

# I Love My Addiction

## A Program with a Purpose – Exposing Your Value to God

1 Corinthians 16:15

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### Lesson Five Gone for Good

***Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*** (Philippians 3:13, 14).

This lesson will help you see the importance of removing personal defeat and replacing it with victory! The author God used to pen these words was once the biggest persecutor of the Jesus and the church, ***I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities*** (Acts 26: 9-11).

Saul, known as the Apostle Paul after his conversion, surrendered his life to the Good Shepherd. It is interesting to note that the name Paul means, small or humble. It takes humility to admit what you once were and proclaim what the Good Shepherd has done for you. You will find in this same chapter that Paul was giving his testimony to King Agrippa. He told him what he was before he met Jesus on the road to Damascus and how Jesus changed his addiction from killing the saints to converting sinners! Only God knows when and where He will use you to share your story of changing Masters from self to the Good Shepherd. In this passage, Paul was standing before the King of Judea! As far as we know, King Agrippa never did get a grip on the salvation message, but Paul did his job; he used his testimony to share what God did for him! If Paul spent his time looking back at how bad he once was, he never would have told a single person how good God is! Do not put God in a box! There are no sins too big for God to forgive—even yours! If He will forgive you, then you can forgive yourself! Someone once said, the windshield of a vehicle is much bigger than the rearview mirror for a reason! What is in front of you is much more important than what is behind you! Press on my friend!

In this lesson, you will see that King David fell into horrible sin which consisted of adultery, conspiracy, lying and even murder. Scripture teaches that God not only forgave him, but used

him to pen down more than half of the book of Psalms! His story is told throughout the Old Testament as well. God has used this story to comfort millions of people who have lost a child! David knew that he would see his baby again, but not on this side of eternity. The Apostle Peter not only denied Jesus, but cursed in the process! But God used him to stand and preach the Gospel and 3000 came to know Christ; a few chapters later, he had another service with 5000 conversions! God has used these historical events recorded in the Scripture to win many souls to Christ! Those who have accepted the free gift of eternal life, by repentance, believing the Gospel and receiving Christ into their heart to forgive them, will rejoice in the truth taught in this lesson. You can turn your defeat into victory!

In our last lesson, we learned the importance of having a forgiving spirit towards those who have done us wrong. This week we need to understand that the most important person to forgive is the person in the mirror. One of the main reasons people remain in a dark depressed hole of no hope is their inability to press forward without looking back. There is absolutely nothing that can be done to change one moment of the past, but you can use your past as a launching point to hit the mark of the **...high Calling of God in Christ Jesus.**

There are billions of souls, in both Heaven and Hell, that wish they had the opportunity that you have to use your story to change the eternal destination of sinners! In Luke 16, the rich man cries out, ***Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment*** (Luke 16:27, 28). Christians that have gone on before us are looking over the balcony of Heaven, ***Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*** (Hebrews 12:1). Jesus has issued our marching orders, ***And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen*** (Matthew 28:18-20).

The **high calling of God** is not salvation, that is a free gift offered by God and accepted by the repentant sinner, ***For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*** (Romans 10:13). This **high calling** is for you to begin serving the LORD by using your testimony to guide others to the freedom in Christ you now enjoy. The prize will be hearing Jesus, the Master and Good Shepherd say the words, Well Done, ***His lord said unto him, Well done...*** (Matthew 25:21).

The most important element to your freedom from your destructive addictions is the wiliness to help others with your testimony. Listen to the advice that the Apostle Paul gave to young Timothy:

***And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26).***

This verse is loaded with truth! It is directed to the servant of the Lord.

1. The servant is to display the love of Christ unto all men.
2. They must be ready to teach others.
3. Have patience with all the nonsense that goes along with helping the hurting
4. Understand that many addicts oppose themselves, they are unable to forgive themselves nor see the value they have to God.
5. The good news is, God will give them repentance when they study, learn and accept the love of God.
6. The end results are, freedom from the snares of the devil and to be equipped with the power of God to conquer and overcome your addictions for the glory of God!

