

## LESSON SEVEN ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR

Sex, food, alcohol, work, perfection, video games, television, relationships, gambling, illegal drugs, prescription pills, exercise, cutting, religion, shopping: this is just a short list of the addictive behaviors that are plaguing our society and our church today. The addicts are: teenagers, pastors, moms, bankers, professors, business owners, soldiers, athletes, the person next to you, or maybe even you. Addiction is a difficult topic to tackle because it is woven into our society in so many insidious ways. There are many people struggling with addictive behaviors, both within the church and without. Millions of people are affected by the damaging behavior of people they either know or live with who have addictions. Many more fail to seek help because they cannot bring themselves to admit that their behaviors are causing problems in their lives, either on a small scale or a large scale. The truth however is that addiction damages everyone. It hurts the addict. It can be physical damage (liver problems, heart disease, diabetes), emotional damage (withdrawal from family relationships or lying to family members to cover up), and spiritual damage. One's identity becomes confused as the addict identifies with the behavior and no longer with the person of Christ. There is a tendency to withdraw from God, and to view God as disappointed and angry.

Is addiction an appropriate topic to handle in church? The book of Proverbs addresses it, the Bible assumes it, and both offer insights into its destructive nature and the way in which God desires to handle the human heart. Much of the first nine chapters of Proverbs is written from the perspective of a father pleading with his son to avoid the deceptive allure of illicit sexual liaisons. The father describes the adulteress in menacing terms. To your face she speaks with sweet, enticing words but slowly her tentacles slip around your arms and legs, enveloping you, until suddenly their hold becomes strong and tight, you are unable to break free of her grip. It is then that you realize her sweet words were lies and that her plan for you is not one of prosperity, but rather of your own destruction.

The book of Proverbs makes it very clear that addictive behavior is destructive and when left unchecked it ultimately results in death, but it is important to remember that addiction starts with an initial temptation. All of us need to hear the message of Proverbs as we manage temptation in our own lives. The warnings against succumbing to temptation are somber. There is however, a message of hope sprinkled throughout the book of Proverbs that encourage both the person who is tempted and the person who is struggling with addictive behavior and would like to find a way out. God remains the covenant God who is faithful to His people, and addiction is not enough to remove a person from His presence. God provides faithful counsel, friends to walk by us, ways to deal with the pain in our hearts, and the promise to bring healing into our lives if we are willing to trust Him and allow Him to enter into the emotional landscape of our lives.

This lesson on addiction is only an introduction to this broad topic. Most of us have been touched in some way or other by addiction. We may be dealing with it

personally or we may know someone who struggles with addiction. It is beyond the scope of this study however to provide a detailed explanation of the complexities of addiction. We will again be looking at what the book of Proverbs offers us in terms of the danger of addiction and the ways in which we can find hope for our problems. It is the hope of this author that you will find both encouragement and strategies in dealing with addictive (or compulsive behavior) as you work through this lesson. An excellent resource which specifically addresses addictive behavior, but also provides a framework for dealing with the painful experiences of life, is "Sex, Food, and God: Breaking Free from Temptations, Compulsions, and Addictions," by David Eckman.

## **DAY ONE**

The book of Proverbs has strong warnings regarding the adulteress. In the context of addiction, the adulteress represents the pull toward something that initially promises satisfaction, it may be pleasure, it may be the alleviation of the pain of loneliness, but it is a promise of something that appears to be good. In a similar way, the addictive behavior makes a promise to either bring pleasure or to alleviate pain in the life of the person struggling with addiction. Whether it is food, pornography, shopping, gambling, or (fill in the blank yourself), the first experience, the first taste is something pleasurable. The end result is destructive, both to the addict and to the people in his or her life, but in the moment, in the pull of the addictive behavior, it is that pleasure/alleviation of pain that is sought after. This is one of the keys to understanding addiction. The person is looking to alleviate a huge amount of pain in his or her heart, but they have not learned how to do so in a healthy way. Because of this, some activity or substance serves to bring the pleasure that is so necessary in alleviating the pain. The irony of course, is that the pain is only temporarily alleviated, but the pleasure that is promised is enough for the moment.

### **Read the following verses:**

Proverbs 2:10-18, 5:3-6, 5:8-11, 5:20-23, 6:23-28, 7:1-5, 7:9-27, 9:13-18, and 22:14.

