



Pastor David's Weekly Devotional

When most people hear of an “addict” they probably think of someone who is addicted to meth or nicotine, but probably not food, TV, prescriptions, social media, alcohol, or caffeine. For the few of you who (after reading that opening sentence) are still reading this devotional, let's examine the nature and consequence of addiction. By definition, an addiction is the compulsive condition of being physically or psychologically dependent upon a substance or behavior despite harmful or negative consequences.

Humans have proven that they can be addicted to just about anything. For me, it is helpful to place addictions into one of three categories (although there are certainly some addictions that span more than one category). Addictions can be chemical, behavioral, or spiritual. Chemical addictions are substances, such as drugs and alcohol, which chemically alter our thoughts, feelings, and/or behavior. While behavioral addictions, like gambling, procrastination, fingernail-biting, food, workaholism, media, etc., may not directly alter one's psychological state, they can represent an unhealthy habit or dependence. Perhaps the most notorious, but least talked about in the world today, are spiritual addictions. Spiritual addictions, including but not limited to pornography, anger, idolatry, lust, etc., represent areas in one's life over which sin has dominion.

To be sure, one could argue that all addictions are fundamentally a spiritual problem. The apostle Paul declared, “*All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything*” (1Cor.6:12). The apostle Peter gave this ominous caveat: “*Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*” (1Pet.5:8; see Gen.4:7). In Galatians, we are told that “*self-control*” is part of the fruit of the Spirit (5:23). Christians are not to be controlled by addictions, but by the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:24-25; Eph.5:18). We are not to be governed by worldly compulsions but by a godly devotion to Christ. Godliness is truly a work of the Holy Spirit, but God commands us to be submissive to and disciplined in His will (1Tim.4:7). The reward for a spiritually disciplined life is godliness, and the consequence of an undisciplined life is ungodliness.

The following story graphically illustrates the devastating consequences of the undisciplined, ungodly, life:

Thomas Costain's history book *The Three Edwards* has the story of the life of Raynald III, a fourteenth-century duke in what is now Belgium. Raynald III was grossly overweight, and he was commonly called by his Latin nickname, “Crassus,” which means “fat.” After a violent quarrel, Raynald's younger brother Edward led a successful revolt against him. Edward captured his brother Raynald, but he did not kill him. Instead, he built a room around Raynald in the Nieuwerk castle and promised him he could regain his title and property as soon as he was able to leave the room.

This would not have been difficult for most people since the room had several windows and a door of near-normal size, and none was locked or barred. The problem was Raynald's size. To regain his freedom, he needed to lose weight. But Edward knew his older brother, and each day he sent a variety of delicious foods. Instead of dieting his way out of prison, Raynald grew fatter.

When Duke Edward was accused of cruelty, he had an available answer: “My brother is not a prisoner. He may leave when he so wills.” Raynald stayed in that room for ten years and wasn't released until after his brother Edward died in battle. By then his health was so ruined that he died within a year ... a prisoner of his own appetite.

Together in and for Christ,
Pastor David
(8/31/26)

Scripture Readings for the Week (Monday – Sunday ~ Week #35):

Numbers 9-12; 1Chronicles 15-19; Psalms 102-104; Proverbs 20-21; Hosea 8-14; John 10-12; 2Timothy 1-2

Recommended Reading:

“The Mortification of Sin” by John Owen