As the LORD leads, tell your story of being set free from your old destructive addictions to as many as you can! This practice will cause all Heaven to rejoice, ***Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth*** (Luke 15:10). YOU AND YOUR TESTIMONY ARE VALUABLE! A steady diet of introducing the Shepherd and Master of your soul to the lost will help keep your fire lit for Christ and keep the demons at bay!

**BE CAREFUL NOT TO DWELL ON THE DETAILS OF YOUR SIN MORE THAN YOU DO THE POWER OF GOD TO FORGIVE YOU AND TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE!**

Our Instructor, Jesus the Living Word of God, has much to say about your past sin. Let's take a look at what the Bible says about them:

1. ***As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us*** (Psalm 103:12). The east never touches the west!
2. ***He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*** (Micah 7:19). The deepest recorded part of the western Pacific Ocean is 36,000 feet deep. It is called the *Challenger Deep*. That is 6.82 miles deep. Man has been to the moon, but no man has ever stepped foot on the depth of the sea!
3. ***Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*** (Hebrews 10:15-17). Our sins are wiped out of the mind of God and will never be mentioned to us.

This last verse is one of the most comforting verses recorded in our Bible. There are several truths revealed in this verse to comfort us, encourage us and help us completely overcome any addiction in our lives.

1. The Holy Ghost of God made the covenant or promise. This is also how we have received our Bible, ***For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*** (2 Peter 1:21). Submitting yourself to the Bible, the Living Word of God, is the key to unlocking complete success in conquering your addiction!
2. The laws of God will be put into your heart and written in your minds to always inform you of what is right or wrong in the eyes of God. If we have a question whether something is right or wrong, the Holy Ghost will guide you in your decision. The best rule of practice is, **IF IN DOUBT, DON'T!**
3. Our sins and iniquity will never be brought up to us again. God has covered them with the precious Blood of His Dear Son! The old Christian classic song says:

**I remember the days when I was bent low with the burden of sin and strife; Then Jesus came in and rescued me and gave me a brand-new life; Now as I thank Him day after day for washing my sins away; It seems I can almost hear the voice of the Blessed Saviour say:**

**What sins are you talking about, I don't remember them anymore. From the Book of Life, they've all been wiped out, I don't remember them anymore!**

There is one more passage that is designed to drive home the comfort the Saviour has in store for all who come to Him for forgiveness and freedom. John the Baptist was the sent to tell the people that their Messiah, Jesus was soon coming. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he boldly proclaimed to the crowd, **...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world** (John 1:29).

1. The Sacrificial Lamb of God, Jesus, took your sins away from you!
2. Your sins no longer belong to you, nor will they ever be brought up you in God's final judgment!
3. You have been granted a brand-new beginning; like Jesus told the woman caught in adultery, **...Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more** (John 8:11).
4. Jesus will guide you in this new life of liberty!

After John the Baptist baptized Jesus, God the Father spoke up, **And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased** (Luke 3:22). Jesus has come to seek and save you; not only from the eternal flames, but from the bondage of sin—addiction. He can if you will allow Him to!

## **The Only True Source for Freedom**

In order to enjoy the freedom found in a productive addiction (addicted to the ministry), you must be willing to accept God's Word as total and complete authority in your life. It has been said that the Bible stands for; B-basic I-Instructions B-before L-leaving E-earth. God does not give us a Book of suggestions, but a Book filled with commandments coupled with promises—success for compliance or punishment for defiance.

***Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but***

***as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king*** (1 Peter 2:13-17).

You do not have to agree with the laws, but you are commanded to submit or yield to them. The police are not your enemies! They have sworn an oath to serve and protect law abiding citizens. If you are living on the opposite side of the law, then it is their job to protect those who are living within the guidelines given by the leaders of this nation. It is a crime to drink and drive! It is a crime to sell and consume illegal drugs! It is a crime to drive above the legal posted speed limit! No crime to big or to small in the eyes of God.

