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Introduction

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**Colossians 2:8**

***See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.***

1. The Scope of Addiction Issues in the U.S.A.
2. Addiction Defined by the World

* The Center on Addiction defines an addiction as a “complex disease, often chronic in nature, which affects the function of the brain and body.”[[1]](#footnote-0)
* The American Society of Addiction Medicine defines an addiction as a “treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual’s life experiences. People with addiction use substances or engage in behaviors that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences.”[[2]](#footnote-1)
* Smith and Seymour further define addiction: “a disease, in and of itself, characterized by compulsion, loss of control, continued use in spite of adverse consequences. The disease is progressive and, without treatment, often fatal. Addiction is incurable. No individual who has passed the threshold of the disease can go back to non-addictive use; any attempt to resume use will result in the further progression of the disease. Addiction can, however, be brought into remission through abstinence from all psychoactive drugs, including marijuana and alcohol, and adherence to a program of supported recovery.”[[3]](#footnote-2)[Underlined portions mine for emphasis]
* Notice that they use the word “abstinence” as treatment, but abstinence is a choice!

1. Re-defining Addiction Biblically

“The persistent, **habitual** thoughts, words, and actions associated with excessive pleasure-seeking which are *known* by the user to be harmful and physically enslaving; these are sinful, willful choices to disobey God whether one acknowledges it or not.”

– Mark E. Shaw, 2012

1. Secular Descriptions and Statistics

1. The Official Secular Name for Addiction is…

1. Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
2. In the DSM-V, there are 11 qualifiers that help classify persons into the categories of Mild, Moderate, or Severe substance use disorder
3. Also, drug addiction is synonymous with *severe* substance use disorder (SUD) in the DSM-V.
4. 275 million people worldwide were estimated to have used an illicit drug in 2016 (World Health Organization)

2. Official Biblical Name for Addiction has always been…

1. Sin (drunkenness and idolatry)
2. Qualifiers based upon heart criteria as known by the One True God
3. Could be labeled foolishness, spiritual adultery, rebellion, lust, etc
4. Estimate of persons impacted worldwide by sin is 100% (Romans 3:23)
5. Don’t supersize addiction and make it a bigger issue than Christ, the Gospel, the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and the local church can handle!

Most of the following statistics were taken from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov) (accessed October 1, 2019). Three other sources of statistics are the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

3. NIDA & CDC – January 2019

1. 130 people in the U.S.A. died DAILY after overdosing on opioids.
2. The CDC estimates the total “economic burden” is $78.5 billion per year, which includes costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement.

4. Drug Overdose Deaths in 2017

1. 70,237 (NOTE: 66% males & main driver were synthetic opioids like illegal fentanyl)[[4]](#footnote-3)
2. By way of comparison:

* 58,220 died in the Vietnam War (in 10 years)
* 36,010 in 2007 vs. 70,237 in 2017

5. Illicit drug use in the USA was increasing in 2013 (NIDA)

a. 9.4% of the population (24.6 million Americans) aged 12 or older reported used an illicit drug in the past month.

b. Up from 8.3% in 2002

1. Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug

6. Quick Statistics from NIDA

1. Most people use drugs for the 1st time when teenagers.
2. More than half of new illicit drug users begin with Marijuana.
3. Drug use is highest among people in their late teens & twenties.
4. Drug use is increasing among people in their fifties & early sixties. (baby boomers 1946-1964 historically report higher drug usage over course of lifetime)
5. Drinking by underage persons (age 12-20) has declined.
6. Driving under the influence of alcohol has declined also slightly.
7. Fewer Americans are smoking. (21.3% down from 26%)
8. Teen smoking is declining more rapidly. (But vaping is increasing rapidly!)
9. After alcohol, marijuana has the highest rate of dependence or abuse among ALL drugs.
10. There continues to be a large “treatment gap” in the USA. In 2013, an estimated 22.7 million Americans needed treatment but only 2.5 million received treatment at a specialty facility. (8.6% vs. 0.9%)

D. Current Trends in Addiction

1. Juuling is the BRAND NAME & simply another term for vaping.[[5]](#footnote-4)
2. Vaping means “the act of inhaling and exhaling aerosol, often referred to as vapor, which is produced by an e-cigarette or similar device.”[[6]](#footnote-5)
3. According to the 2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey, 27.5% of high school students & over 5 million youth were CURRENT e-cig users.[[7]](#footnote-6)
4. Daily Marijuana use has more than TRIPLED in the past 2 decades among college students.[[8]](#footnote-7)
5. Binge drinking and Intoxication in the past month is reportedly higher among college age students than their non-college aged peers.[[9]](#footnote-8)
6. Nicotine usage (cigarettes and e-cigarettes) is 4x higher in non-college aged persons than in their college-aged peers.[[10]](#footnote-9)
7. Marijuana usage is TWICE as high in non-college (1 in 9) than college (1 in 17).
8. College age young adults are vaping and using alcohol more.
9. Past month use of vaping nicotine in college students had the largest jump in stats for any substance in the history of this survey from 6% (2017) to 15.5 % (2018)
10. Past month use of nicotine vaping increased from 7.9% (2017) to 12.5% (2018) for non-college-age adults. (19-22 years of age)
11. Fentanyl

