

**UNDERSTANDING SOME DIFFERENT KINDS
OF ADDICTIONS.**

1. Some are involved in a **romance addiction**. They are in love with the idea of love. It becomes a compelling need and desire to maintain an illusion of being in love.
2. Some are involved in **sexual addictions**. They feel that sex is the most important need, and they are looking for constant sexual highs in whatever way they might try to find it or attain it. This person may cruise a section of town where he is more likely to find what he is looking for -- pornographic shops, prostitutes, etc.
3. Some are involved in **power addictions**. They must be in control. Exercising power over people, things, and events is all consuming. The power addict uses every means possible to control things to bring about the desired ends which will bring great personal acclaim and honor. This person looks forward to manipulating people and to achieving control over others. Pastors also are vulnerable to power addiction, but seldom recognize it.
4. Some are involved in a **relationship addiction**. They feel that they need the other person regardless of what is taking place. They, seemingly, must keep the relationship even when it means beatings and abuse, both physical and mental.
5. Others are involved in an **eating addiction**. Often this is manifested in anorexic or bulimic behavior. The person experiences a mood change by bingeing or starving, or they do it to punish themselves for some past failure or extreme guilt over some past horrible sinful act. This addict may only be using the addiction to *give back* what they feel someone else deserves. The person may want to become fat or stay fat in order to punish the other important person in their life.
6. Still others are trapped in **activity addiction**. This represents the workaholic who gains great personal satisfaction from his personal drive

COUNSELING STUDIES -- ADDICTIONS

and sacrifice. He may be involved in some exhilarating, arousing activity which controls him, such as thrill seeking, exercising addiction, or some other compulsion. This person may be seeking an adrenaline high from the activity which becomes an obsession in life.

7. We know that many people are involved in a **drug addiction**. This can be anything from an addiction to medications that doctors have prescribed, to the heroine addict. Many millions are involved live with a daily addictive habit and only God knows the total damage of liquor and all other kinds of life destroying drugs.

UNDERSTANDING THE BASIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ADDICTIVE AND NON-ADDICTIVE

If we obey the control of our wicked sin nature we will be overcome by some kind of sinful thought pattern, sin practice, or attitude. Sin brings corruption.

Those who live an ever deeper addicted lifestyle finally bring total slavery and total corruption into their lives. (See Romans 6: 13-17; 8:5-7.)

A. If it is a sinful addiction:

1. It will be an object or experience that diminishes you, your spiritual desires and labor and love for Christ.
2. It will make you less attractive for God because God's love and will for your life cannot reign within.
3. It will render you less capable and less sensitive to the needs of those around you, or to the Lord and the work of the Lord.
4. It will limit, stifle, and harm you and others whom you influence. It will bring a sinful bondage that will blast and ruin if continued in.

An experience can be intensely absorbing without being sinfully addictive. An addiction is marked by an intensity of need in which a person pursues the

COUNSELING STUDIES -- ADDICTIONS

sensual aspect of an experience primarily for its intoxicating effects as it impacts the senses.

There are some good questions to ask yourself about any activity, desire, or interest that absorbs you or in some way controls you!

B. If you question or wonder if something is a sinful obsession, then ask these questions.

1. Does the experience enhance my ability to live for God?
2. Does it help me to bear fruit that encourages and builds up others?
3. Does it enable me to work more effectively?
4. Does it bring me to a closer relationship with God?
5. Does it permit me to appreciate the world around you more?
6. Does it foster growth and expansion of the ministry for the Lord?
7. Does it facilitate the experience of God-honoring joy and pleasure?
8. Does it allow me to make choices that please the Lord?
9. Does it allow me to be in control when I start and stop the activity?

If we are to have an addiction or an obsession then it needs to be with God, the Word of God and the things of God. This kind of control will bring godly living, fulfillment in service, God-honoring labor, and a love-life with the Lord. This is truly what the dedicated, consecrated life is to become -- a life in full control by the Holy Spirit. He will bring a love for the God the Father, and Christ the Son, and will cause us to desire constant fellowship and love-service for God.