1. What kinds of words does the adulteress use with her victim? What does she promise?

2. What does she really offer?

3. How does the father describe the adulteress?
  
4. How effectively does the metaphor of the adulterous woman describe the pull of addictive behavior?
  
5. What does the father present as the alternative to the adulteress?
  
6. Why is it so difficult to avoid her path?
  
7. How do these verses in Proverbs help you in understanding the person struggling with addiction? Do they give you insight or compassion?
  
8. Read Proverbs 20:1, 23:19-21, 23:26-35, and 31:3-7. These verses address the specific addiction to alcohol, but the warnings can be applied to addictive behavior in general. Write down your observations.
  
9. According to these verses, how does the abuse of alcohol alter one's ability to make wise decisions?
  
10. How does the author of Proverbs describe the situation of the addict?

11. According to Proverbs 23:35, does the addict learn from the negative consequences of their behavior?

## DAY TWO

In his groundbreaking book, "Sex, Food, and God: Breaking Free From Temptations, Compulsions, and Addictions," David Eckman suggests the following equation:

$$\text{PAIN} + \text{PLEASURE} = \text{ADDICTION}^i$$

David Eckman argues that pain is the critical puzzle piece to understanding addictive behavior. Addiction begins with pain in a person's heart. Without the tools and the relationships to work through and comprehend that pain, a person will then look around for a pleasurable experience to alleviate the pain. Whether it is food, alcohol, drugs, or any other addictive substance or activity, the key is that the substance or activity alleviates the pain in the heart. For a moment there is an odd sense of peace, numbness may be a better term, that envelops the addict. When the numbness wears off however, the painful wound still screams and the person is left looking for another experience of pleasure. Over time, even a very short period of time, the cycle becomes embedded in the addict's way of living life: pain followed by an alleviation of pain through a pleasurable experience, followed by a period of numbness which then wears off and leaves the addict back in the mountain of pain that envelops the heart. The great tragedy is that many of things that God intended to give us for our pleasure and our enjoyment are abused in our attempt to manage the pain in our lives. Food and sex are gifts given to us by God. They are intended to bring us pleasure, they are intended to be enjoyed, but for many they become the only source of comfort and relief in our lives and what was once a gift becomes a curse as the addiction gradually overtakes the individual.

1. Read Proverbs 12:25, 13:12, 14:30, 15:13, 15:15, 17:22, 18:14, 25:28, and 27:19. How do these Proverbs describe the qualities of a tranquil heart?

2. How do these Proverbs describe the qualities of a troubled heart?

3. According to Proverbs 27:19, what does the tranquil heart and the troubled heart reflect about the person?

4. Read Proverbs 13:25, 16:26, and 10:3, Ecclesiastes 6:7, Ezekiel 7:19, Habakkuk 2:5, and Philippians 3:18-19.

What do these verses reveal about a person's appetite?

5. Are appetites good or bad?

6. Read Proverbs 5:3, 24:13, 25:16, 25:27, and 27:7.

Do these verses contradict one another?

7. Is it clear from Proverbs that appetites can be confusing and difficult to manage?

8. Read Proverbs 20:13 and 21:17. What are the dangers in overindulging our appetites?

## DAY THREE

The process of addiction begins with a heart in pain, which is then followed by a desperate attempt to alleviate the pain. The pain is temporarily alleviated until it cries out again for relief. It is apparent to the outside observer that the cycle of addiction is fraught with foolishness and self-delusion. If the painkiller worked, the pain would be dead and the issue would be resolved. If the person was able to accurately assess their behavior, they would understand that continuing to apply the same behavior in order to address the pain is not working. Unfortunately the numbness that is experienced once the person indulges in the addictive substance or activity, is worth more to the addict than almost anything. The process of becoming self-aware, of recognizing the damaging effects of one's addictive behavior and of understanding the inner pain that moves a person into addictive behavior, is not an easy process to undertake. It is necessary however, in the recovery process. As one becomes able to see what they are doing to themselves and to the one's around them, and what is driving the addictive behavior, then they will be empowered to make the necessary changes, to find the right support, and to go through the painful but worthwhile process of becoming healthy and whole.

