

Biblical Counseling 301
Class Two – June 17, 2018 – Counseling Addictions

- I. **Homework from last week** (9:00-9:15)
- A. Share your memory verse.
 - B. Share your thoughts about the Yancey article.
 - C. Share your thoughts about the Tripp article.
- II. **Addictions – What are they?** (9:15-9:30)
- A. *Addictions (“to be given over to, devoted”) are dependencies that have become “compulsive” (I feel I can’t stop) urges to repeatedly do what a person has every reason to know is harmful to them and maybe to others. Psychological diagnoses for addiction fall into chemical addiction (substances such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs) and non-chemical addiction (impulse control behaviors like gambling, sex, eating or shopping.) In the first 350-400 years of the word, it meant a “leaning towards, a penchant” for something. But at the turn of the 20th century (because of opium in China), the word became attached forever to the idea of not merely leaning, but “resolute devotion.” We could say that an addiction is any dependency which “renders a person unable to stop” and negatively affecting their overall life, work, health, relationships or spiritual life.*
 - B. The *compulsive* nature of addictions causes many in the psychological and medical community to refer to addictions as “illness” because, for the person under consideration, the urge is “beyond their control” to resist. The medical community decided in 1956 (in the area of alcoholism) that if someone should stop something that is hurting them and they “can’t make themselves stop,” there must be a physical rationale, and it is therefore an illness. To corroborate this philosophy, as genetic studies increase, scientists are finding certain genetic markers that appear to coincide with people who have certain compulsions. (e.g., *In chromosome 15, GABRG3 is found to be increased in certain patients who struggle with alcoholism; or alcoholics and binge food addicts are each found to have an increased density of D2 gene markers.*)
 - C. Renewal from Sexual Addictions (RSA) is a national Christian ministry dedicated to helping people break unrelenting, repeated sexual sin. They say, *As Christians, we consider a person's sexual behaviors "problematic" if the behaviors are considered sinful in God's eyes.* But they define “sexual addiction” as *a (repeated sexual sin) behavior causing a significant impairment in the person's ability to fulfill their major life roles such as employee, husband, wife, father, student, etc. However, the behaviors are **considered "addictive" when it is clear that the person cannot stop doing them, especially in spite of negative consequences.*** We could extrapolate this and apply it to all addictions.
 - D. “Biblically speaking, addictions are not an illness since there is no physical cause, but rather, **a worship disorder.**” (Neuropsychologist Ed Welch ¹)

III. Principles of Counseling an Addicted Person

(9:30-9:50)

- A. **Any addict who really wants to change can change** - even without spiritual growth. Let that encourage you but **don't** let it make you judge them.
- B. **Nobody can help an addict who does not want to change.** They may tell you they want to. They may believe it. But James 4:8 says, "*Wash your hands you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double minded.*" Most addicts are double-minded in the sense that they may want to change, but they also still want their source of peace/pleasure. Nowhere is double-mindedness more apparent than with an addict who says "I want to change" as she is on the way to the grocery store to buy more beer.
- C. Addicts are **the CE's who will most make you feel an urge to rescue**, but rescue is never the turning point for an addict. If their will isn't engaged, they've not left their devotion.
- D. If you **do not engage the will and behaviors**, you usually can't help an addict. "Talk therapy" (i.e., discussing their problems and truths to overcome them) alone will be of essentially no help, apart from the conversion mentioned under "B" above. This means that if you counsel an addict, you have to help them **utilize specific behavioral steps**. Our "Pursuing Person Purity" course, for example, has pages and pages of specific steps the men need to follow if they are going to break out of this pattern. This is a hard area for some biblical counselors, and easy for others. **It involves creativity**. Remember, if you do this: YOU MUST FOLLOW THROUGH. Accountability is key!
- E. **Secrets and deception are huge with addicts.** They will deceive you and they already deceive themselves. Accountability is important and very hard to get. Most addictions occur in the dark. That is, they can behave well when everyone is around, but the vast majority of the time, it is what they do when they are alone that captures them. Things like a daily tracking report of both the negative behaviors they are now avoiding (i.e., did they fall, and if so, when? How?) and the positive behaviors (e.g., daily time with the Lord, passages being memorized, keeping the house clear of all substances that they have struggled with, being open with spouse, physical exercise, etc.) are important.
- F. **Addiction** begins losing its power when a person becomes more afraid of its power over them than they are afraid of living without it in their life.
- G. You will be helping them **deal with an idol** (James 4:1-10). This thing to which they have been addicted is something in the place of God. It has become their security blanket. Remember, like all false gods, idols do not die easily. It must be replaced with the Lord.
- H. **The most complete and dramatic change** you will ever see in an addict is when their conversion to Christ is clear, distinct, life-changing, marked and memorable. Such addicts often stop using immediately upon coming to faith in Christ. Remember, in conversion, everything necessary for change is included: Conviction of sin, knowing and being truly known and loved (intimacy), forgiveness, hope, new identity, power of sin is broken, new reason to live. Those whose conversion is "an old and undramatic story of believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for my sins and offered eternal life to all who believe," they usually don't easily "get" the changes Christ wrought in them at conversion and it's harder for them to apply biblical truth and have it change them.

