



ADDICTION INVENTORY

*Locating the Things We Turn
to When We Don't Go to God*

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Locating the Things We Turn to When We Don't Go to God

Life is not easy. Whether you feel like you've "had it easy" or not in life, the fact is, the world can be a hard place. Things go wrong all the time. We get hurt easily and often. Our wounds begin at a very early age. For many of us, our earliest memories are negative ones. It seems life is constantly trying to knock us down, and when it does, we reach out for something to hold us steady. The problem is, when we're very young, very few of us know we can reach out for Jesus. So we do the best we can, reaching out for a false sense of security and comfort from things that can never measure up to the God we're created to cling to.

We're abused, ignored, or bullied when we're young, and instead of Jesus, we reach out for approval, food, or accomplishment. We grow up with a nagging ache inside that doesn't seem to go away, so we try to fill it with relationships, a good job, substances, or sex. Meeting Jesus doesn't make these old, insufficient security blankets go away, it just makes them more obvious. In light of Jesus, it's much easier to see where we've fallen for impostors; for comforts that can never satisfy.

Old habits die hard, but in Christ, they *can* die. The key is to first confront the behavior, then submit it to Christ—but don't stop there. You see, behavior modification is not enough. Acknowledging unhealthy behaviors leads us to greater discipline in Christ. And it is by practicing these disciplines of freedom that we uncover the root of our issue; the real brokenness *beneath* the behaviors.

To that end, take inventory of your life and behaviors. Seek the input of your discipler and those you trust to be sure you are seeing your life rightly, and not disregarding something important. Go ahead—ask those closest to you if you have any unhealthy habits. None of us are as fine as we think we are. You may think you are not addicted to anything harmful, but, look closely with Jesus. There is likely something there. He won't point it out to shame you; he'll bring it out to set you free.

It's easy to spot our addictions, because the thought of losing them makes us feel anxious and exposed, and we all know what that feels like. We like to think we're in control of our unhealthy habits, and we justify their presence in our lives; but the fact is, they control us. Addiction is the master, and we are the puppet. Our old, corrupted comforts are much more harmful than we realize, and they don't just affect *us*; they impact everyone around us. And if we've never lived *without* the sins we savor, it's hard to estimate how much better life could be without them. Try to imagine it anyway. Imagine what it would be like to really be free. You'd be a new person. You'd be *you*. Just *you*, without the baggage. That's how God made you to be.

You can't live a life of open-handed generosity with one hand tied behind your back. You can't turn to God *and* an idol and expect to get fully satisfied. Boldly go discover where you are settling for less, pacifying your pain, or denying God the chance to heal you. *Discover how much energy you waste maintaining and managing your addictions* and imagine how much *more* you'd have to give if those unholy habits were gone. You'd have more time, more money, and more creativity to spare to partner with God to heal the world. You *really* would.

THE PRACTICE

If you want to be generous with what you have, you have to discover what has *you*. Identify your unhealthy behaviors and addictions so you can surrender them and get to the bottom of things. Start by completing this simple inventory. Journal your responses to the questions below. Whenever possible, complete this exercise with a good friend so you can help one another.

Remember: some addictions are easy to name (cell phones) and others are apparent to the people we love, but we remain oblivious. As you uncover addictions, keep pressing in until you uncover *why* the thing is so irresistible. That's when you can address the core issue and see real change. For example, almost everyone is addicted to their cell phone. Why is your phone such a good distraction? What do you want to be distracted from? It's easy to turn to your phone. What unmet need do you have that you hope will be satisfied in your apps and searches? *This* is the point of the inventory.

1. Does the suggestion that you probably have an addictive habit annoy you? Why do you think that is?
2. If you already have some of your own addictions in mind, what are they? List them.
3. Directly ask one or two of the people closest to you if you are addicted to anything (email or call them, text them, etc.) Write their responses down.
4. Do you often wish that you had *more* of something? What?
5. Do your loved ones often disappoint you or fail to meet your expectations? How?
6. What annoys you most about other people? Why do you think that is?
7. Do you ever do, say, or *not* do things that you then hide from those closest to you?
8. What is your most common New Year's Resolution, or what acts of denial have you practiced during the season of Lent? Why?
9. Is it easier to give money to another person or cause, or purchase things for yourself? Why is that?
10. What makes you irrationally angry? Why?
11. Do you regularly do or say anything you know other people would think is wrong, but justify your right to do it anyway?
12. Where do you most often resist obeying God? How do you live out that resistance?