1. Read Proverbs 11:6, 12:11, 14:8, 26:11-12, 27:8, 28:26, and 30:20.

What are some of the characteristics of the people depicted in these verses?

2. Read Proverbs 14:12-15, 14:27, 20:24, and 21:2.

What prescription does Proverbs give for overcoming self-delusion and becoming more self-aware?

3. Read Ephesians 4:14-24.

According to Eph. 4:14, why are we sometimes tossed about and carried away by lies?

4. What is God's desire for us?

5. How does Paul (the author of Ephesians) describe the mind of the Gentiles?
  
6. In this description Paul is describing two different paths to take. He is telling the Ephesian Church that the behavior they are exhibiting has the appearance of behavior that belongs to the world. Paul is reminding his readers that they belong to Christ and because of this relationship they have the power to live lives that are not characterized by sensuality, greediness, and darkness. In verse 23, Paul reveals the key to putting on the new self. What is it?
  
7. What does it mean to you to renew your mind? Why would this be a key thought in dealing with addictive behavior?

#### **DAY FOUR**

In order to overcome any kind of temptation, compulsion, or addiction, it is necessary to have an accurate view of oneself. It is difficult to change something if a person is not aware that something needs to be changed. It is not always easy to view our situation and our behavior accurately though. It requires a right attitude and an openness to look at both the good and the bad. It also requires God's loving direction and insight in revealing our sinfulness to us.

1. Read Proverbs 10:17, 12:1, 13:14, 18:12, 29:3, and 29:23.  
What kind of attitude is necessary to invite change into a person's life?
  
2. How can pride prevent a person from listening to correction?
  
3. How do we confront pride and embrace humility?

4. Read Proverbs 11:1-3.

Prov. 11:1 talks about a just weight, an accurate measurement. Why do you think the discussion about pride and humility, the upright and the treacherous is preceded by a comment about using accurate measures?

5. How do you think this relates to the subject of addiction and recovery?

## DAY FIVE

One of the biggest detriments to recovery from addiction is living in isolation. Addictions thrive in the secrecy that isolation provides. We wait until our families are asleep before we get out the boxes of cookies and bags of chips, we stay up late into the night looking at things on the internet, or we secretly pour that second or third or fourth glass of wine when we think that nobody is looking. The behavior that we indulge in privately would bring us deep shame if we were forced to allow others to view those habits and compulsions. This is why walking with others, surrounding ourselves with honest counsel, and being deeply honest about the way we live our lives is one of the greatest keys we have in the process of recovery. Coming out of isolation breaks the illusion that we are the only ones struggling. It gives us access to people who have shared our struggle and who have had success in dealing with their pain. It allows us the freedom to truly share the ugliest parts of our addictive behaviors and to be received with grace, love, and truth. It also gives us hope that there can be and there will be a better life to live, the life that God intends for us; free of addiction, free of shame and full of expectation.

1. Read Proverbs 18:1 and 28:13.

What do these Proverbs say about isolating one's self?

2. Why would somebody choose to live in isolation?

3. What does confession (being honest about our struggles and acknowledging the way in which we are harmed by them) have the ability to bring about in our lives?

4. Read Proverbs 11:14, 12:20, 13:19-20, 15:22, 19:20-21, 24:6, and 27:9. What does Proverbs say about the quantity of counselors? Why would more be better than one?

5. What does Proverbs say the counselors should be like?

6. What does Proverbs suggest the outcome will be if one is surrounded with wise counselors?

Although the path to wholeness can often seem overwhelming, the person who continues to push forward, to take steps in the right direction no matter how discouraging it may be, the person who is willing to submit themselves to counsel, to being honest, and to search deep within their heart, is the person who will ultimately find change and healing. There are no sure promises and everyone has a different path to walk, but it is God's desire that we all come to a place in our lives where we are not depending on substances or activities to fill us, to comfort us, and to deaden our pain. It is God's desire that we learn to sort these things out in the presence of friends who love us, people who support us, and relationships that will challenge us to grow.

7. Read Proverbs 24:15-16. How many times does the righteous man fall? What is the result of his fall?

8. Read Proverbs 25:4. Once the impurities are taken away from the silver, what is left?

9. Read Proverbs 3:1, 3:7-8, and 4:20-23. These verses admonish the reader to keep the teachings of the father. They also set forth the benefits of persevering and remaining on the right path. What are some of the benefits?

