

Numbing Out **- Freedom from Addictions -**

They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace. Jeremiah 6:14 (NIV)

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. Galatians 5:1 (NASB)

"Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered by anything. 1 Corinthians 6:12 (HCSB)

Jesus came **to set us free!**

It's important to ask two key questions when we're deciding whether an action is in our best interest (freedom) or could instead lead toward an addiction (bondage):

- (1) Is there something inside me—a void, deep need, or hurt—that's driving me to do this?
- (2) Over time, does this activity or interest have potential to hurt me or draw me under its control?

37 Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" John 7:37-38 (NASB)

16 Do you not know that if you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of that one you obey—either of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But thank God that, although you used to be slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching you were entrusted to, 18 and having been liberated from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness. Romans 6:16-18 (HCSB)

For My people have committed a double evil: They have abandoned Me, the fountain of living water, and dug cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that cannot hold water [cisterns represent trying to supply their own water compared to God's "living water"]. Jeremiah 2:13 (HCSB)

We are “slaves” to whatever or whomever we give our lives to.

To find freedom and life we must recognize that there are really only two paths we can choose from:

- (1) Trusting God and taking our deepest thirsts (needs) to Him. He longs to give us freedom and healing that leads to life and hope even in the midst of our pain.
- (2) Turning to other things that sooner or later will drag us down, cause us more pain, and eventually take us out.

13 Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. 14 But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again—ever! In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up within him for eternal life." John 4:13-14 (HCSB)

"I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty again. John 6:35 (HCSB)

31 To the Jews who believed in him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you really are my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. ... "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 8:32; 14:6 (NIV)

Step #1 – **Don't Cover Up**

Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The intense prayer of the righteous is very powerful. James 5:16 (HCSB)

Step #2 – **Take Full Responsibility**

A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the LORD. Proverbs 19:3 (NIV)

Step #3 – **Seek Counsel**

Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory. ... A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out. Proverbs 11:14; 20:5 (NASB)

Step #4 – **Enlist Support**

9 Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts. 10 For if either falls, his companion can lift him up. ... 12 And if somebody overpowers one person, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not easily broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10,12 (HCSB)

Step #5 – **Develop a Plan**

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; 6 think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths ... 16:3 Commit your activities to the Lord and your plans will be achieved. Proverbs 3:5-6; 16:3 (HCSB)

Step #6 – **Fight!**

8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 1 Peter 5:8-9 (NASB)

Freedom Plan

(1) My “drug of choice” (TV, shopping, friends, food, porn, drugs, etc.) to numb out is:

(2) Question to Take to Your Heart: Be sure to record your thoughts ... Look into your heart for the answer to the following question. This is a time to grapple with what you believe in the deep recesses of your heart about God, yourself, and the world around you. “What’s driving my need to numb out? What are my deepest unmet thirsts (needs)?”

Begin to formulate a Freedom Plan with Jesus’ help this week:

Step #1 – DON'T COVER UP: Who can I confide in?

Step #2 – TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY: What excuses & blaming am I still holding onto?

Step #3 – SEEK COUNSEL: Where can I turn for help (pastor, counselor, support group)?

Step #4 – ENLIST SUPPORT: Who cares about me and can support my healing?

Step #5 – DEVELOP A PLAN: Take your deepest thirsts and struggles to Jesus so you can begin to taste the love, healing, and freedom He offers. As you do this what does He say to you?

Step #6 – FIGHT: What lies does the Devil keep repeating to make me question the heart of God, to isolate me, and to make me give up?