bring the aid and assistance for me and my family members. I hire you because I don't have the resources. I acknowledge that my best own efforts fall short. Build my hope and trust in You. Give me eyes to see like You see. Fill me with your Holy Spirit so that I can abound and be free to be all that you created me to be, and in that freedom, I can encourage and partner with you to see those around me set free. I give you rightful permission to break through the barriers of survival living, and to be the God that Your Word claims you are - powerful, mighty, loving, strong, and merciful. In my weakness, I can be strong in you. I can be everything you created and intended me to be.

In Jesus Name - Amen

## **WHAT IS RECOVERY?**

All true recovery will involve the process of departing the lifestyle of survival (through chemical or other faulty adaptations) and building a life centered on Christ. Most people who have experienced a Christ-centered recovery process in its fullness would call it the gift of a lifetime. Through recovery, they received something they never had in the first place: authentic love, peace, joy, wholeness and security. These rewards are so massive that people who have received them will claim gratitude for the storm and wrecking that occurred first. For without it, they may never have had the opportunity to experience God's rebuilding.

True recovery involves two redemptive motions of God: to remove that which doesn't belong (the debris of the storm), and to replace it with what He intended (rebuilding after the storm). God doesn't modify behaviors. He's not concentrating on making the external change alone. That's because all true change must occur by resolving the deeper rooted issues that affect the soul and spirit. Trying to change the behaviors without having the heart changed first would be like building a structure minus any sturdy foundation. The wall and roof would eventually fall down. But when God is given access, He will build from the "ground up" - beginning with a foundation that is strong, dependable and can house the very life of God.

While the transferring of systems may seem like an obvious goal, change is naturally resisted. The homeostasis environment that has been created individually and within the family system tends to want to retain its faulty centering point. In reality, change can be a difficult journey. Seasons of transition can be filled with both fear and hope. It needs to be understood and validated that there is no magic fix that will zap everything into place immediately. That's not to say that the touch of God isn't profound. One touch of His spirit can set in motion a brand new life. But much of recovery is a process of change. It can at times be painful and other times glorious. It does require a lifelong commitment to follow Him and allow Him to re-center our lives. But here is where we start to move away from the power of the storm, and move into the wonderful reality of life in Christ.

Anyone who has truly experienced the authentic power of God's love will find abiding in Him to be exceedingly abundantly beyond anything that we have ever thought or imagined (Ephesians 3:20). He is not a religion. He is not merely a history book. He is a Person - a Lover, Healer, Redeemer, Father, Spouse and

Friend. The journey will never be about sobriety alone - the goal is to know Him, be conquered by His love and be conformed into His image.

## FRAMING CHRISTIAN ADDICTION RECOVERY

While we are going to review recovery for all family members, the next few chapters will deal with the recovery process of the person that has been under the influence of drugs and alcohol. It can be difficult to understand how to incorporate Christianity into a process that has been hijacked by the secular world view. In truth, there are different avenues that can be used to produce a positive recovery program. We certainly can't claim that what we will share is the absolutely, one and only pathway in recovery. However, there is only Jesus Christ who can bring true inner transformation, and therefore we will focus upon His principles.

What the world calls a brain disease, we believe is a sin disease. Everything God created was good. But then the broken condition of the human heart took that same thing and perverted it into another outcome. By seeing sin as the disease rather than merely a physiological brain disease, we can apply a spiritual solution as opposed to being fully reliant on the medical system.

Calling it a sin problem doesn't mean we will use tactics of guilt and shame. We don't need to beat someone over the head with the Bible. A pastor who can simply give biblical justification as to the sinful nature of addiction oftentimes negates or misunderstands bondage. This can cause a very callous and misinformed approach to aiding the addict. Everything in this world that is done apart from God will lead to some form of death within. Addiction is one of many ways this can occur.

On the other hand, we are not ignorant of the disease model embraced by secular and many Christian organizations. We use medical professionals in our program, and at times certain medication is necessary. But we simply refuse to stand under the world's authoritative label. God can deliver a person out of the "disease" of addiction because He already paid the price for it. But sobriety and recovery must be a lifelong commitment. And for the addict, this will need to entail a serious, diligent and continual pursuit of change.

## ARE THE 12 STEPS BIBLICAL?

Most everyone is familiar with the twelve-step programs and before we delve into a deeper form of biblical deliverance, we want to briefly touch on this. The twelve-steps have a rich heritage in Christianity. The men that formed Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) had a spiritual conversion to Christ, and believed he was the solution entirely. However, through time and changes, the program began to focus more and more on respecting individual beliefs in a "higher powers". In some ways this was necessary. Some people aren't ready for a Christian approach, thus they wouldn't seek any help at all unless this option were made available. The process itself is effective enough to bring a form of stabilization. What most people don't know is that those steps are actually pointing to God's system of redemption. They are twelve biblical steps (see next page) that offer a spiritual prescription of scripture.

People benefit from the twelve steps even if they do not know Jesus because they are actually biblical principles that contain natural benefits. Like laws of nature, these steps work just because they were designed by God to promote a particular change. If you have an addict who resists a Christian approach, it's

## 12 STEPS WITH SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

<p><b>Step One - "We admitted that we were powerless over our alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable".</b></p>	<p>And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. 1Romans 7:18 18</p> <p>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8</p>
<p><b>Step Two - "Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity".</b></p>	<p>Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Ephesians 4:23</p>
<p><b>Step Three - "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him".</b></p>	<p>If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Scripture - Romans 10:9</p>
<p><b>Step Four - "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves".</b></p>	<p>Instead, let us test and examine our ways. Let us turn back to the LORD. Scripture – Lamentations 3:40</p>
<p><b>Step Five - "We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs".</b></p>	<p>But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. – 1 John 1:9</p> <p>If we say that we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. Scripture – 1 John 1:8</p> <p>Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. Scripture – James 6:15</p>
<p><b>Step Six - "We became entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character".</b></p>	<p>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up in honor. – James 4:10</p>
<p><b>Step Seven - "We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings".</b></p>	<p>But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. – 1 John 1:9</p>
<p><b>Step Eight - "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all".</b></p>	<p>Do to others as you would like them to do to you.– 1Luke 6:31</p>
<p><b>Step Nine - "We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others".</b></p>	<p>So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.– Matt 5:23</p>
<p><b>Step Ten - "We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it".</b></p>	<p>If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. – 1 Cor. 10:12-13</p>
<p><b>Step Eleven - "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out</b></p>	<p>Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom He gives. – Col. 3:16</p>
<p><b>Step Twelve - "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs".</b></p>	<p>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.– Gal. 6:1</p>

important that you embrace the twelve -step process. At most meetings at least one or more really do know Jesus, and refer to Him as their Higher Power. Sometimes, those meetings are the place where they are introduced to their Savior. However, the twelve steps minus God cannot lead to freedom within. There is no freedom and alignment of identity without a relationship with Jesus Christ. Thus as wonderful as they are, they cannot heal the heart in and of themselves, as can no program. And even more important, they do not save a person for eternity and allow them entrance into God's Kingdom.

We are not going to go deep into the twelve steps directly, but rather want to explain a process that links people to the power of God's redemptive heart. This process coincides with the twelve steps, and so you will see how it aligns to each step. However, because we are authoring this book and administering treatment through a spirit-led Christian worldview, we can explain this process in greater detail from God's perspective rather than be completely reliant on the twelve steps.

We will discuss the need for a twelve step program as a long-term plan and an essential part of the recovery process. It not only contains a remedy, but it provides a community of support that is necessary.

## UNDERSTANDING CONNECTION

Recovery involves a complete transformation of the person: body, soul and spirit. The body under bondage of addiction first needs to have that influence removed. The body will need to deal with cravings and the imbalances that have occurred within the brain. A structured detoxification program is strongly recommended for a safe and more effective approach. The body will need to be cared for through healthy diet and nutrition to make up for the depletions that have occurred. Understanding nutritional needs and supplements is an important of recovery. This book will not address those specific issues. However, we want to emphasize that the physical body's needs cannot be rejected entirely in the name of spiritual healing. Medical help should be sought for any major issues.

The connection made to addiction was not just a physical dependency, and thus everything won't simply align once it is gone. Instead, it was a false source of comfort that led to unthinkable bondage. Addiction empowered the addict with a wrongful set of tools.

Before any true change can occur, the disconnection must not only be made physically, but the will must transfer from a system of selfish, self-centered survival to God dependency. We learned in Chapter 4 that the spiritual connection with God was broken. This created a disconnect from the source of life and power. Thus, before learning anything, the addict must understand how to reestablish that connection (or connect for the first time).

## THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The connection needed to perform the deeper work of recovery involves the Person of the Holy Spirit. In fact, He is the source of light, truth, revelation, conviction, comfort, change and eternal hope. The need to understand that the Holy Spirit is not "spooky" or strange theology is essential. Some people are turned off by His name because they have been exposed to beliefs that seem to make Him perform odd activities. Others don't believe that the Holy Spirit is even a present force, citing the Bible as the source of information and all that is necessary to deal with life issues. However, all theology and bible knowledge won't save a person dying from bondage. They need a real, tangible, authentic power source.

The Holy Spirit is a person who has been granted authority in our lives to abide inside us and give us the power to perform God's will. While Jesus saves us and becomes our Bridegroom, the Holy Spirit enters into our lives to align us, make us holy and remove the brokenness. While they are two different People, they are one with the Father at the same time (the triune God). Thus they are all the same power.

Connecting to the Holy Spirit is the most vital and necessary step of any. In the practical sense, we understand the concept of electricity being used in a home. Without it offered as an energy source, there is a loss of use of anything that is dependent on its power. Those objects in need of electricity will still exist in the physical sense, but they cannot perform the complexities and useful purpose of their created design. The addict was not only misaligned with God-given purpose, but had succumbed to the addiction to the point that the addict's own body became a death trap. What was intended to be a blessing, had then become a curse.

The Holy Spirit offers a direct link to the life of God inside of us. This can turn the power back on to be realigned with God's purpose. Most drug addicts are familiar with the term "the connection." It referred to their source to purchase drugs. In the same manner, they will need to make the Holy Spirit their new connection - but He is the source of life! What a much bigger reward!

## WALKING INTO LIGHT: GOD'S SYSTEM OF TRANSFORMATION

With a connection to the Holy Spirit, one of the immediate changes that occurs is the presence of Light. The Word of God refers to God's Kingdom as the Kingdom of Light, and to Satan's system as the Kingdom of Darkness. Darkness is not just the manifestation of bad behaviors, it is a system based on lies with a strategy to dismantle the power of God. The behaviors of this system can be evil, or they can be hidden behind seemingly "good things." In either case, when a person is walking in darkness, they cannot see or comprehend truth. They are blinded by their own heart issues, and limited to skewed data their mind is processing in a given moment.

When under the influence, the addict wants to stay hidden to continue using. Since God will disrupt that compulsive need, the addict will push Him away, and choose the darkness as a lifestyle. This can happen to a Christian as much as to an unbeliever. But once an addict begins seeking and calling on God, he or she has the opportunity to walk into the light. Because the addict has been in darkness, the light can feel overwhelming. And that is typically where the fight emerges at its fiercest point.

The principle of darkness speaks for itself. Darkness cannot be cleaned, removed or swept away. Instead, the removal of darkness only occurs through the entrance of light. The amount of light allowed into a darkened room determines the level of visual clarity. A match removes some darkness, but not so much. Whereas a set of flood lights exposes an area vividly. Therefore, the amount of light that is allowed will determine the level of freedom that is experienced. It is quite normal for an addict in recovery to have both light and darkness. You might think of this as a room that has some parts lit, and some parts darkened.

The bible tells us that the eye is what determines if light is given access (Matthew 6:22-24). This is the vision and focus we have based on God's principles. Once that vision transfers back to a system of survival and coping, the darkness will return. These systems directly compete against each other and one

will eventually outweigh the other. We will look at this once again in Chapter 11 when we deal with competing systems of light and darkness within the family system itself.