10. Read Proverbs 4:13-15 and 4:25-26. How seriously does the father expect the son to take his instruction? How important do you think diligence and perseverance are if one expects to move forward in life, to experience change and growth?

11. Do these verses offer hope to the one who is struggling with addictive behavior?

12. Read Proverbs 18:10. What is the ultimate source of hope for all of us, in all of our struggles?

## 10 Ways Christians Hide from the Truth

Scary Truth vs. Deadly Denial

by Melinda Fish

From the book "I Can't Be an Addict - I'm a Christian"

1. Fear of Facing the Truth - Since Eden, man has been afraid of the truth. We are afraid that the truth will present us with a reality so harsh that we cannot overcome it. So we hide as Adam and Eve hid from God. The feeling that we are inadequate to meet the challenge of truth leave us naked, so we reach out for the fig leaf of denial.

2. Ignoring the Problem - One way to keep from finding answers to a problem is to pretend the problem doesn't exist. Ignoring symptoms can postpone the trauma of facing facts. An addict will go to great lengths to ignore the problem. Someone who is co-dependent, for instance, will help a "problem person" by entering into his fantasy world and pretending with him or by keeping him from facing the negative consequences of his addiction.

If the addict is a binge-er, able to maintain himself without indulging for periods of time, he may begin to feel he is in control. Addicts need to remember that they are not addicts because they feel like it, but because they follow the addictive cycle.

3. Minimization - One day the addict may give in to what others are saying and begin to admit he has a problem. The fig leaf of minimization, however, accommodates denial by preventing him from associating his behavior with addictive patterns or his actions with destructive consequences. He will use euphemisms and understatements to keep from recognizing the acuteness of the problem. Pleasingly plump instead of fat, drinking problem instead of alcoholism, bad habit instead of addiction are a few popular minimizations.

4. Rationalization - When minimization crumbles, rationalization is quick to replace it. This means justifying actions. "I deserve to get high because ..." Self-pity is the stem on which the fig leaf of rationalization grow. Addicts develop elaborate cases for maintaining their behavior. They blame family members for problems and addictions. "If you were a decent wife, I wouldn't have to drink ..."

5. Procrastination - "Ill think about that tomorrow," was Scarlett O'Hara's famous reaction in *Gone with the Wind*. It gave her a way to cope with guilt: simply put off thinking about it. Someone once said, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." The fig leaf of procrastination sometimes remains when all the others have slipped; it can stall addiction recovery for years.

6. Humor - Making light of the problem joking about impending disaster, an

unusually effective form of denial: "If I eat anything, I'm going to die! Ha! Ha! Ha! So I might as well indulge!" It is the companion of rationalization. Laughing about the problem breaks the tension and fends off conviction. But doesn't it sound a little like the rich fool in Jesus' parable: Soul, ... take your ease, eat drink and be merry (Luke 12:19)?

7. Misapplying Scriptures - We Christians are great at this one! In order to barricade ourselves against the nudging of the Holy Spirit, we simply reapply a few Scriptures to cover the naked truth: Forgetting what lies behind ..., There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ... or If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. We don't try on these Scriptures: He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper (Proverbs 28:13) or Having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1). Satan tried taking Scriptures out of context in tempting Jesus Christ. It's far better to face the truth than risk lifelong addiction and early death.

8. False Positive Thinking and Confession - The soul attempting to reassure itself that everything is fine is an elaborate fig leaf. Grabbing at religious phrases and applying them to oneself to escape the truth is the soul's attempting to recover from the Fall by itself. Positivism when it does not proceed out of the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit profits nothing. Trying to convince ourselves that negative facts do not exist because we are Christian is a form of denial masquerading as a Christian doctrine. True faith does not deny reality but walks through it the apostle Paul wrote, His strength is perfected in my weakness, for when I am weak, then am I strong (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Today's Christian usually says, "What weakness? I have the power to rule and reign!"

9. Lack of Discernment - The inability to recognize the difference between the work of the Holy Spirit and the works of the flesh reinforces denial. Addictive patterns and behavior tend to disguise themselves as "spiritual boldness" or "faith" or "dedication." This is especially true of people addicts who seem to be patient when in fact they are filled with anger and depression.

