



DEALING WITH ADDICTIONS, Part 1

Living in Chains

July 8, 2023

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Romans 6:16 (The Message) • “You know well enough from your own experience that there are some acts of so-called freedom that destroy freedom. Offer yourselves to sin, for instance, and it’s your last free act. But offer yourselves to the ways of God and the freedom never quits. All your lives you’ve let sin tell you what to do.”

Proverbs 23:20, 21 (NIV) • “Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.”

Romans 13:12-14 (NIV) • “The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”

Ephesians 5:18 (NIV) • “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “DEALING WITH ADDICTIONS, Part 1”

Most Seventh-day Adventist teens are more than familiar with exhortations to say No! to drugs and alcohol. But sometimes that’s as deep as their knowledge of issues around addiction goes. Teens need a much more thorough knowledge of the real dangers of substance abuse if they’re going to be prepared to deal with real-life temptations. They also need to recognize that drugs and alcohol aren’t the only substances to which it’s possible to become addicted. This week’s lesson takes a broader look at the problem of addiction and places it in the context of a teen’s whole life.

(Note: Many definitions include the ideas that addictions can be to any substance, behavior, or relationship that is having a negative effect on the addicted party and important aspects of their life, but which they are unable to give up in spite of the negative effects.)

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “DEALING WITH ADDICTIONS, Part 1”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Define what an addiction is.
2. Recognize some warning signs of addiction.
3. Identify possible danger areas for addictions in their own lives.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) thread, scissors; (Activity B) paper, pencils, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • “Warning Signs” handout (see p. 22), pencils, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

2 BRIDGING

A. THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service projects reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Bring a spool of lightweight sewing thread. Ask for a volunteer from the class to come to the front.

Get set • Have the volunteer hold up their hands with wrists together; wrap a single strand of thread around their wrists, tie it, and ask the person to break free. They will easily snap the thread. Then **say: Let’s pretend this thread represents a habit that could become an addiction. Let’s see what happens if we allow things to continue for a while longer.**

Go • Continue wrapping the thread around the volunteer’s wrists until it is several strands thick and then ask them to break it. They will probably not be able to get free. **Ask: What do you need now in order to get your hands free?** (Help from outside.) Cut the thread with a pair of scissors and thank the volunteer, sending them to their seat.

Debriefing • **Ask: How is this object lesson like an addiction? How is it different? At what point might it still be “easy” to break free from an addictive behavior? When is the point at which the addiction becomes stronger than we are? Can you always tell when you’ve reached that point? What kind of outside help might a person need to set them free if they’re trapped by an addiction?**

(Refer to the note under “What’s to Be Said About . . .”; see p. 17)

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Give everyone paper and pencils.

Get set • **Say: I’m going to ask a question, and I want you to write down everything that comes into your mind when I ask it. Don’t worry about writing in proper sentences or anything; you can just list words or phrases if you want. Just brainstorm, writing thoughts that come into your head for a minute or two after I ask this question.**

Go • Ask: What kind of person is an addict?

Allow one or two minutes for class members to write down whatever comes to mind. When the time is up, ask everyone to share what they've written. Write words and phrases from their answers on a board at the front of the room.

Debriefing • Ask: What kind of picture do we have here? What kind of mental images do we attach to the word "addict"? Could they describe someone your age? You, or a friend? What kinds of addictions were you thinking about when you answered the question?

Point out that not all addicts, and not all addictions, fit a stereotypical pattern. Some people can hide an addiction for years, living apparently healthy, normal lives while secretly being addicted to a substance or behavior. People can be addicted to "harmless" things such as TV, the internet, or people pleasing, as well as to more obvious things such as drugs or alcohol. There's no "typical" addict—the only thing typical is that any addict is a slave, controlled by a substance or behavior that dominates their life.

(Refer to the note under "What's to Be Said About . . ."; see p. 17)

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

Some of Chad's friends are starting to try alcohol and marijuana, and a few of them have been smoking since fifth grade and seem to be really hooked. Chad stays away from all that. He doesn't want to get pulled into that lifestyle. Instead of hanging out with these friends, Chad spends a lot of time up in his room on his computer. He's not into anything bad on the computer. He just likes visiting different websites, posting on message board forums, chatting about some of his hobbies on chat sites. Sometimes he stays up till one or two in the morning, and plays on the computer when he's supposed to be getting his homework finished. Chad's mom says she thinks he's addicted to the internet. Chad thinks his mom is wrong. He thinks it is his friends who have a problem with addiction, not him!