King David made this statement for us to know how to handle our sin failure, ***I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah*** (Psalm 32:5). Notice with me the three different ways his crimes against God are described:

1. Sin – *Sin* is anything that misses the mark. Basically, it is anything that goes against what God says is right.
2. Transgression – *Transgression* refers to presumptuous sin {presumptuous means bold and confident in excess}. A transgression is willingly doing wrong without concern of the consequence.
3. Iniquity – *Iniquity* refers to a premeditated choice; to commit iniquity is to continue in your chosen sin without repentance or even a desire to change.

But when you cry out to God with a repentant heart, He will forgive you of these different types of crimes against Him. King David made this cry after his sin spree with Bathsheba, ***Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me*** (Psalm 51:2, 3). This is the spirit of true repentance.

1. He was sorry for his sin – ***For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death*** (2 Corinthians 7:10).
2. He confessed it as sin – ***He that covereth his sin shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*** (Proverbs 28:13).
3. He admitted that he needed God's help – ***Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit*** (Psalm 51:12).

4. He humbly asked God to help – ***Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me*** (Psalm 51:10).

The most important lesson to note is the reason why King David pleaded with God for forgiveness of his sin, transgression and iniquity, ***Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee*** (Psalm 51:13). God wants you to use your past to tell others about Jesus and how they too can find help from their sinful ways, ***But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy*** (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

Jesus, our Instructor, gives us the clear teaching that those who have lived a life of hard sinful activities will become the most productive soul-winning servants. There is a Biblical account that details this truth:

***And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.*** (Luke 7:37-48)

Notice with me the proceedings of this historical event:

1. This woman came weeping for her sin—Godly sorrow
2. She publicly worshipped and served Jesus at His feet
3. The self-righteous group in attendance judged Jesus for allowing her to serve Him
4. Jesus taught them a lesson in forgiveness
5. He then informed the crowd that this woman had been forgiven
6. He also explained how someone who has a wicked past will love the LORD more than someone who has a clean testimony. Although both can be forgiven, the excessive sinner will love the LORD more.

As stated in the lesson on forgiveness, if you choose not to forgive yourself, you are placing yourself on a higher plane than God Himself. He chose to forgive you, now you choose to forgive yourself. Listen to what Jesus said to this woman after her acts of kindness, ***And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace*** (Luke 7:50). He gave her total peace from her past! The more you love Him the more you will desire to serve Him! It was her faith that saved her not the work of worship!

Satan will do everything he can to keep you defeated. One of his most effective tactics is to remind you of your past. The best way to defeat the devil in this tactic is to quote Scripture out loud so the devil can hear it. A good place to start is Hebrews 10:15-17, ***This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*** Once he has heard that your sins are gone, then, remind him of his future – ***And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophets are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever*** (Revelation 20:10).

The Bible that you hold in your hands is the key that will loosen all the chains that have kept you bound in your old addictive habits. Total faith in God's Word will give you the same ability to go home in peace like the women with the alabaster box. ***Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word*** (Psalm 119:9).



When a young lady, who had successfully overcome her addiction, was asked how she did it, her reply was astounding. She said that she learned to love herself! When you do not choose to forgive yourself, you will not like the person that you are. To remain in this state will allow you to continue to poison yourself with the destructive addictions that has destroyed your life up to this point. But, today is the first day of the rest of your life. God loved you so much that He gave His life for you, now learn to love yourself as much as He does and use your life to **teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee!**

God knew who you would be when He created you—God does not make junk! **Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee...** (Jeremiah 1:5). The Psalmist also gives us this confirmation of God’s love toward you, **I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well** (Psalm 139:14). If God loves you, and He does, then you must also learn to accept your past as building blocks for your future! **YOU ARE VALUABLE – God Needs You!**

Remove the haunting memories of your previous life and replace them with the possibility of using your past to help others find the freedom you have in your Instructor, Jesus Christ the Living Word! There is no way possible to change on second of your past—so, instead of grieving over your past, rejoice that you have been forgiven and tell someone just like you were how Jesus changed your life! Jesus is very clear in His Word that the only way sinners will be converted is if someone will introduce them to the Saviour, **How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher** (Romans 10:14)? **YOU ARE VALUABLE!**

If you will allow the LORD full access to your heart, He will:

