

# Beyond Addiction:

## Promises You Can Count On

PREPARED BY PS ADRIAN WEBSTER  
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### INTRODUCTION

Is there any hope beyond addiction? If you've ever been caught in the clutches of any sort of addiction you may well have asked yourself this question. The good news is that there is definitely hope. It is possible to find freedom from addiction.

The purpose of this study is to introduce you to some powerful Bible promises and principles that, if implemented, will guarantee you of permanent freedom and healing.

If you would like to access digital media on the internet that will assist you in understanding and overcoming addiction, please visit: [www.missionenterprises.org](http://www.missionenterprises.org) and click on the 'Video Library' link at the top of the web page.

### WHAT GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PROMISES DOES THE BIBLE OFFER IN REGARD TO OVERCOMING ADDICTION?

#### **1 Corinthians 10:13** *You Can Overcome!*

You may have failed a thousand times in trying to beat the problem of addiction. But unless one adopts a positive can-do attitude, the attempt to break free from addiction is doomed to failure even before the start.

Scripture makes it clear that whatever we are struggling with, we are not the pioneers of that weakness or addiction. The temptations we encounter have been experienced by others. Thus, just as others have been through what we are going through, so too others have overcome in the area where we are seeking to overcome. God has given His assurance that nothing which comes our way is insurmountable. He will not allow any temptation to be brought upon us for which there is no way of escape! (1 Cor 10:13). Our assurance of victory is not based on our abilities, but on God's faithfulness. Thus if we are experiencing temptation and struggle, it can be overcome – no matter how overpowering it may feel in the moment. God's faithfulness will prevent anything coming our way that cannot be mastered.

#### **1 Corinthians 10:13** *Look For God's Escape Route!*

The last part of 1 Corinthians 10:13 is absolutely clear that in every situation of weakness or temptation that we might find ourselves in, God has prepared an escape route. When one approaches the problem of addiction with an attitude of faith, one will immediately begin seeking the escape route that God has made when one feels the call to the old way of life resurfacing. The attitude of faith does not fixate one's attention on the intensity of the temptation thereby magnifying the trial. Rather the attitude of faith seeks the backdoor of escape that God has left open.

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**Philippians 4:13;  
Galatians 5:16, 17;  
Matthew 11:28-30**

### *You Need God's Power!*

Long-term victory has to go beyond mere self-help techniques. The addict is an addict precisely because of his or her choices and weaknesses. If the addict naturally had the ability internally to break free, there would be no such thing as 'addiction'. The very concept of someone being an addict implies helplessness. We need an external power source to make up for the deficiencies of our internal weaknesses. When we combine our frail humanity with the resources of God's perfect omnipotence, victory is absolutely assured (Phil 4:13).

The teachings of the Bible consistently seek to direct our attention away from ourselves to God when it comes to finding freedom from sin and addiction. The popular philosophies of the present day seek to encourage self-trust and self-help. Yet these concepts are internally bankrupt. We need to look outside of ourselves if we want true victory. God has promised to give us His own divine presence, through the Holy Spirit, as the true source of power which will give genuine victory (Gal 5:16, 17). Victory is guaranteed by the fact that the power of God is greater than the most severe weakness the addict may struggle against.

One of the most helpful and important concepts to understand in seeking to find victory over addiction is that true victory is not about trying harder. Rather it is about communing with God more deeply. This is not to say that there is no sense of struggle. Rather, permanent victory comes from internal change and transformation. If one is seeking to change oneself from the outside in (i.e. behaviour modification), the struggle will always be lost eventually because the internal weaknesses are left unchanged. Yet, if one has found internal transformation, then the outward actions and behaviours change naturally. This is why Jesus' invitation to those who are trying, working, striving and failing is to come to Him so that He can give the rest that is so needed (Matt 11:28-30). True victory comes from spending time in the presence of the life changing God. His grace changes us at the heart of our being and gives true rest and contentment. Once this experience has been found, addictions lose their power as they no longer have an answering cord at the heart of our being.

**Philippians 4:8;  
Romans 13:14;  
Colossians 3:1-2**

### *You Need New Influences!*

The Bible is emphatic about the fact that very conscious and deliberate choices need to be made in regard to the influences that we allow into our lives (Phil 4:8). Just like a wind that can cause a tree to grow skew by constantly blowing in a certain direction over the years of the tree's growth, so too the influences we allow into our life experience will exert a shaping force upon our characters and ways of thinking.

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For an addict who is seeking to leave the old life behind, some difficult but essential decisions may need to be made in terms of friendship circle, musical choices, places of entertainment etc. It is possible to set oneself up for failure by associating with the old friends whose minds are not set on recovery from addiction, or by listening to the music that one used to party to, or by frequenting the clubs and parties where the substances one is seeking to separate from are used. We need to ensure that we make no provision for failure (Rom 13:14). If an addict intends to break free, it is essential to choose positive spiritual influences to replace the old influences that will constantly trigger temptation. A new goal demands a new focus (Col 3:1-2).