Debriefing • Ask: Could Chad be addicted? Is it possible to be addicted to the internet? How would Chad—or his mom—know if he really had a problem? How do you define an addiction? What are some of the things, other than drugs and alcohol, to which people can be addicted?

(Refer to the note under "What's to Be Said About . . ."; see p. 17)

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

Many of the issues we face when we talk about addictions aren't specifically addressed in the Bible. There's no verse in the Bible that tells us not to smoke or not to use drugs, since tobacco and most of the narcotics used today weren't even discovered in Bible times. Nobody in the Bible had a problem with TV or the internet, obviously! But there is counsel in the Bible that, if followed, would guard against addictions to such things as food, power, or sex. And another problem that still exists today is alcohol. From the Bible's statements about drinking and drunkenness, we can get a picture of why addiction is a problem and what the response of a citizen of the kingdom should be today.

Assign class members to read the following texts: Proverbs 23:20, 21, 29-35; Romans 13:12-14; Ephesians 5:18. **Ask: Can we apply what these texts say to drinking alcohol today? How could we apply them to other addictive behaviors?**

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Ask: Do you know anyone who uses alcohol the way Becky did? Do you think that person could be in danger of addiction?

Is her pattern of drinking typical among kids you know? Discuss Becky's reaction to the teacher's discussion of alcoholism. How often do we listen to teachers and parents talking about these kinds of problems (maybe even this Sabbath School lesson today!) thinking, *That doesn't apply to me—I don't have a problem?* Do you think Becky was an alcoholic, or was on the way to becoming one? If you were her friend at this point, what advice would you give her?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Pose the following scenario:

Your best friend has started smoking marijuana. She doesn't do it a whole lot, just occasionally on the weekend. She says she's never really been stoned, and she doesn't see what's so wrong with it. "It's not addictive, not like hard drugs. I'd never be stupid and use cocaine or anything," she tells you. "If I'm not hurting anyone else, what's the problem?"

Ask: How could you help your friend understand the warning signs that might help her see if she's becoming addicted, even if it isn't physically? And how would you answer her when she says, "It's not a problem as long as I'm not hooked"? Why is it better to avoid some activities altogether?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Distribute the "Warning Signs" handout (on page 22) and read through it with class members. **Ask:** What kind of addiction is this handout talking about? Does it relate to drug or alcohol abuse? Allow time for students to respond. **Say:** In fact, these warning signs come from a website that talks about internet addiction. Let's look back over the warning signs with that in mind. Do you feel this material relates more to your life now that you know it's about internet use?

Ask class members to turn over the handout

and on the back list all the substances and/or activities they can think of to which a person could be addicted. (As well as the obvious drugs and alcohol, and the internet addiction discussed on this handout, think about gambling—a serious social problem that kids are getting introduced to at younger and younger ages. Class members will have other suggestions as well.) Then have everyone share their lists and write them on a board at the front of the room.

Debriefing • Ask: Could these same warning signs apply to all these addictions? Which ones might be different? What common thread do you see running through the warning signs that might help us define what an addiction really is? (Something you become dependent on, something you can't easily break free of, something that interferes with your ability to live a healthy, well-rounded life.)

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. When is it OK to use/do something "in moderation," and when is it better to avoid it altogether? How can you tell the difference?
2. What's the best thing to do if you think a friend might be addicted to something?
3. Have you ever given up something because you felt it was becoming too powerful in your life? How did quitting work for you?
4. What underlying problems in a person's life might make them more likely to become addicted to drugs, alcohol, or other behaviors or substances? How could dealing with these problems help the addiction problem?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

We all know that addiction is a problem. It's scary to think about letting something control

your life and not being able to make good decisions because of it. But usually we think addiction is someone else's problem. You may have a friend or family member who is addicted to something. It's important to learn more about addiction so we can help others. But it's also important to know the warning signs so that we can be aware of areas in our own lives in which habits may be getting out of control. Maybe you're doing something that seems harmless—

watching TV, playing computer games, doing gymnastics—that is using up too much of your time and becoming an escape from reality. Or maybe you've started a potentially physically dangerous addictive behavior—smoking, drinking, gambling—and you think you've got it "under control." Take a close look at your own habits and ask God to point out if there are areas in which you're placing yourself in danger of becoming addicted.