Another manifestation of this fig leaf is the inability to discern the origin of guilt. It is coming from the devil or from the conviction of the Holy Spirit? Often when the Spirit of God helps us see truth, we condemn Him as being the voice of the devil.

10. False Guilt - An addict tends to use the hopeless feeling of having sinned against God and others to fling himself farther away from recovery and deeper into addiction. Hopeless guilt comes from the devil who assures him he is guilty of a terrible crime; there is no hope. Many addicts deny that help exists and is available to them. This belief is reinforced whenever the addict attempts to reassert his willpower to deal with the addiction and fails miserably, going back to his addictive substance or process. Because he fails to meet a standard he has set for himself, he feels guilty.

In *Willpower's Not Enough*, Arnold Washton and Donna Boundy explain, "The belief that an addict is a 'bad person' perpetuates the problem and that's why it's so important to reframe addiction in a nonjudgmental light, to separate who you are from the addiction problem you've developed. Remember, you are not your addiction! You are something much greater than that."

**20 Steps to Defeating Addictions**  
**by Henry Cloud and John Townsend**  
From the book "God Will Make a Way"

It does not matter what you are addicted to.  
It does not matter how long you have been addicted.  
It does not matter how severe the consequences.

If you are willing to allow God to make a way, he will. All you have to do is to stop trying to tell yourself to be strong, admit that you are weak, and get into his system of recovery. You will notice that many of them are the same as the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. The plan works if you work the plan. The strength will not come from you but from God. Yet you have to go to him with your weakness and join his program in order to receive his strength. We encourage you to do that and to discover, like millions before you, that no matter what you have lost, God can make a way.

1. Admit to yourself, to God, and to another person that you are out of control and this addiction has gotten the best of you. Admit that you are powerless on your own to fix it.
2. Ask God for forgiveness for whatever you have done, and claim it. Receive it, and get rid of all condemnation.
3. Believe that God can help you, reach out to him, and totally submit yourself to his care, guidance, direction, and strength. Submit to total obedience to whatever he shows you to do.
4. Take an ongoing inventory of all that is wrong inside and between you and others, and all that you have done wrong. Confess it to God and to someone else.
5. Continually ask God to show you anything that you need to work on, and when he tells you, follow through.
6. Go and ask for forgiveness and make amends to all whom you have hurt, except where that might harm the person.
7. Seek God deeply, ask him what he wants you to do, ask him for the power to do it, and then follow through in obedience.
8. Reach out to others.
9. Find out the triggers that get your addictive behavior started, and then when they occur, reach out. Do not ever underestimate the need to reach out. That is why some addicts, especially in the beginning, go to multiple meetings every day and have a sponsor whom they can call.

10. Discover the hurts and pains that you are trying to medicate and seek to have them healed. Find out what you are lacking inside and begin to reach out and receive the love and strengthening that you need.
11. Do not try to do all of this alone. Join a support system, maybe attending every day for a few months, and get a few buddies to call on every day.
12. Find out what relational skills you need to develop in order to make your relationships work. Work on these skills and take risks in order to relate to people better.
13. Forgive everyone who has ever hurt you.
14. Find your talents and develop them. Pursue your dreams and goals.
15. Simplify your life so that it has less stress, and make sure that you are recreating and taking care of yourself.
16. Join a structured group that is going to provide the discipline to do all of this.
17. Study God's Word and other spiritual writings that will teach you how to apply it.
18. Stay humble, be honest, and remember that spiritual growth and recovery are for a lifetime, not just for a season.
19. If you are addicted to a substance, seek medical help as well. In the beginning it is possible that you will go through withdrawal or other serious medical conditions. Make sure that you are safe.
20. See your addiction not as the problem but as a symptom of a life that is not planted and growing in God. Get into recovery as a life overhaul, not just to fix a symptom.

**SCRIPTURE FOR LESSON SEVEN****DAY ONE**

**Proverbs 1:31** <sup>31</sup> "So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way And be satiated with their own devices.