## THE PRESENCE OF LIGHT

The most important thing to understand about Light is that it provides an environment conducive to life, growth and all forms of healing. Just as plants will wither and perish with a lack of light, so the addict in recovery cannot grow and be filled with God's life if they do not remain in the Light. But once light is allowed, an environment is established that can make life thrive and grow. Thus the goal of recovery should be the removal of all darkness.

Darkness	← Person →	Light
Shame, forgiveness, hiding, sin, covering, brokenness, loss of purpose, loss of identity, unhealthy relationships, unhealthy coping, negative emotions, control, lying, denial.	The level of light, the level of freedom. The level of darkness, the level of bondage.	Grace, love, hope, peace, forgiveness, redemption, wholeness, identity, stabilizing emotions, relationship skills, truth, openness, vulnerability and healthy coping skills.

To better understand the nature of darkness and light, we are going to break down its essential features. In other words, if the addict walks into the light, what does that mean? What happens in the light that causes them to change?

### #1. LIGHT REVEALS TRUTH

If we return to the principles of Chapter 2-4, we learned how addiction occurs physically, emotionally and spiritually. The body was kept in bondage by the God-created chemical processes being manipulated, and turning against themselves. But physical bondage was only the effect. The problems of the addict stemmed back to the area of faulty thinking, the inability to cope with emotions and the loss of the self will. The moment that will is conquered by God and the addict steps into the light of His Kingdom, a dramatic shifting occurs. In the light, the addict can see the truth of what has been occurring. This is called coming out of denial (step1).

Truth has many ramifications. It isn't simply reading the Bible. The Bible provides a handbook for truth, so it will incorporate that important discipline. But the ability to see truth will be an exposure to the nature of lies that engulfed the addict's thought life, which led to emotional pain and eventually the use of medication.

When the light comes into the heart, whatever has the residue of bondage, shame, sin, unhealthy coping, violation, etc. can be dealt with properly. Like a home that sat in darkness, once the light comes on, any dirt, mess or disorganization is revealed. That isn't meant to be negative. It is meant to offer exposure that in turn can lead to a cleansing process.

The Bible explains that the entrance of light occurs because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. One of His jobs is to guide the believer into all truth - to give them spiritual eyes to see, and the ability to adopt

the mind of Christ. This will not happen in a moment. The mind has been programmed with many strongholds (lies that have become truth), thus darkness will need to continually dispel those areas. Let's see what God's Word says regarding this:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. ...John 14:16-17

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.' - John 16: 13-1

In applying this to what we learned in Chapters 2-4, the truth is the remedy for the mind, where faulty beliefs and thoughts drove the addict's life. Thus truth must replace the lies. It must also remain as the guiding force in order for any transformation to occur. If another point of view other than God's truth is introduced, it will diminish who God is and the power of His promises.

The Enemy will work to try to confuse and sabotage the process of recovery by making a lie sound alluring. This is why new age practices and artificial modalities based on anything other than Jesus Christ will not work. He is the source of truth! Only truth brings freedom! We have quoted it several times, but this Bible verse lies at the heart of this process. "And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." - John 8:32

## **#2. LIGHT GIVES US THE PROPER VISION OF THE HEART AND CHARACTER OF GOD**

Once God's truth is introduced, His character and agenda can be comprehended. After all, it's important to know who He is and what He is after. This is where all hope can be formed (step 2). It's not simply that the addict needs to focus on changing external, but needs to first know the One who authors change. Authentic and genuine Christian recovery cannot be imposed onto people in a religious way. A relationship with Jesus Christ must become personal, real and tangible. He must move off the pages of the Bible and into a personal encounter and experience. And that will always happen through the gift of free choice, not by imposing theology.

Addicts must come in touch with God's love, grace and the understanding of His holy character. They will need to learn of Him in Fatherly way to know that He has a tender and passionate desire for their wholeness. And because of the intensity of His love, He will seek to protect them from danger. He will use discipline to enforce the importance of obedience.

How the addict sees God is how they will learn to see themselves through Him. Thus understanding His heart is imperative. God's nature is composed of His love and His holiness. They are perfectly balanced to formulate the recipe for redemption. God will always have a loving agenda, but it will just the same be a holy agenda. The real goal of God is to make His children holy. He wants to set them aside for His purposes and prepare a generation for His return. While there are many practical circumstances that must be worked out, this is God's central agenda.



People "freak out" that God's holiness sounds like some strict, religious dreary place to be. Legalistic Christianity makes it that way. But in knowing God's heart, we'll discover that holiness is a process of separation. God is holy because He is separate from anything impure. He injects holiness in our lives to do the same - to separate who we are from the sin that has brought corruption. Therefore, He desires that we eventually align with His perfect, God-created purpose and identity, and be delivered from the sin and brokenness that stole that purpose.

### **#3. THE LIGHT GIVES THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE ON PERSONAL IDENTITY AS GOD'S CHILD**

Once addicts learn who God is and His rightful agenda, they can embrace the central role in life - learning to be God's child. Living as a child of the King births a brand new identity. It removes the fear and slave mentality that addiction created.

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. - Romans 8:15-16

One of the most beautiful areas of transformation occurs when addicts embrace sonship (or daughterhood) and develop hearts like little children. The Word tells us that God seeks after people that will come to him this way (Matthew 18:3-4).

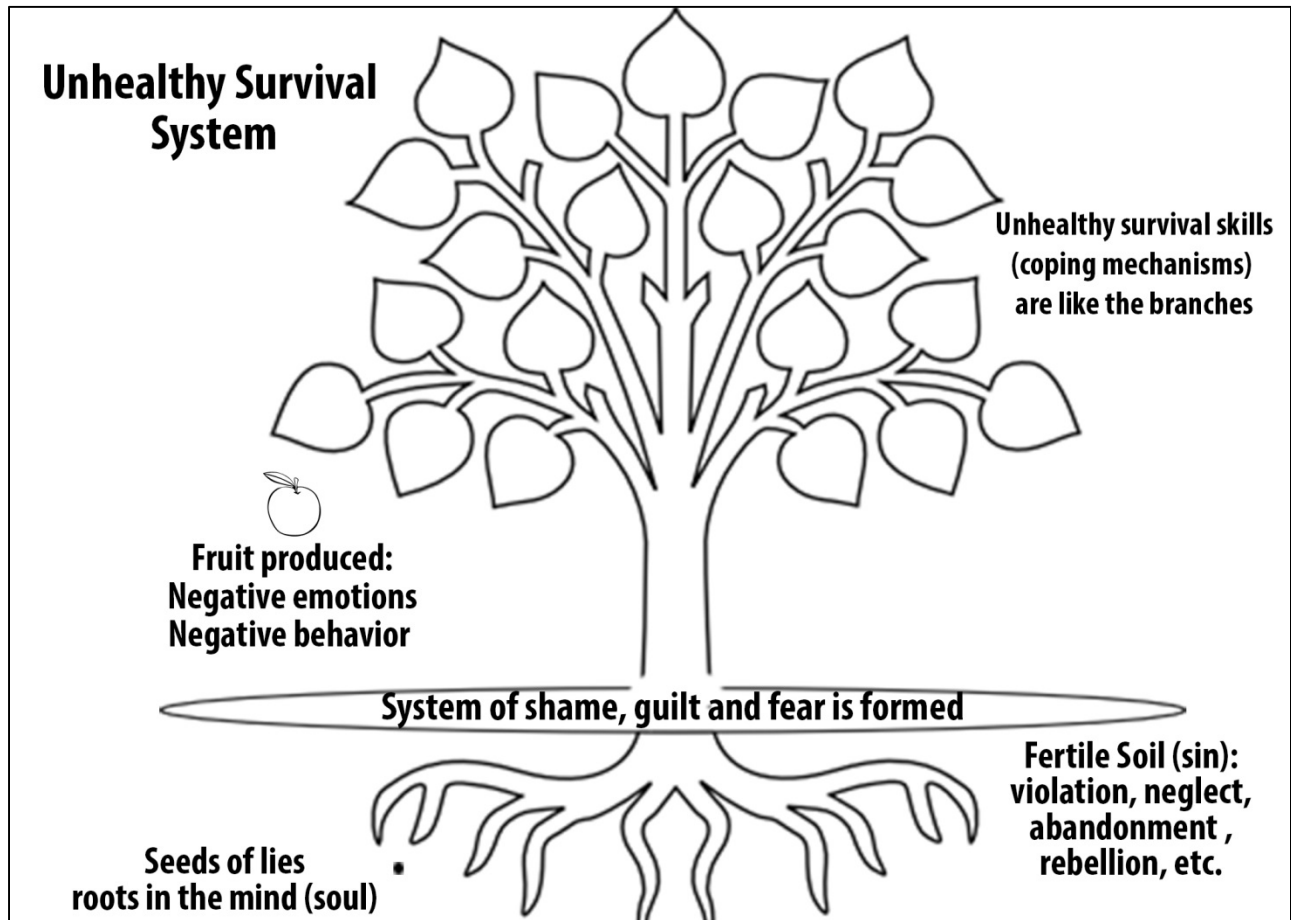
The identity we each have in Christ is one of the most important principles to embrace. The freedom will come as addicts can stand on the interpretation of who God declares rather than what the past has dictated. Being loved, valued, accepted and honored by the God of the Universe as one of His own has more power behind it than words can give justice. It is at the heart of freedom.

### **#4. LIGHT ALLOWS FOR CLEANING TO OCCUR**

As we already mentioned, turning on the lights has the purpose of exposing what's dirty or contaminated. This is an extremely important principle to embrace - because the washing and cleaning must occur for freedom to occur. The light of God automatically has cleansing effect (1 John 1:7). However, the enemy has worked in the addict's life to strategically plant toxic seeds in the mind. And this is where a deeper form of deliverance must be sought.

Most addicts are operating from a system that was originally created to mask, hide or medicate from something that had taken root before they began to use. It could be many things: trauma, death, divorce, physical problems, rejection, abandonment, etc. The seeds that are planted are not just these actual events, but the lies attached to them that become ingrained in the mind as truth (a stronghold). Sin produces shame, guilt, fear and countless other negative effects. The negative emotions that the sin produces invokes action. The fruit is simply the life of that seed. By seeing it in this sense, it should be clear that all toxic seeds, along with roots and their respective fruit must be removed (See diagram on next page). If these seeds are not understood and pulled out, they will eventually take root again. All behavior is the actual fruit of a seed. If the focus of recovery is changing behavior without ridding the seed and renewing the mind, that toxic root will spring back up. It may come in the form of another addiction, but rest assured it will rise back up.

Therefore, "root digging" is necessary for long-term freedom. Not only that, but new seeds will need to be planted based on God's truth - this will happen gradually through the biblical process known as sanctification (Romans 12:2).



## HOW BAD SEEDS ARE REMOVED

Because seeds are difficult to see at surface level, a deeper process needs to be engaged. For this purpose it is critical that the addict revisit the past for a season in order to come to grips with the nature of those seeded issues.

We might think of sifting through the past like working through a pile of dirt. The addict must sift through the soil where the seeds were planted in order to find the ones that are active and producing something negative.

At New Life Spirit Recovery, our counseling process is designed to intensively bring the client through all life experiences, especially those related to relationships and any introduction of trauma. The event itself does not remain in focus. Standing as the victim of something in and of itself will not bring freedom! Instead, seeing, comprehending and understanding the pain of the past has a divine purpose: it exposes the seed and the root. Not only that, but it begins to highlight both the rooted lie and the faulty

coping that began to emerge as a result. Faulty coping opens the door for all forms of addiction and survival adaptations.

Linda entered into recovery like most addicts: worn down, filled with shame and afraid that she could never live a life behind her addiction. Her current life had been so overcome by her addiction, that she had piles of rubbish that seemed impossible to sort out. But instead of immediately working on ways to fix her current circumstance, Linda was asked to write her life story, with details, about everything that happened in life from childhood, to adulthood. But in order for this occur under the context of truth, she was asked to do this by allowing Jesus to lead the way. Therefore, she didn't recall through her memory alone, but asked The Lord to take her hand and allow her to see what needed to be brought into the light.

