

## Addicted

Text: I Corinthians 16:1-18

Key verse: I Corinthians 16:15: "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.)"

"Hi. My name is Stephanas; I am an addict." "Hi Stephanas!" This is the opening statement and reply said by addicts at a recovery program.

Basically, there are two definitions of an addict:

- 1) Physically and mentally dependent on a particular substance, and unable to stop taking it without incurring adverse effects.
- (2) Enthusiastically devoted to a particular thing or activity.

Thankfully, the household of Stephanas was addicted in a very good way to Christ and His Gospel. But first of all, allow me to share some very sad statistics.

- Almost 21 million Americans have at least one addiction, yet only 10% of them receive treatment.
- Drug overdose deaths have more than tripled since 1990.
- From 1999 to 2017, more than 700,000 Americans died from overdosing on a drug.
- Alcohol and drug addiction cost the U.S. economy over \$600 billion every year.
- In 2017, 34.2 million Americans committed DUI (21.4 million under the influence of alcohol and 12.8 million under the influence of drugs).
- About 20% of Americans who have depression or an anxiety disorder also have a substance use disorder.
- More than 90% of people who have an addiction started to drink alcohol or use drugs before they were 18 years old.
- Americans between the ages of 18 and 25 are most likely to use addictive drugs.
- Every year, worldwide, alcohol is the cause of 5.3% of deaths (or 1 in every 20).
- About 130 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose.

Should you decide to research the signs of an addict, you will find any number of lists. However, many of the longer lists become repetitive. Here is a short list that most all the other lists would fall under the category of.

1. Obsessive thoughts and actions: acquiring and using the substance or activity become the main priorities of life while all or most other obligations including work, family, or school are sidelined.

2. Disregard of harm caused: although the substance or activity abuse is causing physical and mental distress to the individual and their loved ones, the person struggling with addiction continues using drugs or alcohol.
3. Loss of control: even in the face of wanting to stop or reduce their substance use or activity, the person cannot do so.
4. Denial of addiction or hiding substance use or activity: when confronted, the person battling addiction will deny or downplay their substance use or activity. To avoid having to explain themselves to others, the person may partake of substance abuse or activity in secret.

What I am about to share with you is a composite, with some personal insights on what has become known as the twelve-step program of recovery, from a biblical worldview.

1. Admit we are powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors—that our lives have become unmanageable. Romans 7:18
2. Believe that Christ alone is the power greater than ourselves that can restore us to sanity and wholeness. II Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:27; Phil. 2:13
3. Make the decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God. Romans 12:1; Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 40:11; John 10:11
4. Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Lam. 3:40
5. Admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. James 5:16
6. Be entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. James 4:10
7. Humbly ask the Lord to remove all our shortcomings. I John 1:9; Eph. 3:20
8. Make a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. Luke 6:31
9. Make direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. Matt. 5:23-25
10. Continue to take personal inventory and when we are wrong, promptly admit it. I Cor. 10:12
11. Seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and power to carry that out. Col. 3:16

12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, carry this message to others and practice these principles in all our affairs. Gal. 6:1

Conclusion:

A. BE ADDICTED TO PLEASING CHRIST.

II Tim. 2:4; John 8:29; I Cor. 10:31

B. SCRUTINIZE HOW OUR ACTIONS WILL AFFECT OTHERS.

Romans 10:12; Phil. 2:3

C. PRAY FOR SERENITY (by Reinhold Niebuhr)

God, grant me the serenity to accept things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know  
the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a  
time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus  
did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You  
will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be  
reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever  
in the next.

-Pastor Pope-