**Proverbs 2:10-18** <sup>10</sup> For wisdom will enter your heart And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; <sup>11</sup> Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you, <sup>12</sup> To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things; <sup>13</sup> From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness; <sup>14</sup> Who delight in doing evil And rejoice in the perversity of evil; <sup>15</sup> Whose paths are crooked, And who are devious in their ways; <sup>16</sup> To deliver you from the strange woman, From the adulteress who flatters with her words; <sup>17</sup> That leaves the companion of her youth And forgets the covenant of her God; <sup>18</sup> For her house sinks down to death And her tracks lead to the dead;

**Proverbs 5:3-6** <sup>3</sup> For the lips of an adulteress drip honey And smoother than oil is her speech; <sup>4</sup> But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. <sup>5</sup> Her feet go down to death, Her steps take hold of Sheol. <sup>6</sup> She does not ponder the path of life; Her ways are unstable, she does not know *it*.

**Proverbs 5:8-11** <sup>8</sup> Keep your way far from her And do not go near the door of her house, <sup>9</sup> Or you will give your vigor to others And your years to the cruel one; <sup>10</sup> And strangers will be filled with your strength And your hard-earned goods *will go* to the house of an alien; <sup>11</sup> And you groan at your final end, When your flesh and your body are consumed;

**Proverbs 5:20-23** <sup>20</sup> For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress And embrace the bosom of a foreigner? <sup>21</sup> For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths. <sup>22</sup> His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin. <sup>23</sup> He will die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he will go astray.

**Proverbs 6:23-28** <sup>23</sup> For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life <sup>24</sup> To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress. <sup>25</sup> Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her capture you with her eyelids. <sup>26</sup> For on account of a harlot *one is reduced* to a loaf of bread, And an adulteress hunts for the precious life. <sup>27</sup> Can a man take fire in his bosom And his clothes not be burned? <sup>28</sup> Or can a man walk on hot coals And his feet not be scorched?

**Proverbs 7:1-5** <sup>NAU</sup> **Proverbs 7:1** My son, keep my words And treasure my commandments within you. <sup>2</sup> Keep my commandments and live, And my teaching as the apple of your eye. <sup>3</sup> Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. <sup>4</sup> Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," And call understanding *your* intimate

friend; <sup>5</sup> That they may keep you from an adulteress, From the foreigner who flatters with her words.

**Proverbs 7:9-27** <sup>9</sup> In the twilight, in the evening, In the middle of the night and *in* the darkness. <sup>10</sup> And behold, a woman *comes* to meet him, Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart. <sup>11</sup> She is boisterous and rebellious, Her feet do not remain at home; <sup>12</sup> *She is* now in the streets, now in the squares, And lurks by every corner. <sup>13</sup> So she seizes him and kisses him And with a brazen face she says to him: <sup>14</sup> "I was due to offer peace offerings; Today I have paid my vows. <sup>15</sup> "Therefore I have come out to meet you, To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you. <sup>16</sup> "I have spread my couch with coverings, With colored linens of Egypt. <sup>17</sup> "I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. <sup>18</sup> "Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses. <sup>19</sup> "For my husband is not at home, He has gone on a long journey; <sup>20</sup> He has taken a bag of money with him, At the full moon he will come home." <sup>21</sup> With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him. <sup>22</sup> Suddenly he follows her As an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as *one in* fetters to the discipline of a fool, <sup>23</sup> Until an arrow pierces through his liver; As a bird hastens to the snare, So he does not know that it *will cost him* his life. <sup>24</sup> Now therefore, *my sons*, listen to me, And pay attention to the words of my mouth. <sup>25</sup> Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths. <sup>26</sup> For many are the victims she has cast down, And numerous are all her slain. <sup>27</sup> Her house is the way to Sheol, Descending to the chambers of death.

**Proverbs 9:13 - 18** <sup>13</sup> The woman of folly is boisterous, *She is* naive and knows nothing. <sup>14</sup> She sits at the doorway of her house, On a seat by the high places of the city, <sup>15</sup> Calling to those who pass by, Who are making their paths straight: <sup>16</sup> "Whoever is naive, let him turn in here," And to him who lacks understanding she says, <sup>17</sup> "Stolen water is sweet; And bread *eaten* in secret is pleasant." <sup>18</sup> But he does not know that the dead are there, *That* her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

**Proverbs 22:14** <sup>14</sup> The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; He who is cursed of the LORD will fall into it.

