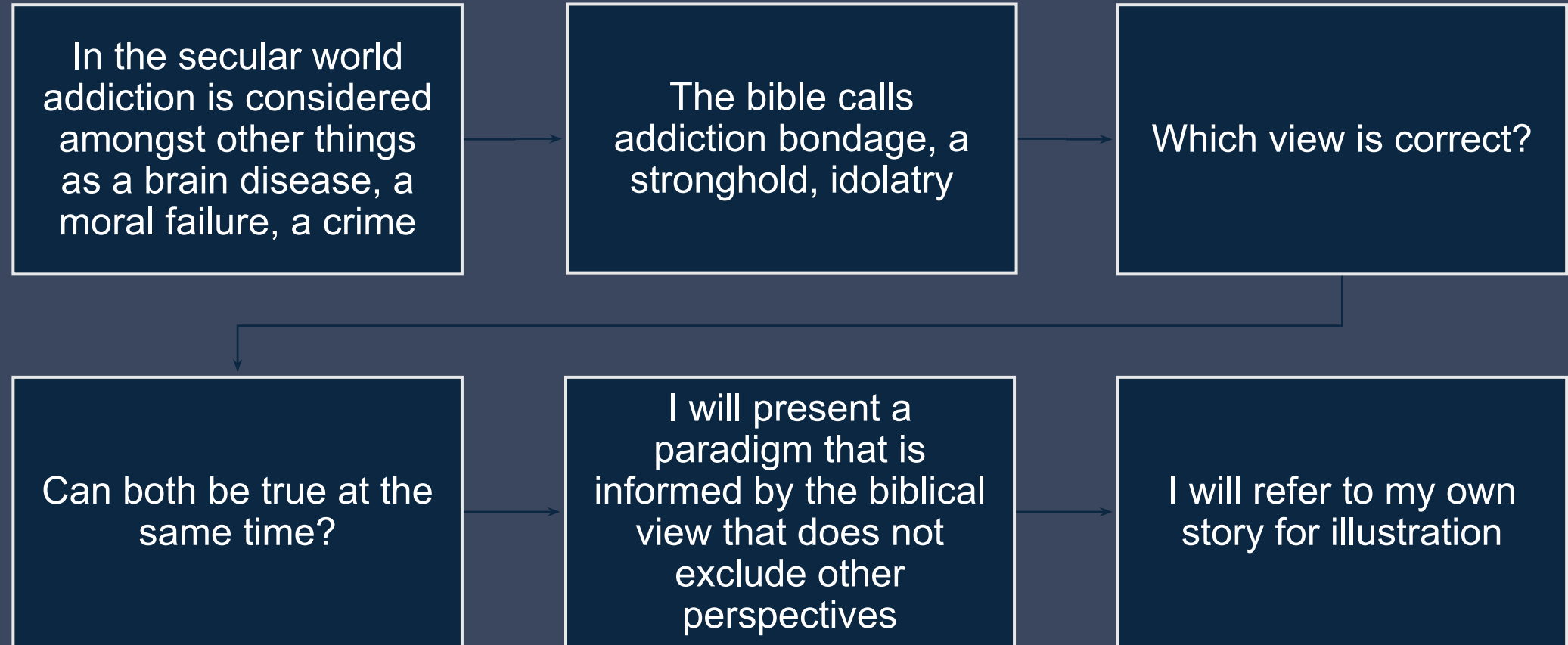


Addressing Addiction, recovery and mental health

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Introduction

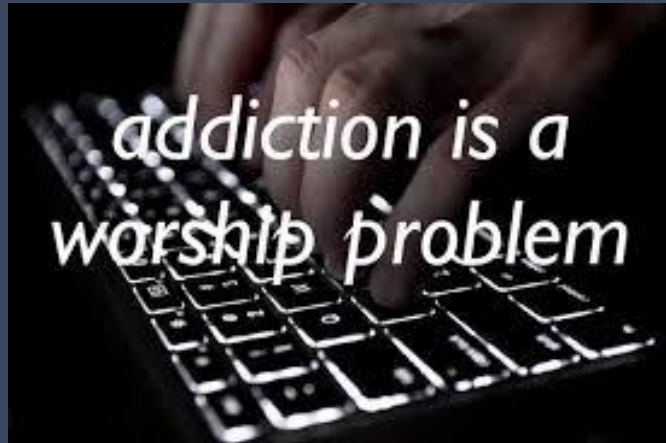


Sermon Outline

- Biblical definition of addiction
- Nature of addiction
- My story
- My redemption
- Role of the Church in recovery



Definition of addiction



- Addiction is idolatry: a spiritual condition
 - **Jer.2:13** “For My people have committed two evils:
“They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters,
And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.”
 - **2Cor.6:16** “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God...”
 - **2Pt.2:19** “While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.”