* In 2016, synthetic opioids (primarily illegal fentanyl) were involved in nearly 50% of opioid-related deaths, up from 14% (3,007) in 2010.[[11]](#footnote-10)
* The musician, Prince, reportedly died taking *fake Vicodin laced with Fentanyl* in April of 2016.[[12]](#footnote-11)
* The musician, Tom Petty, died of an accidental overdose of prescription drugs including fentanyl, benzodiazepines, and oxycodone in 2017.[[13]](#footnote-12)

E. Domestic Violence and Addiction Issues

1. Co-Occurrence of SA (substance abuse) & DV (domestic violence)
   1. Odds of severe physical abuse of a partner is increased by 128% when alcohol problems are noted.[[14]](#footnote-13)
   2. Men are 8x more likely to batter on a day on which they have been drinking.[[15]](#footnote-14)
2. SA and DV are intricately connected many times... and it is always an issue of the heart.
3. I recommend Chris Moles with [PeaceWorks Ministries](http://www.chrismoles.org/). www.chrismoles.org

II. Secular Treatment Approaches

1. Overview of Counseling Approaches
2. All counseling is about *change*
3. There are over *300 distinctive* theories of *psychotherapy* in the world
4. *Every counseling model* operates with *certain assumptions* like:

* Who and what is man/woman?
* How are problems defined? This directs your solution!
* How does change occur?
* and more...

1. Human psychology makes man the center of counseling

* Man’s feelings
* Man’s experiences
* Man’s actions
* Man’s reactions

1. Human psychology seeks to understand *why people do what they do* and *how change can be achieved -- without God’s help!*
2. Secular Current Treatment Modalities

* *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* (CBT): a form of psychotherapy to help patients recognize, avoid, and cope with situations in which they are most likely to use drugs
* *Dialectical Behavioral Therapy* (DBT): teaches patients to interrupt destructive behaviors/thought patterns when overwhelmed and replace them with calming thoughts
* *Mindfulness*: used to reduce stress, anxiety, depression and pain; focus your attention on moment-by-moment experience
* *Motivational Interviewing*: makes the most of people’s readiness to change their behavior and enter treatment
* *Methadone & Suboxone*: medications used to treat opiate addiction
* *AA & NA*: 12 step programs The Addiction Connection’s website has a 7 hour teaching on the ***Bible vs. Self-Help Philosophies.*** [***The Bible vs Self-Help: Which Do You Need?***](https://www.theaddictionconnection.org/self-help-philosophies-a-biblical-evaluation/)
* *Naloxone* (Narcan): used for a person who overdoses on Opioids in an emergency

*These options are ALL based on external, behavioral changes only! Except the 12 step programs- they believe it is a spiritual problem!* Good news because the Biblical Approach to Addiction focuses on the heart and the ONE TRUE GOD!

III. The Biblical Approach to Addiction

1. What Makes Biblical Counseling Different?
2. Biblical Model

* Concerned with all the same conditions as human psychology
* Central focus however, is **not on man** and his/her problems
* Central focus is on God and how man is handling his/her problems from God’s perspective
* The focus is on changing the heart first; behavior second
* Holds that the Bible is:
  + the inerrant, unchanging Word of God
  + sufficient to deal with all the non-organic problems that man may encounter (2 Peter 1:3)

1. Uses God’s Word, by the Holy Spirit, to change...:

* ...the desires of the heart leading to changes in thinking, emoting, and behaving
* God’s Word is all about Jesus - the revelation of God to us
* Because the ***Holy Spirit*** indwells only born again believers,
  + It is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that helps believers to understand spiritual truths and execute practical change.
  + Addiction is a spiritual problem!