**Genesis 1:27; 3:8;  
Colossians 2:8-10**

*You Need Jesus to be Complete!*

One of the biggest factors that drives people into the world of drug addiction is personal dissatisfaction with one's life or circumstances. The drug of abuse becomes a means to dumb down the pain or to create an alternate reality where one feels 'bright and sparkly' for a few hours.

In seeking to exclude God from daily life, human beings live in denial of the very purpose for their existence. God's purpose in our creation was that He wished to share Himself with us. This is why we were created in His image (Gen 1:27). God sought out the company of human beings after the creation event in the cool of the day (Gen 3:8) as well as every seventh-day (Gen 2:3). In other words, built into our design plan is a need for fellowship with God. As long as we deny God the permission to fill the God-shaped vacuum that He has created inside of us, we will never feel complete or contented at the core of our being. We may run from one fad to another and from one addiction to the other seeking to fill the void which only God can authentically fill. This is why the Bible warns us to be careful about being deceived by worldly ideas and philosophies that cannot bring true fulfillment (Col 2:8). Our completeness will only ever be realized once we allow ourselves to connect with the God who made us for this very purpose (Col 2:8-10).

When the cravings of the heart are satisfied through one's relationship with Jesus and the soul has found a place of rest and contentment, the very driving force of so many of one's addictions simply ceases to exist. While a period of physical withdrawal may still need to be endured, the root cause has been cured and thus long-term victory will result.

**1 John 1:9**

*You Need Peace with God!*

The lack of peace with God is another contributing factor to being dissatisfied with oneself. When one finds a relationship of peace

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with God, one also finds a place of acceptance. The experience of acceptance relieves the need and the drive to continually be trying to shape oneself and one's circumstances to meet internal or external pressures and standards. Peace with God alleviates the internal pressure and dissatisfaction that too often causes one to self-medicate with various substances that ultimately become addictive.

The secret and method of finding peace with God is so simple. Our part is to stop running, to stop hiding, to stop faking. Our part is simply to go to God in honesty of heart and confess to Him our weakness and our brokenness. The promise is that with this simple recognition of our true state, He will give His forgiveness and acceptance (1 John 1:9). Thus we find a place of refuge in His love and forgiving grace.

In the struggle for victory there may be a point at which we are overcome briefly. We might light up another cigarette, or take another drink. The most important thing to do after a fall, is to get back up and start again. Whatever our feelings may tell us about our unworthiness or our hopelessness, the promise of God is that if we will acknowledge our fall to Him, He will forgive us. We may hear the voice of despondency in our mind telling us that it's not worth the fight or that God has written us off so there is not use in trying anymore. At that point we face an important decision. Are we going to live by faith or by feeling? Faith and feeling are too different things. But many people confuse them. Faith takes God at His word no matter what our feelings may be saying. We may feel hopeless. We may feel as if God will not accept us. We may feel unworthy. Yet the promise of God says that He will forgive us if we will confess our sin. If we choose to trust the promise of God and ignore our feelings, we are acting in faith. The attitude of faith results in victory. Listening to feelings will only result in a downward spiral and a sense of despondency!

### **James 1:22**

#### *You Need to Take Action!*

It is not good enough to simply pursue intellectual answers to why one has fallen prey to addiction. Mere theorizing about the problem does not necessarily bring freedom. Agreeing to the logic of how addiction works and what the underlying problems are that are triggering this state of being is not sufficient to bring deliverance. A definite plan of action is needed. Knowledge must be translated into practical actions (James 1:22).

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## **SUMMARY & APPEAL**

No matter how far one has fallen, the arms of God are open wide to accept and to transform the addict from a slave to a victor! The road is not necessarily without trial or struggle. But by a daily experience of spending time in the presence of God genuine change is brought about at the core of the addict's being. This internal change will flow out in new behaviours, words and habits.

By substituting the the old ways of thinking with new spiritual influences, such as memorizing and repeating the Bible's promises of victory, new habits of thought are trained and a new focus will be gained. By consistently maintaining a new focus and a new goal the daily pattern of behaviours will inevitably change over the course of time.

The Bible is packed with practical principles and promises that give assurance that there is hope beyond addiction. There is simply no addiction that is more powerful than the grace of God to save. The most important principle in recovery to remember and put into practice is that ultimate healing comes from connection with God. If this connection is not cultivated and maintained, the power for change will not be present and regression will set in. This means that recovery is a step-by-step and day-by-day experience.

Stay close to Jesus and there will be nothing that you cannot rise above!