

The Philosophy of Addiction

INTRODUCTION

I. Addiction is a “Worship Disorder” (the heart of the problem)

A. Exodus 20:3 You shall have no other gods before me. (ESV)

1. Placing themselves as gods is idolatry; living to please and serve self rather than pleasing and honoring God

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- I. Addiction is a “Worship Disorder” (the heart of the problem)
 - A. Exodus 20:3 You shall have no other gods before me. (ESV)
 2. Sin and idolatry are the general terms and drunkenness is the specific term

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 - A. Exodus 20:3 You shall have no other gods before me. (ESV)
 3. Another term is witchcraft “pharmakia”

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- I. Addiction is a “Worship Disorder” (the heart of the problem)
 - B. Addiction is fundamentally a problem of unbelief
 - 1. Secular world relabels this problem as an outer man problem [disease] with a spiritual component
 - b. They prioritize the body first, emotional second

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 - B. Addiction is fundamentally a problem of unbelief
 - 1. Secular world relabels this problem as an outer man problem [disease] with a spiritual component
 - c. Some see addictions as a “spiritual problem”

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- I. Addiction is a “Worship Disorder” (the heart of the problem)
 - B. Addiction is fundamentally a problem of unbelief
- 2. As biblical counselors we know that it is a heart problem [spiritual first, and physically manifested].
 - A. That doesn’t mean we don’t address the body, but it is secondary to heart change

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- I. Addiction is a “Worship Disorder” (the heart of the problem)
 - B. Addiction is fundamentally a problem of unbelief
- 2. As biblical counselors we know that it is a heart problem [spiritual first, and physically manifested].
 - B. We do NOT address the body as medical doctors! Never recommend for or against any medication or illicit drug.

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- I. Addiction is a “Worship Disorder” (the heart of the problem)
 - B. Addiction is fundamentally a problem of unbelief
- 3. What the world calls addiction, or substance use disorder [SUD], AUD or OUD, manifests as a physical problem but the root issues are in the spiritual realm.

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- I. Addiction is a “Worship Disorder” (the heart of the problem)
 - B. Addiction is fundamentally a problem of unbelief
 - 4. Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.
 - a. Guarding your heart is your responsibility
 - b. Guard your heart from believing lies

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4. Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

c. Your counselee has a BELIEF problem; fill their hearts with truth: I have stored your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you (Psalm 119:11)

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4. Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

i. Have notecards on their person with TRUTH

ii. Knowing truth helps identify the counterfeits

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4. Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

d. Idolaters believe they are gods and then demand others worship and serve their false god of self

e. Idolaters serve self rather than worshipfully serving the One True God

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5. **Hebrews 3:7-15** - Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. 10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ 11 As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’” 12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. 15 As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

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5. Hebrews 3:7-15

a. “Brothers” is talking to Christians; therefore believers can struggle with unbelief

b. Result is falling away from the living God (not a loss of salvation – but separation from Him relationally)

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5. Hebrews 3:7-15

c. Sin is...

i. deceitful (not a disease of addiction which suggests victimhood)

ii. Sin hardens your heart (wrong beliefs about God are always there; sinning reinforces wrong beliefs)

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5. Hebrews 3:7-15

c. Sin is...

iii. Hard heart of unbelief is the real, overall problem
(Heb 3:12)

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6. Unbelief manifests in billions of wrong views about God and man and life!

a. You help them know truth and then call them to act upon it. (Confrontation in a gentle way – Gal. 6:1)

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6. Unbelief manifests in billions of wrong views about God and man and life!

b. They have deceived themselves in their sin and suppressed the truth (Rom 1:18)

c. Every single day (residential program perhaps) they need help with reminders, exhortations so they don't harden their hearts and act on lies rather than truth.

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6. Unbelief manifests in billions of wrong views about God and man and life!

d. Renounce Lies/Announce Truth (Eph. 4:20-24)

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6. Unbelief manifests in billions of wrong views about God and man and life!

e. Example: LIE- How could God let all this evil and suffering happen? TRUTH – Teach Gen. 1-3 as you present the Gospel and the truth about God: God is using suffering. He hasn’t taken us out of all suffering yet due to Adam’s sin, but will in the next life everlasting. He is redeeming it with a good purpose, His purpose. God is not the wicked angry God they are thinking of.

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7. Hebrews 3:19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

a. Literally this rest was the promised land for Israel. God is pointing us to Jesus.

b. Your addicted counselee cannot spiritually rest – always seeking their drug of choice for temporary pleasure, escape, or rest

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7. Hebrews 3:19

c. But spiritually speaking the work of salvation by Jesus Christ is finished work

d. They need to know that their unbelief is preventing their spiritual rest

e. Heb. 4:11 Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

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8. Hebrews 4:7 again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”

a. God says to His children: ‘Don’t harden your hearts’ because that’s our tendency in our hearts when we hear God’s voice through His Word

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8. Hebrews 4:7 again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”

b. Pray, asking God not to allow your heart to harden when you hear truth by His Spirit

c. God is saying this THREE TIMES in Hebrews 3:7-4:7 to believers: “Don’t harden your hearts!”