Much to her shock, by the time she arrived at the current circumstances, she could clearly see they were effects of many other issues that she had dealt with. At a young age, a sexual assault led Linda to check out through false comfort (seed planting). Her violation led her into a severe distortion of her identity, worth, and sense of being protected by those she loved (shame, guilt and fear). As her mind was focused on faulty beliefs, her emotions followed into different levels of pain that she did not know how to deal with. To begin to "feel better" she used sex and the pursuit of the acceptance of a man. Her lifestyle of using drugs and prostitution all was produced from a seed, and a developed system to cope.

Linda had run so hard from her inner pain, she had never been able to face or see that the heart of that young girl had been violated. Being asked to step into her that little girl's shoes and feel what she felt was encountering the raw emotional pain that led her to check out in the first place.

That root drive produced all sorts of dysfunctional choices, until it was buried by layers and layers of toxic fruit. Untangling the heap of rubbish in her own life experience would first need to occur before true solution could happen. A separation of these different events and choices would need to be understood through the scope of God's truth. From there, a spiritual remedy could be applied.

## **RIDDING SIN DAMAGE**

Awareness of a problem is the beginning of all change. But it is not enough. Going back through the past is a temporary and purposeful journey. It is meant to extract the unhealthy roots permanently, in order to prevent those seeds from reproducing again. Looking into the past is not meant to lead to a lifestyle of introspection, where the events begin to be empowered. Instead, it empowers a solution - a method of eradicating the very issues that led to using in the first place.

All transformation comes through the power of redemption and forgiveness. In fact, the central message of the Bible is that Jesus came to give us life. He came to redeem and rescue us from the horrible nature of sin. In fact, Jesus is a Cleanser, a Healer, A Rescuer, A Redeemer and a Restorer. His job is to meet people in their brokenness and sin. Thus, when He is initiating and exposing the problems, He is able to stand closely by and pour on His solution.

There are two primary ways this occurs:

1. Forgiveness must be received for any sin that has been done
2. Forgiveness of other people's wrong doings must be administered

Forgiveness is no simple "pat" answer. Many times people will say "Oh I forgave them a long time ago" when in truth that sin was buried and had developed a deep and penetrating root that brought much

contamination. Real forgiveness is accessing the blood of Jesus Christ that was spilled on Calvary directly over that seed as to eradicate its existence altogether. Nothing else but the blood of Jesus is able to do this. In order for this to occur, it will require a season of going into the "dirt" of those seeded issues to see them in their proper perspective. But even more important, it will be learning to access the precious resource of grace - something only accessible by encountering the Jesus that paid the price of that sin personally.

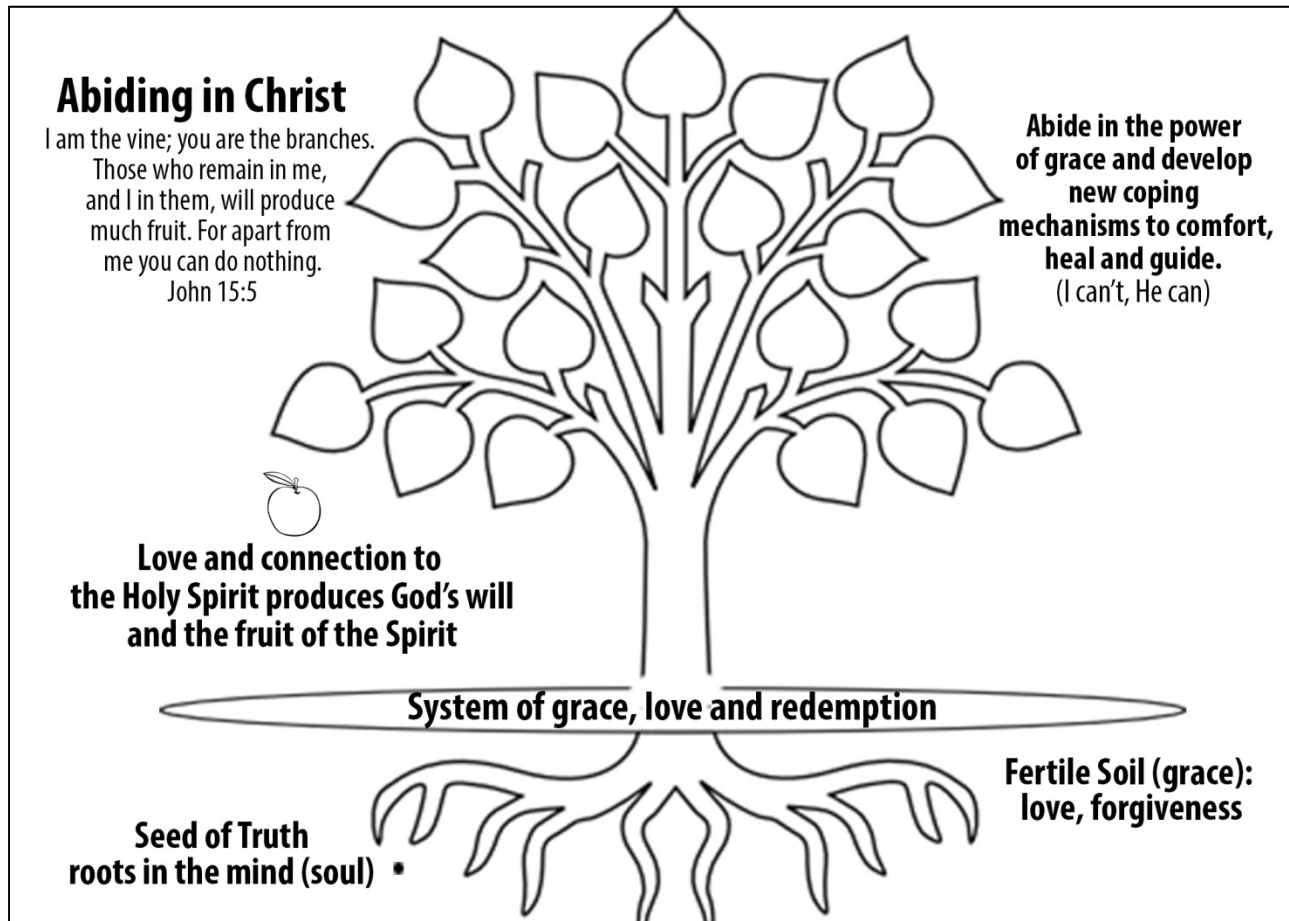
God's grace won't say "oh it, okay, it's over. Let's move on." Grace incorporates a holy standard alongside love. The death and viscous murder of Jesus Christ proves that is not a small issue. Sin is horrific and horrible. It's an awful human condition. When sin is seen and comprehended in the light of God's truth and love, then repentance has the power to undo the sin damage. But real repentance doesn't diminish sin - rather it recognizes and says "I see it. I see how bad it is. Oh God help me. Deliver me from it. I need you! I choose to leave it at the foot of the cross and trust you rather than let it rule me."

Giving and receiving forgiveness can be a process, and it's something that will need to be worked out in each individual. At New Life, we use a variety of tools to facilitate this process, knowing we can't get inside a person's heart and do this work for them. Clients in our program not only write a life story, but they do individual homework assignments on the relationship problems they encountered through life. Confession, repentance, offering and receiving forgiveness, letter writing, deliverance prayers, renouncing sin and emotional processing all are incorporated to create an environment to process and remove those toxic seeds.

## THE PROCESS OF DELIVERANCE

Let's take what we have learned and formulate some specific steps.

1. **Bring the sin into the light** - this means the absence of all darkness and forms of denial. Tools can be used for this to occur. As mentioned already, we use a life story and other assessment tools. In the twelve step program this is referred to as a Step 4-5.
2. **Understand who God is**- this is meant to instigate an environment of hope, not fear. If a person fears God as someone angry, this will be an obstacle that must be dealt with. God is love (Step 2).
3. **Confess** - the ability to agree with God that sin is sin. This can be the sin that addicts committed against someone, or the sin someone committed against them. In either case, confession brings the lie of that sin in agreement with the truth of God (Step 5).
4. **Give or receive forgiveness** - God hates sin, it's awful. But He loves the sinner. By the power of grace, not effort or merit, we can fully receive forgiveness. The addict in recovery will need to systemically deal with personal sin, as well as understand the people in their own lives they need to forgive (Step 8-9).
5. **Renounce** - Sin has an influence in the demonic realm. Renouncing sin is closing the doors where that spiritual influence was given access to in the first place. It takes back any and all power and footholds that were given to the Enemy.
6. **Plant new seeds based on truth.** (See diagram on Page 69) Once the soil of the heart is established, the life journey of walking and abiding in Christ can begin. This is the unfolding of God's promises, His purposes and the establishment of the life calling. Therefore, deliverance prepares new soil, which prepares for a new life. But from there on out, all change will happen through growth of new seeds that root into a new system, and eventually turn into new fruit (Steps 11-12).



## STUMBLING BLOCKS TO INDIVIDUAL RECOVERY

Some of the most significant stumbling blocks occur in the healing process when:

1. Sin, trauma and tragedy are minimized, and there is no ability to get in touch with the raw nature of pain. A person that goes through the process without any pain has not yet walked out of darkness/denial. Processing pain is critical.
2. Forgiveness is casually offered, without an understanding of the horrible reality of the sin itself. It swipes over the top without allowing the Holy Spirit to cut deep.
3. Forgiveness of self is rejected: there can be a stronghold that says "I don't deserve to be forgiven". This empowers sin, while minimizes grace. The person will remain in bondage if they don't receive forgiveness. The blood of Jesus Christ as a remedy for the human heart must never be diminished.
4. Bitterness and resentments create the unwillingness to forgive the people who had harmed them. While this understandably is a process in some regards, a blatant refusal to forgive will allow the contamination of the sin to remain in the addict's life. Not only that, but God will not give offer forgiveness to someone unwilling to give it out.

But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins – Matthew 6:1

People in recovery who have resentments remaining will never be free. Even if sobriety is attained, they will not be able to move into the life God intended. Resentment is one of the greatest threats of freedom.

Another way to look at this process is that sin is an actual wound that has been established in the heart. Wounds can be self-imposed or imposed on us by someone else. Where a wound goes untreated, it grows into infection. The addict can many times living with this reality. Deep resentments can actually cause the sin root to fester and grow, rather than be removed. Thus, when the addict chooses forgiveness, the wound can begin to heal. Forgiving a violator never removes the awful nature of the sin itself. God will never ask anyone to accept sin as okay. Instead, He requires we separate the sin from the sinner; forgive the sinner, but give the sin to God. This is as necessary for family members as it is for the addict. In fact, all redemption and reconciliation rests on this principle.

## EMOTIONAL HEALING

As we have dealt with seeded issues, it's important to understand that out of the rooted issues coping mechanisms rise up. These are typically structures of the flesh that allow for survival apart from God. We covered some of the manifestation of these briefly in Chapter 7. This is very important to understand, because this is another way the soul gets sick. While sin is always the original problem, these faulty coping mechanisms then begin replace God's solution. Addiction is one of many ways this can occur.

Some Christians think that "emotional healing" sounds like a worldly term. But this is not true. Emotions are not evil. They are not wrong in and of themselves. God created emotions to be indicators. Negative emotions have a negative root, which leads to negative behavior. Young children begin to learn ways to deal with these feelings. When emotions are considering wrong or disallowed in the family system, most children try to stop feeling, and thus stop growing emotionally. That's because emotional maturity happens as feelings are felt, and then can be understood at the rational thought level. But the key is to understand healthy ways to deal with the feelings.

