

Five Easy Steps to Wreck Your Life Week 3

- When life begins to feel like Kryptonite, sapping your strength or maybe it just gets a little bland and colorless, where do you go to escape? To a movie? TV? Sports? Starbucks? A relationship? A good novel? Facebook? Food? What do you experience emotionally in your place of escape?

"Everything is permissible for me"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-but I will not be mastered by anything.

1 Corinthians 6:12 (NIV)

- Do you think anything has ever mastered you? Do your best to be transparent here.

He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak... Some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it... He prays to it and says, "Save me; you are my god." ... Their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. No one stops to think... "Half of it I used for fuel... Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood?" He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, "Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?"

Isaiah 44:14-15, 17-20 (NIV)

- Why is it often easier to look for comfort and satisfaction in people, places and things rather than in God?

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Galatians 5:16-18 (NIV)

- Our addictions come out of those broken and wounded places in our lives. Is there one particular addiction that you battle repeatedly? If so, what is it? How might that battle be a result of a broken or wounded place in your life?
- If our addictions come out of our wounds and brokenness as human beings, it would make sense that healing in these places would be the answer to our battle with addictions. Can you heal these places yourself? If so, how? If not, who can?
- Why do you think our efforts to battle addictions with the weapons of "will power" and determination alone, almost always fail?

"But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

Luke 14:18-20 (NIV)

Admitting to an addiction is one thing, but often the most difficult thing to do is recognize that we even have an addiction.

- Take a moment and ask yourself this difficult question: Think of the things that provide you with a sense of security, or comfort, or excitement, or relief in your life right now. Now, how easily could you let them go? Even the slightest hesitation in our answering this question might be cause for us to look closer at the "thing" to determine if it has taken root somewhere in our soul.

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Proverbs 28:13 (NIV)

- What is the difference between "renouncing" your sin and simply putting strategies in place to make it harder for you to sin?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ .

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery...

Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

- Is simply not acting on the desire that drives your addiction really freedom from addiction? Why or why not? What kind of freedom do you think Christ has given us.: Freedom from bad behavior or freedom from the destructive desires holding us captive? Explain.

Final thought: What is Christ offering you freedom from today? What kinds of things are holding those around you captive? The battle of our addictions is truly a battle for our relationship with God. The enemy has sold us a counterfeit and told us that it will satisfy us where God will not. As a group agree to see the battle for what it is and wage war with the divine weapons you've been given. Agree that there will be many battles in the war, but agree to fight them together and with the strength that comes only from God.



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For Further Study

To use this resource, simply select one or two questions from each category below that you think will help your group discussion. Alternatively, you can use these questions and scriptures in your own personal devotions during the week.

Open

- What activities or pursuits are part of popular culture currently that seem to lead to addiction for many people?

Explore

Read 2 Peter 2:1-22

- What did Peter warn his readers that false prophets would attempt to do? (2:1)
- What did Peter say would happen when people followed false prophets? (2:2)
- What did God use as an example of what will happen to the ungodly? (2:6)
- What effect did living among immoral people have upon Lot? (2:7-8)
- How did Peter say the Lord would deal with the godly and the unrighteous? (2:9)
- How did the evil people of whom Peter wrote affect others? (2:18)
- What did such sinful men promise? (2:19)
- To what were sinful people slaves? (2:19)
- How did Peter say a person could escape the corruption of the world? (2:20)

Reflect

- How do you deal with the influence of immoral or rebellious people around you?
- When are you typically tempted to lapse back into some sinful activity or attitude? Why
- How can be become enslaved to a desire without even realizing it?

Apply

- Beginning today, is there a sinful desire that God wants to help you escape from?

Here are some suggestions you may want to use for your time with God this week:

Day 1: Read 1 Cor. 6:12. Ask God if there is something that has mastered you in some area of your life that you may be unaware of. Ask Him to continue to reveal the nature of the battle in this area of your life.

Day 2: Read Isaiah 44:14-20 and Jeremiah 3:13. Ask God if there is an area of your life where you don't trust Him. Ask Him for a deeper awareness of His love for you.

Day 3: Read Galatians 5:1-18. Ask God about an area of your life where you've struggled with addiction. Ask Him to show you the root desire driving that addiction. Ask for His healing and restoration in this area of desire.

Day 4: Read Luke 14:18-20 and Proverbs 28:13. Have an honest conversation with God about addictions you may battle. Tell Him what you are looking for in those addictions. Ask Him what He wants to offer you instead. Listen for His answer.

Day 5: Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Ask God how He wants you to battle against the strongholds in your life. Ask for His strength in these battles, ask for understanding of how to accept it and use it.