



# Grace Christian Counseling Ministries

1906 Treble Drive – Suite 22  
Humble, Texas 77338  
[www.graceccm.com](http://www.graceccm.com)

## **The Problem: Addictions. The Solution: Jesus Christ**

An addiction is a compulsive or physical dependence upon any behavior substance, or person, that produces a temporary feeling of pleasure. However, the long-term destructive effects of an addiction normally tend to outweigh the temporary effects. A behavior is considered addictive when one knowingly does something that is harmful or not in one's best interests. Addictions are progressive conditions that exert more and more control over the individual. Control is usually both psychological and physical. Although the addict may admit that the condition is harmful, quitting may be difficult or impossible.

So, ask yourself this question, "Am I doing something that temporarily makes me feel good but harms me?" If you answered, "Yes," you may be addicted to something. Maybe you are struggling with an alcohol or drug addiction. Maybe you have a sexual addiction of some kind. Maybe you have a spending, eating or gambling addiction. Here are some suggested steps to help you understand the causes of addiction and begin the road to recovery.

**First, the cause:** Addictions are the result of one trying to find immediate release from emotional or physical pain. People who become addicts generally have problems which produce emotional or physical pain, so they want and need comfort. They then turn to a substance, which is a false comforter, to make them feel better or to help them deal with the pain. There are three false beliefs (mindsets), which contradict the scriptures that contribute heavily to addiction. They are:

1. I cannot tolerate suffering (Discomfort Anxiety).
2. I must feel better immediately (Low Frustration Tolerance).
3. I choose immediate pleasure over long-range consequences (Short Range Hedonism).

It is an attempt to deal with pain, apart from God, that leads to addictions.

### **Understanding Addictions**

#### **Addictions are deceitful, progressive, and deadly.**

James 1:15 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Mark 4:19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Hebrews 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

### Warning Signs

- Deterioration of family and work relationships
- Withdrawal from family activities
- Change in daily activities
- Negative personality changes
- Listlessness, depression, nervousness
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Legal and moral problems
- Unrealistic compulsive behaviors

### The Stages of Addiction

#### Scripturally



Tempted...drawn away....enticed...conceived...sin...finished...death

1. Tempted: thought of evil (James 1:14)
2. Drawn away: strong imagination (James 1:14)
3. Lust: delight in viewing it (James 1:14)
4. Enticed: weakening of the will (James 1:14)
5. Lust conceived: yielding (James 1:15)
6. Sin: sinful act committed (James 1:15)
7. Death: result of actual sin (James 1:15)

#### Behaviorally



Lust...behavior...use...abuse...habit ... addiction

### The Effects of Addiction

**Deceitful** - Cause a change in the person that he may not be aware of until it is too late. (Denial) "I can quit anytime" "I can handle it"

Addictions cause a change of attitude, values, and beliefs in self. This leads to a change of behavior. This change in self causes a change in other people as they react to the change in self.

**Progressive** - The need becomes stronger and stronger and the behavior becomes more ingrained. The behavior becomes a reaction rather than an action. More and more time is spent "doing" this.

- Reach the end of what is natural
- Begin to explore what is not natural
- Not satisfied with self...seeks to include others
- Move past what is natural is broken and perversion results
- Leads to watching, self-infliction, including others
- Now enters the realm of "perverse"

**Deadly** - The body is now doing things it was not designed to do and/or is neglecting the other things that the body needs to maintain a healthy balance.

Things that are addicting cause, directly or indirectly, physical destruction and/or death.

**Addictions not viewed as sin are unconfessed sin. Unconfessed sin separates you from God.**

### **The Cycle of Addiction**

- Longing (Emotional Emptiness or unmet need)
- Low self-esteem (Emotional pain) – Search for a pain reliever
- Addictive Agent
- Consequences
- Guilt and Shame
- Self justification
- Delusions
- Self hatred
- Over indulgence
- Guilt and shame – strengthens longing

**Second, the cure:** Jesus Christ has come to set the captives free. All people have some problems, distress, or stress in their lives. The difference is how they choose to handle these problems. For those of you who are having difficulties handling problems, I have Good News for you. Jesus Christ has come to set the captives free.