IV. Key passages –

9:50-10:20

Take the next 20 minutes at table to discuss and jot down what each passage adds to the concept of addiction and to helping “addicted” people.

- A. **Proverbs 5:22 (NKJV)** *His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin.*
- B. **Proverbs 18:1** *A man who separates himself seeks his own desire; he quarrels against all sound wisdom.*
- C. **Isaiah 5:11** *Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them!*
- D. **Romans 6:16** *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?*
- E. **Romans 7:14-19 (selected) (NASB)** *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand. For I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹ For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.*
- F. **1 Corinthians 6:12** *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*
- G. **2 Timothy 2:24-26** *And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.*
- H. **1 Cor. 10:13** *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*
- I. **2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*
- J. **Titus 2:11-13** *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...*
- K. **James 1:12-15** *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

V. Resources

1. Ed Welch – booklet *Just One More* and book, ¹ *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*.
2. Dr. Sam Williams, *A Biblical Approach to Addictions*
<http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Pastoral-care-counseling-Biblical-approach-to-addictions>

VI. Homework

- A. Complete the exercise found on pp. 2-3 of these notes under “III” (Key Biblical Passages)

B. **READ: Steps Which Help An Addicted Person**

1. Get them into community. They need healthy relationships – friendships. Ideally, these relationships will 1) be open and honest and 2) not one way (all about them).
2. Help them identify every compulsive urge that captures them, and every behavior which is in service to satisfy the urge. **This is the behavioral level that you need to help with.** If they confess “compulsive immoral thoughts,” for example, is it accompanied by images or by masturbation or by inappropriate email or phone activity? If it is drinking, what do they drink the most, when and specifically what steps do they take to get it? They like beer – ok. But do they store two cases at a time in the basement or garage? Do they get some on the way home from work each day? Do they drink with someone or alone? Etc. ***If they commit to changing, and they say they want to stop going this way, they will have to stop specific behaviors which feed the addiction.***
3. Help them see that **addictive behaviors are choices.** Even when they feel compelled (and they may be more physically compelled than other people), they have to see that each (fill in the blank - - drink, sexual image on a computer, pill, flirtatious or intimate conversation with a member of the attracted sex not their spouse, cigarette, source of excess calories, manipulative effort at gaining control or influence, etc.) is a choice. They need to see and admit that to refrain from a drink (or whatever addictive tendency is theirs), is a choice available to them. They have to see that beating this thing involves saying “no” to their own desires (See for example, Galatians 6:8, Titus 2:12).
4. Help them personalize their relationship with God.
 - a. First, carefully learn whether they have been born again. Ask them, “help me understand how your life with Christ began?” When did you come to know the Lord? And they say “I grew up Methodist or Baptist or whatever, or was baptized at age 13, or realized I needed God in my life when I was 24 and...”, you have **not gotten ANY** indication that they are born again. This is essential because you are counting on the Holy Spirit convicting them and them understanding and being able to apply the Word of God, but they can’t if they do not know Him in the first place (see, for example, 1 Corinthians 2:11-14).
 - b. Second that means to find out about their walk with God. Are they in the Word regularly? Do they have a regular time with God on a daily or near daily basis? What is their prayer life like? How personal is He to them, and how are they juggling life between this spiritual life that draws them towards humility and righteousness, and this physical life that draws them towards willfulness (which is not humble) and a destructive life that is anything but righteous?