The nature of addiction ~ deception

- Alcohol and drugs are deceptive:
 - They promise freedom, 'fun', power, endearment, acceptance and belonging
 - They deliver bondage, misery, weakness, disconnection, isolation and withdrawal
 - **Prov.20:1** "Wine is a mocker,
Strong drink is a brawler,
And whoever is led astray by it is not wise."
 - **Prov.23:29-35** describes the cycle between drinking, drunkenness, hangover and repeating the cycle; it's irrational right?



Addiction creates strongholds

- Addiction is a stronghold – seemingly impregnable □ being trapped
 - 2Pt.2:19[b] “...for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage”
 - We are enslaved by whatever overcomes us
- Strongholds are established ways of thinking, barriers and fortresses that resist the will, knowledge of God – the truth
- In addiction they are characterised by a lack of insight into the truth of one's situation – denial
- Addiction is a condition of obsession and compulsion - it takes thoughts captive
- It is a fortress (*ochyroma* –Gk.) of sin and bondage (Jn.8:34; Rom.6:16)
- It leads to deceit according to the “philosophies [and] traditions of men...not according to Christ” (Col.2:8)



Addiction ~ How it starts

- If drinking/drugging is seemingly irrational, how can you explain why anyone would be enticed into it?
- It starts 'harmlessly' with a little indulgence
 - After all Timothy is told to use a little wine for his stomach (digestion) (1Tim.5:23)
- In addiction psychology this is called experimental/recreational use
 - Gen.3:6 – Eve's curiosity led her to sinning against God
 - 1Cor.10:23 – Paul says he has the right to do anything, but not everything is beneficial to him, and he will not be mastered by anything
- I started 'harmlessly' though the early signs were there - drinking more than I intended, memory blackouts



Addiction ~ How it progresses



- Addiction Psychology describes the progression of use of addictive substances as proceeding to circumstantial/occasional use from experimental
 - Using for a desired effect: "I need a drink"; "to take the edge off"; "to relax"
 - Judg.2:11-13 – the Israelites forsook God for idols provoking God to anger; relying on idols rather than God
 - their destruction
- **Jn.8:34 - Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin."**
 - Using the drug is now habitual and becomes sinful as it replaces God as one's primary relationship
 - The drinking/drugging is now becoming idolatrous
- I became obsessive about alcohol within three years of regular drinking



Addiction ~ How it intensifies



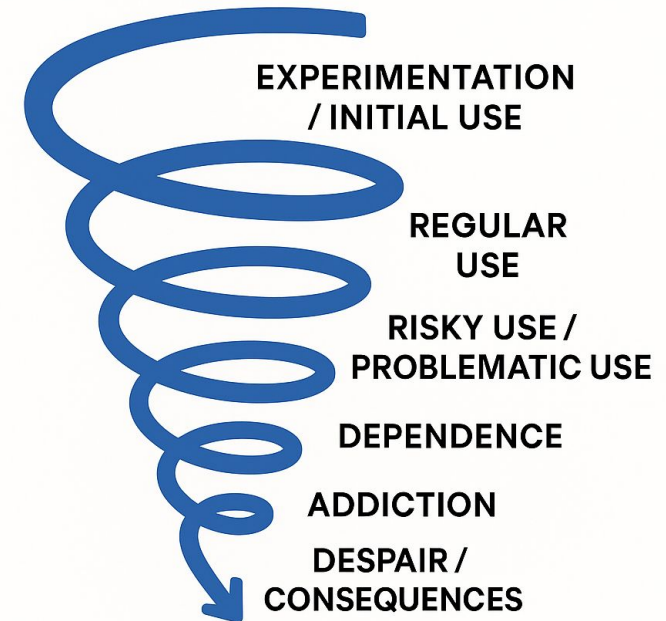
- When we do wrong, the shame causes us to hide or deny the painful truth
 - Gen.3:8 – Adam and Eve ‘hiding’ from God
- Habitual sin desensitises us – hearts harden (Heb.3:8)
 - Rom.6:16 – enslavement to that we obey (indulge)
- I convinced myself I ‘deserved’ the alcohol; “it’s all I have”
- Denial is failure see the (painful) truth
 - **2Cor.4:4**– “whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”
- The drinking escalated to intensified and regular