1. Forgive you
2. Give you peace
3. Use you to tell others about Jesus – **YOU ARE VALUABLE**

## **Saved to Serve**

In 2 Samuel 12, the Bible clearly records how the LORD used King David after he confessed his wicked sin to God:

***Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.*** (2 Samuel 12:20-24)

1. He repented of his wicked act, confessed it to the LORD and sought His mercy for the child. Refer to Psalm 51 to listen to his cry for mercy.
2. He did all he could physically do to change the verdict passed down by God as a punishment for his sin. His child was to die so, David fasted and prayed for seven days – ***I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?***
3. He then gave us the most comforting word concerning the death of a child – ***I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.***
4. David was then able to offer comfort to his grieving wife – ***And David comforted Bathsheba his wife***
5. The result was the next king of Israel – ***and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon***

Now I want you to see what David did after he realized that his punishment had been executed, he had been forgiven by God, and he forgave himself, (2 Samuel 12:20).

***And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters. Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name. And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.*** (2 Samuel 12:27-29)

1. God's mercy provided David an opportunity by restoring his position of service through his attitude of worship. Joab gave him the chance to regain his integrity as the leader by calling him to the battle – ***Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.***
2. David heard the call for help and rallied men together to fight – ***And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah***
3. They won the victory - ***and fought against it, and took it.***

Instead of living in a depressed state of mind, wallowing around in guilt and sorrow, David picked himself back up, dusted off the old sin and went to work for God! He replaced his defeat with victory! God needs you in the battle against sin and the devil. Satan is trying to take your friends and family to Hell and wants to keep them addicted to drugs, alcohol, pornography and any other vice that prevents them from making Jesus their Shepherd.

Like King David, use the rest of your days on this earth to enjoy the fact that your sins have been forgiven and introducing your friends, family, co-workers, and anyone else you come in contact with, to the One that saved your soul from Hell, set you free from your destructive addictions and has led you in the path of righteousness—His name is Jesus! *Do not allow your memories to be bigger than your dreams!*

1. Who is the most important person to forgive?
2. What can be done to change your past?
3. What is not the ***high calling of God?***
4. What is the ***high calling of God?***
5. What is the best rule of practice?
6. God does not give us a Book of \_\_\_\_\_, but a Book loaded with \_\_\_\_\_ coupled with promises of \_\_\_\_\_ for compliance or \_\_\_\_\_ for defiance.
7. What worketh repentance to salvation?

8. What happens to the person who covers their sin?
9. What does God want you to use your past to do?
10. What are three things God will do when you allow Him access to your heart.

(Answers to these questions are all located within the pages of this lesson)

Regardless of what you have been told or even what you may think, God loves you enough to make you free from your destructive addictions and restore your life to the purpose in which He created you, ***Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created*** (Revelation 4:11). By changing your shepherd from self to Jesus, the ***Good Shepherd***, you will begin to bring God the pleasure you were created for. God wants to use you to tell others how to receive the same freedom you now have and introduce lost souls to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. ***Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*** (James 5: 20).

God the Father wants His children to be successful and prosperous, ***Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant. And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long*** (Psalm 35:27, 28). As you continue to trust in your new Shepherd, Jesus, He will make you prosperous so you can cheerfully, without being ashamed, tell others about His great love—you are valuable in His eyes! ***Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee*** (Psalm 51:12, 13).

Seek Knowledge

Apply the new-found Knowledge and Wisdom to your life

Then, teach others the secret to your success!

***Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven*** (Matthew 5:19).

Memory Verse:

***Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13, 14).***

Suggested reading:

- A chapter of Proverbs each day according to the day of the month
- Psalm 51 – David’s prayer of repentance

Model Prayer to help you replace your defeat with victory:

Dear Heavenly Father, my memory often haunts me! Please help me to forgive myself for all the wrong I have done in my former life; help me learn to love myself. Help me to use my new life of liberty to teach others the way to a life of peace in Christ. I rely fully on Your strength and Your grace to make me into a valuable person for the cause of Christ. I long to hear You say to me, Well done! In the precious name of Jesus, I pray, Amen!

**Be sure to pass out at least five Gospel tracts this week and invite at least one person to come to class with you next week. Use your past to build your future!**