

Overcoming Addictions

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The Power of Addiction Comes From Sin

Each of us has some areas in our life where we have become addicted. For some it is watching too much Television. For some it is eating too much and too often. For others it is gossip and being too judgmental. There is no one that is free of addiction—outside of grace. The reason I can be confident of this truth is because addiction is sin having dominance in our life. Addictions are compulsive and repetitive dependence upon a substance or behavior. The power of an addiction comes from sin and the power of sin is the law. This is what the curse of the law is all about:

I Cor. 15: 56 The sting of death is sin, **and the strength of sin is the law.**

The fundamental reason we are dependent upon a substance or behavior is because our life has a God shaped hole in it. This hole must be filled with something or someone if it is not God. When we become born again our spirit becomes joined as one with the Lord (I Cor. 6:17); however, our heart is still governed by our will and choices. The admonition puts the responsibility on us to transform our will into agreement with God's will. We are not robots since we have become Christ's possession (Eph. 1:14). We have our part to play in focusing and giving our attention to the things of God. Grace has been poured out into our spirit but **what dominates our heart is up to us (II Tim. 2:1)**. This is the main thrust of verses like these:

Rom. 12:1 **I beseech you** therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

This means we need to do something that God cannot and will not do for us. We need to be obedient by giving God's Word preeminence in our life. We must meditate, we must choose to put God's Word in our heart, and we must address the weeds of doubt and unbelief that have been planted there through life's experiences. It is simply God's will for us to know God's will and abide in His love (Col. 1:9). For us to be full of God, full of faith and the Holy Spirit, we need to be fully established in God's Word (Col. 2:7).

Living In This World Depends Upon Our Emphasis

The day to day result of living in this world as a Christian depends upon the emphasis we give spiritual things. We can claim Jesus is Lord and as far as eternal things are concerned, He is; but when it comes to our heart in this world, our salvation is subject to us (I Cor. 14:32). What we believe is what we get in this life. What is in our heart determines the issues of our life.

Pr 4:23 **Keep your heart with all diligence,** for out of it spring the issues of life.

It is sad but true we can have access to the divine life in our spirit but live life in this world carnally. To live carnally is to live life sense driven, naturally minded, or to live life as mere men

(Rom. 8:6); this ultimately means that are not availing ourselves to God's grace.

2Pe 1:4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you **may be** partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The words "may be" are also rendered "might be" and both reflect the potential but not necessarily the reality of being partakers of the divine nature in this life. These great and precious promises can be *neglected* (Heb. 2:3), *resisted* (Acts 7:51), *ignored* (1 Pet. 1:14), and *untapped* (1 Cor. 15:2). Paul also wrote that Christ can become of *no effect* in our life by trying to be justified by the law.

Gal. 5: 4 **Christ is become of no effect unto you**, whosoever of you are justified by the law; **you are fallen from grace.**

Even as Christians **we can fall from grace** by the way we live our lives. **One of the ways that we can see this manifest in our life is through addictions.** Addictions and their power come through sin and sin's power is the law.

Gal. 6: 7 **Do not be deceived**, God is not mocked; **for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**

8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

This passage and others speak to the power of God's law that brings back upon us what we are living to or sowing in our life. The law of God is twenty-four seven operating showing no

partiality and having no glitches. No one escapes the power of the law for we are all born under the law having been born into sin. When Jesus said, “Judge not; lest you be judged,” we have often interpreted that to mean that others will judge us back (and of course they do); but, the truth is that God’s law, the law of creation, the law of Moses, the law of sowing and reaping, automatically brings back to us what we have put out. We may think that our judging is not hurting us or others from time to time but we would be *deceived*. Every time we judge, like clockwork, the law is bringing back to us what we have sown. God is not unfair; the law operates on all of us the same, when we reap corruption because we have sown corruption that is the curse of the law.

Special note: Life is Unfair!

When people describe life as unfair this is not because God’s law is unfair. It is because God’s will is not being done on the earth. The law of God is bringing back upon each one what he/she has put out. Furthermore, because life is dynamic, multifaceted; this means that often what one person does affects others. This was meant to be for our blessing; however, because of sin, it has had the opposite result. When someone commits sin it doesn’t just affect one person it can affect many—that is the curse of the law.

