

# The Lethal Addiction

“Please help me”, pleaded Mark. He looked totally forlorn and desperate. “I’ve tried to stop but after a while I just do it again. It’s like I can’t help it.” The counsellor smiled encouragingly. “Well, you’ve made the first important step. You’ve admitted that you have a problem and you’ve come to the right place for help. Please try to follow exactly what we tell you, because, as you know, continuing as you are would be life-threatening. Fortunately, you have not left it too late, and we do know what can work for you.”

## The Problem of Sin

In this world of stress many people turn to addictive behaviour such as comfort eating, drinking, smoking or drugs. None of these addictions is good for us, but some are particularly dangerous. While most people manage to live contented lives without resorting to these, there is one thing to which we are all naturally addicted. This addiction is sin – doing things that God does not like.

We are all, without exception, naturally self-centred and not God-centred. There is only one person who never displeased God: His Son Jesus Christ. Everyone else has been and is addicted to sin. The great apostle Paul described his struggle:

*For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me,*



*but how to perform what is good I do not find (Romans 7:15–18).*

## What is Sin?

We do well to consider what God regards as sin. According to His Word, the Bible, sinning is not just doing what we would consider awful things like murder or stealing, although they definitely are sins. Sinning is not even necessarily unpleasant – in fact it can be quite enjoyable (Hebrews 11:25). The Bible says that our ‘natural’ thoughts and reactions can be sinful ‘works of the flesh’.

*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:20–21).*

None of us can say that we have never been guilty of these things. This sort of thought and behaviour is so instinctive that we are addicted to it.

## **Sin and its Consequences**

Like other dangerous addictions, this way of life is killing us. In fact left to our own devices our position is so serious that we are even enemies of God (Romans 5:10). Our sinful nature stops us entering the kingdom of God and inevitably results in eternal death. As the apostle Paul said:

*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).*

Like Mark, we all need to admit that we have a serious problem which we simply cannot solve by ourselves. We need to recognise that there is a solution, provided by God. That is why Jesus came – to live a sinless life, to give his life as a sacrifice for sin and to be raised from the dead so that he can now sit in glory at his Father’s side, to help his people.

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*

## **The Solution**

There are many myths about addictions and many false beliefs about what the Bible actually says. Some people do not even base their beliefs on the Bible. Mark needed professional help and we need help from the God of the Bible. There is no other way. As the counsellor said to Mark, we must conform to what the Bible says if we want to be saved. This means we must:

- ❖ Admit our desperate problem and helplessness,
- ❖ Come to God in the way He has provided,
- ❖ Do what He asks of us, in humility and obedience.

This also brings great blessings here and now, helping us to cope with the stresses of life which could lead to the other sorts of addictions:

*Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans 5:1–4).*

## **Stage by Stage**

At what stage are you? Are you happily indulging in your addictive sins, enjoying life and hoping for the best, but allowing your sins to destroy you? Or are you genuinely searching the Bible and trying to obey God? God cannot save you unless you respond to His message of hope. He asks you to be baptised and to follow Jesus. Jesus commanded his disciples:

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20).*

When Jesus returns your opportunity to be saved may be over. If this addiction to sin is killing you, don’t leave it too late.

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