UNDERSTAND THAT THE ADDICTIVE PERSON GRADUALLY BUILDS BONDAGE

A. Notice the following:

1. Addiction is a process, for it seldom remains constant. As it changes, it usually takes more and more of the person's energy and resources to the point that it can become destructive and even fatal.
2. As the addiction continues and grows, it becomes a way of life, a lifestyle that is very hard to break.
3. The addiction is an out-of-control search for happiness or an avoidance of pain. Regardless of the addiction, every addict has a relationship with an object or event in order to produce a certain desired effect or end.
4. The addict engages in addictive behaviors or addictive mental obsessions. They are literally, more and more captivated by sin and by the enticement of the object or event that is involved. This brings their own self-imposed and chosen addiction which in turn brings a completely controlled addictive personality.
5. It is also easy for the addictive personality to switch objects of addiction. The bottom line for the recovering addict is to understand that the addictive personality will stay with him for life. He best be giving himself over totally to Lord's control.
6. The lack of control and bondage that is being built is mainly seen in the behavioral level. The episodes of being *behaviorally out of control* become more frequent. The addict becomes more preoccupied with the object or event that has become their obsession. At this stage others sense something is wrong.
7. The desire for the object or event (like drugs, sex, gambling, etc.) continues to grow as the person engages in it. The addictive process and cycle continues to bring more and more bondage. In this process the person denies reality and avoids responsibility. (Notice the following progressive results.)

COUNSELING STUDIES -- ADDICTIONS

- a. The addict become more and more dependent upon the addiction and the sense of whatever fulfillment they feel they gain from it.
- b. Because the addict must make emotional sense to his or herself out of the inappropriate behavior, the person turns to *denial*, *repression*, *lies*, *rationalization*, and other *defenses* to cope with what is happening.
- c. The person surrenders immense power to the addiction. The stress of such surrender limits a normal life. Energy once directed toward family, friends, work, etc., is now used to sustain the addiction.
- d. At this point the addicts life will start to break down under the tremendous stress cause by the increased pain, anger, and fear which results from continuously control of the addiction itself.
- e. The person's emotions start to break down. The person may cry uncontrollably for the slightest reason or go into angry rages or tantrums for seemingly no reason.
- f. Free-floating anxiety, panic attacks and hysteria can strike and last for a few moments or even days. The person is now under the the weight of tremendous guilt because of the sinful lifestyle he has been living.
- g. Difficult circumstances now abound. The addict's work is endangered, marriage is threatened or ended, financial problems are overwhelming, or legal problems emerge. Physical problems also occur. Many illnessness and problems are attributed to the breakdown and sinful lifestyle of the addict.
- h. The physical damage resulting from the addiction is enormous, both for the addict and for his family and friends. Suicide is often a common consideration at this point. Depression, anger, rage, guilt, shame, loneliness, and hopelessness can combine to make self-destruction very inviting.

**UNDERSTANDING THAT THE BIBLE SPEAKS ABOUT
ADDICTIONS AND SIN'S BONDAGE**

Bondage to sin is something that is often seen in the Word of God. The old sinful nature is corrupt to the core, the heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked. (See Romans 1:18-32; Jeremiah 17:9;

Christ ministered to the needs of mankind while on the earth. Often he ministered to those who were blasted by their sin, and held captive to sinful living. Some were in such bondage to demonic delusions and control that they were not even sane.

I don't think that we fully understand the extent of the corruption of the man's sinful nature or the potential of complete bondage to sinful ways and what it brings. What men call a lack of mental health -- paranoid disorders, anxiety disorders, psychosomatic disorders, and schizophrenic disorders are often and largely the resultant effects of unconfessed sin. Guilt has eaten away at the personality until the person is derange to some degree by the very sinful lifestyle that has brought the bondage.

-- Dr. Edward Watke Jr.