### **Wine**

**Proverbs 20:1** Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.

**Proverbs 23:19-21** Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way. <sup>20</sup> Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat; <sup>21</sup> For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe *one* with rags.

**Proverbs 23:26-35** Give me your heart, my son, And let your eyes delight in my ways. <sup>27</sup> For a harlot is a deep pit And an adulterous woman is a narrow well. <sup>28</sup> Surely she lurks as a robber, And increases the faithless among men. <sup>29</sup> Who has woe? Who has

sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? <sup>30</sup> Those who linger long over wine, Those who go to taste mixed wine. <sup>31</sup> Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly; <sup>32</sup> At the last it bites like a serpent And stings like a viper. <sup>33</sup> Your eyes will see strange things And your mind will utter perverse things. <sup>34</sup> And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, Or like one who lies down on the top of a mast. <sup>35</sup> "They struck me, *but* I did not become ill; They beat me, *but* I did not know *it*. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink."

**Proverbs 31:3-7** <sup>3</sup> Do not give your strength to women, Or your ways to that which destroys kings. <sup>4</sup> It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Or for rulers to desire strong drink, <sup>5</sup> For they will drink and forget what is decreed, And pervert the rights of all the afflicted. <sup>6</sup> Give strong drink to him who is perishing, And wine to him whose life is bitter. <sup>7</sup> Let him drink and forget his poverty And remember his trouble no more.

## DAY TWO

### *The Heart*

**Proverbs 12:25** Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, But a good word makes it glad.

**Proverbs 13:12** <sup>12</sup> Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

**Proverbs 14:30** <sup>30</sup> A tranquil heart is life to the body, But passion is rotteness to the bones.

**Proverbs 15:13** A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.

**Proverbs 15:15** All the days of the afflicted are bad, But a cheerful heart *has* a continual feast.

**Proverbs 17:22** <sup>22</sup> A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.

**Proverbs 18:14** <sup>14</sup> The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, But *as for* a broken spirit who can bear it?

**Proverbs 25:28** *Like* a city that is broken into *and* without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.

**Proverbs 27:19** <sup>19</sup> As in water face *reflects* face, So the heart of man *reflects* man

**Appetites**

**Proverbs 13:25** <sup>5</sup> The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, But the stomach of the wicked is in need.

**Proverbs 16:26** A worker's appetite works for him, For his hunger urges him *on*.

**Proverbs 10:3** <sup>3</sup> The LORD will not allow the righteous to hunger, But He will reject the craving of the wicked.

**Ecclesiastes 6:7** <sup>7</sup> All a man's labor is for his mouth and yet the appetite is not satisfied.

**Ezekiel 7:19** <sup>19</sup> 'They will fling their silver into the streets and their gold will become an abhorrent thing; their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD. They cannot satisfy their appetite nor can they fill their stomachs, for their iniquity has become an occasion of stumbling.

**Habakkuk 2:5** <sup>5</sup> "Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man, So that he does not stay at home. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, And he is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all nations And collects to himself all peoples.

**Philippians 3:18-19** <sup>18</sup> For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ, <sup>19</sup> whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

**Honey**

**Proverbs 5:3** <sup>3</sup> For the lips of an adulteress drip honey And smoother than oil is her speech;

**Proverbs 24:13** <sup>13</sup> My son, eat honey, for it is good, Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste;

**Proverbs 25:16** <sup>16</sup> Have you found honey? Eat *only* what you need, That you not have it in excess and vomit it.

**Proverbs 25:27** <sup>27</sup> It is not good to eat much honey, Nor is it glory to search out one's own glory.

**Proverbs 27:7** <sup>7</sup> A sated man loathes honey, But to a famished man any bitter thing is sweet.

**Pleasure**

**Proverbs 20:13** <sup>13</sup> Do not love sleep, or you will become poor; Open your eyes, *and* you will be satisfied with food.

**Proverbs 21:17** He who loves pleasure *will become* a poor man; He who loves wine and oil will not become rich.

**DAY THREE**

**Proverbs 11:6** <sup>6</sup> The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, But the treacherous will be caught by *their own* greed.

**Proverbs 12:11** <sup>11</sup> He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, But he who pursues worthless *things* lacks sense.

