

Addictions: Many Forms But Never Satisfying

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Several years ago, I heard an interesting sermon that was so thought provoking I often think about the Pastor's words and admonitions. Candidly, the Pastor spoke of his path to drug addiction and his eventual deliverance. Then, with great concern, he cautioned the congregation that we are all capable of becoming an addict. A collective gasp was heard as the congregation reacted. An awkward silence and shifting in the pews followed. It seemed as though no one wanted to know or believe that it is possible for each of us to become addicted. The stereotype that addictions are only for the back alley was directly confronted. Undauntedly, the Pastor continued to explain that addictions come in many forms.

Some of the more commonly thought of addictions are drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gambling and pornography. These addictions can create a physiological and emotional dependence. Research informs us that brain chemistry can actually be altered. Subtly deceptive, addictions can produce a high. This high is always short lived. The individual can find himself repeating the behavior in order to attain the high. Seeking the high, instead of seeking God becomes the priority. Over time, more of the stimulus is needed to achieve the high. Left untreated, addictions are most often progressive. In addition, there are less commonly thought of addictions such as computer games, sports, internet use, television, food and exercising. Generally, these activities in themselves are not harmful. However, even these activities can become an addiction. An individual can spend large amounts of time engaging in these activities or thinking about these activities to the neglect of responsibilities. Regardless of the type of addiction, a turning away from God is the result.

Addiction is a form of anxiety disorder. Consciously or unconsciously, the person often engages in the addictive behavior in attempt to calm, self soothe or emotionally fill them. However, the addiction never produces the desired effect. Addictions are incapable of satisfying completely. For this reason, it is not uncommon for a person to have multiple addictions or to substitute one addiction for another. Resulting in the individual feeling more anxious and depressed, addictions always rob the person of joy and peace. Man has been described as having a God shaped void. Therefore, only God can completely fill that void. Anything else that we use to try to fill that void will be a misfit.

The good news is that God knows us completely and understands our hearts. Even when we turn away from Him, He never turns away from us. Like the father, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, God waits for us to return home. He is neither condemning nor shaming. Rather, God completely loves. If you believe you have desired something

before desiring God, He knows and understands. Still, He wants you back in His arms. He knows that we are all capable of making mistakes in our lives. God is waiting to heal.

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