1. Overview of Biblical Addiction Counseling Model
2. View of counselee

The counselee/client is:

* An image bearer of God with great value & worth (Gen 1:26-27)
* Loved by God (1 John 4:8)
* Created to glorify God (Is. 43:1,7; 1 Pet. 2:9)
  + each of us will worship God or we will worship ourselves
  + when we worship something other than God, difficulty comes
  + addiction is a worship disorder

1. Focus on Internal Temptations (Heart)

* External temptations do not go away.
* Internal temptations do not go away completely but there is power by the Holy Spirit to deny them and say yes to righteous choices.
  + 2 Tim. 1:14 **By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.**
  + Gal. 5:16-17 **But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.**

C. A Biblical Paradigm for Addiction Treatment

* The focus of change is on the heart
* The Bible uses the word **“heart”** to describe **the inner person**
  + The outer person is the physical self, your medical body
  + The inner person is the spiritual self (Eph. 3:16)
    - The heart is the real you — spirit, soul, what you think, your will, what you feel, what you desire, what drives you, etc.
  + Everything we do is shaped and controlled by what our heart desires—the heart is never neutral; it is always pursuing something (Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemers Hands,* p.59-60)
* The substances are just the tools to get what the addict wants. The idol is self. (Study Isaiah 44:9-20 to learn more about the tools we use to get what we want and serve the idol of self.)
* We will pursue God and what brings Him glory (honor) or we will pursue something else.
* Because the Bible says your heart is the essential you, any ministry of change must target the heart

D. Desire Drives Addiction

1. Addiction begins with a pursuit of something. Either one of two desires are pursued:

a. The desire *for* something -- 1 John 2:15-17

* Pleasure (lust of the flesh)
* Possession (lust of the eyes)
* Power/control --especially reputation (pride of life)

OR

b. The desire for relief *from* something; an escape from...

Pain (physical, emotional, or spiritual) to pleasure

Boredom, seeking pleasure

Solitude, seeking excitement

Dependence, avoiding the need for others

Insignificance, lacking purpose or worth / identity

2. Hope for transformation and freedom for the addicted person comes from heart change

* + - * Behavior change is not bad—we want the addicted person’s behavior to change!
      * Hope for lasting change however, comes through the heart

3. Heart Change vs Behavior Change

***Behavior change:***

* Occurs in thoughts, words or actions
* Often time-limited (temporary)

(Counselee presents again and again for the same or similar problems or requires many years of counseling)

* Likely to change depending on mood or circumstances
* Motivated by self (or the threat of consequences or potential incentives) and dependent on self-effort

***Heart Change:***

* Heart change is a *transformation* that occurs when a person’s thoughts, words, and behaviors are changed due to the motivation of love for Christ and a desire to obey and honor God (1Pet. 1:15-16-- “Be holy, for I am Holy”)
* Focuses on pleasing God rather than pleasing self or another
* Requires dependence on God and submission to His authority (i.e., obedience)
* Transformation is a result of God’s work in the believer’s life
* Behavior change does *not* always result in heart change but heart change *always* results in behavior change

**Recommended Website Resources**

1. The Addiction Connection (TAC) [www.theaddictionconnection.org](http://www.theaddictionconnection.org)

What does TAC offer?

* + - a [network of counselors](https://www.theaddictionconnection.org/people/)
    - a network of biblical [Residential](https://www.theaddictionconnection.org/residential-programs/) and [Non-Residential](https://www.theaddictionconnection.org/non-residential-programs/) programs around the world (this continues to grow!)
    - a variety of [TRAINING for counselors](https://www.theaddictionconnection.org/addiction-counselor-training/) & a [Commissioning credential](https://www.theaddictionconnection.org/commissioning/) (CABC)
    - a [PODCAST](https://anchor.fm/theaddictionconnection) and BLOGS
    - VIDEO GROUP STUDIES called

[(1) Family Help for Addiction](https://www.theaddictionconnection.org/family-help-for-addiction/)

(2) Next Steps: Be TRANSFORMED

1. Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC)—website: [www.biblicalcounseling.com](http://www.biblicalcounseling.com)
2. IBCD (The Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship)—website: [www.ibcd.org](http://www.ibcd.org)
3. The Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC)—website: <http://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org>
4. The Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation (CCEF)—website: [www.ccef.org](http://www.ccef.org)

Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC) - website <https://christiancounseling.com>

**Recommended Published Addiction Resources**

* Berg, Jim. *Freedom that Lasts: Finding Freedom God’s Way.* Taylors, SC: Faith Baptist Church, 2013.
* Playfair, William, M.D. and George L. Bryson. *The Useful Lie*. Stanley: Timeless Texts, 2017.
* Scott, Stuart. *Killing Sin Habits.* Bemidji: Focus Publishing, 2013.
* Shaw, Mark E. *Addiction-Proof Parenting: Biblical Prevention Strategies.* Bemidji: Focus Publishing, 2010.
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* Shaw, Mark E. *How Not to Raise an Addict.* Bemidji: Focus Publishing, 2017.
* Shaw, Mark E. *Relapse: Biblical Prevention Strategies.* Bemidji: Focus Publishing, 2011.
* Shaw, Mark E. *Understanding Temptation: The War Within Your Heart.* Bemidji: Focus Publishing, 2014.
* Welch, Edward T. *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2001, 2011.

**Recommended General Biblical Counseling Resources**

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