

JJ West 0:00

Welcome to the every man's battle Podcast. I'm JJ Wes. I'm here in studio with Doug Barnes.

Doug Barnes 0:05

Hello, hello.

JJ West 0:06

Today we are going to be talking about recovery versus sobriety, and the impact of each of those on our relationships. So Doug, let me ask you a question. Why is it? What is the difference between sobriety and recovery?

Doug Barnes 0:25

Yeah, that's a great question. Especially guys getting into recovery. This is, this is hard sometimes, because we have a tendency to look at it from a cultural and worldly perspective. For me, I love I love my AA brothers and sisters. Okay, so Been there done that. AA has a tendency. And again, this is not across the board. This is not a slap against them. But they have a tendency in the groups that I've been in to look toward sobriety, meaning, I'm not going to drink, I'm not going to go to the liquor store, I'm not going to go to the bar. And it's focused on stopping the behavior. If I just don't drink, which I'm all in. That's the that's the beginning of that, right? I'm powerless over this, whatever it is, in this case with a alcohol. So I'm powerless over this. And so as I'm powerless, I have to step back and say, what, what more is there, because if I stopped the obsession, if I stopped the disease, then I can live a different lifestyle. I take that a little bit further for my work anyway, with with sexual integrity and sex addiction to mean that, I go a step further, it's not just about what I'm not doing. So it's not about what I'm not acting out with my behaviors. My medication as I as I use it, it's about what am I doing to live a more healthier life. So it's, it's we take the equation, recovery, good recovery equals time. And that's a length of time that is stretched out over days, weeks, months, and years, it's not a couple of weeks, it's not a couple of months, as we all want it to be

JJ West 2:15

right.

Doug Barnes 2:15

And so that length of time, whatever that is, for the duration, whatever that is, for each individual, plus believable behaviors, because we had to stop some things and start other things, other things that are good for us, but we need to stop some unhealthy behaviors. And we need to begin other healthy behaviors.

JJ West 2:32

Right.

Doug Barnes 2:33

Plus, an added bonus of what is the sanctification of my character? If I can include that sanctification of my character, my character changes, I'm addressing issues. Like if I have a tendency to have angry outbursts at home.

JJ West 2:50

Right.

Doug Barnes 2:52

Is that changing at all? If I have a sarcastic, you know, bent to my conversations, am I am I addressing my sarcasm? Even for me, that may be how my house was growing up.

JJ West 3:06

If I have, if I'm prone to lying or deceit, deception, I may not be acting out sexually. But if I'm still continuing to do that, that character plot is still there.

Doug Barnes 3:16

Correct. So time plus believable behaviors? Plus, good character sanctification equals good recovery?

JJ West 3:24

Yes. So is it fair to say that sobriety is an important component of recovery? It's, it's part of recovery. It's just not all of recovery?

Doug Barnes 3:36

Oh, totally. I totally agree with that, because we need to stop the behavior, right? So if I'm cruising around the college campus looking to take snapshots of women or men or dogs or whatever my thing is, then that needs to stop.

JJ West 3:55

Right.

Doug Barnes 3:55

If I'm cruising the mall, Those are behaviors I need to stop if I sit down by myself in isolation, and I start turning on my computer, ready to open up, you know, two 4 10 websites, whatever it is getting online chatting with women or chatting with anybody, then those are behaviors that I need to stop. But But recovery doesn't stop there.

JJ West 4:17

Right?

Doug Barnes 4:18

Right.

JJ West 4:18

Correct. It's not it's not enough.

Doug Barnes 4:20

Right. But that that is where sobriety. That's where I think sobriety really equals the normal definition. If there's a normal definition of sobriety, I'm not engaging in my behaviors. But what drives me to my behaviors is not about the behavior in the first place. And that's the difference that a lot of times we don't understand with sexual integrity.

JJ West 4:43

Right. It's not that I'm just this oversexed monster who just needs you know, sexual input all the time.

Doug Barnes 4:51

Right.

JJ West 4:51

There's actually something else that's driving that.

Doug Barnes 4:54

Right. Yeah. And that's behind the scenes usually, and that takes a little bit of digging It takes a lot of data.

JJ West 5:02

Right? It takes takes more than a little bit. We this is not a 21 days to the new you, where we're just focused on changing behavior.