As we learned in Chapter 3, when the addict begins to self-medicate, the purpose of emotions is immediately misaligned. Therefore, maturity is absolutely impossible. Once recovery is initiated, the addict will need to begin processing feelings at whatever maturity levels they possessed when the faulty comfort was sought. For some addicts, this will be overwhelming. They may have spent their entire lifetime not feeling, or using anger or other unhealthy ways of expressing emotional pain.

The transferring of survival to God dependency will provide the remedy. The Holy Spirit plays a significant role in this process. The addict needs to understand what it is like to be held by God. They will need to develop an intimate understanding of their Creator to know that their tears are His tears crying through them and for them. This can be considered a healthy form of grieving. Addicts can discover that He is so involved in their lives, He will actually weep through them, and they will experience the pain together. This is a cleansing gift that is offered by God. Through it, healing occurs, and maturity begins to rewire the addict's faulty system of coping. A new system of coping is formed based on the comfort of the Holy Spirit. God's presence in this process will produces inner peace and joy despite the pain that is experienced. Over time, falling into God's arms will need to become the new method of "getting a fix." Again, this can also be known as healthy grieving. Heartache, disappointment, and other trials will not end, but now will become

opportunities for growth. Therefore, the addict needs to be intimately in touch with a relational God who is real, not theologized. This is the job of the Holy Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. - Romans 8:26-28

## WHERE TO GO NEXT?

In the next chapter will see how the addict's recovery can contain challenges within the family system. All in all, it must be acknowledged that while radical changes can happen immediately, the long-term goal of learning to love God and love others through Him will take time to develop. But one thing we can agree upon is that the addict will only grow and thrive at the level they are living in the light and embracing the fullness of who Jesus is.

### **A Prayer for Long-term Change**

Lord God,

I am filled with the hope of your redemptive plan both in my life and in the life of \_\_\_\_\_ . So often I minimized your power because I had a theology that had not yet been realized in my reality. I want to know you and the power you offer. I want \_\_\_\_\_ to experience that power and learn to walk and live under its influence. We invite you, Holy Spirit, to have your way. Remove anything that is not of you, pull any seeds that the enemy planted and plant a new harvest that will produce fruits into the Kingdom of Heaven.

In Jesus Name, A-men.

### **Application:**

1. What is your own relationship to Jesus? To the Father? To the Holy Spirit?
2. Do you believe that can they transform the addict in your life?
3. Write God a letter explaining to Him your needs, desires and interests in the addict's need for recovery, and how it affects you. Ask Him to help you understand where you may require a level of the same healing.

CHAPTER NINE  
ADJUSTING TO CHANGE  
WHEN RECOVERY ENTERS THE FAMILY

Change is one of the most resisted forces in all the world. That is because even when it is positive, it brings a level of insecurity. Change forces us to venture places we have not yet been. Thus, there is no direct compass to guide us as to what to expect. Change also forces us to seasons of adjustment that can be uncomfortable, and sometimes even painful.

In the addicted-based family system, change will be difficult for everyone. For the addict, change will need to be enforced as a long-term lifestyle. It will involve resisting the temptation to resort back to the former methods of coping when the difficulties of life and relationships hit. Not only that, the addict will need to learn to revolve his life around a whole new reality - the attention, affection and centering of life on God. If an addict doesn't have a Christ-centered recovery, usually the recovery environment becomes the focal point of sobriety. This can provide stability, but this will never inject the power of transformation.

Addiction was all consuming. Life became centered around how and when to get the next high. Without that fixation, life will need to have a new sense of purpose, significance and meaning. Addicts fail in their recovery when they aren't able to develop a new centering point through the seasons of transition. The way this will happen is through nurturing a relationship with Jesus Christ, and abiding with the inner power of the Holy Spirit.

Not only do addicts have to face change, but the family system itself will experience a major alteration in its formation. Even though the family experienced the negative symptoms associated with the addict's lifestyle, those adaptations ran deep. Change will therefore oftentimes be painful or resisted. Like the physical body that had adapted to a faulty homeostasis, the family system may have also adapted to a faulty homeostasis, and therefore find it more comfortable to remain in the very cycle that promoted its problems.

To see a biblical example of this, it's helpful to look at the story of the children of Israel. They had suffered under the oppressive rule of Pharaoh in Egypt for many years. In that place of bondage, they had lost their will and their individual right to make choices. They had to serve the Pharaoh, and be at the mercy of whatever he mandated. When God miraculously delivered the Israelites from slavery, they weren't taken



immediately to their "Promised Land." Rather, they were thrown into a wilderness season. It was in that "in-between" state that God required they leave behind their slave mentality, and embrace God's authority.

But once they entered into the wilderness, a deeper problem was discovered. They did not just need to leave Egypt, they needed to walk out their new-found freedom as God's children. And God required trust and obedience to His will and ways above anything else. Circumstances and challenges arose that challenged their ability to walk in God dependency. At times, they wanted to resort back to their survival mentality of trying to solve problems and "get by" through their own ideas and logic.

Amazingly, the Israelites had at times looked back at their place of enslavement as something better than what God to offer. The change they were asked to go through was difficult enough for them to request to return to the system of slavery in Egypt then continue with God's ways. How utterly shocking!

In many ways, the family had been in bondage serving the addiction or the person that has been the controlling influence (BCAP). As they responded to the addict's needs and controlling influence, they had often lost their ability to make choices. Even if family members (and the addict) genuinely desire change, there will be points of distress and roadblocks that will prevent them from wanting to continue. They too can find it easier to remain in unhealthy roles rather than transfer to a new system. The first thing to understand is that it is a basic normal and human reaction - to resist change. The next is to understand that all change will not be behaviorally, but rather the transferring of an authority system. In other words, the centering point will move from something or someone (including the addiction), to God.

In this chapter, we are going to take a deeper look at the nature of the transition that takes place when the addict enters recovery. If the addiction was at the center, it was essentially served by everyone. Thus when it is removed from "authority", the family members will also need to switch authority systems. If you have not yet experienced this in your own situation, it is critical to understand the contents regardless. If at any point the addict relapses, then the mode of recovery ceases, and the storm itself has the opportunity to bring start anew. Thus, these principles are only relevant when recovery is occurring. In a later chapter we will better understand how families can protect against the occurring of storm conditions. Before we continue, please keep in mind that if the family already is healthy, this chapter may be entirely avoided and an unnecessary component of the process. However, we strongly encourage you use this as an assessment and planning tool regardless because typically there has been some form of adaptation.

## ADDICTS IN RECOVERY

When addicts enter in their own mode of recovery, the families that have been left to deal with the debris can have mixed feelings about their recovery. First of all, even addicts do get sober, there will be that inbred fear of relapse occurring. The family members will continue to want to prepare and plan around that possibility, thus maintain deep defenses. The adapted roles everyone has used to survive will not leave. Identity and responsibility have been imprinted through those roles, and it can be hard to even know how to separate or exist apart from them.

Preparing for the challenges that lie ahead if or when the addict gets sober and enters in a mode of recovery requires understanding, planning and preparation. By understanding some of the stumbling blocks and points of stress that can occur, both the addict and family members can be more sensitive and understanding of each other's needs. In addition, finding some practical ways to engage in support during this process is essential.

But more than anything, the family itself right now requires vision. They need to see the aim of the "Promised Land" as well as understand the environment of enslavement that has to be left behind. Without this vision at the forefront, survival living will by default stay in place. The problem is that each individual can have their own "vision." They can have a version of what that "promised land" is meant to be, and it may not necessarily be God's plan. It can also be a plan that will not at all be what the other members desire or need.

To deal with this, the rest of this material will address how to move into a vision, create a plan and work through personal transformation. Since this requires the individual choice of each member, it is not a guarantee.

However, through that season of transition, it must also be understood that the process of grief is necessary to embrace. Grief was introduced in the last chapter. It involves a way to release the pain of the past, and prepare for the changes that lie ahead. It is also the positive way to cope with negative feelings. Grief allows pain to be validated, rather than simply bypassed. Without a process of grief, that missing or broken place in the heart can become a hole with a vacuum, trying to suction other things in its place. But through grief, the past can be honored for what it contained that was positive; and be released to move into a future that has something more. Healthy grief is orchestrated by the Holy Spirit, and involves the ability to cry with Him, release the pain to Him and allow Him to fill us with the comfort of His hope. In fact, the very process of recovery is a season of grief, not simply "moving on with life." There is a time and a place to move on, however. The Israelites had to learn that lesson in a difficult way. Hanging onto their former mindsets had a cost. But for us, we have access to a bigger picture than they did, and thus we have the opportunity to embrace the life that God intended without having to recycle the pain over and over again.

### **APPLICATION:**

1. Do you comprehend that the changes that lie ahead require time to grieve?
2. Are you still feeling loss from the "storm" and thus need time to assess it before jumping into a new building project?

### **Prayer of Grief**

Lord,

In the midst of change, I realize that some of the things in my heart are a response to a sense of loss. Some of that loss is my own dreams. Some of it is my own identity. Some of it is this relationship. And some of that loss I can't quite express. But the storm hit, and I have suffered loss. Help me with the challenges that arise in me when I face change. Help me to embrace the feeling of grief as it rises inside me so I can learn how to cope in a healthy way. Instead of deal with the crisis, help me release the emotional pain that has built inside me. Help me find a way and place to do this.

In Jesus name - Amen

## **THE REALITY OF EXPECTATIONS**

In seeing the loss of the past and the vision of the future, there needs to be an understanding of the process of being "in-between". This is the wilderness season where one mentality must leave while a new one is learning to be embraced. One of the biggest problems that families face in the recovery process is unhealthy expectations on both sides. The addict can expect the family to "snap out of it" and let him or her

move on with life, without a thoughtful regard for the actual site of the storm itself. They can walk back sober into the same home they destroyed through addiction, and feel so elated by their new-found hope that they seem totally out of touch with what just occurred. They can even perhaps be astonishingly spiritual, focusing on their restored faith. This can almost seem insulting.

At the same time, the family members can expect the addict to be available and make up for lost time. They might actually want the addict to deal with each family member's emotional needs, and ask the addict to invest time and energy into those relationships. They might furthermore expect perfection overnight, without even a shred of immoral or weak character.

What is the actual dilemma? The vision or idea of what constitutes positive change has not been effectively communicated, along with reasonable expectations.

Mara finally surrendered her life after destroying the people and opportunities around her. Her drug rampage resulted in the loss of her job, children and marriage. Many times her family had tried to assist her, but because she wasn't ready to give it up, their efforts went rejected. They had given up hope.

Then Mara experienced a Step 1. It was similar to the prodigal son's "come to his senses" moment. Mara saw and comprehended the reality of her addiction and believed there was more to life. She wanted to be changed and redeemed. For Mara, this experience was life changing. It was like a blinder was released from her eyes, and she could see the horrifying truth of her addiction, along with the need for help.

But as Mara launched into her personal transformation process, in the trail of her addiction were two children, parents, and a husband who had long given up hope of ever seeing her function again. Mara for the first time in over five years was filled with hope (Step 2) that she could reclaim her life as a mom, wife, daughter and child of God. Her family, however, was so deeply wounded and shattered by the lies, betrayal and manipulation they had witnessed, that they were less than enthusiastic or hopeful that her recovery program would even work. The family cared about her, but she had hurt them so much that they were skeptical of any involvement with her. They had so many wounds and feelings of betrayal, that the only thing that would satisfy them was her admission of the wrongs she had done, and her willingness to serve the family from then on out through love and loyalty. She would need to somewhat earn back the position she had given up.

Mara's own recovery process consumed everything inside her. She had deep brokenness and was processing her life emotionally in a way she had never done before. While she was following her recovery plan, she was incapable of appeasing her family's expectations. As she processed and moved through her personal debris, she had to both grieve the things that led her to check out of life and attach to addiction (an abusive upbringing, sexual abuse, etc.), as well as deal with the horrible and awful behaviors she had done against the people she loved.

Her family wanted to support her, but they saw their needs should take priority. After all, she had inflicted unthinkable levels of pain and neglect into their lives. Thus, as Mara moved through recovery, she began to feel more and more alienated from them because they weren't comfortable with her recovery process. The family became angry by her recovery, and felt that the program itself was not helping them, but hurting them.

