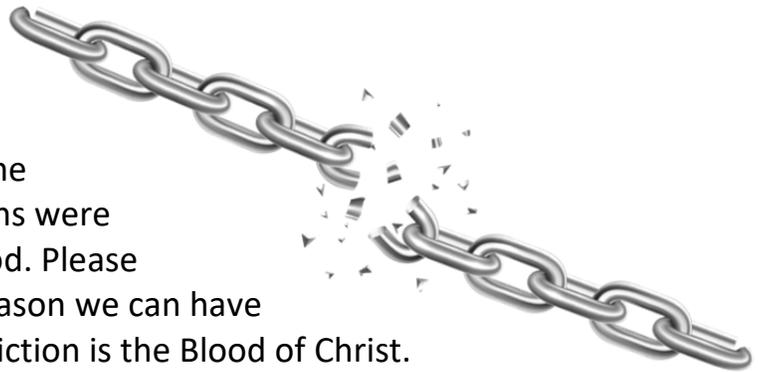


BREAK THE CHAINS OF ADDICTION

Introduction

Recently, my 13-year-old son told me of a vivid dream he had where chains were shattered in pieces by drops of blood. Please give me your attention: The only reason we can have the hope of true freedom from addiction is the Blood of Christ. However understand that Christ is **not**; I repeat **not** going to do something for us that we should do for ourselves. It's unfortunate, but the post-modern church world of today has changed the definition of faith in Christ to somehow equate to **escape-ism**; as if to say, "I have faith that I will no longer be addicted by 12 PM tomorrow."



But faith is not an escape-hatch. It is not a wishing-well. Rather, it is a means to overcome. So before we get started, understand the role of your faith. Faith without works is dead. You're not supposed to wish-away your addiction. If you treat your faith as such; as if it should immediately dissolve your urges and take away your addiction, then you're stripping it of its purpose. Let faith be the substance of what you hope for, not a nominal or superficial wish. Let faith serve its purpose by being your constant companion in your journey to freedom; not an unrealistic or empty apparition. Please don't strip faith of its purpose. Decide right now that come Hell and high water you're going to get through this addiction and make it to freedom. Otherwise, there's really no point in getting started.

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My Friend, True Freedom Really Exists

You, BY DEFINITION, have the power to overcome addiction. No need for medication, no need for a psychiatrist-motivated therapy program or support group, and no constant admittance that “My name is so-and-so, and I am an addict.”

Genesis 1:27 reads: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

The Holy Scripture makes it inescapable that we are created in the image of God, so by definition we are always “free moral decision makers”; which means we’re free to choose freedom, and by the same token, free to choose slavery.

This is not a gimmick. If it is your choice to pursue freedom, then there is an end in sight for your addiction. Unfortunately, our society has perpetuated the idea that addiction is an incurable disease and only managed on an ongoing, unending basis. Perhaps this is an indication that interests are being served besides those of the individual suffering from the addiction; but the reality is freedom is not some guise for perpetual management of prolonged duress. You can and should truly look forward to wholesome and lasting freedom.

A worthy prize demands a worthy challenge, and freedom would not carry a price tag if it was not valuable. Opt in and engage in the challenge for freedom. Make the choice to delay immediate gratification and assume the capacity to shoulder temporary discomfort if necessary. I promise, you will find that it was worth it in the end.

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Steps on Your Journey to Freedom

To yield the best results, view all of these steps as a coherent whole. To dismiss or minimize any one step breaks the continuity and could result in undoing this entire process.

Step 1: Understand that addiction and despair go **hand-in-hand**. Listen carefully to yourself... you will more than likely protest the idea of freedom with a statement like: “well, what else is there?”, or “what is my life without my antidote?” **That’s called despair.** Despair is the opposite of hope. Hope gives you something more in life to look forward to than the brick wall of addiction. So your first step on your journey to freedom is simply that you need hope.

Romans 8:24a reads: “For we are saved by hope”

Listen carefully: something as fundamental for all human beings as salvation is based solely on the one thing you need to get started: which is hope. Take the first step imagine your life beyond your addiction.

Step 2: Change your perspective. View your life as if you were literally in heaven... **right now**; where there is no allure of the routine, every-day schedule of the loathsome temptations of the flesh. Doing so will help you realize that your addiction is NOT a coincidence. The god of this world, aka the devil, must offer you something he can use to enslave you. These can only be things that appeal to your flesh.

1 John 2:16 reads: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

When you realize this, you will also realize that it’s your **flesh** that has the addiction, not you; and **you are not your flesh**. This takes practice. The ability to distinguish your identity from your fleshly desires places you 2 steps well into your journey to freedom.

