



FINDING FREEDOM

by Whitney Davis

Merriam-Webster defines addiction as “a strong inclination to do, use, or indulge in something repeatedly.”

Addiction is most commonly associated with alcohol and drugs but can also include many other categories. Eating disorders, shopping, pornography, gambling, work, and exercise are other addictive behavior that some women struggle with. Addiction does not happen overnight. The “high” experienced by continually acting on unhealthy compulsions overtime leads to struggles with addiction. The shame people feel from these struggles often leaves them suffering in isolation, afraid to reach out for help. At some point, we all have struggled with unhealthy hang-ups and habits. Let’s take the mask off today and seek to find truth and hope in the Word of God. Here are

some practical ways we can tackle the addiction and addictive behaviors with which we struggle.

1.) ACKNOWLEDGE THE PROBLEM.

The first step into freedom from addiction is acknowledging your struggle. The sin and darkness in our lives must be brought into the Light. It is essential for us to personally accept the truth of our struggle and spend some time doing inventory. You can ask questions like these: When did this unhealthy pattern start? Under what circumstances am I most tempted? How often does this problem surface? How does engaging in it make me feel? Having a healthy understanding of our addiction is key to moving forward. Realize that your addiction may be too much for you to handle alone in some cases, and you may need someone who is professionally trained to help

you on your journey to freedom. Regardless of your addiction, I encourage you to share your struggle with a trusted friend or mentor who can encourage you and hold you accountable. Accountability will be a significant part of your recovery process.

In your acknowledgment of addiction, know that there is hope. “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13

A way of escape!!! What hope this is to all of us. We serve a faithful God who has our best interest at heart and works all things for our good.

2.) SUBMIT TO GOD

The reason Jesus came to the earth, suffered death, was buried, and rose again, was for us – for our sins, shortcomings, failures, addiction, and compulsions. Acknowledging that we have a problem that we can't overcome apart from the work of Jesus Christ is liberating. James 5:15-16 says, “And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 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.”

Self-help will only get us so far- we need the Holy Spirit's transforming work in our lives to find freedom from addiction. We should confess our sin, confess the ways we have put other things before Christ, and fallen prey to the trap of addiction. We can pray, believing that the Lord will forgive and will raise us. This scripture encourages us to confess our sin not only to Jesus but also to others. Our confession not only provides accountability and support for us but also unites the body of Christ as we come together to pray for one another.

3.) COMMIT TO HEALING AND GROWTH.

After acknowledging our struggle and submitting ourselves to God, we must then walk out the practical healing journey. We will have to make choices that contribute to our spiritual and physical growth. We may have to surround ourselves with new people or hobbies that don't expose us to being tempted by our former addiction. We have to commit to spending time in the Word of God, in worship, and prayer. You need to connect with a community that can encourage you, whether that be through a mentor or friend, church, or recovery program. Your healing will not complete itself passively. You must take intentional and active steps that result from you taking ownership of your healthy journey.

Romans 5:3-5 says, “More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

The suffering and healing journey you are on is maturing you, growing your character, and will make you more like Christ. Redemption and restoration are yours in the name of Jesus.

Addiction and the struggle we have with compulsive behaviors in our lives are a battle of our flesh resulting from being born with a sinful nature. You do not have to walk in the solitude and darkness of your addiction any longer. Great grace and hope are available to you. Reach out to a pastor or trusted friend and begin the journey toward freedom in Jesus Christ. We also endorse other recovery ministries that may be available in your area – Life Recovery and Celebrate Recovery.

Celebrate the freedom that is yours today!



CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1.) We all have hang-ups. If you are comfortable, discuss a compulsive or addictive behavior that you have struggled with in your life?
- 2.) Have you struggled with guilt or shame regarding these issues?
- 3.) What do you think causes people to give in to temptation and prevents them from making healthy decisions?
- 4.) How does knowing Jesus give you hope regarding the addictions or temptation you face?

CALL TO ACTION:

- 1.) Take inventory this week. Do you struggle with addiction or addictive behaviors that have the potential to cause problems? Journal your thoughts and acknowledge these issues.
- 2.) Submit these concerns to God and reach out to a trusted friend, mentor, or pastor who can encourage you, pray with you, and help hold you accountable during your healing journey.

Commit this week to fight against temptation and behaviors that may lead to addiction.

MEMORIZE:

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