The very scenario that seemed it would hold the solution to this family's problem almost seemed to make it worse. What was happening? How could this be? The family was quite simply dealing with the after effects of the storm. The damage was systemic, and had produced a layering effect. The wounds went deep and the healing would require compassion and understanding by everyone involved. In truth, neither was right nor wrong. Both "sides" had a legitimate point of view. Mara was fighting for her life. If she allowed a

trigger to set her back into addiction, she could die, go to prison or lose her children permanently. But Mara's family felt cheated. How could she leave after all they had done for her?

Had the family understood the recovery process as a whole, it would have set them up for more healthy expectations. Furthermore, her family needed to understand that even though she contributed to the damage, she couldn't be held responsible for cleaning up the entire scene of the storm. She would be required to own her part, to partner with God through the Holy Spirit to be transformed, and to grow in the power of grace to keep her falling again. She could be sorry for what she had done, but even that would be a process. What she couldn't do is make the family happy or undo the damage. In other words, they would need to take ownership of their own part.

Healing the family is no small task, but it is absolutely possible. In fact, God is a reconciler, and has offered to each us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, He gets right to work in the places that are broken. How He works, however, may be very different than what our human perspective may have in mind. That's because He knows the very depth of each person's heart, and offers a remedy and a process that is individualized for those needs. He isn't as concerned about the external changes as He is the inward transformation. Quite frankly, real change takes time. Like the Israelites, the family will be asked to step forth on a new journey not based on human control, but God's authority. It may be scary, awkward, confusing and strange in the early stages because it can be a lifestyle that no one has yet experienced. However, through vision, the family can work toward a goal of their own "promised land."

Vision and hope can only be accessed through the gift of faith. Together, these are strongest force necessary to persevere through difficult seasons of change. Faith allows for hope to be alive, and for vision to be attainable even when it cannot yet be seen. Thus, through faith, perseverance can occur.

Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. - Hebrews 11:1

If you feel like this task is overwhelming, it's okay to admit that. However, remember and stand encouraged that God provides the actual resources to make it happen. He says if you have but a tiny mustard seed, you can say to a mountain move. Not because of personal strength, but because God can.

**Application:**

1. What is the vision you have for your family?
2. Do you think it aligns with God's vision?
3. Explain your level of faith right now? Do you believe God can fulfill that vision? Why or why not?

**A prayer to receive faith and hope**

Father,

In this season of change, I feel that there is insecurity. I know that what has happened in unhealthy ways needs to be release to you, and that you want to form a new system for me and my family. Even though I want this, I'm afraid at what it may mean. Please inject faith into my heart. Give me your vision for my family. Help me to see what you want, and let me experience hope that you have a plan and purpose for us. I do not want to get lost in the wilderness. I do not want to go back and live under bondage. Free me and align each us into your image.

In Jesus name - Amen

## RESISTING CHANGE

One of the clearest sign of an unhealthy family system is the response it will have to one member is getting well. If the family is healthy and walking in a Christ-centered manner, recovery by the addict (or the member) will be embraced. Like a lost child who was found, there will dancing and celebration for his or her return. We see this example in the story of the prodigal son. The father received the son back with celebration and honor. That was an indication that his own heart was positioned for redemption and reconciliation.

However, if the family developed an unhealthy homeostasis environment to survive the “storm” of addiction, the addict’s recovery will actually disrupt a system that had become everyone’s normal. Since human beings by nature resist change, even the healthy choices of the addict can be rejected.

To bring better clarity to this, we are going to refer back to the survival roles listed in Chapter 7 (See the Family Roles After Recovery chart). This will demonstrate some of the challenges that can occur when each survival role is disrupted by the changes to the system itself. It should be noted that any family member entering into recovery will at some level affect and influence the system itself. That's because somehow they are all connected. While these changes may be positive for the person under their influence, they can have unusually challenging result.

## BALANCE SHIFT

While many different scenarios can occur, let's focus primarily on the change that would occur if the BCAP was the person who entered into the mode of recovery. After that, we can briefly highlight some other scenarios.

When the centering of the family had revolved around addiction, all the survival modes had a direct connection to it. For example, the enabler's role was established around the unavailability of the addict. The counselor’s role sensed the difficulty of the situation, and tried to care for emotional needs. The invisible one hid and withdrew without any confrontation, knowing that everyone was focused on the main problems. The good one felt obligated to offset the addict's bad behaviors. And the problem one bore the weight of responsibility for the wrongs that were occurring. If all these roles contained a dependency based on the addict in addition, it should be obvious that a change in the addict will disrupt the system itself.

A season of transition can be confusing and uncomfortable initially. Pain, anger, hurt, betrayal, offense, and an overall unwillingness to see the addict in a different way can emerge. The unhealthy adaptation roles can unknowingly be protected rather than relinquished.

That's because the adaptive nature of these roles typically contain a root of shame, guilt, fear and other toxic heart conditions. Even if the family members did everything right at a behavioral level, they were still reacting to the "bad soil" addiction itself had created. There is simply no easy way to remedy this situation, other than encounter a deeper understanding of the need for healing and recovery in each family member (we will address this in the next chapter). For now, take some time review your own role and see how it might be affected by the addict's recovery.

### **Application:**

How you have been related to the addict will change if they get better. This includes:

1. Physically (your time, environment, daily routine, and anything else on the external level that will change)
2. Emotionally (your inner life - how you feel as a result of the addict's changes)
3. Spiritually (your connection to God, how you work out your spiritual life will change when the addict begins their own spiritual journey)

## WHEN THE ADDICT IS NOT THE BCAP

If the person in the treatment or recovery is not the controlling figure of the family, and thus the addiction was not the primary problem to which everyone was responding, a different dynamic can emerge. For example, if the addict was actually the "problem one", the family system will have to deal with the inability to blame that role for the problems. Yet, the system itself can continue to be maintained minus that role.

It is common for the Chief Enabler to receive recovery for either addiction or codependency before the BCAP. While the controlling figure is still positioned, the lack of enabling will actually take away the unhealthy cycle and force the BCAP to either agree with the changes, or be unable to function in the position of dictatorship control and addictive mentality. Sometimes, this will be breaking point that will lead the BCAP into a recovery process. A BCAP without an enabler is forced to feel the pain of bad choices. However, it will also bring a strain on the other members, thus essentially breaking down the other adaptive styles (Refer to the Family Roles in Recovery Chart).

## ROADBLOCKS IN THE RECOVERY PROCESS

When the addict returns to a family system that has been wrapped around the addictive dynamics, there can be some unexpected road bumps due to the change in the family's balance system (homeostasis). Let's look:

### **Roadblock #1. The family system can adjust to addiction where it has been engrained as comfortable, and there are benefits to maintaining the survival role.**

Adrianna had adjusted around her husband's addiction. For years she had fought to get him right with God. But eventually, Adrianna learned to implement and plan the family around her husband Josh's absence. While Josh was irresponsible to his role, Adrianna held the financial control, and also was in the leadership role with the children. A part of her resented Josh's absence, feeling hurt and betrayed by his addiction. But another part had learned to retain the control. Even though Josh's addiction centered the family as the BCAP, Adrianna played a key role (Enabler). Adrianna's role was for the most part more of a mother to Josh than a wife.

When Josh was arrested and faced jail time, he decided to get better. He not only cleaned up from drugs, but experienced inner healing that led him into relationship with Jesus Christ. In learning his role as a husband and father, Josh was ready to return and be the man God created him to be.

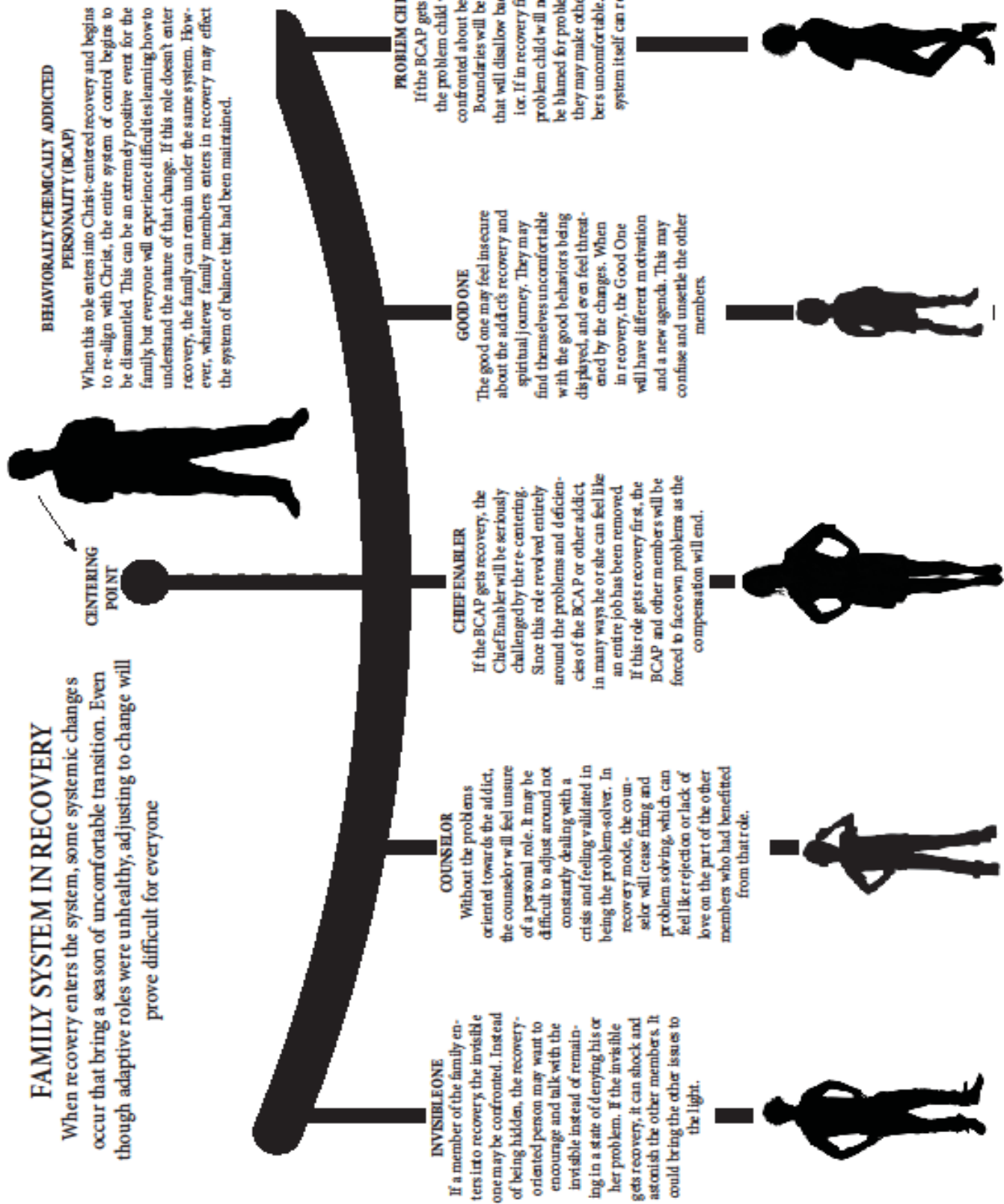
Adrianna, however, resisted this change. Josh's absence had given her a huge responsibility, and with him wanting to resume his position, she was in essence losing her job. They hit a recovery roadblock

not because Josh had gotten sober, but because the family itself had developed a faulty homeostasis and now wasn't ready or willing to align it with the new centering point.

Was the relationship doomed? Could it be changed and brought into a healthy marriage relationship? It wasn't doomed and could absolutely be made right. By Josh entering into recovery, the first step was taken. But without Adrianna participating, they would experience what appeared to be separation

## FAMILY SYSTEM IN RECOVERY

When recovery enters the system, some systemic changes occur that bring a season of uncomfortable transition. Even though adaptive roles were unhealthy, adjusting to change will prove difficult for everyone





for a season. But in the transition, it may have brought significant levels of strain on the relationship that neither was prepared to face.