FOR LESSON TWO:

THIS HANDOUT IS FOR THE APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Eight Warning Signs of _____ Addiction

1. Do you think about _____ even when you're not using it?
2. Do you need to use _____ more and more to get satisfaction from it?
3. Have you tried several times to control, cut back, or stop your use of _____?
4. Do you feel restless, moody, or irritable when you're trying to stop or cut back?
5. Have you lied to others about how much you're using _____?
6. Has _____ gotten in the way of your schoolwork or important relationships with others?
7. Do you use _____ more, or for longer, than you planned to?
8. Do you use _____ to escape from your problems or cheer you up when you're feeling bad?



STUDENT LESSON

DEALING WITH ADDICTIONS, Part 1

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Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 7, The Nature of Humanity:** “The image of God in them [Adam and Eve] was marred. . . . [Their descendants] are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 116, 117

LIVING IN CHAINS

Becky felt upbeat and confident as she walked through the halls on her first day of high school. Many of her friends were nervous about making the move from junior high to the much larger high school. But at the end of last year Becky had been chosen as a junior cheerleader, and during the summer she had gotten to know the other cheerleaders and popular athletes. While her friends worried about what to wear on the first day of school, Becky got to wear her cheerleader’s uniform and was instantly guaranteed a spot among the coolest kids in school.

But, unbeknown to others, Becky had developed a destructive habit during the summer—she’d begun drinking. Soon she was known as

the life of the party. Cheerleaders were supposed to keep up a squeaky-clean image, and Becky’s Christian parents certainly expected her to stay away from alcohol, but she just got better at hiding her habit of drinking.

On homecoming weekend Becky had the biggest thrill of her year—she and the other junior cheerleaders got to cheer at the varsity game, in front of the huge homecoming crowd. At a post-game party Becky sat quietly drinking until she eventually fell asleep on a pile of coats.

The next morning Becky woke up and didn’t remember a thing about the party. For the first time she felt regrets about her drinking. She’d been invited to a party with some of the coolest people at school, and she couldn’t remember talking to even one person! The whole party was a blur.

Later that year Becky and her friends listened to the teacher talk about the dangers of alcoholism. Becky paused when the teacher wrote on the board, “Blackouts—loss of memory.” Remembering the night of the game, Becky wondered, *Could I have a problem?* The teacher went on to write more warning signs: “Frequent absences from work or school; drinking in the morning; drinking every day; drinking alone” (adapted from Becky Tirabassi and Gregg Lewis, *Just One Victory* [Campus Life Books, 1987]).

This is the way it is with sin—many times it comes in little by little. Then one day you realize that this sin now has a big hold on your life. You are chained to it. But the good news is that Jesus can free you from these chains of sin. How? All you have to do is ask Him to help you

every day—sometimes many times throughout the day. Romans 8:38, 39 says, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (NKJV). This means that no sin or addiction can separate you from His love if you surrender them to Him.

If you haven’t accepted Christ as your Savior, now is the time. Let Him help you with whatever is in your life that distracts you from being His child.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.
- » Your older cousin Brad is just like Becky in the illustration. You hear he has a reputation of always being the life of the party, usually drunk before the party’s over. You don’t want to say anything, but one day some friends are discussing alcoholism, and one of them says to Brad, “Man, if anyone’s got a drinking problem, you have! You’re wasted every chance you get.” Brad says, “You’re crazy! I like to drink, but I don’t have a problem.” Then he turns to you. “I don’t have a problem, do I?” What do you say?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE NATURE OF HUMANITY

- » Read Genesis 3; Psalm 51:10.
- » Although we are born with the tendencies to sin, we can call on God and He will keep us and prepare us for heaven.
- » What tendencies are in your life that you need and want to turn over to God?

- » What are some things you need and can do to make changes in your life?

