

Addiction

Today we are beginning a **5 Week** series called “**Sound Mind**” where we are going to be diving into the topic of mental health and attempting to address some of the major struggles we have regarding our mental health by looking to God’s word for comfort and strength in order to deal with these issues and find healing and victory. Our theme verse for this series is **2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.** So many of the mental and emotional challenges we face in life can be boiled down to our battle with fear. Fear paralyzes us and causes all kinds of emotional struggles which are designed by our enemy to rob us of joy and ultimately enslave us and destroy our lives as we seek ways to cope with it. But notice the three resources God promises to give us to help us combat our battle with fear. He promises us:

- 1) **Power** - divine strength so that we have the ability to overcome any and all threats to our lives. Whether they are physical, spiritual or emotional there is no need for us to be overcome with fear.
- 2) **Love** - out of an understanding of the love God has demonstrated toward us through Christ we can be secure in our relationship to God and thus show others love.
- 3) **Sound Mind** - a disciplined, self-controlled, and emotionally balanced mind that flows from a place of security and peace.

As followers of Jesus this is what is available to all of us! The question is, **Are we fully tapping into these resources which we have been promised?**

We have 3 main Goals we hope to accomplish over the next 5 weeks with this series.

- **Goal #1 is to help you understand you are not alone!** The mental health issue is a human issue! We all struggle in some way with our mental health! You are not alone. Whether you see a therapist or not, whether you have been diagnosed by a mental health professional or not, we all have struggles. One of the lies Satan tries to sell us is that you are the only one who is struggling with your particular issue whatever that may be. We want to encourage you by helping you see that you are not alone in this battle! **1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV) No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind.....**
- **Goal #2 is to help you see that therapy (seeking the help of a mental health professional) is not a sign of spiritual weakness but is actually a step of courage.** Sharing your burden with others who are equipped to help you is a blessing God has given us. Sometimes we need help sorting through and working on things that have us bound up emotionally. Don’t isolate yourself and don’t let pride cause you to fight by yourself. Instead reach out for help when you find yourself overwhelmed. There is comfort and healing to be found by sharing your burden with those who can be trusted to care for you and help you in your struggle. Whether this be a good Christian friend, a pastor, or a licensed Christian counselor, don’t attempt to fight this battle alone! **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NIV) Two are better**

than one, because they have a good return for their labor: 10 If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. 11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

- **Goal #3 is to help you see Jesus is the answer for whatever your struggle may be!** Whatever your struggle is, Jesus wants to heal you. Jesus wants to comfort you. He wants to give you victory over whatever is coming against your life. Jesus wants you to be of a SOUND MIND walking in His POWER and filled with His LOVE! **Psalm 18:1-3 (NIV)** I love you, LORD, my strength. **2** The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. **3** I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies. He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters.

Psalm 18:17-19 (NIV) **17** He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. **18** They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. **19** He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.

Here is our schedule for the next 5 weeks. Today we are going to start by talking about ADDICTION. Next week we will address the issue of DEPRESSION. Then Week 3 we will deal with ANXIETY. Then, during our fourth week we will tackle GRIEF and LOSS. And then the last week we are going to close out our series by talking about how God can use professional help to bring healing into your life as well as a healthy discussion concerning ways that we can help those in our life who may be severely struggling with mental health issues. Let's **PRAY** and ask God to lead us through this journey. Let's ask Him to set people free and let's open our hearts to what God wants to do in our lives over these next 5 weeks.

[\(Play first Half of Robert Locklear Video\)](#)

When it comes to the issue of addiction we tend to think of stories like Robert's and we tend to think that only certain types of people are susceptible to the addiction struggle. But what I want us to see this morning is that addiction really is a human experience issue and we all have the potential to become addicts in one way or another. You see, we all have a deep desire to be happy or to find peace of mind and soul. This is part of what it means to be human. However, due to the nature of life in this broken world it is impossible to feel this way all the time because as we all know, life has its ups and downs. When our happiness and peace of mind is disturbed we begin to feel sadness and even mourn the fact that we are no longer happy or at peace. But because this is a natural cycle of life we cannot control it. To some extent we can help these cycles along by the way we choose to respond to them, but for the most part it is uncontrollable.

Addiction in its purest and most simplest form can be viewed as an attempt on our part to try and control the uncontrollable. In the end it leaves you with less control and ends up controlling

you. For example, the porn addict may be feeling lonely or bored due to relational circumstances beyond their control, so to help ease their feelings of loneliness or sadness they turn to a mechanism that enables them to change those feelings when and where they want. This attempt at controlling their feelings and emotions ultimately leads to a porn addiction that ends up controlling them. Likewise, the drug addict or alcoholic, when frustrated with sad feelings caused by anxiety and stress or some trauma experienced from some event or situation that happened to them, turns to a substance to alter their feelings and what they thought was a mechanism to control those feelings ends up controlling them. Addiction, on its most basic level, is an attempt to control and fulfill this human desire for happiness. Who among us has not at some point in our life looked to something or someone to mask a pain or cover over a sadness or numb a deep hurt. In fact, addictive substances can also be:

Sleep
TV/Cell Phones
Exercise
Gambling
Work
Sports
Sex
Caffeine
Success
Gossiping (and we could go on and on)

It may be helpful for us if we think of addiction in terms of cancer. For us to understand all the different forms of cancer we must first understand what they all have in common. All cancers share a similar process: **the uncontrolled multiplying of cells**. There are all different types of cancers but one thing they share in common is they all have multiplying cells that are uncontrollable. Likewise, we must understand what all addictions and the addictive processes have in common: **the out of control and aimless searching for wholeness, happiness, and peace through a relationship with an object or event**. Through an object or event the addict seeks to produce a desired mood change. These objects or events can be anything from alcohol and drugs, to food, to gambling, to even working too much. All of these objects or events are vastly different but, for the addict engaged in them, they all produce desired mood changes which they feel they can control, or so they think.

The Bible gives us a great picture of the ADDICTION CYCLE. Man's struggle with addiction extends all the way back to the beginning of human history. Drunkenness is the prototype for all addictions and here in Proverb 23 Solomon is trying to warn his son regarding its dangers and the grip this addiction cycle can have on one's life.

Proverbs 23:29 (NIV) Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Notice how the cycle begins. It starts with some sort of woe or sorrow that has disturbed or disrupted the person's happiness and peace. As a result, they begin looking for something to help ease the pain.

Proverbs 23: 30-31 (NIV) 30 Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. **31** Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly. In our pain we begin to look for something that can help us change our current state by changing our feelings or altering our mood. Either creating a temporary altered state of mind or by numbing the pain as much as possible. Notice the captivating appeal of the wine in this case. It looks good and it even tastes pleasant. The pleasantness becomes a temporary distraction as it disguises the dangers laced within. Btw, Satan always makes the counterfeit to God look good on the outside and we are even made to believe that it is a solution, but its way eventually leads to death. The substance of your addiction is something that you think can rescue you, but in the end you will have to be rescued from it.

Proverbs 23: 32-34 (NIV) 32 In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. **33** Your eyes will see strange sights, and your mind will imagine confusing things. **34** You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. Solomon tells his son to not be fooled. He warns him that what looks good and appears to be a solution for his pain is actually dangerous and deadly like a serpent. It will have adverse effects on his life . It poisons physically and spiritually. It alters our minds and our understanding of reality. The after effects will leave you sick and miserable with a horrible hangover only to want more to help with your misery. Notice the last verse.

35 “They hit me,” you will say, “but I’m not hurt! They beat me, but I don’t feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?” Despite these warnings and the adverse effects and consequences, the benefit of numbing one’s pain and the ability to have some control over that, even though it may be temporary, is enough to say, **When, will I wake up so I can find another drink?”**

Our desire to take control of our lives and our own happiness and to have some say over feelings that are unpleasant is a greater motivator than are the consequences we may endure as a result of our addiction. This is why it is not enough to just point out the consequences of addiction and urge the addict to just stop what they are doing. It is at this point that our addiction now has control over us and we are trapped in bondage which was not what we were after. We were in pursuit of happiness and something to help with our pain. What we received in return was bondage to something that now has control over our life.

The reason the addiction cycle is so strong and hard to break is because of THE APPEAL it has TO OUR SIN NATURE. You see, we don’t sign up for addiction initially. The addiction is the result, or the consequence, of choices we have made as we choose to follow the dictates of a wayward and sinful heart. Rather than look to God for healing or wait for Him to supply us with His peace of mind and with His joy, we pursue other avenues that appeal to our fleshly desires and gives us some control over when and where we may find relief. When we are determined to do that we settle for a lie instead of the truth and we allow ourselves to be placed in bondage to our flesh and ultimately to the substance or event that we chose to submit to rather than our

heavenly Father. **When it comes to breaking addiction we want to focus on the act of the addiction itself when in essence we really need to deal with the pain that led us to seek relief in the first place and the sinful decisions made in our own heart that caused us to choose other things instead of God to cope with our pain.** We need to realize that left to our own devices we have a heart problem that causes us to look for any and every other avenue except for the one that leads to God. Paul highlights this problem for us in **Romans 1**.

Romans 1:18-24 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness. Godlessness, as being referred to here, is a human being problem and is the result of our lack of devotion and reverence for God leading to worship. It is a desire to worship other things instead of worshipping Him. We create for ourselves alternatives or take matters into our own hands by creating substitutes to give out allegiance to. In acting this way we in essence suppress the truth. **19** since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. **20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Even though we have plenty of evidence that should lead us to God, the evidence of His creation, our very own conscience, and God's revealed word, we resist Him holding on to our sin **21** For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles (in other words we turned to idols or false gods). We have a submission problem. We would rather establish our own gods that we think we can manipulate for our own purposes and desires rather than answer to the God of Creation who made us and offers us His infinite JOY.

"It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." - C.S. Lewis

As a result, God will give us over to the control and influences of our idols.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts,.....