Addiction ~ where it ends

- Addiction tears us apart body, soul, spirit and family
- I lost everything of value
 - **Prov.23:20,21** “**Do not mix with winebibbers,
Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;
21For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,
And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.**”
- This was my exact experience – alcoholism brought me pain, misery, failure, despair
- However, like the prodigal son, I went home and was received (not with a fatted calf however), but with a chance to go to rehab.

SPIRAL OF ADDICTION



Addiction ~ the solution – contemplation



- There was a happy ending!
- I found freedom in Christ – healing, redemption, restoration
- **Lk.4:18** – “...to set at liberty those who are oppressed...”
- Jesus defeated sin and death ☐ my freedom as I embraced Him
 - **Jn.8:36** “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”
 - 2Cor.5:17 – I am a new creation
 - 2Cor.12:9 – God’s grace is sufficient
- First, I had to confess and repent – Lk.15:18 - the prodigal son



Addiction: the solution-preparation

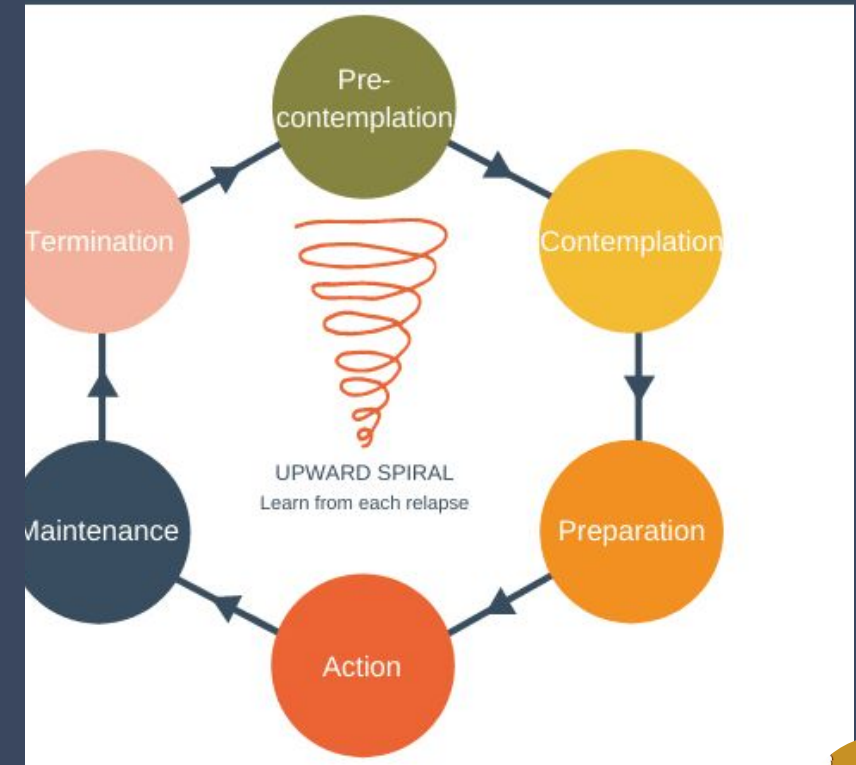
- Lk.19:8 – Zaccheus upon being redeemed having confessed of his sinfulness eschewed all that he had obtained wrongfully; he was ready to change
- I too became ready – Jesus intervened and had me walk with Him
 - Ps.34:17 – “The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears,
And delivers them out of all their troubles.”
 - Jam.5:16 – “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
 - 1Jn.1:7 – “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”