This scenario is quite common, and is oftentimes one of the most unexpected roadblocks families will face. The enabler especially can have adapted so much around the addict's lifestyle, that when the addict gets healthy, the enabler will in some ways feel he or she has lost a sense of identity. Furthermore, the dynamics of survival mode are based on control. With so much invested, the enabler and other members can feel as though they have lost their job. In fact, marriages have been known to withstand addiction, but dissolve when one person enters into recovery. Learning this and participating in the process of recovery greatly reduces the risk of this occurring.

**Checkpoints:**

Understanding your role in the addiction is imperative. If the addict no longer needs you to help them survive in the mode of addiction, how will it make you feel? Do you feel rejected or discarded? Are you scared that if you aren't needed then the addict won't have a relationship with you? Are you afraid of losing that person? Do you feel a loss of control?

**Roadblock #2. Other brother symptom will kick in, causing family members to resent the addict's attempt to "return home" in a joyful way.**

Like in the story of the prodigal son, family members can feel "jaded" that the "prodigal" engaged in bad behavior, while they remained faithful and loyal to their own role. These members feel unwilling to celebrate the addict's recovery because they had been "working hard" and dealing with all the deficiencies their irresponsibility brought on the family system. This is a slightly different dynamic than we saw with Adrianna. In this case, the family member is filled with very deep resentment, and a sense of deserving more than the addict because a sense of entitlement has been created.

The family member will sometimes even be offended at the notion that God will grant grace and mercy to the addict at such a high magnitude. Thus, this family member may resort to pointing to an inventory lists of all the wrongs that were done during the storm of addiction. In essence, this condition causes a family to focus on the "mess" that was created rather than the hope of restoration.

In truth, this reaction is a condition of the heart on the part of the family member that desperately needs to be resolved. Its roots can run deep, and it needs as much care as the addict so that it doesn't yield destructive fruit. While it is perfectly fine to be hurt and to need recovery to heal from the wounds that were inflicted, resentment, bitterness and judgment will disallow any healthy family realignment and redemption to occur. It may be difficult to face and discover that other brother symptoms are very significant. Significant enough, in fact, for God to highlight it specifically and speak to it in His Word. The solution will not be that the addict needs to learn to "eat the dirt of their own sin." Rather, it will come as the family member learns to receive from God the same grace that has been granted to the addict. If this is embraced, the family will be prepared to find healing. Without it, the environment is toxic to everyone.

**Check point:**

Am I filled with resentment towards the addict to the point that I am unwilling to celebrate the grace and mercy God wants to grant them? Do I feel I deserve to be honored for what I did in the addiction cycle? How am I dealing with this feeling? Am I willing to get help for any wrongful condition of the heart?

**Roadblock #3. Family members will impose difficult and impossible expectations onto the addict, believing that they should re-enter into the family in a way that aligns with their own needs.**

It must be understood that family members have been genuinely wounded, and God cares immensely about this reality (we'll address this in the next chapter). However, those wounds, just like a physical wound in the body, must be treated appropriately. One of the most difficult dynamics faced by the addict in attempting to re-enter into the family system in recovery is the expectations that are imposed onto them.

Addiction wasn't "all the sudden it just happened" event. It has a rooted set of issues attached to it. But while early recovery can bring substantial changes, long-term maturity will be required by the addict. Typically, the addict is emotionally immature, still unable to recognize and appropriately deal with feelings. Thus, whenever strong emotional events are stimulated, there may be problematic responses. Through the different difficulties the family faces along life's journey, the addict will be learning how to interact and engage with the Holy Spirit to make decisions, deal with feelings, etc. Learning to rely and be strengthened by God in situations involves spiritual maturity. If the addict doesn't embrace this relapse is always a possibility.

If the family members don't understand that maturity occurs when the addict can learn the benefit and consequences of following God or taking heed to false comforters, they can contribute to a toxic recovery environment. Expecting the addict to change overnight is like asking a small child to drive a car. That is not to disrespect the addict or diminish him or her to a child-like status, but depending on when the addict started using, he or she may have significant emotional stuntedness. This will take time to develop. Making decisions to obey God will help the addict establish faith and growth in understanding God's power. While certainly some people may experience a "zap", it is not the norm. It is unfair to ask the addict to be what the family members perceive reflects a healthy recovery.

At the same time, some guidance can be established that will allow family members to question or be concerned with certain behaviors which can prompt warning signs. It is furthermore not a license for the addict to be disrespectful, completely unavailable, unloving or overly protective. True growth in Jesus should eventually bring forth the fruit of love.

**Checkpoint:**

What are my expectations about my family member's recovery? Do I have my own ideas and agenda of how they should respond?

**Roadblock #4. The addict will remain unavailable to the family because of a focus on recovery, and the family will begin to fight recovery rather than support it.**

It will seem unfair to family members when the addict remains unavailable in some regards at the initial stages of recovery. That's because recovery becomes a lifeline, and without it they stand a very good chance of relapse. At the same time, the hurt the family members have experienced needs to be understood. This is part of their own recovery: to grieve the loss and betrayal of the past, and to learn a new way to interact and prepare for the future. If the family members can embrace their own recovery process, many of the challenges in this regard are bypassed and the process of healing can be accelerated.

**Checkpoint:**

Do you feel betrayed by the addict's unavailability? How might you learn to be more understanding? How can you address your own pain of abandonment?

**Roadblock #5. The addict claims sobriety and recovery, but isn't showing evidence of heartfelt change.**

This dynamic can be very difficult to deal with when the presence of the addiction has been removed, but toxic attitudes seem to remain. There are so many different possibilities as to why this may happen that it's impossible to list them all. However, sometimes the addict distances themselves from family members because the hurt and injuries have been made raw. They cannot handle some of the conflict, so can adapt a very distant, detached and seemingly unloving response to them. What appears to be resistance may actually be a form of protecting. This isn't necessarily a healthy approach, but when someone has damaged emotions and is hurting, it is a common way of interacting with family members.

Other times the family members simply expect something that aligns with their own ideas of how the addict should act and respond. Thus, they can actually be claiming something is wrong with the addict, when it's actually a condition in their own heart.

Finally, the addict may be what's called a "dry drunk" or "white knuckling." This means sobriety brought no inner healing and there has been no transferring to a different control system. This means that the addict continues to serve self, even if the drug itself isn't being consumed. This can be an alarming and difficult scenario that requires a deeper understanding of boundaries. Usually, the addict will resume using in only a matter of time, although some may continue to live this way. An addict who gets sober, but doesn't experience freedom may continue to be a difficult and sometimes intolerable person with the ongoing tendency to manipulate and use people for personal gain. The family members may even feel this person was easier to handle under the influence of alcohol or drugs than sober. Remember, this is first and foremost a spiritual issue that requires a spiritual solution.

**Roadblock #6. The addict can be asked to deny another addiction.**

Many times, the addict in recovery is not the only family member with an addictive influence. As you recall, addiction can have many forms. And many of the addictive tendencies are generational. Thus, when a child in a family receives recovery, it is possible that another siblings or a parent is also struggling with addiction. This poses some unique challenges because while the addict wants to be out of denial and assume a clean and substance-free lifestyle, the family itself may continue to hide, deny or be operating in the storm of another addiction. When this occurs, the family will not be out of "storm mode" and thus the recovery process will need to be done completely outside the context that system. The addict in recovery will need to rely heavily on outside resources, and have strict boundaries in place for involvement. This can put added pressure onto the system as the family will feel a sense of rejection and betrayal.

When this occurs, the addict will need to focus on their own recovery, but learn to intercede and operate from a pure heart. They will need to keep clean from the toxic influence physically, emotionally and spiritually.

**Checkpoint:**

Is there another addiction with me or anyone else in the family system that has not been properly addressed (this can include people, sex, pornography, religion, food, etc)? Am I willing to face for the sake of the long-term benefit of the entire family system? Why or why not?

## SUPPORTING ADDICTS IN RECOVERY

Making the shift from the addiction to recovery will require specific resources. Families will be unable to make this transition on their own. They will bear a difficult weight because while they want the addict to be more functional, the addict will be concentrating on their own program. If the addict loses focus, a relapse is almost always going to occur. Thus, if the families begin to discourage recovery they will be aiding rather than preventing that from occurring. To help us better understand how to support the season of transition, let's look at some of the more important ways to support both sides of addiction.

Addicts in recovery are going to need some specific areas of support:

**Addicts need a sponsor or mentor to walk them through their sobriety.** This person will be the main contact for the addict's issues and troubles relating to sobriety. They will also work together to formulate a healthy recovery plan. An addict is prone to isolation, and will have a bend towards returning to the addictive lifestyle. A sponsor is someone who has already been on this path, and thus can assist in the journey. In the family planning, it is a fair request to require the addict be accountable to a sponsor or mentor figure, especially in the initial year of recovery where the vulnerability to use again is intense. The addict must have the freedom to choose a sponsor, however. The family member attempting to control this would not be helpful, but would be operating from control. Ideally, the sponsor would be Christian and understand the deeper journey of being God's child, not just an addict in recovery. They should also have already attained freedom, and have a living testimony of their own. It is strongly suggested that a sponsor be of the same gender.

**Addicts need a recovery group that will hold them accountable.** This group may be a more general AA or NA group that allows them to use Jesus Christ as a Higher Power. Celebrate Recovery is an excellent option for long-term recovery as it incorporates the twelve-steps through a Christian perspective. Oftentimes the sponsor will be found within this same meeting. It is imperative that this group be a place apart from the family where they will gain support for their emotional and spiritual challenges. This group is not intended to replace the family, and the goal of family reconciliation should remain. A recovery program will need to consume a level of the addict's time and energy for the long haul to support sobriety. This will need to be accepted and honored by the family members. Remember, isolation is extremely toxic for the addict. This environment should be a lifeline.

**Addicts need a place to live that is free from drugs and alcohol.** Sometimes multiple addictions occur, and the housing environment might become unsafe. An agreement and understanding of those needs should be discussed in the family planning. Some family members may have occasional wine, etc. This may be something that the addict will be required to live with. On the other hand, it may be too much pressure to bear initially. Some addicts have to reside in sober living homes outside of the house when they are not strong enough to handle the temptations of home and society. There should be an understanding of these triggers.

**Addicts need a strong church community that will accept them how they are, but lead them into a greater understanding of who God is and the changes He wants to implement.**

Connecting in a church community is about learning to be a member in the body. If the family can remain or join a spiritual community together, this will be a place where the family roles can be emphasized and honored. It can be the "together" part of the journey of recovery. Finding a church that supports recovery and

the variety of different needs that are exposed is important. Also, finding a church in an environment where the families don't feel they need to hide or be ashamed is also important.

It can be alarming to some family members how spiritual the addict in recovery gets in such a short period of time. This can even be intimidating. But in truth spiritual maturity will take time, and church is one of the other lifelines for the addict. Allowing them to be involved is an important part of recovery, even though it may be a radical change for the family. Prayerfully, church can bring the family together.

**Addicts need the opportunity to gain back trust, and to be held responsible.** Perhaps one of the most difficult dynamics families face is to trust the addict. This certainly is understandable. Trust needs to be earned. But when the family roles have thrown the balance away from the addict, allowing the addict to regain their position will pose problems. Still, in order to grow, mature and learn how to live a life of Christ-centered sobriety, this will need to occur. This may include the roles of parenting, leadership, assigning responsibility, etc. If this is resisted simply because of the behaviors of the past, it is an indication that the family system itself does not feel secure with making this change. This is understandable, and may take time to restructure. But the long-term goal should be to allow the addict to play out his or her God-given purpose and role. In others words, the costume of addiction comes off, and the authentic person underneath has the opportunity to thrive.

