

Children and Addiction I the biggest parenting challenges you will face, Part 8

I. Secular Definitions of Addiction

- According to Merriam-Webster, the first definition of addiction is “a compulsive, chronic, physiological or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behavior, or activity having harmful physical, psychological, or social effects and typically causing well-defined symptoms upon withdrawal or abstinence.”
- The second definition is less clinical and reads, “a strong inclination to do, use, or indulge in something repeatedly.”

II. A Biblical Understanding of Addiction

- The Bible doesn't use the words addiction or addicted, but the concept is definitely there, and is illustrated in a far more dramatic way.
- Addiction involves pursuit. (Isaiah 5:11)
- Addiction involves repeated habituation. (I Corinthians 5:11)
- The Primary Addiction to which all men are enslaved is sin. (John 8:34-36; Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:3; II Peter 2:17-19)
 - The primary addiction from which all other addictions grow is the addiction to sin. Sin — in every form — is the perfect drug.
 - Sin feels good. (Hebrews 11:2)
 - We interpret that good feeling as satisfaction and safety, and we want more and more of it. And the more we habitually pursue it, the more addicted to the sin we become.
 - Therefore, physical addiction to drugs and alcohol is merely a result of being addicted to the sin of striving for my own pleasure via drugs and alcohol.

III. A Biblical Cure for Addiction

- I Corinthians 6:12-20; Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13; Romans 6:6-7, 16-23; Romans 12:9-11; Galatians 4:7-9, 5:1; I John 3:6-10
- How are we escape the mastery of addiction? We must submit ourselves to the Lord.
- We can only ever be enslaved to one thing. The cure for being enslaved to sin is to be enslaved to God.
- And none of this should surprise us. If addictive behavior is simply the consequence of habitually seeking our own pleasure by our own means, then — clearly — like with every other parenting challenge we've discussed, the answer is to trust God and seek the satisfaction that He offers when we live according to His will.
- We must follow Christ.
- This is why “getting clean” and finding a substitute for our addictions — like broccoli instead of chocolate or community service instead of sex — is never going to fix anything.
 - The issue is not the addictive behavior, but what it reveals about us. The addictive behavior simply shows that we're trying to reap our security in our own way.
 - The heart of the issue is still an issue of the heart, and it doesn't matter if we replace one sacrifice for another if we're offering those sacrifices to self instead of God.
 - Yes, your children — especially if they aren't born again — are addicted to the primary addiction of self worship which is the ultimate sin in that it breaks the first and greatest commandment.
 - The best way to help our family members with addictive behavior is to break their addiction to self and teach them to serve God.