

ADDICTION'S ACCOMPLICES



LAZARUS 
ROOMS FINDING FREEDOM
FROM ADDICTIONS

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Introduction

Addiction of any kind is, above all, destructive to the addict. Almost no one on earth has ever wanted to become addicted to anything, and yet millions and millions do. While there is often a powerful physical element, especially with drug and alcohol, that perpetuates addictive behavior, there are also moral actions and decisions that are made which enhance the bondage and suffering of the addict.

The four fundamental traits of all addictions are:

- (1) No fear of the Lord
- (2) Lying
- (3) Blaming others
- (4) Blindness to sin

It is only when we are ready, with help from God and others, to face all of these problems that we are truly ready to be set free from our addiction. If we attempt to get free from the physical or habitual nature of addiction without dealing with the underlying issues that support and nourish addictive behavior, we are merely setting ourselves up for disappointment and failure.

In addition to this personal tragedy, these traits of addiction are usually the greatest source of grief and pain to our loved ones.

The goal of this short booklet is to help you begin to recognize and gain freedom from the accomplices of addiction in your life.

No Fear of the Lord

One of mankind's greatest failures is the lack of the fear of the Lord. But what is the fear of the Lord? Why should we be afraid of a kind and loving God?

The reason it is good and right to fear God is because He is not only the Creator, Sustainer, and Savior of world, He is also the Judge of all the earth. God is totally good and holy, and He made the world to be a good and beautiful place. However, God has given all of us free will. He did this because without freedom of the will we could never truly love and trust Him or anyone else. We would merely be robots, programmed in certain ways.

Sadly, this freedom can and has been used wrongly by all mankind. The same hands we use to build and to work are used to harm and to destroy. The same minds that could plan acts of goodness can plot deeds of theft and murder. The same mouths that can bless and comfort can also curse and tear down.

The Bible calls these wrong, harmful actions "sins." A sin is a crime against God's good and moral laws. And God has told us, in advance, that He will not leave any crime against His moral laws unpunished—as any good judge must do.

Could you imagine if someone murdered a beloved family member or friend of yours, and the judge simply let the person go? The injustice of such actions would rightly cause great anger. God, too, cannot merely overlook sin. As a just judge, He must one day punish it.

So, to fear the Lord is to have a healthy fear that if we do wrong things, God will justly punish us. It is a very similar fear we should have of committing crimes in society, only with God everyone will be caught and brought to judgement, while in the world many of our crimes may go undiscovered and unpunished.

The Bible tells us that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10).

This is because when we start to realize that we will be held accountable by God for all that we do in this life, and when we begin the journey to freedom, we cease deluding ourselves that our actions are our own business and no one else's.

There is a day coming where we will all stand before the Lord, and everything we have ever done, and in particular our secret and hidden actions, will be made public and judged. We should all be afraid of that day because we know how many things we have done against God and others.

God, however, has warned us of this in advance so that we do not need to be condemned on that day. We can turn from our sins, stop justifying our destructive behavior, and receive forgiveness in Jesus Christ. But before that forgiveness is a possibility, we must first rightly fear the Lord.

Short Answer

1. Do you fear the Lord? Why or why not?

2. John Newton wrote arguably the most famous hymn "Amazing Grace." In the second verse he writes:

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

Newton poetically captures the fact that God's grace expressed in the forgiveness through Jesus teaches us to fear Him. But in the second line he shares the natural response to fearing the Lord: his grace relieves our fears. They are linked and you can't have one without the other. Too often people want to receive God's forgiveness but don't want to fear the Lord—this leads to spiritual death. Have you experienced what John Newton captured in this verse?

Lying

Lying is at the very heart of a person's descent into addiction. We lie to ourselves about what we're doing, why we're doing it, our ability to control it, and so on. We lie to others about where we're going and what we're doing. We swindle people for money or shelter. We spin a web of lies and deceit so intricate that, after some time, we don't even know the truth anymore.

It is said that "the truth will set you free." If that is the case, then lying is the surest way to enslave yourself to addictive desires. Every time we lie and deceive in pursuit of our own desires, we are adding another chain to our own miserable condition.

Like surgery, telling the truth may hurt, but it is an essential part to getting freedom from addiction. We must be honest about our motives, our fears, and our actions—to God, ourselves, and those around us.

The Bible speaks to us about "confession." Confession is where we take our hidden sins and bring them into the light by telling others what we have done and taking responsibility before God for those actions. For those willing to confess, God has made the incredible promise of forgiveness:

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us (1 John 1:8-10).

For the addict, lying becomes a means of survival, but at a great cost. For the recovering addict, honesty becomes a rope to freedom out of the dark pit of addiction.

Short Answer

1. Jesus said:

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God (John 3:19-21).

How do you respond to Jesus' words?