Addiction ~ the solution- action

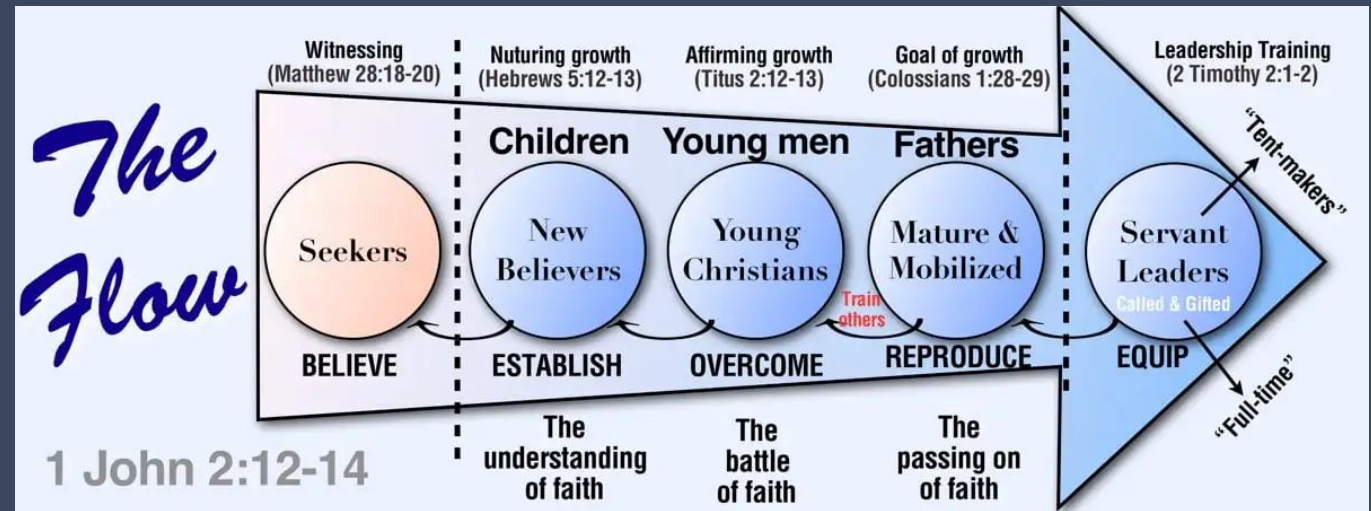
- I took action by putting off the old man and putting on the new
 - Col.3:8-10; Eph.4:22,24
- Like the church of Acts (Act.2:42-47) I embraced a new way of life
- I received the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to overcome the shame, guilt etc.
 - **Gal.5:1** “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage”
 - **Gal.5:16** “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”
- My mind was renewed (Rom.12:2; Ps.51:10) and I sought purity
- I attended AA and church religiously for 2.5 years, and then church on its own thereafter

he Stages of Change Model



Addiction: the solution ~ maintenance

- I live a life of renewed purpose and freedom in Christ
- I have a new identity in Christ
 - 2Cor.5:17,21 – I am a new creation, and I am the righteousness of God in Christ
 - **Phil.4:13** – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”
 - **Ps.40:2** – “He also brought me up out of a horrible pit
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.”
- I am vigilant – the enemy is lurking (1Pt.5:8)



Addiction: Sin or Disease?

- Sin enslaves, so does addiction
- Sin involves choice, addiction is impaired choice
- Sin is a heart condition, addiction is BioPsychoSocial-Spiritual
- Addiction leads to sin; is it not sin itself? Controversial
- Addiction is slavery, thus sinful



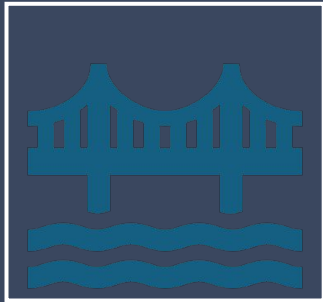


Role of the Church in Recovery

- The church provides the missing piece – the heart of Jesus Our Saviour
- AA and rehab led me back to Christ
- Jesus Christ healed me of my addiction
- AA says addiction is incurable, but Jesus heals, saves and delivers
- These are not incompatible – God uses AA & psychology to bring His people back to Him
- The Church needs to be ready to catch them through love and understanding



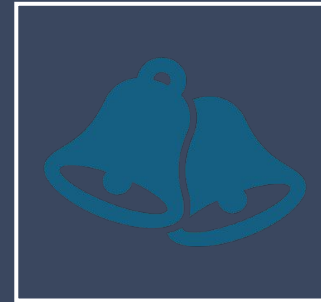
The Church's Role in Recovery



Church has a role in bearing one another's burdens (Gal.6:2)

1Thess.5:11 – “Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”

1Cor.12:26 – “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”



The Church as a confessional community

Jam.5:16 – “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

- There is power in receiving one another

Gal.6:1 – “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”



Thank you

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