

# I Love My Addiction

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

1 Corinthians 16:15

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### Lesson Six Changing Friends

*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).

We have seen in Lesson One there must be a desire for change, Lesson Two, use it or lose it, Lesson Three, the need to make the move, then in Lessons Four and Five, the importance of forgiving others as well as yourself. Now, we will move on to another major step in securing a new life of liberty—removing your old friends and replacing them with productive, Godly ones. ***He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed*** (Proverbs 13:20).

#### **A REAL FRIEND WILL NEVER ASK YOU TO DO ANYTHING ILLEGAL OR IMMORAL!**

Our text verse sheds much light on this truth:

1. You are a chosen generation – God has chosen you to be one of His choice servants. ***But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him*** (Psalm 4:3).
  - a. Just think, our Instructor, Jesus Christ, the Living God will set you apart from your old ways of destruction and place you right by His side. He promises to hear you when you call unto Him – ***And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him*** (Malachi 3:17)
  - b. One of the major ways of enjoying your new life in Christ is to allow Him to answer your prayers any way He chooses. Sometimes He may say yes, when other times it may be no or not now. Whatever the answer, realize that He know best and

thank Him for the answer He gives – ***In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*** (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

- c. Jesus is the only person in the Bible that gave God this privilege – He prayed one time for relief and then allowed the Father to do it His way, ***Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done*** (Luke 22:42).
  - d. The Apostle Paul prayed three times before he finally allowed God to be God – ***...there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me*** (2 Corinthians 12:7, 8).
2. A Royal Priesthood – This is a position of great honor! Not just a priest, but a royal priest; one that ministers to kings! ***Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings...*** (Proverbs 22:29).
  3. A Peculiar People – This will call for you to be different than you once were. Your old friends will think you have lost your mind, but deep down they will envy your freedom from the old destructive ways that once dominated every waking moment of your life. As these old friends accept the person you have become, you will gain opportunity to introduce them to Jesus.
    - a. Your Instructor, Jesus, will be there to assist you with every temptation that comes your way – ***The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:*** (2 Peter 2:9).
    - b. There is always a way to avoid falling back into your old addictive habits. God has not left you alone to fight these temptations, but is actively working behind the scenes to make sure you can stay clean – ***There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*** (1 Corinthians 10:13).
  4. Jesus has now given you a purpose for changing your destructive addiction into a productive one – ***...that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: GOD NEEDS YOU TO SUCCEED SO YOU WILL BRING OTHERS TO HIM!***

Satan is not happy with your decision to change masters from self to the Saviour! He is fully aware of just how effective you can be for the cause of Christ; he will do everything in his power to prevent you from succeeding in addicting yourself to the ministry. ***Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*** (1 John 4:4).

In order to fully understand this, you must realize your value to Jesus, the Good Shepherd. There are people in your life that are on the same destructive path, that you once travelled, which leads to misery and bankruptcy, both physically and spiritually. Your testimony and new life in Christ will give them the same hope the you now have! This is why this lesson is so important! You are in a raging battle that will not only affect you, but your family, friends and many other souls, ***For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*** (Ephesians 2:10).

The psalmist, King David makes these opening statements in the book of Psalms, ***Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful*** (Psalm 1:1). Notice the progression, if you walk with them, you will end up standing around with them and before you know it, you will be sitting with them!

The Apostle Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, gives us this very important passage concerning the friends we choose to share the most valuable commodity we have—time! Our life is made up of time. The Good Shepherd wants you to use what time you have left to serve Him as He serves you! This is a lengthy passage, but God can say it much better than the author of this program. Take in every word carefully, meditate on His instructions and ask God to help you spend your time with friends that will build you instead of tear you down!

***Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all***

*goodness and righteousness and truth;)* Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. (Ephesians 5:1-21)

1. Notice the instruction begins with walking with God as a child would walk with his father—***Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour*** (Ephesians 5:1, 2). Walking with God is understanding that He is right beside you every moment of your life. When you are conscience of His presence, your old friends will either flee or desire the freedom you have.
2. Verses three through five gives us a list of people that are the devil in disguise—***But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God*** (Ephesians 5:3-5).
3. God clearly tells us what to do with these old acquaintances—***Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them*** (Ephesians 5:6, 7).
4. He continues his teachings with a reminder of what our old life was—***For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)*** Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:8-10). Walk in the light of the LORD not in the path of devil and you will prove to the world that Jesus is alive!

5. The command is to not even fellowship with them. They have a tendency to remind you of all the fun instead of heartache! Satan can lure you back into the old ways with one simple conversation with an old friend—***And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light*** (Ephesians 5:11-13).
6. Take action and Christ will come to your rescue—***Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*** (Ephesians 5:14).
7. The next two verses give us the best advice to accomplish our new walk with God—***See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil*** (Ephesians 5:15, 16). To ***walk circumspectly*** is to always be aware of your surroundings! If you see someone before they see you, avoid them at all cost! A wise man will take heed while the foolish man will walk blindly into the trap set by the enemy!
8. The will of God is for all men to be saved and enjoy all the benefits He has created for mankind! This is accomplished by a wise man who chose the right path to walk in fellowship with godly friends, ***Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is*** (Ephesians 5:17),
9. We are once again given a list of things to avoid and instructions to help you through—***And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.***
  - a. Get and stay happy in the LORD
  - b. Listen to God honoring music
  - c. Sing songs to the LORD as you walk with Him
  - d. Always be thankful to God and His dear Son, Jesus
  - e. Submit to your new Godly spiritual leaders and Godly friends
  - f. Live in the Fear of God—dwelling in His presence at all times

If you will simply ask the LORD to give you the strength to use this passage of Scripture every day of your life, you will be successful in changing your destructive addictions into productive habits that brings joy, peace, happiness and it will bring others to Christ in the process!