- » Unscramble the words in the word bank. Then, using the correct words, fill in the blanks in the verse below. The verse is from the New King James Version.

sselemlab	
gnimoc	
ecaep	
yfitcnas	
tirips	

ydob	
yletelpmoc	
devreserp	
luos	
snainolassehT	

“Now may the God of _____ Himself _____ you _____; and may your whole _____, _____, and _____ be _____ at the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 _____ 5:23).

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Psalm 118:21.
- » You’ve probably been hearing all your life that addictions are bad. In church, in school, and at home you’ve been told to “just say no” to drugs—even though you may get a different message from your friends or from the movies and popular music. But is “just say no” enough? What if you’ve already said yes to drinking or drugs? Does that mean you’re an addict? And if you’re not addicted, does that mean it’s safe to engage in these activities once in a while? What about other addictions? Can you be addicted to TV, to the internet, to computer games, to gambling?
- » The problem of addiction is a big one and a serious one. You need to be aware. What

are the signs of addiction? You may be addicted to some substance or activity if:

- you need to use more and more of it in order to feel good.
- you use it as a way to escape from problems and bad feelings.
- you've tried to quit or cut back but find yourself unhappy and irritable when you do.
- you do it when you should be doing other things.
- it's getting in the way of your relationships with other people.
- you find yourself lying to others about how much you do it.

Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

» Look up the texts and fill in the blanks.

If you don't have these versions of the Bible, you may go to www.biblegateway.com. You will find there the versions you need.

1. "Who is always in trouble? Who argues and fights? Who has cuts and _____? Whose eyes are _____? Everyone who stays up _____, having just one more _____. Don't even look at that _____ stuff _____ up in the glass! It goes down so easily, but later it bites like a poisonous snake. You will see weird things, and your _____ will play _____ on you. You will feel tossed about like _____ trying to _____ on a ship in a storm. You will be bruised all over, without even _____ how it all happened. And you will lie awake asking, 'When will morning come, so I can drink some more?' " (Proverbs 23:29-35, CEV).

2. "So whether you _____ or _____ or _____ you do, do _____ all for the _____ of _____" (1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV).

3. "We know that the persons we used to be were _____ to the _____ with Jesus. This was _____, so our _____ would no _____ be the slaves of _____" (Romans 6:6, CEV).

4. "Jesus said, 'I tell you most solemnly that anyone who _____ a life of sin is _____

in a _____ - _____ life and is, in fact, a _____. . . . So if the _____ sets you _____, you are free through and through' " (John 8:34-36, *The Message*).

5. "Do you not _____ that your bodies are temples of the _____, who is in you, whom you have _____ from God? You are not your _____; you were bought at a price. Therefore _____ God with your _____" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, NIV).

Thursday CONNECTING

» Read Romans 6:6.

» Review the memory text.

» Maybe you've been reading through this week's lesson getting worried. You've tried a few drinks with friends, and you're wondering whether you're getting addicted. Or you're starting to worry about all those hours you spend online. Maybe you've identified something else in your life—something others would think is quite harmless—that's turning into an addiction for you.

» Remember that addiction is real, and it is serious. Addiction makes you a slave, and God wants His people to be free. Nothing should control your life except the Holy Spirit. Nothing should get in the way of your ability to make good decisions, relate to other people, and follow God. Drugs, alcohol, pornography, TV, the internet, even books or music or food or shopping—anything that becomes an addiction places you in chains.

» Determine to be free. Don't let yourself get chained up. Look at the areas of your life in which you think you may be at risk for addiction. Decide today to turn those areas completely over to God and take the steps you need to be free. (If you believe you're already addicted and want to know more about the steps to freedom, stay tuned for next week's lesson!)

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- » The following circle represents an average day in your life. Each segment represents an hour of your time. Shade in the segments in different-colored pencils to show about how many hours you spend at different activities (e.g., about eight hours for sleep; six hours at school, etc.). When you've finished, look at your chart. Are there any activities that you

think are taking up too much of your time? Could any of these be considered addictive? What if something is starting to control your life? What about your thoughts? For example, a teen may spend two hours a day playing video games, but what if the six hours in school are all spent daydreaming about video games? Could that be an addiction?

- » Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior? If not, won't you take a few moments now and pray, inviting Him into your heart? He loves you more than you can possibly know.

