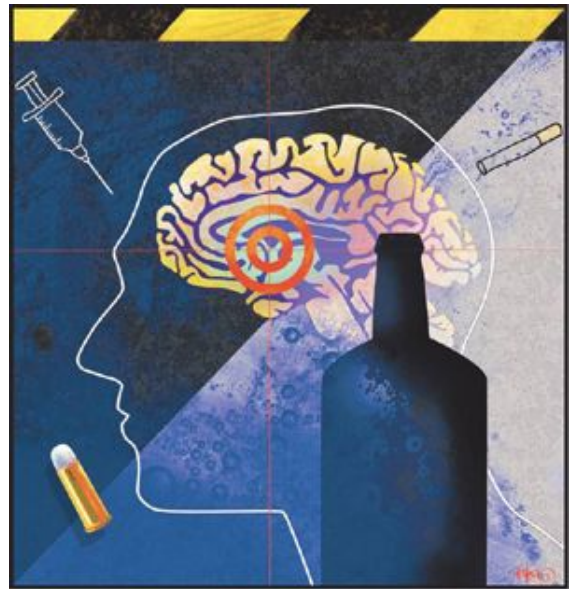


Overcoming Addiction

The addict needs to carefully examine their lives and their methods. How has it been working for them so far? Are they better off for their addiction? Do they have good, healthy relationships? Are they doing well at work? Do they have the esteem of their peers? It would be valuable to have someone video tape them when they are in the throes of their addiction so that later they can see how stupid and ridiculous they look. They must come face to face with the nastiness of their habit or there will not be sufficient desire to change.

- Proverbs 23:29-35 HCSB Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has conflicts? Who has complaints? Who has wounds for no reason? Who has red eyes? Those who linger over wine, those who go looking for mixed wine. Don't gaze at wine when it is red, when it gleams in the cup and goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a snake and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and you will say absurd things. You'll be like someone sleeping out at sea or lying down on the top of a ship's mast. "They struck me, but I feel no pain! They beat me, but I didn't know it! When will I wake up? I'll look for another *drink*."



Addicts need to carefully consider the consequences of their sins and acknowledge to the Lord, to others and themselves that their troubles are of their own doing. Addicts tend to try to blame shift, but in this they must be brutally honest. “Troubles without number have surrounded me; my sins have overtaken me.”

- Psalm 40:11-17 HCSB LORD, do not withhold Your compassion from me; Your constant love and truth will always guard me. For troubles without number have surrounded me; my sins have overtaken me; I am unable to see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my courage leaves me. LORD, be pleased to deliver me; hurry to help me, LORD. Let those who seek to take my life be disgraced and confounded. Let those who wish me harm be driven back and humiliated. Let those who say to me, "Aha, aha!" be horrified because of their shame. Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let those who love Your salvation continually say, The LORD is great!" I am afflicted and needy; the Lord thinks of me. You are my help and my deliverer; my God, do not delay.

They need to also recognize that their sins have blinded them. They are “unable to see.” While they are getting clean (and for a long time afterward) they need to find someone who is wise, clean and CAN see and heed their advice.

They need to pray for deliverance. They need to mutter these prayers throughout the day. They should be wary of temptation, looking over their shoulders and around the corners as it were, for potential traps. This is not done in a phobic manner but in an honest, realistic understanding that they are very much in a battlefield and that the unwary will fall. They need to be constantly reaching out to “High Command”, asking for support.

The addict must acknowledge their addiction. They are not strong enough to resist this temptation alone. They must place their trust in the Lord and wait patiently for his

rescue.

- Psalm 40:1-5 HCSB For the choir director. A Davidic psalm. I waited patiently for the LORD, and He turned to me and heard my cry for help. He brought me up from a desolate pit, out of the muddy clay, and set my feet on a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD. How happy is the man who has put his trust in the LORD and has not turned to the proud or to those who run after lies! LORD my God, You have done many things--Your wonderful works and Your plans for us; none can compare with You. If I were to report and speak of them, they are more than can be told.

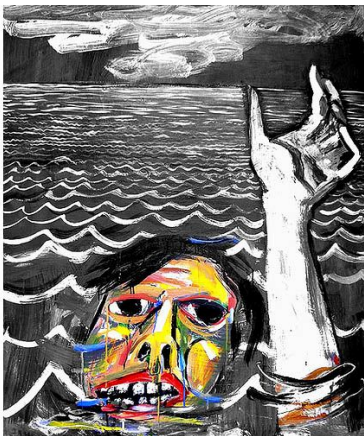
This allows them to continue trying, “working the program” even when they fall off the wagon. It also removes the excuse that addicts often use to place themselves in a position of temptation – “I should be strong enough”.