Jesus said, Luke 4:18-19 (KJV) The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath annointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, [19] To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Gal 5:1

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:34-37 NIV

When a person trusts Christ as their Lord and Savior, he or she can be set free because Jesus is God and has promised in John 8:36 "if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." and in John 10:10 "I have come to give you life and give it more abundantly." Jesus sets people free and answers the pain in their lives....where am I going when I die and what am I living for on this earth? He also gives power to overcome the temptations and the addiction when a person surrenders his or her life to Him.

For those struggling with addiction, I recommend the following steps:

1. First, acknowledge that you have an addiction. (Matthew 9:12)
2. Second, desire to be free from the addiction (Mark 10:51)
3. Third, be willing to turn from the addiction (Luke 9:23-25)
4. Fourth, understand that God is the real goal (Matt. 6:33)
5. Fifth, be willing to lay your addiction before God (I Peter 5:7)
6. Sixth, depend upon God to fulfill your needs (Philippians 4:19)

The pain is real; the longing is real; but you have a choice about how you are going to deal with the pain and longing. Turning to a thing does not fix the problem. It only makes the pain go away for a short time. But, when the pain returns, the problem is still there. An addiction is a way to hide the pain, not fix the problem. Remember, dealing with symptoms is not the same as dealing with the problem, or the root cause, of your pain. Also remember, there is no chemical solution to a spiritual problem.

## **The Bible and Addiction**

### **Principle: Do not get drunk - Be filled with the Spirit**

Ephes. 5:17-20 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. [18] And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; [19] Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; [20] Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

2 Cor. 3:4-5 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: [5] Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

### **Do not be mastered by anything**

1 Cor. 6:12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

### **Obey the laws**

Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. [38] This is the first and great commandment. [39] And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. [40] On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

## **Keep the body pure**

1 Cor. 3:16-17 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? [17] If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

## **Understand that true satisfaction comes from God**

Psalms 107:9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

## **Practice moderation and self discipline (self-control)**

Philip. 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

Col. 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

## **Breaking the Cycle of Addiction**

Philip. 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Because addiction is far more than just a dependency on an addictive agent, healing requires a multi-directional approach.

- Find a way to interrupt the cycle
- Identify the longing (unmet need)
- Raise self-esteem
- Heal emotional pain
- Forsake addictive agent

## **To accomplish this, one must:**

- Confess the addiction as sin
- Forgive past hurts and failed relationships
- Repair present relationships
- Evaluate standing in Christ
- We must acknowledge that we have an addiction
- We must desire to be free from the addiction
- We must be willing to turn from the addiction
- We must see that God is the real goal.
- We must be willing to lay our addiction before God.
- We must wait upon God to fulfill our needs.

Before the urge to turn to your addictive behavior rises again, make plans for a better response. Plan 3-4 things you are going to do before you cave-in to the urge to go to your addictive behavior. This can include making plans to meet or call someone, find a place of worship to go to, engage in an activity that you enjoy that is not harmful, or best yet, start to pray. Call out to God, who is the true comforter. Jesus has promised, (John 14:18), "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

Jesus loves you, cares for you, and desires to be your help and ever present comfort. Since all of the other things have not worked for you, this year, give God a try.

**Dr. Alan Kitay is the Director of Grace Christian Counseling Ministries. He has a Ph.D. in Psychology from International Christian University and a Masters degree in Counseling from Prairie View A&M. He is a Licensed Professional Christian Therapist through the American Association of Christian Therapists. He can be reached by calling 832-419-0673 or e-mailing him at [alankitay@graceccm.com](mailto:alankitay@graceccm.com).**

**Dr. Carrie Kitay has a Ph.D. in Psychology from the Institute of Theology and Christian Therapy and is a Board Certified Christian Therapist. In addition to her counseling ministry, she is certified as an Academic Instructor at Houston Bible College. She can be reached by calling 281-413-3405 or by e-mailing [carriekitay@graceccm.com](mailto:carriekitay@graceccm.com).**