Addiction is Carnal; Deliverance is Spiritual

I have laid this foundation in order to address why it is that all of have addictions. We cannot overcome the power of the law as natural human beings. In our carnal state the law’s dominion keeps us in sin (Rom. 3:20). In our natural state the law keeps us in our addictions. We have addictions because we are walking according to the flesh. When we live to God, walk according to the Spirit, we are free from the curse of the law!

Ga 3:13 **Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law**, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),

If Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law why then do we still have addictions? Why do we still experience the curse? As long as we do not believe the right things, as long as we are still living to the flesh, as long as we continue to neglect so great a salvation, we will still be under the law.

Ro 7:1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), **that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?**

Paul reveals to all of us that as long as we continue to live to self, live to the world, and live in our sinful desires we will always be subject to the law.

Ro 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, **who do not walk according to the flesh**, but according to the Spirit.

Our Addictions Reflect Which Man We Are Living To

When we became born again we were given another nature created in the same image as Christ. We are to die to the old man and live to the new man:

II Cor. 5: 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation; old things have passed away**; behold, all things have become new.

18 **Now all things are of God**, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the **ministry of reconciliation**,

19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

The problem with addictions is that we haven't died to the old man yet. We are still living life under the control and dominance of the flesh. **We can change this.** The change begins with understanding the problem and living to the answer.

If we have been redeemed from the law as the scripture testifies why then are we still under its power? **Our life reflects what we believe in our heart (Pr. 23:7).** Our spirit man is free but that doesn't mean our heart is. Freedom from the law means living to the Spirit. When we live to the flesh we are still under the judgment and condemnation of the law. When we live to the Spirit the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us because Christ, who fulfilled the law, becomes our life.

Ro 8:4 **that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us** who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

The question becomes, "How do we live to Christ; therefore, fulfilling the law, and break the bondage of addiction?"

Ro 13:14 But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

The Answer is Putting On Christ

When we put on Christ and walk according to the Spirit we are freed from the law of sin and death. We are no longer under the law and **its righteous power to keep us in addictions.** We are now under grace and the **gift of righteousness** in Christ.

Ro 6:14 **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

Knowing this and experiencing this requires faith in God's grace. We can know *about this truth* and it may have no effect in our life. ***We must be convinced and established*** in this truth that we have been set free by the Spirit through the grace that comes to us in the knowledge of Christ.

II Pet.1: 8 For if these things are yours and abound, **you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the *knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

9 **For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.**

We are living as if we have forgotten or do not understand that **we have been cleansed from our old sins.** We are living as if the grace of God does not extend to our present condition. We are living life under the law believing the wrong things and living to the wrong things. ***We can change this;*** we can believe the right things and live to the right Spirit.

I Pet. 1:13 **Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober,** and **rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**

Understand the Power of the Cross!

Addictions in our life mean that we have not understood the power of the cross in Christ our Lord. We have not embraced our ***gift of righteousness*** and believe we are still subject to the flesh. We believe that we are not worthy of redemption; condemnation reigns and keeps us from seeing or accepting our deliverance. **We get what we believe not what we deserve.** Our

freedom is not dependent upon our right living but upon what Christ did for us. Our freedom is not based upon our efforts but upon His finished work. **Our freedom is based upon what we believe not what we've done.** Our freedom is not based upon our conditions but upon His condition within us. What do we believe about Jesus? Do we believe His righteousness dwells in us?

Rom. 5: 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; **much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.**

The battle is "believing the right things!" When we believe we must suffer the consequences of our sins we are under the law. Our own hearts condemn us as law breakers and deserving of bondage. Even our own pride will reason within us that we are not worthy of the free gift of salvation. We may accept it for saving our soul but do we accept it for reigning in life?

