Addiction & Sin

Why do you sin?

This is the most fundamental questions one can ask him or herself and is something that we have already discussed in some detail. Galatians 5:19-21 explains this to us, pointing out that we have a sin nature that leads us to do things that are in direct opposition to God:

> **19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

We sin because our very nature wants us to do so. In fact, Paul tells us in Romans 7:15 that the very things I know not to do, I cannot stop myself from doing them, and the things I want to do, I am simply unable to do. No matter how much I try to fight against my sin nature, it will beat me every time, unless I have Jesus in my heart.

We have learned that accepting Jesus into our lives means that we are filled with the Holy Spirit. It is with God dwelling inside of us that we can bring out the "new man," the one who is filled with the fruit of the Spirit. Can you name the elements of that fruit?

My Addiction Is Rooted in Sin

All of you are sitting in this class because you are battling your sin nature. The problem is not that you are battling, but that you have been losing. This is not intended to be demeaning or belittling to you in any way. All of us are losing in this battle. You were just smart enough and fed up enough to want to do something about it.

The struggle you are having is with addiction. Whether it is drugs or alcohol, or both, sin has become such an essential part of your life that you have become addicted to a substance.

First, understand that you are not alone in this battle. While drugs and alcohol are not taking over the lives of everyone, the truth is that everyone has some kind of addiction. They may be addicted to pornography, gambling, spending money, or other vices that can have a negative consequence. In fact, what may seem like a good thing can lead to a bad addiction as well. There are many who are addicted to love. They are constantly looking for someone to fall in love with them to the point that they will give up or endanger other relationships to find that new person to court and seduce that new person into loving them. That can be extremely unhealthy as well.

Keep in mind that you have learned what it means to sin. Sin is missing the mark. It is falling short of the direction God wanted you to go. Clearly, God did not want you addicted to a substance, therefore your addiction is a sin.

Do you recognize that your addiction is actually a sin?

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Do You Know What You Are?

There is a word we will use to describe you that you will likely find offensive, and we hope you find it offensive. We want you to be offended by this term. We also want you to understand that it is a completely fitting word to describe you. You are a slave!

Before continuing, what do you think it means to be a slave.

Slave is one who is owned by someone or something. That person is basically property. He or she has very little, if any, say over how his or her life will go. That person is under the complete control of the "master."

The Bible makes it clear that your addiction has made you a slave. 2 Peter 2:19 declares, "**They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.**" Are you under the control of drugs or alcohol? Has that thing overcome you? If it has, then you are enslaved to it.

This is a very common description that is given in the Bible. In John 8:34, Jesus declared, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin**." We have already determined that your addiction is a sin. Therefore, since you are practicing sin, you are a slave to sin. How does that make you feel to know you are a slave?

What Master Do You Obey?

Here is a hard teaching that you will rarely hear on Sunday morning or at Bible study. Romans 6:16 states, "**Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?**"

You may not have realized this but when Jesus died on the cross for you, He paid to remove you from the slavery to sin. Revelation 5:9 declares, "And they sang a new song, saying, "**Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.**"

Jesus paid to remove you from the slavery to sin and the devil. 1 Corinthians 6:20 tells us that you were "**bought with a price**." Because you were bought, it now means that you are the property of God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reads, "**Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**" You are freed from the slavery of sin and death, but bought at a price where you now belong to God. However, as Romans 6:16 told us, you are now purchased to the obedience of God so that you can live a righteous and peaceful life.

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God did not purchase you to enslave you and make your life miserable. Instead, He purchased you as an heir, giving you every perfect gift.

Are you troubled by the thought of being owned by God?

If you are struggling with this, consider the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Explain what happens to the son who leaves.

This son returns to his father, willing to be a servant, a slave. He is desperate, and simply wants to be fed, have a roof over his head, and a safe place to sleep. He is willing to be a complete servant to his father. However, the father does not treat him in that way at all. At this point, his willingness to submit to his father is an acknowledgment that his father basically owns him. However, the father does not treat him that way. Instead, he is still treated as a son.

This is the way that God treats you. He has ownership over you. However, His burden is light. God does not treat us as slaves, but as sons.

Do you know you have a loving and compassionate Father who wants to care for you and provide every good thing for you?

A Father Who Clothes You in Glory

If you remember, once the Prodigal Son returned the father clothed him, put a ring on his finger, and slaughtered a calf to celebrate his return. He was clothed in riches and made to feel like a son once again.

