

Some Biblical Perspectives on Addictions

The devil often uses two techniques to keep us from God and His blessings:

- 1) Deception
- 2) Temptation

Jesus was tempted by the devil after He fasted for forty days (Matt. 4: 1-11). He was able to respond to Satan's lies and temptations because He was **prepared**. We can learn some very important things from how He handled the situation.

First, we must give our lives to Christ as our Lord and Savior. When we surrender to God, He transforms us (Romans 12:1-2). We then receive His Spirit that gives us power over sin and Satan's schemes. We also have our identity in Him. And, the emptiness within us, that we have been trying to fill with other things (marijuana, alcohol, money, power, gambling, sex, pornography, pain pills, tranquilizers, people pleasing or even close relationships), is now filled with Jesus. Our actions are then a **result** of our relationship with Christ who **is** the source of peace, joy, security and hope; **not** the world.

Our habits need changing. In the process of becoming more like Jesus (sanctified), it is important to **plan** how to deal with the temptations **before** we are tempted. Any thing that we own or do that is of greater importance than God is called an idol. God is then replaced by cheap substitutes. Consider the following steps:

- **Honestly** identify the things in your life by which you are tempted that give you pleasure or are used to avoid the hurts of life that are keeping you from Jesus. One way to test this is to consider the amount of **time** and **money** that you spend on things that dishonor God compared with the time and money you spend on that which honors Him (Proverbs 16:11-13).
- **Confess** to God that you have placed a thing or person above Him and **ask** Him for His power over it. Do this daily and ask your loved ones and friends to pray for you. Confession is the beginning of mastery over an addiction (1 John 1:9).
- Start developing a **thought life** that eliminates the temptation or addiction. Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5) as soon as it enters your mind. Remember, the "battleground" is the **mind**. Satan has access to your mind and don't think he doesn't. Keep all thoughts pure and admirable (Phil. 4:8) and **kick out** those that aren't.
- Through this **practice**, our minds become renewed and we develop **new habits** of thinking (Romans 12:2).
- Start hanging with good godly people. Stop hanging with negative people. Bad company corrupts good character (1 Corinthians 15:33). At times, we have to love some people from a distance unless God prompts you to be with a particular person, friend or loved one, in order to share God's love and truth. Learn and practice to be **in** the world but not **of** it.
- **Be in prayer** regularly. Prayer does not have to be formal, audible, lengthy or filled with flowery words. It just needs to come from the heart. When done, it unleashes the power God gives us when we come to Him with our requests with a heart of thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6). Pray wherever you are and in all occasions (Ephesians 6:18).
- **Be in the Word** regularly. We cannot practice the truth if we do not know the truth (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 119:105).
- Finally and most importantly, **seek to love God** with your whole heart, mind, soul and strength (Mark 12:30). Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things you need will be added (Matt. 6:33). The blessings may not always be in the form you expect. The peace, joy and power He gives you will not disappoint you.