2. We said above that "[f]or the addict, lying becomes a means of survival, but at a great cost." What do you think that cost is? Have you "paid the price" for lying? Are you ready to turn to honesty and receive God's mercy?

Blaming Others



Fig 1

Occasionally, even when we lack the fear of the Lord and are lying frequently to keep up with our sin, our consciences will bother us. Perhaps we do something for the first time, for which we are profoundly ashamed, or we hurt someone who had never been anything but good to

us. How can we handle this moral guilt if we are not yet ready to give up our addiction?

The “solution” that is always employed by the addict, to some degree or another, is to blame others. It may be unavoidable to admit that we have done something wrong, but we continue in our sin by making others “responsible” for our behavior.

Now, to be sure, many of us go through horrific and traumatic events in our life. Tragedies may have happened in your life or people may have victimized you in ways that have deeply wounded you. We are not to blame for what has happened to us, but we are responsible for how we have responded to things in our life.

The truth we must come to embrace is that we aren't just animals, creatures of instinct that are the result of their

circumstances. No, as human beings we are rational, moral creatures who can make free decisions, either for good or bad.

When we say that we must stop blaming others for our circumstances, that does not excuse whatever wrongs may have been committed against you, but it is a crucial step to freedom because by not blaming others for our addiction and other sins, we are acknowledging that we don't have to continue in that destructive behavior anymore, by the grace of God.

On the other hand, the addict's tendency to blame others has few limitations. Often an addict will accuse family, friends, and other helpers of hurting them in some way (and through that, being responsible for the addictive behavior). But in reality, those people have never done the addict any serious wrong. For man, anyone is a suitable scapegoat to take the blame. The urge to deflect responsibility so that the addiction can be continued must be broken if the addict is going to find true freedom.

Short Answer

1. Do you blame others for your addiction? If so, why?

2. There is a key principle mentioned in the booklet: "We are not to blame for what has happened to us, but we are responsible for how we have responded to things

in our life." Too often people blame others for the things that were done to them like, "I blame my addiction to alcohol on my dad. He was always drunk and would hit me and my sister." Although these traumatic things (and sometimes not so traumatic) affect us, we are responsible for how we respond to them. Do you have hard things in your life that you use to justify your addiction and/or sin? What will you do in light of this revelation?

Blindness to Sin

Finally, the combination of the lack of the fear of the Lord, frequent lying and deception, and blaming others leads a person to be blind to their own sin. Often addicts see themselves



Fig 2

as no more than victims and don't even feel bad about lying, stealing, deceiving, and inflicting pain and loss on those around them.

This lack of moral awareness cements a person in their addiction because the last motivating factor to want to get free is now gone—the conscience of the addict.

Again, blindness to sin is really a result of the other three “accomplices” to addiction working together. Seeing clearly the wrong that we have done, and are doing, is one of the most critical steps in gaining freedom from addiction. We must be willing to take a hard look at our lives and what we are becoming so that we can turn to God and ask for the help we need.

Short Answer

1. Are you blind to your sin? A good test for this is to ask yourself, “Do you consider yourself a good person?” Why or why not?

2. What can you do to regain spiritual sight into your life so that you are not blind?

Conclusion

The fact that you're reading a booklet like this means that you are at least interested in getting freedom from the addiction that has been plaguing you. That is a good desire, and a victory to be sure! However, God offers us far more than just a "second chance." Yes, through His Son Jesus we are offered forgiveness for the things we have done against Him, against others, and even against ourselves.

Not only that, but He offers us newness of life—a new character. We can be freed from selfishness, lying, bitterness, shame, and hopelessness. We can be made into good, honest, upright, loving, and respectable people through His grace.

In order to access all these good things, we must repent of our sins. Not just one particular sin; not just seeking freedom from our addiction; but an acknowledgement of all our sins—especially the ones being discussed in this booklet. If we are willing to do this, and to look to Jesus for the forgiveness and love that we need, we will see God work a mighty miracle in our lives.

Search me, God, and know my heart;
Test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting
(Psalm 139:23-24).

ADDICTION'S ACCOMPLICES

We all know that addiction is a destructive lifestyle. But what are the motivating factors as to why someone would turn to drugs or alcohol? The sad reality is that millions of men and women, young and old alike, are caught in this dangerous cycle. Though you may or may not understand the physical addiction to a drug, it is important to recognize the decisions and actions behind how someone can find themselves in bondage to addiction.

Addictions Accomplices will explore four fundamental traits of those in addiction: lack of fear of God, lying, blaming others, and blindness to the sins driving the addict. Only when we are ready to receive help from God and others to face these sins are we able to find true freedom.

Jesus is the only true answer to be set free from any addiction. And years later, Jesus is still the same answer to overcoming the desire to self-preserve and look out for our own interests. We hope that by reading Addictions Accomplices, you will be inspired to follow Jesus with your whole self, no matter what part of the journey you are on. May the Lord bless you as you seek Him.