**Proverbs 14:8** <sup>8</sup> The wisdom of the sensible is to understand his way, But the foolishness of fools is deceit.

**Proverbs 26:11-12** <sup>11</sup> Like a dog that returns to its vomit Is a fool who repeats his folly.  
<sup>12</sup> Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

**Proverbs 27:8** <sup>8</sup> Like a bird that wanders from her nest, So is a man who wanders from his home.

**Proverbs 28:26** <sup>26</sup> He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered.

**Proverbs 30:20** <sup>20</sup> This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth, And says, "I have done no wrong."

**Proverbs 14:12-15** There is a way *which seems* right to a man, But its end is the way of death. <sup>13</sup> Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, And the end of joy may be grief.  
<sup>14</sup> The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways, But a good man will *be satisfied* with his. <sup>15</sup> The naive believes everything, But the sensible man considers his steps.

**Proverbs 14:27** <sup>27</sup> The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death.

**Proverbs 20:24** <sup>24</sup> Man's steps are *ordained* by the LORD, How then can man understand his way?

**Proverbs 21:2** <sup>2</sup> Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.

## Lesson Seven Scripture, Day Three/Day Four

**Ephesians 4:14-24** <sup>14</sup> As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup> but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. <sup>17</sup> So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup> being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; <sup>19</sup> and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. <sup>20</sup> But you did not learn Christ in this way, <sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, <sup>22</sup> that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, <sup>23</sup> and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

**DAY FOUR**

**Proverbs 10:17** <sup>17</sup> He is *on* the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who ignores reproof goes astray.

**Proverbs 12:1** Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is stupid.

**Proverbs 13:14** <sup>14</sup> The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, To turn aside from the snares of death.

**Proverbs 18:12** <sup>12</sup> Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, But humility goes before honor.

**Proverbs 29:3** <sup>3</sup> A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad, But he who keeps company with harlots wastes *his* wealth.

**Proverbs 29:23** <sup>23</sup> A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor.

**Proverbs 11:1-3** A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, But a just weight is His delight. <sup>2</sup> When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom. <sup>3</sup> The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them.

## DAY FIVE

**Proverbs 18:1** He who separates himself seeks *his own* desire, He quarrels against all sound wisdom.

**Proverbs 28:13** <sup>13</sup> He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.

### ***Counselors***

**Proverbs 11:14** <sup>14</sup> Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory.

**Proverbs 12:20** <sup>20</sup> Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But counselors of peace have joy.

**Proverbs 13:19-20** <sup>19</sup> Desire realized is sweet to the soul, But it is an abomination to fools to turn away from evil. <sup>20</sup> He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.

**Proverbs 15:22** <sup>22</sup> Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.

**Proverbs 19:20-21** <sup>20</sup> Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days. <sup>21</sup> Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand.

**Proverbs 24:6** <sup>6</sup> For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is victory.

**Proverbs 27:9** <sup>9</sup> Oil and perfume make the heart glad, So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend.

**Proverbs 24:15-16** <sup>15</sup> Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; Do not destroy his resting place; <sup>16</sup> For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in *time of* calamity.

**Proverbs 25:4** <sup>4</sup> Take away the dross from the silver, And there comes out a vessel for the smith;

### ***Diligence And Perseverance***

**Proverbs 3:1** My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; <sup>2</sup> For length of days and years of life And peace they will add to you.

**Proverbs 3:7-8** <sup>7</sup> Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. <sup>8</sup> It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.

**Proverbs 4:20-23** <sup>20</sup> My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. <sup>21</sup> Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart. <sup>22</sup> For they are life to those who find them And health to all their body. <sup>23</sup> Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it *flow* the springs of life.

**Proverbs 4:13-15** <sup>13</sup> Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life. <sup>14</sup> Do not enter the path of the wicked And do not proceed in the way of evil men. <sup>15</sup> Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on.

**Proverbs 4:25-26** <sup>25</sup> Let your eyes look directly ahead And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. <sup>26</sup> Watch the path of your feet And all your ways will be established.

**Proverbs 18:10** <sup>10</sup> The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe.

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<sup>i</sup> Eckman, David. "Sex, Food, and God: Breaking Free From Temptations, Compulsions, and Addictions," (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1996), 27.