- c. Third, find out whether they have been convicted by the Lord about any portion of this struggle, and if so, find out how they have handled it. If not, you may need to work with them about what conviction is (since you know that the HS *has been* convicting them about this life-controlling sin.
5. Take **one of these case studies** and **write a one page T- chart summary** of what you think is going wrong with the counselee and what the right direction for them is, biblically speaking. Then write a one page homework assignment for them, pretending that you are at **any session** with them – first, fourth, ninth – whatever.
6. **Jerry Gray** is 42 and is a maintenance engineer for Hood Dairy. He admits he drinks, but doesn't think it is a problem except for his wife. He says both his parents drank excessively and so did one of his granddads, so he knows what a real drunk is. He has been told by his family doctor that alcoholism is in his genes, though, and to not be surprised if he becomes an alcoholic. He says he is better than he used to be. After his DUI five years ago, now he doesn't drink Sunday night -Tuesday night at all because he has to leave for work before 5 am Monday-Wednesday. Jerry feels like his wife is way too picky and demanding. And just because she is religious, she thinks he has to be. He's tried church, but doesn't care for it a lot. He says he became a Christian when he was 9 or 10 at his grandmother's church. They explained to him how Jesus had died on the cross for his sins, and that He offered eternal life to all who believe. He believes – he did then and he does now. And when he was a teenager, he liked going to church. That is where he met his wife. But he doesn't want to take up his whole life with church like his wife does. He doesn't want to give up hunting and playing cards with friends. His wife has threatened to leave him if he doesn't stop drinking. He says that doesn't help. It just feels like control. He says he rarely drives if he drinks, and won't drive if he is drunk. Staying at his brother's house a few times a month when they have been drinking is part of the problem with his wife, but he is trying to be safe... that is his motivation. He is coming to counseling to get his wife off his back.
7. **Lisa Gray** is 41 and has three children at home and a husband, Jerry. She works as a school nurse at the Middle School near their house where their youngest daughter goes. She is thinking of leaving Jerry because she is tired of his drinking. He stays out 1-2 times per week at his brother's house – who he works with. He sometimes goes to the horse races at Charles Town. Twice in the past seven years, he lost his Christmas bonus (he gives her half). She is tired of his goofy humor when he has had 5-6 beers, and she feels like he doesn't take his responsibilities with their kids seriously. He did help coach their oldest son in baseball for a few years and is now the high school team's dugout score keeper. But he hardly does anything with their daughters other than attend the older one's basketball games and play video games with their youngest. She has told him he better quit drinking or else she will not stay after June. Lisa's sister and best friend at work have told her that they would not blame her for leaving. They have told her that she shouldn't waste her whole life sitting around with a guy who is going nowhere, and who would rather drink than be married. That has helped her confidence that she is doing the right thing. She even had a friend at church give her a book that talks about how divorce can be a necessary way of getting the attention of a guy who never listens.

T- Chart Summary

<i>Things they are doing, thinking, believing or saying that are not biblical, not accurate</i> That is, the problem	<i>Things you could teach them, remind them, pray for, and show them which might help them</i> That is, biblical and practical direction/solution

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1. Pray *specifically* for the counseling process at least 3x this week

- Pray for yourself that God would help you see what He wants you to see about Him and His heart for you. Also pray that He would help you see yourself as He wants you to, including your true identity in Christ and where you may need to repent, change and grow.
- Pray for your counselor to have wisdom and insight – to know where to work/what to do.
- Pray for your spouse to be encouraged in the process and to see the changes being made in your life and pray as a couple (husband – you initiate).

Name(s): _____

Date: _____

Session #: _____

2. Set up a journal to jot down things you are learning, specific prayers and Bible passages being read. Homework (unless it is to be turned in) should be done in this journal. In your journal, record principles you can apply to your life now. Be ready to share.

3. Attend: Sunday Worship Small Group Other _____

At next meeting, share very briefly from your journal what you got out of each of these.

4. Bible Reading: _____

Read the scripture passage(s) at least ___ different times (don't read it all in one sitting).

Record in journal when you read and principles you can apply to your life right now.

5. Memorize word perfect and be ready to explain how it relates: _____

6. Read: _____ Listen to: _____ Watch: _____

- If reading, underline the _____ most important sentences to you and be prepared to share at next meeting what were your most important and why.
- If listening or watching, write a 100 word summary of the CD or DVD in your journal and share at the next meeting how it applies to your life.

7. Other: _____

Charges/Materials: _____

Next Appointment: _____

Our Part in Biblical Change: Trust + Prayer + Bible Study + Correct Thinking + Effort (I Tim. 4:6-10)