**Addicts need to set goals, and follow structure and routines.** An addict in recovery will need to have a plan on a daily, weekly, monthly and even yearly basis. This planning and structure will help create a new system and be accountable to a new routine minus the addictive agents. Establishing this new routine may be difficult and oftentimes requires assistance. It is tempting for the family members to believe they need to establish this routine for the addict. But in truth, the addict must implement it with the help of their recovery support system (including a sponsor, mentor, etc.). As we'll learn later, the family is going to need to learn a way to love and relate with each other outside of the dynamic of control. Thus, the addict is going to need to learn to make choices, and to experience the benefits or consequences of them. If the enabler or other members continue to "parent" the addict in an unhealthy way, it is maintaining the former system that brought addiction into it in the first place. The addict will resist this control, and sometimes resort back to what had been comfortable.

**Addicts need to be willing to provide proof of sobriety when questioned.** It must be understood that questioning, debating and accusing an addict in recovery on a daily basis is absolutely toxic. It will be of no benefit to their recovery if you display that you are watching over them with the belief that they will relapse. It can in some ways allow that happen, instead of discourage it. At the same time, the family members should research the drug that has been used and understand signs and symptoms of relapse. If the addict is showing a clear display of physical symptoms, it should be agreed upon that drug testing be allowed. This is a delicate issue, and that drug testing may require an outside location, such as a drug and alcohol treatment facility or a doctor's office. This is an area that must be covered in the family plan itself. We will discuss this in detail in Chapter 12.

**Addicts need to know that drugs and alcohol will not be an option in their family relationships.** If family members don't make it clear that consequences will be imposed, the addict under the influence of a trigger may have less of incentive to remain sober. One of the tools of relapse is for the addict to understand in the moment of temptation what the choice to use again will involve. If they can look at it and say "my family will not allow this" it helps hold them accountable. Of course this isn't always the case, and relapse can happen regardless. But a strong family plan with boundaries helps assist the addict in being accountable.

## FAMILIES IN RECOVERY

While the addict has some unusual challenges in the early stages of recovery, the family members will find that many difficult dynamics can arise. Family members must come to terms with their own dynamic in the addiction cycle, and then be willing to work through their own hurts and injuries it created. This will require a few key ingredients:

**Family members need to be in a recovery community around other people who are experiencing similar dynamics.** Al-Anon and Celebrate Recovery are examples of places that family members can receive support. This is important because when family members have been living in storm conditions, they will need to see what recovery even looks like. They will also need to hear and understand what others are going through in order to begin to gain more clarity. It is vital that happen to all family members. Children may also need the help of a child recovery support group (Many CR's group offer this) or the assistance of an understanding adult, teacher, pastor or counselor. Talking about the feelings and pain that has been experienced is vital for everyone involved. For children, it can also prevent the addiction cycle in their own lives.

**Family members (who are adults) need to be willing to address their own rooted issues, as to assure they are seeing through the filter of God's truth rather than a skewed perspective.** While this is important, it does involve a choice. No one can force anyone to deal with rooted issues. There will need to be a willingness and desire to work through an actual recovery program.

Family members need to learn the importance of choice, identity and freedom. Anyone who has succumbed to the storm site of addiction has not only experienced emotional wounds, but often lost their God-given ability to make healthy choices. To further that, some family members lost their entire identity in the family system itself or the addict under the influence. Thus, they don't know who they are, how to make choices and how to feel apart from that system. This reality reflects the deep need for recovery or counseling. It is something we will be referring to as codependence.

**Family members need to feel supported.** It may seem unfair that while family needs to support the addict in recovery, the addict may not be equipped to support their needs. This is why initially separate recovery plans are vital. It's also why a journey into understanding God's love, kindness and concern is so vital. We will pick up in this exact place in the next chapter. For now, let's pray and ask to invite God in that journey.

Father God,

I don't understand the nature of transition yet, or why or how it will turn out. I don't understand entirely my own part, or why or if I need to be involved. I don't want to get stuck just because of fear, pride or shame. I don't want to lose out on your best for my life, just because I grew accustomed to the problems of the addict in my life. I want everything you have for me! I want the same attention and kindness you are willing or already offering to the addict. I need to know your love personally, and to walk feeling supported and validated by you! Please send people who will understand me, and support me without making me feel shame for what has happened.

In Jesus name - Amen

**Action Step:**

1. What can you do right now to find a healthy support system?
2. Are you afraid or embarrassed to reach out for help? Why or why not?
3. Do you believe you deserve to be happy? Why or why not?

CHAPTER TEN

# FREEDOM FROM SURVIVAL

## CEASING THE ROLE OF COMPENSATION

Recovery is an individual choice. No one can force a process onto another person unless that person is genuinely interested and ready for change. This next chapter is being written for family members who are ready and willing to learn more about their own need for recovery. This is not intended to offend or label. Rather, it's meant to aid and assist in putting clarity and understanding to something that oftentimes is overlooked and misunderstood. Furthermore, it's meant to offer hope.

It must be understood at this point that family members are not the forgotten faces behind the main character's disease. God deeply cares and is tremendously concerned about their unique needs. Even though the focus of recovery appears to be centered around the addict, in God's point of view, each person is precious and in need of specific resources and individualized care.

However, we (as the organization of New Life Spirit Recovery) have discovered that the willingness of family members to switch over and assume a role of being helped is extremely difficult. They are oftentimes unwilling to be vulnerable to revealing their own heart issues. Sometimes, they can be so out of touch from the survival roles of "storm living", they simply are unresponsive. Thus, when resources are offered, they are unwilling or not interested in receiving.

No matter where you are, recovery is not about admitting to being blamed or considered part of a problem. Rather, it is the opportunity to seek freedom from the problem.

There are many tragedies related to the addiction cycle. For the family members, being bound to the insanity of a love one's addiction can aid in a sense of powerlessness and despair. However, this process will teach that family members can attain true peace and joy despite the addict's choices. Without this hope, the focus of redemption would remain on the addict. But in reality, redemption occurs despite of the addict. Thus, it's something that no one can steal.

God's love is the most powerful force in all the earth and nothing, not even addiction, will separate us from it just so long as we can learn how to receive.



With that being said, oftentimes family members truly don't know how to receive and live in the authentic nature of God's love. A relationship with Him can be sterile, distant or religious. That isn't because God isn't accessible, but because filters have caused them to see Him in a faulty manner. As with addicts there are roots and reasons behind everything, In this chapter, we are going to delve into some of these areas in a deeper way.

## THE HISTORY OF FAMILY RECOVERY

The term codependence (or codependency) was established in the 1970's to describe the family members of an alcoholic. It was at that point discovered that just as alcoholics had distinct characteristics and symptoms, so the family members also shared toxic similarities (in this book, we put alcoholics and addicts in the same category). The family members had learned to adapt and compensate to the alcoholic through ultra-responsible behaviors and efforts to manage their needs. But in the process, the family became unable to identify with their own needs. Their sense of purpose and need for affirmation was so centered on the addict, that they had learned to live a lifestyle that directed them to change the addict in a compulsive and sometimes addictive manner. This system of attempting to balance and compensate for the deficiencies presented in the addict-based home became its own vicious cycle.

Codependence extends much beyond the addict-based family system, although it perhaps is most evident in that environment. The adaptive roles of the Chief Enabler, Counselor and Good One all will apply to this dynamic. In truth, all humans being are in some way codependent. That's because the very essence of it is to be dependent on something or someone from outside to fill the inner needs within. Since this need can only be validated by God, codependence actually unknowingly tries to substitute a person or thing for Him.

The cure for codependence isn't simply to detach from people or unhealthy dependences. And it certainly isn't to merely rid the addict. Rather, it's to put God in His rightful place. While the addiction had a toxic and harmful effect, codependence can be as destructive and dangerous. There is no limit or end to the pain and corruption that can occur when the will is subjected to the force and control of someone or something else other than the Holy Spirit. Not only that, but the person under its bondage tends to recycle the mentality over and over again. That is why children and spouses of addicts often continue to bring those same relationships into their lives.

## DEFINING CODEPENDENCE

In a more practical way, codependence is a set of adaptive behaviors and coping mechanism to deal with a family or relationship that is imbalanced. It is bred in an environment where basic needs are lacking such as love, security and acceptance. At its basic level, codependence emerges to secure these needs by attempting to rescue, change, fix and manage the problems of others. Through caregiving, the codependent sets forth on a mission to nurture the needs of others, hoping in some ways personal needs will be satisfied. But because the people that are the focal point are unable to give due to their own unavailability, this rarely, if ever, occurs. Thus, the purpose of relationships becomes distorted. Codependents learn to do all the giving with little or nothing in return.

Some people who deal with codependence become controlling, angry and bitter at the people they want to change. They place demands and use tactics of guilt, shame and fear to break down the person they claim to want rescue. Other codependents are people pleasers who try to make people happy and bring peace

to an environment that otherwise has problems. Both learn an unhealthy relationship style of giving in relationships. They furthermore begin to see themselves as catalysts to the needs and desires of those around. Yet they continue to believe that something or someone holds the key to their own need for love and validation.

As codependence takes root, the mindset becomes toxic. A codependent disengages from their own sense of purpose, identity and ability to make choices and decision making. They lose their ability to see themselves as a separate person, and instead become an extension of the needs around them. They furthermore become externally referenced. This means that something or someone on the outside dictates how they think, feel or respond. Like addiction, the codependent enters into a condition of bondage. They become enslaved by people. Most codependents feel they are unable to do anything to change this, and their own ability to change lies direct correlation to the people they are attached to changing.

## SYMPTOMS OF CODEPENDENCE

Codependence is unlike other addictive behaviors. It takes on characteristics that appear good and right, thus it is far harder to understand and grasp. But over time, symptoms lead to inner conflict that will disrupt life and relationships at every level without authentic help. Some of these include:

- Being preoccupied with the addict else's problem and needs, but unable to take care of self
- Believing the love and attention of the addict will resolve all personal need
- Feeling responsible for the actions and choices of the addict, thus taking ownership of those people's choices
- Attempting to protect the addict or others from bad choices.
- Fear of losing the addict or others to the point of compromise at any cost. Being willing to give up personal values, moral and beliefs as a result.
- Being unable to separate emotions from the addict's emotions or behaviors (happy when they are happy, sad when they are sad)
- Trying to please the addict (and others) as the main goal in relationships
- Hiding own feelings and needs. Feeling personal needs are wrong or shameful and thus portraying that needs do not exist
- Being sacrificial and a martyr as a symbol of love for the addict or others, all while feeling secretly bitter or hurt
- Feeling not normal. Feeling like there is something defective about self
- Measuring self to others and chronically feeling "too good" or "not good enough"
- Feeling physical exhaustion and burn-out
- Experiencing negative symptoms like anxiety, panic, depression and stress
- Believing the violation of the addict or others is deserved thus unable to stand up someone else's wrongdoings
- Having outburst of anger or uncontrollable emotions followed by no feelings
- Helping the addict and others, but unable to receive help
- Isolating in fear of people; or attaching onto people in a dependent manner
- Unable to find a personal sense of identity; see self through the addict

## AN EXAMPLE OF CODEPENDENCE

To better understand this dynamics, let's look at Veronica. She had not only spent the last 15 years dealing with her alcoholic husband and all the insanity it had created, but she had dealt with the same dynamic as a child. She was the helper in her own family of origin as she witnessed her dad's angry alcohol rampages. She always thought that if she could just be "good enough" for him it would make everything work. Veronica's innocent heart had absorbed her daddy's problems and needs. She carried inside her the false belief that she was responsible and could somehow fix him. With every stinging slap to her face, and every abusive word from his lips, Veronica believed something about her was wrong or unlovable. Therefore if she tried harder next time, he would love her.

As she grew in adulthood, Veronica carried this very toxic mentality. She was performance-based and very focused on finding success, acceptance and approval. She furthermore positioned herself around people who needed her. This helped her to feel validated in the relationship. It also caused her to attach to unhealthy people.

