

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF DEPENDENCY

D. WHAT IS THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF DEPENDENCY?

You may start by thinking that a drug serves you, but to think that a drug is serving you is to have a “tiger by the tail.” It will inevitably turn on you. Do not be deceived: the drug that serves you today will own you tomorrow.

Romans 6:12

- _____ occurs when the influence of a substance in your body causes changes in your behavior, including mood changes, faulty judgment, slurred speech, poor coordination, unsteady gait, sexual impropriety, aggressive behavior and impaired social functioning. Intoxication may result in your becoming comatose or even dying.
 - Dorland’s Medical Dictionary defines intoxication as, “poisoning; the state of being poisoned.”
 - Interestingly, Moses said about the unfaithful Israelites

Deuteronomy 32:32-33

- _____ occurs when your use of drugs results in your failure to fulfill responsibilities or to maintain healthy relationships or when you put yourself or others at risk of potential harm.
- _____ occurs when you experience these three leading indicators:
 - **Drug tolerance** . . . you need increasingly more to obtain the same effect.
 - **Physical dependence** . . . you suffer from withdrawal symptoms such as nausea, sweating, shaking and anxiety.
 - **Craving** . . . you develop a pattern of compulsive drug use.

Other common indicators include these:

- Failing at attempts to _____ or decrease your substance abuse
- Spending your time targeting activities to obtain, use or recover from the effects of the

substance

- Reducing or abandoning your meaningful social, work or recreational activities
- Continuing to use the substance despite recurring physical or psychological problems

- _____ occurs when the distress caused by a lessening or lack of the drug severely disrupts your daily life.

The Bible describes a distressing time when . . .

Isaiah 24:9,11

Question: “How can I be held responsible for my drug dependence since most drugs are addictive and actually cause the addiction?”

Answer: Your drug dependence has been created both by your _____ to use drugs and by the drug itself. Intoxication results from the makeup of the drug you use and the way it is metabolized by your body. The only way to avoid addiction is to _____ to stop abusing drugs.

1 Samuel 1:14

E. WHAT IS CODEPENDENCY?

A word often associated with chemical dependency and the dysfunctional relationships that accompany drug abuse is the term **codependency**.

- The word **codependent** was first used in the 1970s to describe a family member living with someone dependent on alcohol, the alcoholic. The prefix co - means “with” or “one associated with the action of another.”
- The **codependent** person or “enabler” enables the alcoholic to continue with the addiction without drawing and maintaining boundaries.
- **Codependency** is a relationship addiction. Just as the alcoholic is dependent on alcohol, the **codependent** is overly dependent on the relationship with the alcoholic.
- Today, the word **codependent** refers to anyone who is dependent on another to the point of being controlled or manipulated by that person.

Proverbs 24:24

Take the Codependency Checklist test.

TAKE THE CODEPENDENCY CHECKLIST TEST

Are you unsure about someone who is significant in your life? Is it possible that you are in a relationship that others would call “codependent”? If so, how would you know? Answer the following questions from the Codependency Checklist.

- Do you struggle with feeling loved; therefore, you look for ways to be needed?
- Do you want to throw all your energy into helping someone else?
- Do you have difficulty saying no, even when you should . . . and do you say yes, even when you shouldn't?
- Do you feel compelled to take charge of another person's crisis?
- Do you feel drawn to others who seem to need to be rescued from their problems?
- Do you have difficulty setting and keeping boundaries?
- Do you find it difficult to identify and express your true feelings?
- Do you rely on the other person to make most of the decisions in your relationship?
- Do you feel lonely, sad, and empty when you are alone?
- Do you feel threatened when the other person spends time with someone else?
- Do you think the other person's opinion is more important than your opinion?
- Do you refrain from speaking in order to keep peace?
- Do you fear conflict because the other person could abandon you?
- Do you become defensive about your relationship with the other person?
- Do you feel “stuck” in the relationship with the other person?
- Do you feel that you have lost your personal identity in order to “fit into” the other person's world?
- Do you feel controlled and manipulated by the other person?
- Do you feel used and taken advantage of by the other person?
- Do you plan your life around the other person?
- Do you prioritize your relationship with the other person over your relationship with the Lord?

If you responded with a yes to four or more of these questions, you may be involved in a codependent relationship!

When we find ourselves in unhealthy patterns of relating, we need to change our focus, change our goals, and change what is hindering us from running the race God has planned for us. Our primary focus should be not on a person but on Jesus.

Hebrews 12:1

NEXT WEEK: Characteristics of Substance Abuse