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9. Hebrews 4:14-16 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

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9. Hebrews 4:14-16

a. The time of need can be the time of temptation

b. Jesus was tempted yet without sin; He is our model for handling temptation

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I. Addiction is a “Worship Disorder” (the heart of the problem)

C. Out of the heart of belief come the desires of the heart, and those desires produce thoughts, words, and behaviors.

1. Believing lies about God (and man) results in living without purpose, order, and hope

2. Living with belief based in biblical truth in God who made you in His image results in hope and identity in Christ Jesus – not about what you do, but who you are

Wrong



Beliefs

Right



Desires of the heart →	Behaviors →	State of being → (fruit, reaping what has been sown)		Ultimate Reality
1 John 2:16 <i>For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world.</i>	Mark 7:20-23 <i>And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."</i>		Fig Leaf Responses	James 4:6 opposes proud 1 Tim 2:3-4 <i>... God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.</i> Humiliated, brought low Luke 18:13-14
		Gal. 5:22-23	Even Blesses Others	Exalted or lifted up 1 Peter 5:6-10 <i>Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you...</i> Luke 18:13-14 (above)

Bible informs our beliefs – Psalm 119:11

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II. Tools of Idolatry: Isaiah 44:9-22

A. Idolatry is worship of self as god rather than the One True God, the Lord Jesus Christ

B. Idolaters use tools to carve out their idol of self

1. They have an idealized vision of themselves and cocaine, alcohol, other drugs, sexual pleasure, gambling, restricting food, overeating food, spending money etc. are simply tools (not gods!) to serve the god of self

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II. Tools of Idolatry: Isaiah 44:9-22

A. Idolatry is worship of self as god rather than the One True God, the Lord Jesus Christ

B. Idolaters use tools to carve out their idol of self

2. Choosing these things habitually because they like the way it makes them feel leads to enslavement from these life-dominating sins; thus, the world calls that addiction

3. Picking up another tool (i.e. addictive pleasure) is very easy after one tool is put down if the heart hasn't changed—continuing to serve the god of self

Verses of Scripture from Isaiah 44:9-22	Notes
⁹ All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit. Their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame. ¹⁰ Who fashions a god or casts an idol that is profitable for nothing?	
11 Behold, all his companions shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are only human. Let them all assemble, let them stand forth. They shall be terrified; they shall be put to shame together.	
12a The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm.	
12b He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint.	
13 The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house.	Detail and planning in carving out just the right idol.
14 He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it.	False idol depends upon human purpose for existence... false god is “created” by the human.
15 Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it.	

Verses of Scripture from Isaiah 44:9-22	Notes
16 Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, “Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!”	Idolater not acknowledging God’s naturally ordained process and missing the one True God who designed it all.
17 And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god!”	He is satisfied and now his attention is on praising (“worships” and “prays”) the idol he “made.” You need salvation and to put away your idolatry.
18 They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand.	Idolatry is blinding. God has given them over (Romans 1) and they will end up blind, unable to understand.
19 No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, “Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?”	Plain answer before them. Underneath all the assigned value they have given it they have to get to the truth – this is just a block of wood.
20 He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, “Is there not a lie in my right hand?”	Detail and planning in carving out just the right idol.
14 He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it.	Ashes – not real nourishment. Illustration of malnourishment of the soul. “A deluded heart” has led the addict astray, too! Delusions are lies. Not truth. Has led him astray. “Cannot deliver himself” even if he wanted to. Lie in my right hand – but they cannot see it... no awareness of it. He cannot discern it (verse 19)

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III. Strategy for Counselors

A. Create short-term restrictions and guardrails for behavior (put offs)

B. As you are winning the short-term battles, start addressing underlying heart motives for long-term change with the goal of being transformed into the likeness of Christ for the glory of God

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IV. Conclusion

A. What the world calls addiction, or substance use disorder, manifests as a physical problem but the root issues are in the spiritual realm.

(Refer to p.6 Heart of Addiction: A Biblical Perspective, Focus Publishing, 2008, 2018)

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IV. Conclusion

B. God's Word is sufficient.

C. Summary:

1. Addiction is self-worship (aka a worship disorder).
2. Beliefs are the core issue. (Desires come from beliefs and then behaviors)
3. Biblical counseling with the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit is the only way to help them see truth.

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IV. Conclusion

C. Summary:

4. Tools are not the gods – self is.
 - a. Don't just get them to drop the tool – they will immediately pick up another one.
 - b. We teach them to run to their Creator, to Christ, to the Word, to a Trusted Christian Friend, and to a small group of people with whom they can live in transparency and in community within the local church.

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IV. Conclusion

C. Summary:

5. You and I must be involved in biblically helping the addicted because the local church is the answer!

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Recommended Resources:

- The Heart of Addiction: A Biblical Perspective (Mark E. Shaw, Focus Publishing)
- The Heart of Addiction Workbook and Leader's Guide
- Divine Intervention: Hope and Help for Families of Addicts
- Cross Talking: A Daily Gospel for Transforming Addicts