Doug Barnes 5:11

Right, Yeah.

JJ West 5:12

So why is it then that so many guys, when we're talking about sexual integrity, we're talking about trying to make changes, so many guys get stuck or gravitate to just the sobriety piece, just the behavior piece? Just give me the rules and regs that I need to follow? Why is it that so many of us are, are either drawn there or get stuck there instead of going into full recovery?

Doug Barnes 5:38

Yeah, yeah, that's a great question. I think, for my experience, it's been, because we are, we are outcome driven. We are bottom line driven.

JJ West 5:50

Right.

Doug Barnes 5:51

So in, in our everyday life, we we go to jobs that were paid a wage to

get an outcome, whether that's, you know, 25, ice cream cones in an hour, or it's, you know, 400 widgets down the belt that, you know, by two o'clock in the afternoon, whatever it is, we're, we're paid to do a job. And there's an outcome to that I get paid because of my outcome. And so I'm grown up, like, think about your first job, you were paid to do something that you had no idea what to do. So they gave you an order, okay, you, you turn on the machine, then you flip the you turn on the burner, and then you put the paddy on the grill, and you take the grill off, that, you know, you take the patty off the grill, and then you put the onions and then that tomatoes, and you're given a regimen or routine. And so from our very first for most of us anyway, our very first job is about outcome. We're not sitting there questioning, well, gee, why did the pickles go on first? Why can't they? Why can't the lettuce go on first? We don't we don't do that. We just say okay, you're gonna pay me 10 bucks, 16 bucks, 22 bucks an hour, whatever it is to do a job, right? And so as I do that job, I'm not questioning I'm not thinking about anything, but okay, what am I going to get with my money? Let's see, I got a PS5 coming. I've got some new shoes. Let's see. Yeah, I'm going out on Saturday. So I can treat my date that way. And so we're looking at what can I do with my outcome. But this is all about the process. When we talk about rules and regs, when we talk about the procedures, we there are procedures that we need to be doing but not for outcome sake, we're doing them for the process of changing our hearts and changing our minds in the way that we work our recovery. Because if we're only expecting an outcome in recovery,

JJ West 7:46  
right,

Doug Barnes 7:47  
especially sexual integrity, recovery,

JJ West 7:48  
right?

Doug Barnes 7:50  
We don't ever wake up and go, Man, I did it, glad that's over. That's cool. red letter day. Yeah. Hooray. Right, we throw a party. That's not how this works.

Speaker 1 8:01  
Right? Well, and the flip side of this as well, is that there's a safety and a predictability to rules and regulations and order. And I know, I know what I'm supposed to do. There's, there's so much yeah, there's so much safety and predictability in that. And when you're talking about recovery and how recovery is so relationally based or oriented maybe is a better way to say it relationally oriented, relationships are messy. And recovery is messy. It's not orderly. And so there's there's this unpredictability to it, there's this, there's

this vulnerability and variability to relationship and recovery, that you don't have in a nice ordered rules and REG, option or or, or focus. So I end up gravitating as well to to the order because there's safety there. There's predictability there. I know what I'm supposed to do. I don't have to try and try and respond to what it is that I'm seeing and hearing and and how it's impacting you very different scenario to do full recovery. And then like you said, even the digging in that, that work of digging into the wounds of my heart and my soul. That's hard work. It's much easier to just go in flip the switch and put on the burger. Cheese. Put on the lettuce like that's that's so much easier. It's so much easier to go. Okay, Did I did I drink today? No. Did I go to the bar today? No. Did I? Or in our vernacular, right? Did I get online and look at porn today? No. Did I reach out to the mistress today? No. Did I go to the strip club? No. So I'm good.

Doug Barnes 9:49  
Right.

JJ West 9:50  
Right. It's just it's so much easier to do that than to look at why what are the wounds that are in my heart and soul that are prompting those behaviors in the first response.

Doug Barnes 10:01  
Right. The predictability caught my attention. What are my expectations? Because when something goes wrong, all I need to do is to go back to the process. Go back to the routine. Okay, well, this is how I can fix it. Well, if I just do this, if I just don't do that if I just do this, and relationships don't work that way.

JJ West 10:21  
Right. Right.