In 2 Peter, Lot was described as a just and righteous man. His problem started when he chose to make the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah his dwelling place. Notice what the Word of God says happened to him because of this choice:

***And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed {troubled or afflicted} with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) (2 Peter 2:6-8). (Emphasis added)***

Genesis chapter 19 gives the full account of the destruction that Lot brought upon his family! Your sin does not only affect you! ***For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's (Romans 14:7, 8).***

There is another example in your Instruction Manual that displays the dangers of hanging out with the wrong friends. This account led to exceeding great wickedness that caused many sorrows in the house of David.

***And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her. But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtil {deceitful, sly or crafty} man. And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand. (2 Samuel 13:1-5) (emphasis added)***

Jonadab gave Amnon some wicked counsel that provided the opportunity for Amnon to rape his own sister, ***Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her*** (2 Samuel 13:14). A real friend would not have helped set up such a wicked plan, but would have guided him in the right path. Absalom and Tamar had a different mother than Amnon did. If Amnon would have approached David with his desires, chances are he would have been granted her hand in marriage. Instead, Tamar's life was ruined, Absalom killed his brother Amnon, David's kingdom was divided and ultimately, Absalom died as well! ***Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint*** (Proverbs 25:19).

Always seek good Godly counsel from a man of God or if you are a lady, get your advice from a Godly lady instead of an old friend that is stuck in their own cesspool of sin, ***A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul*** (Proverbs 18:7). Good Christian counsellors will take to God's precious Bible and direct you in the paths of righteousness instead of leading you down a path to destruction, ***There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand*** (Proverbs 19:21).

Let us now survey the instructions given in the Living Word of God to remove old destructive friends and replace them with Godly ones. Criteria for a friend:

1. One that loves and obeys God's Word – ***And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed*** (2 Thessalonians 3:14).
2. Clear instructions are given to separate yourself from evil men – ***I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:*** (1 Corinthians 5:9).
3. Take note that you are not even supposed to sit with them to eat – ***But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat*** (1 Corinthians 5:11).
4. God says to put them away, in other words, avoid them at all cost – ***But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person*** (1 Corinthians 5:13).
5. You must be very selective who you choose as your friends – ***Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get***

**a snare to thy soul** (Proverbs 22:24, 25). Go to the house of God and make new friends that will not help you ruin your life, but will help you nurture your walk with God!

6. In Psalm 26, King David gives us a description of what it takes to live a victorious Christian life. One of those elements is clear concerning the company he chose to keep – ***I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked*** (Psalm 26:3, 4).

One of the best character traits you can develop is to learn to love what our Instructor loves and hate what He hates. ***For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing {lying}: the LORD will abhor {extreme hatred} the bloody and deceitful man. But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple*** (Psalm 5:4-7). Please note that the Psalmist chose to live in the presence of God; ***But as for me!***

The Word of God will help you determine what God hates, ***These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren*** (Proverbs 6:16-19). If your so-called friend has any of these tendencies, then it would serve you well to move on.

Choosing to leave your old friends can prove to be very difficult, but it will also be one of the most effective elements in your new life of liberty. Someone once said, *You are now or soon will be who you spend time with.* The church you are now involved with will provide you with great new friends. They will also offer activities that will produce rewards instead of consequences. The people God has provided to invest their time, energy and finances into you are also excited to see what the Lord Jesus is doing in your life.

King David also made this statement in Psalm 26, ***Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide*** (Psalm 26:1). Notice that he made a conscience choice to trust in the LORD to keep him from falling into sin. The integrity he developed in his life came directly from dwelling in the presence of God in all his daily activities and not spending time with ungodly men. Integrity is a three-phase process:

1. Recognizing the difference between right and wrong—your Bible will direct you in this task



2. Making the choice to do right—David said, ***but as for me***
3. Proclaiming to all who inquire the reason why you chose to do right

If you have now chosen to live for God, do not be ashamed to tell your old friends why you are avoiding them. Stand up for Jesus, your Instructor, Saviour and Friend; He will give you the strength and courage it will take to inform your old companions about your new life, ***the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God*** (Psalm 68:35). Remember, if you are truly a friend to them, you will want them to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ too. The only way you can rescue them from the eternal flames of Hell is to prove with your life that Jesus is real!

***And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation*** (Luke 22:40). Jesus, our Instructor told His disciples to pray this prayer daily and trust the LORD to keep them from falling into temptation. Make this your daily habit as well!

***The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.*** (Psalm 34:15-19)

Get involved in the activities of this program and your local church. Your new family will love you and help you become the person that will bring God pleasure! Remove your old friends and replace them with good Godly friends! ***...and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*** (Proverbs 18:24).

1. What is another major step in securing a new life of liberty?
2. A real friend would never ask you to do what?
3. What is the best thing to realize concerning the way God answers your prayers?
4. Write out 1 Corinthians 10:13
5. Why does God need you to succeed in your new life?

6. What is one of the best character traits to develop?
7. What are the three phases in developing Integrity?

(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:

***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).

Suggested reading:

- A chapter of Proverbs each day according to the day of the month
- Genesis 18
- Psalm 26
- Psalm 19:7-14

Model Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, please help me to recognize the difference between a friend that You approve of and one that will lead me back into my old destructive ways. Please help me not to enter into temptation and deliver me from evil! Thank You for saving my soul and forgiving my sin. I need Your help to fight the battles that I face daily. In the 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!**