They must also spend much time worshiping and praising the Lord. This enhances their feeling of spiritual dependency and decreases their addictive dependency. It fills their time with something positive. Every moment they spend praising and worshiping the Lord is a moment they aren’t thinking about their temptation of choice.

They must recognize that at the root of their dependency is pride. “I SHOULD feel better. I SHOULD get to have this pleasure. The world has done me wrong when I’m entitled to happiness or bliss.” This is arrogance. They must constantly strive to humble this wickedness in them. The more humbly serving they are, the less the likelihood that they will fall back into sin.

They must further recognize that the addiction is a pack of lies. It’s telling them they feel good when in fact, it’s destroying their brains, their relationships, their finances and perhaps even killing them!

They should spend time listing and meditating on God’s many good blessings, filling their minds with positive thoughts instead of whining about “coulda-woulda-shouldas”.



The addict cannot do this on their own. They must have help from outside. It’s like asking a drowning person to save themselves. If they could swim they wouldn’t be drowning! Everyone must come to the conclusion that they need the help of God through His Son the Messiah Jesus. For without His help, His power, His wise advice – we can do nothing.

- John 15:4-6 HCSB Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. (5) "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me. (6) If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

When the addict is willing to acknowledge his helplessness, recognize the rights that King Jesus has in his life and submit to His rule, Jesus will grant that person the right to become a child of God with all the accompanying help and resources.

- John 1:12-13 HCSB But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, (13) who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.

When the addict honestly and humbly approaches God, confesses his sins and asks for both forgiveness and the requisite help to overcome their addiction to sin, God promises to provide forgiveness and help.

- [1 John 1:8-9 HCSB](#) If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- [James 1:5 HCSB](#) Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without criticizing, and it will be given to him.

However, the sinner must be completely committed to this. There is no room for half-baked measures. The options are either total war or total loss.

- [James 1:6-8 HCSB](#) But let him ask in faith without doubting. For the doubter is like the surging sea, driven and tossed by the wind. (7) That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. (8) An indecisive man is unstable in all his ways.

When the sinner is able to do that, a new force, a new power comes on the scene. The addict is no longer “purely human.” They are still human, still susceptible to sin, but now there is a divine spark inside, the Holy Spirit. That Spirit will start making a “new creation” out of the addict – starting on the inside and gradually working out into every aspect of their lives.

- [2 Corinthians 5:16-21 HCSB](#) From now on, then, we do not know anyone in a purely human way. Even if we have known Christ in a purely human way, yet now we no longer know Him like that. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. Now everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; certain that God is appealing through us, we plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

At this point the addict should proceed to not only survive but thrive and even reproduce themselves. They should share their new-found power with others and seek to be an ambassador for their King.

They need from this point on to constantly be seeking for ways to “take off their former way of life” and be renewed in the way they think about life, about pleasure and pain, about relationships and about God.

- [Ephesians 4:22-24 HCSB](#) you took off your former way of life, the old man that is corrupted by deceitful desires; you are being renewed in the spirit of your minds; you put on the new man, the one created according to God's *likeness* in righteousness and purity of the truth.

Their recovery will necessitate a change of companions. They can't expect to keep hanging out with the same people and putting themselves in the same situations and getting different results. GIGO – Garbage In Garbage Out. If they keep hanging out with the same sinners why are they surprised if they keep struggling with the same sins?

- [Proverbs 1:10 HCSB](#) My son, if sinners entice you, don't be persuaded.

- **1 Corinthians 15:33-34 HCSB (33)** Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." **(34)** Become right-minded and stop sinning, because some people are ignorant about God. I say this to your shame.

The struggle against their addiction will necessarily be a life-long affair. "I will call out to Him as long as I live." Every time sin and its wages (which Romans 6:23 tells us is death) start trying to ensnare the addict again they need to get back to their program of calling out to the Lord, resisting their sin, not putting themselves in positions of temptation and seeking the advice of the wise. Only then will they once again be able to "return to their rest."

- Psalm 116:1-7 HCSB I love the LORD because He has heard my appeal for mercy. Because He has turned His ear to me, I will call *out to Him* as long as I live. The ropes of death were wrapped around me, and the torments of Sheol overcame me; I encountered trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the LORD: "LORD, save me!" The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is compassionate. The LORD guards the inexperienced; I was helpless, and He saved me. Return to your rest, my soul, for the LORD has been good to you.

QR

Addiction, overcoming Psalm 40:1-5, 11-17; 116:1-7; Proverbs 1:10 (cp 1 Corinthians 15:33-34); 23:29-35; John 1:12-13; 15:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Ephesians 4:22-24; James 1:5-8; 1 John 1:8-9