Doug Barnes 10:22  
My wife doesn't act the way that I want her to.

JJ West 10:26  
Why not?

Doug Barnes 10:27  
You know, I've been asking myself that for 31 years. Sweetheart, why don't you ask acting the way I want you to?

JJ West 10:33  
Sure.

Nor do we act the way they want us to. Right.

Doug Barnes 10:37  
Yeah, let's be fair. Let's let's own it that's on ourselves. Yeah. So

you're right. So it's that that's that unpredictability that I have just over the recent years have learned to appreciate? Because that I've got this saying, our wives do wives things, you know, people do people things. But in recovery, I've wanted them to do things the way I've wanted them to do. And that's that routine, rather than, like you said, go into vulnerability that says, Wow, they're different than I am. They have different thoughts, different ideas, their heart is in a different place. They grew up in a different family. So what they bring to our family, our family now is something completely different than what I brought in. Can I appreciate that. And work within that framework, rather than make her confined to my rules.

JJ West 11:34  
Yeah. Yeah.

Doug Barnes 11:36  
Because that doesn't work. It's never worked.

JJ West 11:38  
Yeah. Okay. So let's, let's talk about practically speaking. What is the difference? If I wake up? I'm JJ West, you know, recovering sex addict, I wake up? And what does it look like for me to walk through my day focused on sobriety versus what it looks like for me to walk through my day focused on recovery? Right, so I wake up, in my, in my mind, if I'm focused on sobriety, I wake up and I go, Okay, where am I not allowed to go? today? What am I not allowed to do today, so I'm not going to I'm, it's a weekend that my family is traveling, so I am not going to get online, on the internet, because that's too dangerous for me. So I'm not gonna do that. Right. That's my focus. And I'm not going to go drive past the college campus, because that's dangerous. Um, I'm going to avoid that. And I'm not going to go to the gym on that side of town, because that's where all of the 20 and 30 year olds work out at that time of day. So I'm not going to do that. Right. That seems to be the focus on sobriety.

Doug Barnes 12:48  
Right.

JJ West 12:49  
What would it look like to change the focus to recovery?

Doug Barnes 12:55  
Oh, I see. That is where I wake up in. To start my day I wake up, first thing I do is I hit my knees. I pray God helped me to have this day of recovery, so that my eyes are focused on you. Maybe I then go to journaling. I open up my Bible and I have my work through whatever scripture passage I'm working on. And I take the time to, to focus and reflect and pray and then to journal about what does that mean to me? How do I apply that to my my day, my recovery of my day, maybe I, after breakfast on my way to work, I'm calling a brother, a recovery

brother, and I'm chatting through, okay, so this is my routine for the day, my parent, my parents? My family's out of town, my my computer is locked down at home, I know what I need to do at work. Here's my game plan at four o'clock this afternoon, I'm gonna call you on my way home, just to let you know what's happening in my day. If anything happens during the day, I have your number, I'll be texting you just to follow up with you. So maybe even during the day, maybe even at lunch, maybe I'll try to listen to a podcast. But I'm not listening to a podcast for entertainment. I'm listening to a podcast to look for nuggets that I can use for me that apply to my specific mode of recovery. I'll be I'll be jotting those down. I'll be making aha moments of, okay, this really stood out to me. This was really what impacting me in during that timeframe that I'm going to use tonight am oh, by the way, tonight, when I check in with my wife, this is going to be the topic of my conversation as I check in with her. Hey, honey, this is what I learned today on this podcast. And this is how I'm going to use it. Yeah. And oh, by the way, I checked in with my accountability guy. I texted him while I was at work and I called him up before I got to work and after I got to work. Oh and by the way, I've got my group tonight too. So there is another way. And so it's keeping, it's keeping my world out in front of me. Ready to face it rather than wait to be attacked,

JJ West 15:09  
right?

Doug Barnes 15:10  
By something that I don't see coming.

