

ADDICTION IS ANOTHER FORM OF DISOBEDIENCE

Anything that keeps us away from God can be overcome by submitting ourselves to Him through Jesus. Although most reference to addiction is about drug and alcohol abuse, anything we do compulsively that is harmful to us and others can be considered as addiction.

It goes without saying that people with drug and alcohol problems have a way of separating, or being separated, from those who don't.

People who sin may be labeled differently or more harshly based on the sin being committed, but not one has a better chance than anyone else on their own. We should remember that if humans are doing the labeling, they are sinners themselves. Everyone must come to Jesus, ask for salvation, and follow his commandments. The Bible is for everyone, addicted or not.

Although Alcoholism (substance abuse) has been determined to be a disease, the only cure is to abstain from all mind-altering substances. This is one disease where those who have it don't know why they nurture it, and usually deny even having it. Unfortunately, to understand the cure requires understanding the cause.

It usually takes someone who is recovering from this disease to understand the logic of those still bound by it. The rationalization for continuing toward this self-destruction is both comical and sad. One aspect of addiction is that the behavior that is viewed by others as so ridiculous and harmful seems perfectly rational and reasonable to the practicing addict. It should be pointed out that while a recovering addict can relate to this flawed behavior, they certainly do not approve of it, and can be a valuable source for assistance with recovery. Only God can provide a true and lasting solution.

Because we have free will to choose or reject Jesus it usually takes some defining moment, a state of hopelessness, to bring us to Jesus of our own free will. For those addicted to drugs and alcohol this is referred to as "hitting bottom". When this happens we are ready to do what is necessary to change our ways. Actually this event is a perfect opportunity to turn to Jesus.

The Bible tells us we are all born in sin and headed for destruction. God will lead us toward Jesus, afflict us, bother us, plead with us, but will not force salvation upon us.

Some of us, having been previously addicted, believe that the act of hitting bottom is indeed a blessing because it allows us to open our hearts and minds to a better way of life. The down side is the harm we have done to others and ourselves. The up side is we now have a desire through our **own free will** to change our lives. (Required of everyone to achieve salvation.)

Recovery programs contain steps and actions to help addicted people move into more productive lives. Some of them have their roots in Biblical teachings. The similarities between these steps and what is required to walk with Jesus is evident.

People who have accepted Jesus and are walking with Him are all members of God's Kingdom, regardless of what they were before. Differences become less noticeable because the similarities become the focus. We all follow the same God. The Holy Spirit dwelling within and with each of us is the same. He helps each of us develop and use our gifts. Our gifts are different, but blend as one body.

Having said that, some of us need to receive information in different ways than others. The One Living God will guide us to the information we need as long as we submit to him and have an earnest desire to be with him.

Thoughts by John Oliver
a grateful and unworthy servant