

WORSHIPPING COMFORT

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Comfort is a foundational and necessary element. Comfort is needed for us to develop and live a life with some sense of security. As you know, living a life of comfort is not always possible. Due to the fall of Adam and Eve the type of comfort we long for is not always possible. They were told they would “toil” (Genesis 3:17) in life.

Men and women, at some level within themselves, spend much of their lives trying to get to a place internally if not externally where they feel comfort. It is as if there is some part of our spirit, way deep down inside that remembers what it was like in the garden of Eden.

Out of our own brokenness we look to one another to fulfill our needs. Men and women may look to each other, chemicals, work or power for comfort and adequacy. People may do anything including working like slaves to make life better for those around them. Because of their own sense of loss and need for acceptance, people end up exhausted and at each other's throats. You may be or know of somebody who is anxious, needy, and trying to have a life. Instead of comfort, they are looking for the level of living that would mean they were OK but never seem to get there. People get tricked with the outward *look* of a comfortable life. They miss comfort being a result of growth internally.

The desire for comfort or being attracted to things/people that bring comfort is not a sin but it can lead to sin. This can be hard for those who are more aware of their cravings on a daily basis. Often there are days they hit walls and can't be comforted no matter what. God himself seems like a distant idea.

What we do with the need for comfort is important. Our choices in how we pursue comfort can keep us dishonest or from doing an internal inventory of what things really provide comfort. If we are going for superficial comfort, we may be avoiding anything that may reveal the vulnerable self. A superficial pursuit of comfort can result in the abuse of credit cards, relationships, food, and medications. These superficial comforts are short lived and function to keep us from staring loneliness in the face. After a short time the emptiness returns and living the life we want to live and God wants us to live becomes elusive.

If you struggle with this, as discouraging as this sounds there is hope. First, stop fighting the reality that the need is there inside of you. That doesn't mean what you do with it is acceptable just that your particular set of life experiences has created this kind of void. This condition may be a part of you, to some degree all of your life.

Secondly, learn what the triggers are for you. What were you feeling just prior to spending or drinking or taking pills or gambling? What is the first thought that enters your mind when that feeling comes? Is it a feeling of deprivation? What is the physical sensation you experience when that need is touched? Who does this to you? What time

of the day or the week does it happen? How have you addressed it in the past? What has worked? What has failed? It is in these times we will need the help of God's Word, prayer supporters, and those who will give us honest, direct feedback about that they see happening or what we need to avoid. Too many of us are trying to handle these things on our own and as you can see in our culture, it just is not working!

Turning to God's Word and inviting His healing presence to be a part of our daily thought life, emotional journey and physical travels is the beginning of freedom. Having one or two people who will give you honest feedback is a precious gift in these times. Proverbs states that "...an honest answer is like a kiss on the lips." (Proverbs 24:26) It is a gift of love we need now more than ever.

Lastly, watch for the underlying issues of pride, greed, idolatry, and lack of trust that may be feeding the longing to be comforted no matter what the cost. The cost to those you love and to you can be devastating. God is in the business of setting the crooked straight and He is not about to do a half way job. He will continue until the day He is ready to take us home with him.

A life of comfort is possible when we are willing to be vulnerable and searched by the one who created us and knows all about us to begin with. "Search me and know me and see if there be any wicked way in me." (Psalm 139) If we dare, we will pray. God will see us through to a level of comfort in the reality of who He is and what He has for us. This reality will carry us through any discomfort this life can bring.

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