

Navigating the Fog of Addiction in the Family

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Introduction

The fog of addiction

- 1) Lies and manipulation
- 2) A change in personality
- 3) Guilt
- 4) Shame and isolation

A biblical understanding of addiction

- 1) This world is broken: The fall has touched our bodies, minds, and souls, and our families, churches, communities, and culture.
- 2) Addiction and the brain
 - a. Dopamine system
 - b. Dependence (physical and psychological)
 - c. Withdrawal
 - d. Recovery
- 3) Addiction's power:
 - a. Addiction as idolatry
 - We become what we worship
 - b. Addiction as refuge from suffering
 - Pain, trauma, depression, boredom
 - c. Addiction as enslavement
 - Control, and loss of control
- 4) Recovery
 - a. Responsibility
 - b. Repentance

Addiction and the family

- 1) God has designed the way a healthy family is to be organized.
 - a) Husbands and wives
 - b) Parents and children
 - c) Siblings

These roles are grounded in, and reflect different aspects of, the Triune God.

- 2) Addiction tempts a family to become organized around something other than Christ.
 - a) The addiction
 - b) The addict
 - c) Someone else in the family
 - d) Maintaining a façade
 - e) ...

Responding to addiction in the family

Common struggles

1) Addicts often use guilt.

“I need to drink when I’m around you...”

“You were never there for me...”

“I’m this way because of you...”

2) Addicts are blind to depth of their problems.

It isn’t that they can’t see the solution, it’s that they can’t see the problem.

- G.K. Chesterson

3) Addicts will manipulate.

“You need to help me out or I’ll never get better...”

Fear is often the currency of manipulation.

4) Addicts will lie.

An alcoholic will steal your wallet and lie about it. A drug addict will steal your wallet, then help you look for it.

-Beverly Conyers, *Addict in the Family: Stories of Loss, Hope, and Recovery*

Redemptive responses

- 1) The addict is not our enemy
- 2) Compassion often involves consequences
- 3) Love is the driving force in relationships

The prodigal son (Adapted from Robert and Stephanie Tucker – *Christian Families in Recovery*)

- 1) The father's love was not dependent on behavior
- 2) He did not shield his son from the consequences of his rebellion before he returned
- 3) The father was free from resentment
- 4) The father did not respond in a coercive or controlling manner to his son's rebellion
- 5) The father received his son with open arms when he returned

Some final thoughts

- 1) Invite others into the struggle
- 2) Accept your lack of control
- 3) Pray!
- 4) Don't shield the addict from consequences
- 5) Recognize how you enable the addict, and your own desire for control
- 6) Operationalize how trust can be rebuilt