We are not seeing the power of the cross to deliver us from the power of sin and the curse of the law in this life. We won't need deliverance in heaven there will be no sin and no curse there. We need the power of the cross now and in this life. The ***gift of righteousness*** means that we by no act of our own have been made right with God. This means that sin and the curse no longer have power in our life because Christ paid the penalty and took away its judgment against us. The question then is, "Do we believe in the power of the cross?"

Begin to Reverse Course!

When we allow or accept addictions in our life we are not exalting the cross! We are diminishing its power by letting sin have dominion. ***We can change this!*** We change this by changing

our minds about it. We repent; we change our thinking and think God's thoughts. We stop allowing the old man, the old ways, to dominate and begin to reverse course. We begin to think and remember what the Word of God actually teaches about us. We are not under sin! We not under the law (Rom. 6:14)! We are being deceived by the flesh and its symptoms that our addictions rule. If we'll believe it enough, become established in the truth, the truth will set us free!

John 8: 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "**If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.**
32 **"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."**

It is the knowledge of the truth in what we believe that will set us free. The word of God alone is sufficient to change the physical circumstances and destroy the power of the addiction in our life. The Word of God is all powerful, all knowing, and everywhere eternally present. The Word of God created all things and upholds all things together (Heb. 1:3). The Word of God is the power that is holding us in our addiction through the curse of the law. The power of sin is the law; yet, now that we are in Christ that power of the law in our life has been satisfied (Col. 2:15)! We are no longer subject to it.

Releasing the Power of God

When we believe the right things in our heart and then confess and speak them the power of God is released into our situations.

Rom. 10: 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

Our salvation was the greatest miracle. We who were born sinners could be born again into the same image of Christ (II Cor. 3:18). How did this happen? It happened because we heard the truth, we believed it, and then we responded by calling upon the name of the Lord. We confessed our sin and we professed that Jesus saved us (I John 1:9). What we believed is what we got! We believed the right thing and we received it all by grace. Therefore, in the same way that we received Christ we are to continue to walk in Him.

Col 2:6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

When we understand that grace comes to us through believing the right things and acting upon them, **then we are abiding in the love of God that sets us free.** We are sinners who have been saved by grace that is true; however, now that we are born again we have been given the **gift of righteousness** that sets us free from all sin! We are new creations in Christ Jesus and we are not to forget that **we have been cleansed from our old sins!** This means that we do not continue in sin nor continue to believe we are subject to the curse of the law. This means that when we

do fall from grace by living to our addictions that we repent, change course, and begin to acknowledge our freedom in Christ.

It is In Failure that We Can Find Victory

When we experience addiction in our life **that is the time we need to confess that we are free from it**. What we believe in our heart and say with our mouth determines what we'll get in life (Mark 11:23, 24). If we are struggling with smoking and begin to pick up a cigarette and light it, while we are smoking, from the heart begin to confess, **"I am the righteousness in Christ and am made free from this addiction!"** We have to want it, we have to believe it, and we must exercise faith in the grace that Christ has set us free!

Someone might say, "Just confess that Jesus is setting me free; that's too simple, that's too easy..." It may seem easy **but it cost the blood of Christ to bring it to us and when we don't access it we are ignoring it as if it has no meaning to us**. We might think we need to work at it, or we need to be punished for our addiction, or we need to pay some kind of penance; to the degree that we don't accept the free gift we are placing our trust in works.

We may think we need to be in a rehabilitation center and go through detoxification for drugs; in other words, we need to suffer to be set free. **Jesus already suffered immeasurably for us and to the degree that we don't accept it we diminish it**. The righteous shall live by faith! Faith knows God's will and accepts the free gift of salvation—including deliverance from the curse of

the law. I'm not saying that we are wrong to go to a rehabilitation center God meets us where we are at; however, grace is grace because it is unmerited favor to all who believe. **God set us free not because we deserved it but because He loves us!**

I Don't Have Enough Faith

Someone might say, "I just don't have enough faith to practice this or accept that my profession of being made righteous will set me free." Don't let the enemy cheat you that somehow you are **unworthy or don't qualify** for the grace of Christ poured out on your behalf. Don't let the lie that you don't have enough faith keep you from receiving what Jesus died to give you. **We have enough faith when we see Jesus in His grace towards us.**

