

DRUNK WITH HOPE
God's Help for Addiction and Emotional Wounds
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“Tony” became increasingly involved in his job, to the sacrifice of time with his spouse, children and self-care. In childhood he was primarily rewarded and noticed for accomplishments, rather than loved for just being him. Addictive work habits were familiar to him and offered reassurance for his sense of self worth. However his compulsiveness with work eventually fell short of filling empty emotional places within him. Emotional distancing (from both self and family) and habitual overwork even took their toll on the very goal he yearned for; a dream job never materialized. This husband and father was left with finally exploring the fact that God loves him for who he *is*, not for what he does. The truth that God loved Tony *before* Tony did anything to “deserve” it--by sending His Son into the world (I John 4: 9)--was the beginning of healing for him and his family.

Emotional wounds are often at the heart of an addiction. Addiction is the “compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance (as heroin, nicotine, or alcohol).”(*The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 1998) Furthermore, the verb form “addict” means, “to devote or surrender (oneself) to something habitually or excessively.”(Ibid) Often, the excessive use of something is an attempt to fill unmet relational needs. Relational brokenness and emotional wounds go hand-in-hand. Alcohol, drugs, work, shopping, caffeine, pornography, or unhealthy relational attachments can temporarily fill painful loneliness, sadness or anger that result from relational disappointments. Ultimately however, these substances and compulsions fail us. One of the first steps in freedom from addiction is to ask God to help us identify those places inside of us that are empty and wounded. A qualified Christian therapist can be helpful in this process.

Carolyn Rose, from *Love In Action* (www.loveinaction.org) a ministry devoted to healing from sexual brokenness, believes that every individual struggles to some degree with addictions, “because we are all wounded and the wounds come out in different areas depending on our life circumstances.” Rose states that when the evil one spots our vulnerability, he is masterful at implanting lies that target those areas of woundedness. These lies are in direct opposition to how God really views us. Neil Anderson, in his book *Victory Over the Darkness* identifies truths from scripture to help us replace these lies. Following is a partial list that Anderson suggests for healing from emotional wounds:

I am a son (daughter) of God; God is spiritually my Father (Romans 8:14, 15; Galatians 3:26; 4:6).

I am an expression of the life of Christ because He is my life (Colossians 3:4).

I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (Colossians 3:12; I Thessalonians 1:4).

I am a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession (1 Peter 2:9,10).

The prophet Isaiah assures us in Chapter 51 that our Creator, the one who is powerful enough to establish the earth and put the stars in the sky, can surely release us from any captivity (vs. 13 & 14). This includes addiction! God promises to make our desert places blossom and our barren wilderness beautiful (vs.3). When addiction ultimately fails us and tears us down, God's truth and love builds up.

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