But we need to understand that there is HOPE! We may be trapped in an addiction cycle and feel helpless to change it because of the weakness of our flesh and sinfulness of our own hearts. Or, we may know someone who is in that place. But we cannot lose HOPE! Hope gives us something to cling to and press toward. No matter how overwhelmed we may feel we need to remember we always have HOPE as far as God is concerned! **The Bible Describes our HOPE in FOUR distinct ways:**

We have HOPE in God's power to CHANGE us and HELP us to live for Him FAITHFULLY

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (NIV) **14** For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. **15** And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

2 Peter 1:3-4 (NIV) **3** His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. **4** Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Titus 2:11-14 (NIV) **11** For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. **12** It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, **13** while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, **14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

We have HOPE that in HIM we can find EVERLASTING JOY. This joy is eternal and found in an unhindered relationship with Jesus. It is not subject to the cycles of happiness that comes and goes in this life. It is better than happiness and offers us something that happiness cannot.

Romans 14:17 (NIV) For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

Psalms 16:11 (NIV) You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

We have HOPE that Jesus will HEAL our hurts and WALK WITH US through our pain so as to give us VICTORY over our addictions.

Luke 4:18 (ESV) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV) **28** "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

We have HOPE that in Jesus we will have complete FORGIVENESS and CLEANSING of ALL our SIN

This is a vital step because once we come to a place where we are ready to be set free from our addiction Satan wants to hit us with guilt and shame for what we have done. He hopes to bring

despair and drive us back into our addiction. But we need to cling to the hope that in Jesus we have been forgiven of all our sin!

1 John 1:9 (NIV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

When we consider the HOPE we have in JESUS we can be encouraged and we can encourage others that there is deliverance from their addiction. There is a way out and there is freedom to be had.

As we close, I want to share with you 5 important steps one must be willing to take if they ever want to be free of an addiction. In a sense, these are HEART commitments one must be willing to take in order to find true freedom and break the chains of addiction that have enslaved their heart.

- 1) **Identify what trauma, pain or feeling of unhappiness have you been trying to numb and begin trusting God to heal it or grant you His peace to overcome.** (This is a place where you may want to seek the help of a Christian counselor to help unpack this and help you begin a process where you can find God's peace)
- 2) **Allow God to show you how you have been exchanging Him for a counterfeit.** Submit your mind to the word of God in daily reading. Pour yourself into worshiping God throughout each day. (Start reading in the Book of Psalms and let David's cries to the Lord become your prayers to God)
- 3) **Repent of your desire to control your circumstances.** (Confess where you have tried to play God and start learning how to trust HIM for circumstances and situations that are outside of your control)
- 4) **Keep speaking TRUTH over the LIES your heart has a tendency to believe.** Addicts are notorious for telling themselves lies. Here are some of those lies: One drink isn't going to hurt / I am hopeless anyway. Why bother trying to stop / If they wouldn't have treated me that way I wouldn't have to get high / I just need a little something to relax me

Because of our sin nature our heart is drawn to a lie. We must combat our heart's sin nature by constantly preaching the TRUTH of God's Word to our hearts.

Self deception #1 - "God is not Good!" We need to preach to ourselves, **"God is Good and our circumstances do not define Him otherwise."**

Self deception #2 - "I am good, but I occasionally do bad things." The first deception is about God. But this second deception is about us. We need to preach to ourselves, **"We are corrupt and in need of a SAVIOR"**

Romans 3:10-12 (NIV) As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one;**11** there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. **12** All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

Notice how we tend to get these first two backwards. We want to believe we are basically good but God is not. How messed up is that. The thing that makes us corrupt is our selfish desires! Nothing highlights this truth better than **James 1:14-15 (NIV) 14** but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. **15** Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. We cannot find freedom from the things that want to bind us up without understanding who God is and who we are.

Self deception #3 - “My idols are harmless.” We need to preach to ourselves, “Idols/counterfeits want nothing more than to destroy us!” When we think of the object of our affection that led to our addiction we need to see it as a representative of death. It is like a harlot whose house leads to the grave. **Proverbs 2:18-19 (NIV)** Surely her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. **19** None who go to her return or attain the paths of life.

Self deception #4 - “I can’t say NO!” We need to preach to ourselves, “You can say NO!” We are not helpless because through the Holy Spirit we have the power of SELF-CONTROL. It may not feel like it sometimes but we can say NO and we need to speak it to those things that are wanting to take our eyes off of Jesus! We don’t have to give in. Our theme verse says **2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)** For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. A sound mind gives us the ability to make sound decisions and sometimes that decision needs to be, “NO, I will not give in!”

Notice the last step we need to make in order to be free from addiction

- 5) Don’t isolate yourself but instead become part of the Body of Christ. You need the love and support of the church. We are to encourage one another and pray for one another until Christ returns. When you are struggling, ask for help! Reach out but don’t isolate!!

(Close with the end of Robert’s testimony)

Invitation:

Invitation to get help through counseling

Highlight resources available

Ephesians (highlight the spiritual element and that we don't wrestle with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers of darkness) This battle cannot be won with physical weapons.

Prep for week 5 by asking if anyone has a question concerning mental health or questions concerning how to get help or how to help someone they know to text their questions to our PRAYER # 910-736-6615