

Overcoming Addiction



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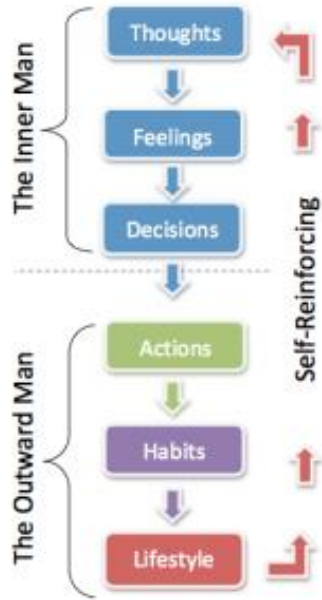
Ask the question, "Can you be free from addictions?" and you will get a mixed reaction. There are those who would tell you that you are afflicted with a terrible disease, and there is no hope of a full recovery. Once an addict, you will always be an addict they will say. They teach that there may be ways to manage your addiction but no way to overcome it.

Those people are not saying what God says on the issue. God has said that when a person comes to Christ for salvation, He gives that person a new life. The old things are passed away, and all things are new. God says that He can give us life and life more abundant. If we know Him as our Saviour, He will make us free from the bondage of sin.

For those who start this journey of recovery, we want them to know that through Christ you can do all things! If you will give yourself completely over to God's way, it will work. Doctors say that the detox times for most substances is anywhere from a week to 10 days depending on the person. That is the time for the substance to be out of your system. The problem that we face is that once the body is free from the chemical, the mind still desires the effects. The problem with addiction is more than just a physical problem; it is a thinking problem. God explains this very clearly in His Word. He says in Proverbs 23:7, *"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."*

The problem that you are having with the addiction that you are struggling with is not as much an external problem (physical) as it is an internal problem (thinking and feelings). The Bible uses three terms interchangeably to describe your inner person, your thinking and feelings. These terms are heart, mind, and soul. These terms describe whom you are inside, how you think and how you feel. How you think and feel work together to form your will, or what you decide to do.

If you can change how you think and feel, then you will change what you do. Examine the flow chart to see how this works. The process of changing how we think and feel is what God does in us when we know him as our personal Saviour and grow as a Christian. God has given us some tools to use, that will help us with that process. This article will help you as you begin the task of changing how you think and feel.



What we call the three C's is found in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6,

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

The first C is Casting down imaginations. The time to deal with the problem is when the thought is first introduced.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us, *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

This verse teaches us that God's Word can divide between things that we often cannot, such as the point at which a simple thought in our mind becomes the intent to commit the act.

Often, we have the wrong concept that we can indulge thinking about sin without acting on it. However, as we already learned, as a man thinketh in his heart so is he! If we are going to get victory over the addictions that control us, we must first get control over our thinking.

The easiest point to defeat our lust for our addiction is when the thought first comes into our mind. We must at the very inception of the thought cast it down when it is still in the imagination stage and before it has time to develop into a mature thought.

The way to do this is to stop the thought and mentally say, "I will not indulge this thought, I am not going to allow it a place in my thinking process, and I reject it."

The second C is Capture every thought. At this point you will want to start a trigger list. A trigger list is kept on a small notebook that you keep in your pocket to record wrong thoughts and what circumstances occurred that might have induced them.

The reason for keeping a list is so that you can examine it for patterns that emerge, and you can avoid those things in the future. Proverbs 1:17 says, "*Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.*" Often in the past you have walked through your day blind to the fact that there are traps set out there to trip you up and draw you into your addiction.

However, to gain lasting freedom, you must stop being blind to these snares. The more watchful you are to see the traps the fewer you will fall into. You must learn to be watchful of the snares if you are going to avoid them and the trigger list is a helpful tool to learn how to identify the "thought snares" that trip you up on a daily basis. A trigger list may look like this:

7/2/21

10:45 a.m. — Thought about how good a beer would taste right now. I just walked by the beer cooler in the store.

11:20 a.m. — Remembered a party that I was at a few months ago. I saw someone wearing a Corona shirt.

11:50 a.m. — Started to think about drink mixes — caught some citrus smell.

When you have that imagination come into your thinking, STOP! Say to yourself, "I will not indulge this! I reject this thought!" Then take out your trigger list and record it, along with the thing that happened which might have triggered you to think the damaging thought. The day and time are good things to record, because you might find that you have more trouble on certain days or at certain times as you develop your list.

A trigger may be anything around you — sights, odors, sounds, songs, certain people, or people dressed a certain way. You may not be able to eliminate all these things from happening around you, but if you are aware of the link you can begin to sever the tie that those things have on your thinking.

The third C is to Correct all thinking. The correction of our thinking means that we get to choose what we think about. You do not have to allow your thinking to be controlled by random happenings. You do not have to allow others to control your thinking; you can take charge of your own thinking and bring it into a Biblical pattern, or as the scriptures said, into the obedience of Christ.

God teaches us how to do this in several scriptures. First in Romans 12:1-3, God says, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which*

is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

If you are going to bring your thinking into the obedience of Christ, it begins with putting your faith in God. You must cast out the thought of yourself as being great and humble yourself to God. Most people have a high estimation of themselves. Even with all their problems, they believe that they are still as good or better than others. God says here that if we are going to be changed, we must see ourselves as God sees us, as sinners in need of salvation.

God has shown us the truth about our condition in the Bible when He said in Romans 3:10, "*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*" You and I are not righteous in our own selves. We are sinners who have broken God's law, and as lawbreakers, we deserve the punishment for our sin. The Bible says in Romans 6:23a, "*For the wages of sin is death;*" meaning that we deserve to be separated from God forever in hell.

However, in Romans 10:8-10 we read, "*But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*" God said that anyone who sees themselves in the same way that God sees them (as sinners in need of a Saviour) and will believe upon Jesus Christ's death burial and resurrection to be the payment for their sin will be saved. God said so!

As it says in Romans 6:23b, "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.", you receive the gift of eternal life when you believe in your heart that God gave Jesus to be the substitute for your sins and call upon Him to save you.

Once you have accepted Jesus Christ, God gives you a new nature and a new way to think. The Holy Spirit of God comes to live in your heart, and you have the opportunity to communicate with God directly through prayer. It is through prayer that you can choose to correct your thinking process.

The Bible says in Philippians 4:6-8, *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

Through Jesus Christ you can choose to think on those things that will lead you to freedom from addiction rather than constantly having your thoughts bring you into the bondage of your sin. As God works in your heart, He will teach you all truth so that you can escape the lies with which the world, the flesh and the devil have deceived you. If you will follow Him and His Word, you will find victory over all the traps of addiction.

To learn more about how to come into a right relationship with God and the life God intended you to have, I encourage you to take our free Bible study entitled, "Finding Hope in Jesus". Contact us at biblestudyglobal@gmail.com to learn more about our FREE Bible study program.

Also, below are some other helpful articles written by Pastor Carter. Please feel free to share these articles with someone who might be helped by them.



A Way Out of Darkness for the Suicidal

www.bbministry.org/suicide



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