It was normal and natural for Veronica to find an alcoholic husband who she could care for. There was a strong sense of security in being needed by him. While her husband was not abusive, he was not available to respond or meet her legitimate needs for love, security and acceptance. Therefore, she entered into the adult phase of her life in an environment where she once again did all the giving, and received little or nothing in return.

At first she couldn't recognize that her own adaptive role was being transferred from childhood to adulthood. She became the mother to the needs of everyone, even if they were an adult. She did everything in her power to make everyone happy, and to try to remove the distraction of the problem. If she could just bring enough peace to the home, surely her husband would see and be changed.

However, this entire system that was established was based on a lie. It was never her responsibility to own the problems of the family, or to attempt to make those problems right. Through compensation, Veronica emptied herself emotionally, spiritually and physically in the marriage. But the seeds and roots of the mentality itself went back much deeper than current circumstances.

By the time her husband entered into a treatment program, Veronica was numb. It was almost as if she couldn't even crack through to feel anything. She had no idea that she had a problem, or that she needed to attain freedom as much as her husband. After all, her efforts were good, wholesome and right.

Veronica didn't need to make any external or moral changes. She didn't need to be chastised for her part either. She desperately needed to understand that the system itself created in her life was faulty. She required her own unique healing process that helped her sift through the past (See Chapter 8) to rid the faulty lies that had developed into strongholds. That precious little girl that was lost to a lifestyle of being responsible for problems and being unloved and unappreciated needed to be reclaimed.

Through the gift of recovery, Veronica could learn the love of her true Father. She could begin to understand the dynamics of her family of origin, and seek to separate those behaviors from Gods' agenda. She would need to offer forgiveness to those people who had hurt her, and receive forgiveness for her own wrongdoing (as the process described in chapter 8). Veronica also needed to learn to release her pain through healthy grief so she could release those feelings instead of stuff them inside.

In doing so, Veronica was rescued from the imposter, adaptive role of codependence. She learned that Veronica was loved, precious, and had an identity based on who she was in Christ. She could serve and

love people, but not to get something from them to satisfy her own brokenness. Instead, she could love from a heart that had been redeemed.

## WHO NEEDS HELP?

Anyone in the family system who has been on the "other side" of someone's addiction will have typically developed a codependent root. In fact, over fifty percent of the clients at New Life Spirit Recovery carry a primary codependent root. This means that before addiction took on its own cycle, the addict had been in the role of caring for someone else's problem. It is vitally and imperative that this side of a substance program gets addressed. If it doesn't, when the addict gets sober, they are prone to moving into problems with the codependence.

It should be understood that it is not wrong in and of itself to be concerned with others people's needs. But when those needs become so overwhelming that a sense of self-care is neglected, there is a desperate need for help. Furthermore when a person becomes the guiding influence of a person's choices, bondage is rooted in the relationship.

In the addict-based family system, anyone who was trying to bring "good" things into a broken system for the purposes of making it better will benefit in unthinkable ways through codependence recovery. While the term and label is something people often fear, ironically, *the recovery process won't trap a person into its identity, but rescue a person from its presence.*

## DEALING WITH ROOTED ISSUES

When codependence has taken over a person's overall relationship style, it's easy to think that merely changing the behavior will fix the problem. However, just as the chemical substance wasn't the actual problem, but a symptom; so codependence must also be dealt with at the root level. The process that was described in Chapter 8 applies to everyone involved. Therefore, that chapter can be reviewed and used to understand how the codependent can deal with these rooted issues. However, there is a major difference in approaching codependence from the behaviorally, emotional and spiritual aspects. Most of all, the mindset of the codependents are quite different than a core addict. Therefore, one of the best ways to prepare to understand recovery is to uncover these toxic spiritual and emotional issues through a process that compares and contrasts them with God's truth in a loving and grace-based manner. For an in depth process, we recommend reading *The Christian Codependence Recovery Workbook: from Surviving to Significance* by Stephanie Tucker.

For right now, let's take a look at some of the most important components.

## SHAME-BASED IDENTITY

A codependent has a shame-based mentality that will place a toxic filter on how they see others and self. This typically revolves a system that tries to measure self by a set of standards. When the codependent feels able to attain a standard, there can be a prideful mentality that says "see I'm so much better than you." This oftentimes happens in the addict relationship. The codependent will measure morality against the addict and always win.

However, it doesn't end there. The shame-based mentality is actually a toxic internal message that states a chronic sense of unworthiness. It leaves the person in an internal state of self-rejection. The shame-

based person may externally grow in perfectionism, people pleasing and performance behaviors. But these are reactions to the dark residue that has trapped them into believing they aren't good enough.

Shame has a remedy - and will require the ability to process through the events and relationship issues that led to its formation. When shame encounters grace, it will begin to be forced away. That's because the grace of God is based on personal acceptance through the gift of love, not as a result of personal effort. Therefore true and genuine recovery must be encountered with a full understanding of the cross.

## FAULTY LOVE SYSTEMS

Codependence revolves around a deep misunderstanding of love. Love had become based on performance, people pleasing and the toxic attempt to earn love and acceptance. Therefore, love becomes something that is strived for. One of the most radical and life changing experiences a codependent will have is the encounter of genuine love. As Christians, we have access to this, although many times we have not yet experienced it as reality. Real love is derived from the Holy Spirit. It is not based on human effort, and there is nothing we can ever do to earn it. The love of God is a fiery, compassionate, affection and holy interest in us because we are simply the object of His eye. We are the result of an idea He had formed in His own heart before we even came into the world. All human love systems can never be aligned properly until this love encounter with God is understood. It is actually the remedy but can involve a process at times. Christian codependence recovery is much more valuable than secular for this purpose. Leaving codependent love is not enough. It must be replaced by Gods' love. Anything else will simply be another imposter.

## ANGER AND RESENTMENT

Many codependents experience a deep sense of violation and disrespect. As a result, a root of anger forms that can eventually lead to deep resentment. Anger is a secondary emotion that becomes somewhat like a coping mechanism. When hurt, betrayal or other injuries of the heart are triggered, anger comes along and attempts to protect against the sense of loss or inability to attain a legitimate need. Anger can produce a sense of power and control to express those needs or rise against the attempt to take something away. The self-protective nature of anger has to be validated, along with the raw emotion. To tell someone to stop being angry is impossible. A source of pain has brought injury, and anger is the reaction to it.

While it may be justified, anger is not a healthy coping mechanism, and can lead to unthinkable levels of bondage and darkness. The Bible affirms that we can be angry, but it states that if we harbor that anger, the enemy has a foothold (Ephesians 4:26). This is typically what occurs with the codependent. Out of anger stems a sense of victimization and resentment. That bitter root will defile many (Hebrews 12:15). In fact anytime we judge sin, including our own or another person's, the power of that sin is measured against us. That's why resentment and bitterness are so very toxic and damaging.

Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others.  
The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. - Matthew 7:1-2

Sin always brings an injury, and the only remedy is grace and forgiveness. The freedom God gives to the codependent is not meant to invalidate pain and injury, but to rise above the violations. As described

in Chapter 8, a process of forgiveness will need to occur. (This process is dealt with intensively in *The Christian Codependence Recovery Workbook: From Surviving to Significance*)

## **PEOPLE AND PLEASING AND PERFORMANCE**

The codependent has adapted to an external reference point, and typically has grown accustomed to using people or things as the source of truth, direction, and choices. Instead of being able to make healthy decisions based on God's best, codependents tend to take the cues, needs and manipulation of those they want to please. While it may seem innocent to want to make people happy, proud or supportive of personal efforts, the person that is established with a people pleasing root will be unable to live freely. That's because it is a source of bondage. God did not intend people to have the position of influence over our thoughts, emotion and will. Rather, He intended that He would be given that position. Through Him, we can serve, give and love. But when we are trying to gain things from people by efforts to get them to think, feel or act a certain way, we are functioning far from God's heart. Sadly, people can spend their whole lives as people pleasers, and think it's the normal Christian lifestyle, never discovering or understanding how radical it is to walk in freedom and the love of the Holy Spirit. True codependence recovery can assist in this amazing transformation process.

## **MISAPPROPRIATION OF ROLES AND AUTHORITY**

In Chapter 7 we covered adaptive roles in the family system used to compensate and deal with the addiction itself. Codependence is the general label of all the roles that try to bring "good" into the darkness of addiction itself. Through adaptation, the critical purpose of God-given roles and authority structures are lost. Children learn to function like an adult, with adult expectations. Thus children also can learn not to trust or ever submit to authority figures. Women can bear the burden of responsibility meant for the man's role - taking on the position of leadership and control. While this may be done out of necessity, she loses the precious purpose of being a woman with the security of a man's love and provision covering her. She furthermore may adapt to control to the point that she can't respect authority systems, and forces control in many different scenarios. The man can leave his post as the leader, and use women as the source provision for his own needs. He can abandon the family entirely, or use work as an excuse to remain detached and available. Or on the other side, he can take on the woman's role, and provide the motherly nurturing his children weren't able to receive from their mother. If he's not affirmed in his male gender role, he can misunderstand its purpose and naturally function outside this role on a long-term basis. He will never be satisfied or walk in godly confidence of his role as God ordained.

When roles are misaligned, they need to be viewed through God's blueprint. But simply telling the family through a biblical reference how they should behave is not enough. These are issues at the heart. They require inner healing and transformation that will break the stronghold. The biggest problem that arises is when reclaiming a gender role occurs in one family member, but the other family members remain in the adaptive version. This is why recovery can't be dependent on the other members. Instead, aligning in a role happens when God is placed in the role where humans have failed.

## **CLAIMING IDENTITY**

At the heart of codependence is the loss of personal identity. This has happened through the toiling of focus of other people. Once they became the reference point, personal identity began to be diminished. Eventually

enmeshment can occur where a codependent simply becomes the offshoot of another person. The loss of identity is also absorbed in the adaptive role itself.

Perhaps the loss of authentic identity is the most significant spiritual condition of a child of God. While the addict loses identity through the substance addiction, the codependent's loss is far more deceptive. They lose it by trying to attain and secure acceptance by "doing good." This can transfer directly over into the general belief that God promotes "good behavior" and when we fail, He sees us as "not good enough." This is a lie. God loves us as His own. There is nothing we can do to earn that. Our identity in Him is secure. We are who He says we are, and everything else falls under the authority of His truth.

Identity cannot be earned back through any process other than being brought into the authentic identity that is found as a child of God. Learning to live and be who God created the codependent to be is an amazing journey. It will lead to the life of wholeness, peace, freedom and joy that the Word promises.

## **THE LOSS OF BOUNDARIES**

Boundaries are meant to designate the rights of property, and to protect against violation and theft. The codependent is entangled in the controlling of others and self to the point where there are no lines of distinction. Many codependent feel unable to express personal rights, thus they are unable to form methods of "fences" that say "you are not permitted access here." For codependents, they become merged both in identity and in responsibility to the people around them. Therefore, there isn't a clear sense of "me" and "you." Boundaries also direct a person to respond to violation. Most codependent have an enabling root because they feel unable to do anything that might provoke pain to the people they are caring for. We spent much time understanding this principle, and will continue to work through boundaries in the next chapter, so for now, it's just important to see the codependent's boundary system is oftentimes non-existent or very broken down from unhealthy allowances.

## **WHERE TO GO NEXT?**

Recovery always starts with a desire and the entrance of light as describe in Chapter 8. Thus, there has to be the willingness to say "yes, that's me. I recognize the problem." The purpose of this section isn't to label you or tell you have a problem. It's always possible that family members have learned to engage with God already, and thus have worked through these issues. But if there are even some remnants, gaining the tools of recovery is essential.

That's because the family can only be reestablished when it becomes re-centered on God. Next we will address the issue related to the family in attempting to reconcile after the storm of addiction. But for now, remember that the family system begins to heal by each individual member participating in their own recovery process.

### **APPLICATION:**

1. Do you recognize codependence in your own life?
2. Which area specifically is most applicable?
3. Are you willing and ready to work through those issues. What scares you? What fills you with hope?