

Biblical Insights into Addiction

INTRODUCTION

Goal: Learn biblical insights for those enslaved to an "addiction" (also known as Idolatry).

1 Cor. 6:9-11 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
(ESV)

Galatians 6:1-3 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. (ESV)

I. Addiction Biblical Counseling Basics

A. Defining Addiction Biblically

1. Sin/Drunkenness/Idolatry: Ephesians 5:18

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit... (ESV)

2. Tools of Idolatry used to “carve out” the god of self: Isa. 44:9-20

a. Disordered worship; self-seeking rather than serving Christ

b. Focusing energy/time on something other than God for selfish gain involving sacrifice: “the act of giving up something that you want to keep, especially in order to get or do something else or to help someone”

B. A Biblical Re-definition of Sin in the Heart

→ “The persistent, habitual thoughts, words, and actions associated with excessive pleasure-seeking which are known by the user to be harmful and physically enslaving, sinful, and willful choices to disobey God (whether one acknowledges it or not).”

– Shaw, 2012

B. Understanding Your Addicted Counselee using Proverbs 23:29-35

1. Agenda in v. 29

- a. Who has woe? (recklessness; impending doom; does not fear the right things!)
- b. Who has sorrow? (deep sadness; despair, hurt, trauma, bitterness, anger to depression)
- c. Who has strife? (relational problems create loneliness)
- d. Who has complaining? (ungrateful; accuses God of being bad, incompetent, etc.)

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e. Who has wounds without cause? (physical; spiritual: forgotten cause of initial pain)

f. Who has redness of eyes? (physical; spiritual: hopelessness; Prov. 30:17: The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.)

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2. Addictive Behaviors in v. 30

- a. Those who tarry long over wine; (time spent thinking, searching and drinking)
- b. Those who go to try mixed wine. (seeking the hard liquor, strong drugs apply here)

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3. Three Warnings about Tempting Your Heart in v. 31

- a. Do not look at wine when it is red,
- b. when it sparkles in the cup
- c. and goes down smoothly.

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NOTE: All 5 senses seem to be engaged here in the temptation. Focus is on the present moment

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d. Homework: Sparkle List – list the ways your pleasure of choice sparkles to you. What do you like about it? What does it give you? etc.

4. Dire Consequences in v. 32

a. In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder.

b. **Homework:** Snake List – list the ways your pleasure of choice has bitten (harmed) you. What consequences have come? Have you almost died? What is the future outcome likely to be (Prov. 14:12: There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death)?

5. Twisted Perception in v. 33

a. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things (sexual sins)

b. Outlook changes, reality is twisted, and spoken words reveal wrong theology (i.e. “God is unfair”). This type of think carries over even in sobriety so counseling provides opportunities to correct wrong thinking/beliefs with truth.

6. Instability in All Areas of Life in v. 34

a. You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast.

Proverbs 23:19-21 Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. 20 Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, 21 for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.

6. Instability in All Areas of Life in v. 34

b. Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual instability.

c. Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde?

Gal. 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

7. Continuing to Sin Despite Consequences in v. 35

- a. “They struck me,” you will say, “but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it.
- b. When shall I awake? I must have another drink.”

Cycle of drunkenness carries on until someone like you intervenes with God’s truth illuminated by the Holy Spirit! Consequences might help get a person’s attention but they are not enough to change the heart. The Holy Spirit does that! So there is no such thing as a rock bottom that brings everlasting change.

Recommended Resources

- **Next Steps: Be Transformed by Mark Shaw** (digital program)
- **The Heart of Addiction and The Heart of Addiction Workbook** by Mark Shaw
- **Relapse: Biblical Prevention Strategies** by Mark Shaw (a workbook style teaching book)
- **Cross Talking: A Daily Gospel for Transforming Addicts** by Mark Shaw (a daily devotional)

Specific addiction Resources (booklets)

- **Fentanyl** (The Transformation Series)
- **Vaping: Hope through the Gospel** (The Transformation Series)
- **Opioids: Hope through the Gospel** (The Transformation Series)
- **Hope and Help for Sexual Temptation**
- **Hope and Help for Gambling**
- **Hope and Help for Self-injurers & “Cutters”**
- **Hope and Help for T.V., Video Game, & Internet “Addiction”**

Resources written to the FAMILY by Mark Shaw

- Family Help for Addiction: A Care Group Study by Mark Shaw (digital curriculum)
- Divine Intervention: Hope and Help for Families of Addicts
- Am I Enabling? Hope through the Gospel
- Addiction-Proof Parenting: Biblical Prevention Strategies
- How 'Not' to Raise an Addict (booklet)