

# Beyond Addictions

Free to live a new life in Christ Jesus



## Making the Change

### Lesson 8

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Obedience flows out of trust.  
We either obey the devices and desires of our own hearts  
or the Word of the God who made us,  
loves us and redeemed us.

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#### Time out

A wise educator once said that a man cannot learn anymore than he has time to contemplate so we are pausing to contemplate what we have studied in the first seven chapters. We have looked at the issue of addiction in scripture. We have also looked at our incredible God and the awesome resources we have in Him. There is a lot to think about.

Take time to review the first seven chapters. Pray and ask the Lord to bring it to life in you. Jesus promised in John 14:26 that the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth and cause us to remember what He has taught us. So, as we continue to study God's Word, the Holy Spirit is faithful to bring it to our mind when we need it.

**Prayerfully ask yourself some questions.** The answers will help you determine the strength of your new life's foundation.

#### 1. Are you only seeking a solution to your problems or are you seeking Jesus?

Do you remember the two thieves on the cross? One wanted Jesus to take him down. The other wanted Jesus to take him up. The first man wanted Jesus to solve his rather severe earthly problem – he was being crucified. He had a very legitimate problem but he didn't seem at all interested in eternal things; he just wanted Jesus to get him out of the mess that he was in. The second man wanted Jesus. He asked Jesus to remember him when Jesus entered His kingdom. His mind was focused on heavenly things.

It's easy to get caught in the trap of wanting only a solution to your problems. After all, some of your problems are real and they need to be addressed. Though none may be quite as urgent as relief from crucifixion, they are quite painful and cry out for help.

Thank God that He does solve problems; however, if we are seeking Him only as a problem-solver then we are not truly worshipping Him. And if we are dissatisfied with His methods or His timing we may be tempted to look for another solution. Then we are likely to find a new idol, a new addiction. I have known people who became discouraged with Jesus and moved in with someone only to find that their new partner was more abusive than their old addiction. I've seen Christians become frustrated with the Lord's timing in fixing their marriage and grow bitter and resentful. They never seem to find the place of peace and contentment that they are seeking.

When we determine to follow Jesus for the sake of following Jesus then solutions to our problems take their rightful priority. We worship God regardless of whether or not things are going our way. We are also thankful for His deliverance from some issues and His grace to endure others. There is great power in that old gospel song that says, "I have decided to follow Jesus. There's no turning back, no turning back." That is a decision. It is a resolution that says, "Come what may, I am going to follow Jesus. Whether the problems go away or not, I'm going to follow Jesus." Make sure that this is the resolution in your heart. There really is no turning back. Where else would you go?

### **2. Am I pursuing things that will last (eternal) or things that will pass away (temporal)?**

You want to move from seeking temporary satisfaction to seeking eternal satisfaction. A six-pack of beer provides very temporary satisfaction. It doesn't provide real peace and joy. True joy and happiness are not found in an abundance of earthly stuff or earthly pleasures. Have you ever purchased anything that gave you real happiness? How long did the thrill of owning a new car or a new entertainment system last? Real life, real joy and real happiness are not found in what we own, and they aren't found in temporary escapes in bottles, powders, pills or sexual escapades. Real life, peace, joy and happiness are given to us as we seek the face of Jesus. You will not find them anywhere else. Real happiness is a natural result of living in Christ.

### **3. Am I being shaped by the world or by the Word?**

What are you watching on TV? What are you reading? What are you gazing at on the Internet? Are you giving God the best time of the day in prayer and Bible reading? The answers to these questions determine whether you are changing the way you think by renewing your mind.

**4. What do my priorities reveal about me?**

You can tell a lot about a person by their daily schedule and their checkbook. Where are you investing your time and your money? The answers to these questions will reveal whether you are a doer of God's Word or just a hearer. Remember, if you are just a hearer then it is easy to become self-deceived. Allow God to direct your priorities. Jot down what you believe your highest priorities to be. Then pray over this short list and ask the Holy Spirit to organize your day according to these priorities. Follow His lead. You will be blessed as you do.