JJ West 15:12  
Right. Right. And what I heard throughout all of that description of, of a recovery focus day was connecting with God connecting with yourself and connecting with others, right that that led through the whole thing, right started the day with I'm gonna get on my knees and pray I'm gonna get in the Word and and study I'm gonna maybe grab a devotional right, I'm connecting with God. And then I'm paying attention to what's happening with me, what am I what am I feeling? what's what, what is what is bubbling up in me, right? I'm paying attention. And throughout the day, you know, there may be things that I'm encountering, maybe I get an angry email, maybe I get a nasty gram from the boss, maybe I get a, you know, something, something goes sideways, the car doesn't have enough gas or whatever, right? I'm paying attention to how that's impacting me. And I'm connecting with my brothers in the battle. And I'm connecting with my spouse letting her know, here's what's going on with me. Here's how my recovery is going today. Right? There's there's connection all throughout that day that you just described.

Doug Barnes 16:17  
Well, that begs the question, why is connection so important?

JJ West 16:19  
Right!

Doug Barnes 16:21  
Why am I why am I connecting with people? Why is that so important?

JJ West 16:24  
Because I cannot do this alone. I cannot do this alone. If I'm if I'm if I'm if I'm isolated, I am easy to pick off by the enemy, right? I'm also I'm in my own little echo chamber. And we say this all the time, your broken self can't fix your broken self. Right? Just can't do it. If all I have in my toolbox is a broken hammer. And after fix my broken hammer with my broken hammer, I can't do it. Right. So I've got to be connected to others so that I have other other voices influencing what I believe what I think how I feel about myself, how I what I believe about my world around me, if I'm just isolated, I'm I am. I'm in danger. Because the the there's not a great validity to what it is that I'm listening to. Right. So I want to spread that out and connecting, connecting with God and others helps me to do that.

Doug Barnes 17:29  
Right. Right. Yeah, I like that. I like that. Yeah, the only thing that connection really ever gave me was a better view of myself. And that's not how other people see me.

JJ West 17:44  
Mm hmm.

Doug Barnes 17:45  
I can make myself out to be any way anyone any personality I want to be until I engage vulnerably

JJ West 17:56  
Vulnerably. Right.

Doug Barnes 17:57  
Th at's the dreaded V word. Right?

JJ West 17:59  
That's the key It's not just talking to other people where I put on my little mask to give you what it is I think you want to see.

Doug Barnes 18:06  
Hey JJ, how's your golf game? You know, that's not that's not important. Although it's during the day, it's okay. But if we're talking about really connecting, we're getting down deeper than just the pleasantries of your golf game. I'm sure your golf game is great.

JJ West 18:20



It's terrible.

Doug Barnes 18:24

But we're trying to get to a place of connection. And that can be very scary. Yet, it's very necessary, right? It's very necessary, especially in recovery, again, which is a little bit different than sobriety, again, not knocking sobriety. But connection says, I'm leaning into you. Because when I lean into you, that helps me to be leaned into as well. Because I know you're going to do that back and you but it's with an era of connection to the brokenness that we both carry,

JJ West 18:58

right.

Doug Barnes 18:59

Rather than somebody wagging my finger in my face, telling me how horrible I am.

Right?

Because that's not that's not good recovery.

Right? I don't need that.

JJ West 19:08

Yeah,

Doug Barnes 19:09

I got that most of my life.

JJ West 19:10

Yeah,

Doug Barnes 19:10

I need guys who love me, who are on my side, who really speak truth and love into me.

JJ West 19:17

And you know, our model for this is Jesus. Jesus when he's in the garden, he connects with self. He says, My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. He connects with his brothers, he shares that with them. And he asked them to pray with him for him. And he connects with the father in his prayer time. Right? Like there's this model of, of deep connection that we're supposed to follow when we're if we're going to be disciples of Jesus. So, all today all through this podcast, right, where we're looking at this difference between recovery and sobriety, and this key, this key element of of Connection, am I going to know myself, and I'm going to share myself in a vulnerable real way with those around me. That's scary. It's

uncomfortable. Sobriety is is safer and more predictable. And it's important but it doesn't go all the way. If we want to, if we want to live this fuller, abundant life, we've got to live this recovery. Like we've got to be vulnerable. We got to follow Jesus' model, and, and be open and honest and vulnerable and share our life with those around us because again, we cannot fix our broken self with our broken self. This has been the Every Man's Battle Podcast looking at how we fully recover from sexual integrity issues, if you want to learn more, or if you want more information about the workshop that we do, call 1-800-New-Life, and they'll be glad to give you all that information. Thanks for listening. We'll talk to you next time.