When we believe it is true that we have been redeemed from the curse of the law. When we believe it is for now, in this life, that we reign with Him. **When we are convinced then we have enough faith!**

Any Faith At All Reflects All the Faith We Need

Furthermore, I want to establish that **if we have any faith we have all the faith we'll ever need.** If we've experienced any peace we have all the peace of Christ. If we have experienced any rest we have all the rest of Christ. We don't get piece mill or parts of the Holy Spirit, or parts of Christ, or parts of faith, peace, and rest. When Jesus spoke about a mustard seed of faith, which is the smallest of seeds, He was trying to encourage us to realize **that any faith is enough faith.** We have often envisioned faith as something that grows from the least to greater faith as we mature

in Christ. I think we've gotten the wrong idea completely. We see ourselves as having very little faith. We ask the Lord, "Lord increase our faith!" This is exactly what the disciples asked Jesus when He taught them to forgive seventy times seven. Then Jesus responded by saying,

Luke 17: 5 And the apostles said to the Lord, "**Increase our faith.**"

6 So the Lord said, "**If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.**"

7 "And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'?"

8 "But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?"

9 "Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

10 "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. **We have done what was our duty to do.**'"

There is so much here but I'll try to be brief, the disciples asked, "Increase our faith," Jesus said in essence **use what you have!** If you want to increase your faith exercise it! We have muscles if we want to strengthen them we need to use them! **Then Jesus refers to the mustard seed meaning that if you have any faith at all then you have all the faith you need.** Even with the least of faith you have enough to move mountains, pull up mulberry trees, and the things of life will obey you. The reason this is so is because faith is not measured out in proportion to our worth. We have been given **the measure of faith** the scripture says.

Rom. 12: 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, **according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.**

This measure is the gift of the Holy Spirit. This measure is Christ Himself! We have the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwelling in us (Rom. 8:11); therefore, we have the same faith that Jesus had (Gal. 2:20). In fact, we have the same peace, rest, joy, life, and faith of Christ Himself. **We don't need more faith we just need to use it.**

Then consider the parable that Jesus used after telling the disciples to use their faith to increase it. He teaches about servants in relationship to their masters. Do servants come in from the fields to sit down to eat before or after their masters? The answer is obvious that they eat after. But what does this mean in relationship to faith? **It means that we have been given faith as servants of the Most High God and when we exercise it we are like the servants in the fields.** We are using our faith to do the work of the master. When we use our faith we please the Lord, we are doing the work of the Lord—we are expected to do our duty! When we do use our faith it will increase automatically. When we do use our faith in doing the works Jesus said we'd do (John 14:12), we are actually feeding the Lord! Listen to this verse again,

'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?

The Lord is fed when we reverse the curse and when we destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). The Lord is fed when we exercise our faith and accept His righteousness to set us free from our addictions. It is God's will for us to walk in grace and in the power of the Spirit. We are only doing our duty to walk as Jesus walked!

Conclusion:

Overcoming addictions has everything to do with what we believe about them. If we believe we are supposed to suffer or be punished by them, we would be under the law. If we accept our *gift of righteousness* and the finished work of Christ in the cross we can overcome them. We are not supposed to let sin have dominion over us. We are to use our faith in God's grace to accept our deliverance in this life. We release our faith by believing in our heart and confessing with our mouth that we are set free!

We speak to our addiction as past tense and of the old man; we are new creations living to newness of life. The liberty of the Spirit, the free gift of grace sets us free. Then we stay the course, keep faithful to God's grace, rest in His promise, and expect the results of the Spirit. Just as we received our salvation by believing, confessing, and expecting, so walk in the freedom of God's deliverance from all addictions. We are set free by the truth which is that addictions are of the flesh, from sin, and empowered by the curse of the law. We are redeemed from the curse of the law; therefore, the addiction has no power in us because we are not under the law we are under grace in Jesus' name. For to be carnally driven, believing only what we see, feel, touch, or sense from our physical life, is death; but to be

spiritually minded, seeing it the way God sees it, is life, health, and peace. Amen.