Step 3: Accept that you are in an **inescapable battle** between **slavery** and **freedom**.

Romans 7:21 reads: “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.”

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There is no substitute for old-fashioned **grit** – that is, one’s ability to shoulder temporary discomfort and persevere in the face of obstacles. In fact, the personality trait of old fashioned grit is actually a **clinically endorsed** recommendation by psychiatrists in therapy settings. So don’t be afraid to get your hands dirty and **fight!**

2 Timothy 4:7 reads: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”

If you’ve come this far and you’re taking the 3rd step, then you’re committed. Go all in and fight for your freedom.

Step 4: You’re the boss. No matter how much you’re tempted to believe otherwise, you are not a victim of circumstance. Remember, you are created in God’s image. Such a privilege carries a heavy responsibility. God sees it as fully rational that you are in full and direct control of your actions. **So, decide what YOU want, and commit.**

James 1:8 reads: “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

You may see the hurt and pain caused by your addiction in your loved ones. People with good intentions may in fact put pressure on you to deflect any collateral damage to the innocent in your addiction’s wake; even to the point where they risk erring on the side of the innocent. But don’t be distracted. Under no circumstances are you doing this for them. The steps you’re taking in this journey are your steps alone. And the forth step in your journey is simply this: **OWN IT.**

Step 5: Believe it or not, and whether you have accepted this or not, God takes you seriously. So after you’ve owned up, and taken full responsibility for actions, **believe by faith that you receive from Him true and lasting freedom from addiction... and you shall have it... PERIOD.** Even if there are signals all around you that cater to despair and failure, never lose your grasp on the promise of receiving what you want by faith in Christ.

Mark 11:24 reads: “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”

This fifth step in your journey to freedom is where you recognize that The Lord is the key component that takes you from settling as a lifelong recovering addict with

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perpetual urge management to experiencing authentic, true freedom from addiction. **Only He can give you this outcome.** No one else can play the part that the Lord plays in your recovery. It's vital you understand that this step is your moment of truth: Accept that someone else must do something for you that you cannot do for yourself.

Step 6: You're on the homestretch now. This is your proving ground. Faith is your constant companion, constantly reminding you of God's promise... listen carefully and you will hear Him say, "I got you". Remember, he took your request for freedom from addiction seriously, so even if you screw up, The Lord is still serious about His role in your recovery. So never, under any circumstances, measure how God sees you **based on your performance** while you're on your road to recovery.

Romans 7:18 reads: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

Clinically speaking, it is relapse that can be a very important part of recovery. The utter misery that people suffering with the addiction cause themselves and their close loved ones by "falling off the wagon" often motivates the seriousness of their plight. But more importantly than that, God sees it too. God is serious about His commitment to your true freedom, and is not going to settle for it being surface or superficial freedom. Believe it or not, you have entered into a relationship with God, and He is partnering with you in your journey to freedom. So never reduce that new-found relationship with God to being brittle enough to crack under your mere performance. Remember you have owned-up. Grant God the courtesy of being serious about your relationship **with Him**, dust yourself off, and **stay the course**.

Step 7: God created you with purpose. This means you were created to need something to do; something substantive. So on the seventh step in your journey to freedom, this is where you accept the reality that your addiction is a vicious predator for your **identity and purpose**. Remember, it's your flesh that has the addiction not you, and your identity is not your flesh. But your addiction is a vicious predator that aims to snuff out your identity and replace who you are with itself.

Proverbs 5:3-5 reads: "For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell."

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Verses 8-10 reads: “Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger. “

The Holy Scriptures describe the addictive qualities of the temptations of the flesh as the anecdotal allure of a prostitute. Things that are addictive in nature are characterized as an alluring, sweet and smooth proposition that leads to a poisonous and bitter end. But focus particularly on the characterization of the role of wealth. The warning is the she (that is, the predator) would cause the person’s honor to go to others, and the person’s wealth to strangers. Think about that. There is wealth and honor that belongs to you by nature of your God-given identity and purpose, and that is precisely what the predator of addiction is after. Avoid the misconception that your purpose in life is only to avoid sin. There is a real role you play in God’s grand scheme, with real rewards; and subsequently the **real potential for loss**. It is time for you to see your enemy clearly as a worthy cause to stay vigilant and sober.

Step 8: Get ready. You’re about to experience a truly fulfilling life; opposed to an empty life of slavery offered by addiction. Look forward to true fulfillment and lasting freedom.

IT IS NOT HARD TO BE FREE. IT’S A CHOICE TO BE FREE.