God did this for you as well when you accepted Jesus. He clothed you with His righteousness, freeing you from the shame and guilt you may have felt.

One of those areas where you were struggling was with your addiction. You were defeated, enslaved by drugs and alcohol. God freed you from them, but there is now a part you have to play.

1 Corinthians 6:12 tells us, "**I am allowed to do all things, but not everything is good for me to do! Even if I am free to do all things, I will not do them if I think it would be hard for me to stop when I know I should**."

Here is an interesting thing about your Master, God. While you are owned by Him (He purchased you with the price after all), He gives you great freedom. This verse tells us that we are allowed to do anything we want. However, the question to ask yourself is if what you are doing is really good for you. This verse tells us that you are free to do anything, but should you be doing anything you want?

At the end of this verse, Paul makes a very common-sense statement. He tells us that we should not do something if we know that stopping ourselves from doing that would be difficult. This is the challenge of your addiction.

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Generally, most things are not bad for you. In fact, you need to do many of these things. For example, you need to eat. If you did not eat, you would die. However, food can become an addiction. Taking a medication to help you with extreme pain could be beneficial. However, needing that medication to function each day is a problem.

Understand that the temptations you face are ones that you have created. Your fleshly desires feed your addiction. 1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us, "**No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."**

Your temptations are not coming from God. They come from your own desires, the things we read about in Galatians 5:19-21.

While you have these desires, God has given you a way out. This is the guarantee that He provides. Not only does He guarantee you a way out, but has created you anew. 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us, "**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come**."

You have been transformed through the blood of Jesus Christ. You no longer have to live in the ways of the past. You have been clothed in glory, one who is equipped and destined to defeat your sin and addiction.

What are ways that God has given you to overcome your addiction?

Is it always easy to use those ways?

<u>Being Renewed in Your Mind</u>

A powerful verse that you have often heard in your time at Hope CDA is Romans 12:2: "**Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**"

The most powerful tool that you have to defeat sin and addiction is your own mind. Sadly, the most powerful tool to lead you to sin and addiction is your own mind. You are the one who will determine the direction you go. If you commit yourself to God, embracing His ways and trusting in Him to help you, then you will win. You will beat addiction because your mind has been transformed to believe in God and to trust in His ways.

However, if you are trusting in yourself and believing in the ways of the world, then you are going to fail. Understand that Satan has sent lots of temptations your way. He is prowling around, looking for ways to destroy you (1 Peter 5:8). You need to be sober minded, aware of the ways that Satan will use to lure you back to your sin and addiction.

This starts by being honest about your weaknesses. He knows what kinds of things will draw you back to your addiction.

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What are weaknesses Satan is using to lure you back to your addiction?

How does your sin enable him to lure you back to addiction?

Let Your Body Speak

This is a very bold question to ask yourself. Understand that your sin, your fleshly desires, will lead you back to your addiction. It is your fear, your anxiety, your pride, your need for attention, and other similar feelings and desires that Satan uses against you.

One tool that Satan uses to draw you into addiction is your own feelings. Truthfully, no one likes to feel anxious, worried, or fearful. As men, we are taught that these are signs of weakness. A strong man is unafraid. A strong man has no concerns or anxieties. Those are lies that Satan is using to destroy us.

Everyone has fear and anxiety. Your body has been created by God to have these emotions, these feelings. They are not signs of weakness but are indicators from your body that you have something to be worried about. It is the natural way that God is having your body speak to you.

If you are worried about not having enough money to pay your bills and the consequences that come from not having enough money, your body is going to react in an anxious way. This is for your benefit. You do not want to be on the street or starving, so your body is warning you to take some kind of action. To shut that off is denying yourself the ability to react to a dangerous situation.

When you are having anxiety or fear about doing something, that is your body likely telling you not to do it. Taking drugs or alcohol to overcome that fear is not becoming fearless; it is becoming reckless.

Have you found that you took drugs or alcohol to help you overcome your fears and anxieties?

Why did you feel it was important not to have these feelings?

The battle to overcome sin and addiction is won in your mind. It starts by renewing your mind and not conforming to the ways of the world. The question to ask yourself is if you are truly ready to overcome your addiction?

Your Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17 – **17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**

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Bible Passages for the Week:

Monday – Proverbs 20:1

Tuesday – Proverbs 34:17-18

Wednesday – Galatians 5:1

Thursday – James 4:7

Friday – Romans 12:2

Saturday – Pick a passage from Scripture that teaches you about addiction and how you can overcome it.

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