

Wise as Serpents Harmless as Doves



A manual for ministering in the addiction recovery mission field.

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Dear minister,

I appreciate your taking the time to teach the Gospel to our program members! Please know, that you do not need to be knowledgeable about counseling drug addicts. The preacher who taught me the Gospel in prison never counseled me for my addiction issues. **The main thing each of our members need is for a minister to help them hear and understand God's word.**

Before missionaries travel to a foreign mission field like Haiti, England, Africa, or China, they learn all they can about the people, laws, culture, customs, etc. The Dos and DON'Ts are important, because they do not want to do anything to hinder the influence of the Gospel. **We prepared this pamphlet to optimize your potential of having a positive impact when you visit Project Rescue.**

Mark 2:17 implies that sinful behavior makes us sick. We have learned that some are sicker than others. The typical man in our care, quit the church in his early teens. Tragically, he chose an evil road less travelled. It was an express route deep down into various sin addictions.

Galatians 6:1 implies that we should be careful as we “restore” members of the church “overtaken” by sin. Paul also instructed Timothy about the ability, patience and humility a “servant of the Lord” needs when “...correcting those who are in opposition . . . that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.” 2 Timothy 2:24-26

We primarily need your skills to help our members hear and understand God's word!

The articles that follow are based on our 13 years of experience living among, housing, feeding, managing, and ministering to recovering drug addicts.

In His service,

Ronnie Crocker, Program Manager
Project Rescue Addiction Recovery Program

Only 15% of addiction is drinking or drugging. These are the surface behaviours that we all see.



The other 85% of behaviours and symptoms sit below the surface.

THE ICEBERG MODEL OF ADDICTION



EDGEWOOD HEALTH
NETWORK INC.

When Helping Hurts is an article written by a man in an addiction recovery program. The Beltline church of Christ eldership mailed this letter to all their members. An addict is not evil, but very sick. Family, friends, ministers, and mentors must be wise as serpents!

Dear kind and giving hearts who still love me,

Please remember, I am in an addiction recovery program, I am not evil, but I am very sick! Please know, there are times WHEN HELPING HURTS:

Please do not give me money. While I'm in rehab, money is like gasoline on a fire. When I come to your home for a visit, please hide all your medicine. I will not be able to resist taking it. Watch your jewelry and small expensive items. I will take and trade them for drugs.

If I leave the program, please don't let me move in with you. I will destroy your home life. I need a recovery program! This is WHEN HELPING HURTS!

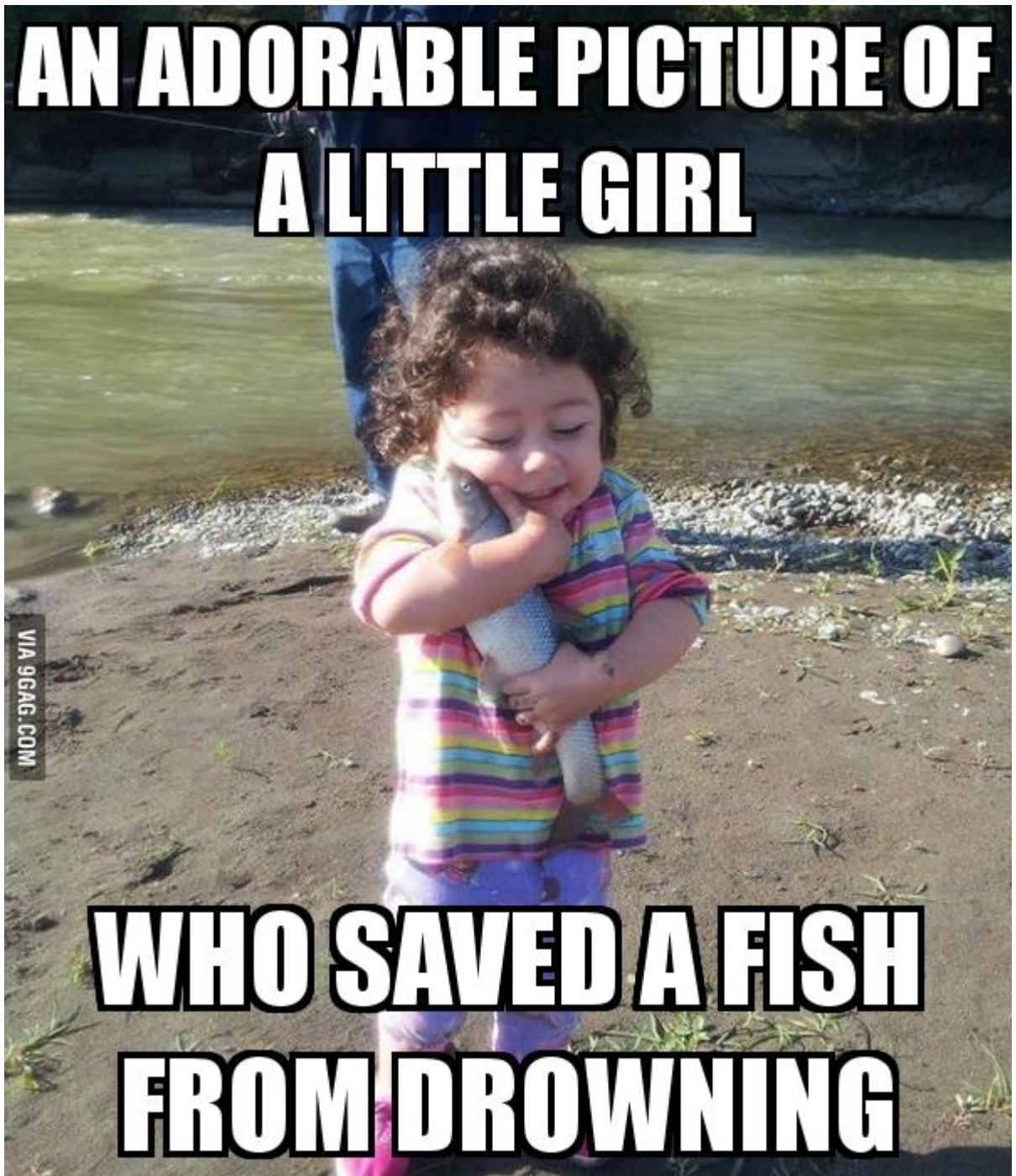
Please watch your credit cards. I will use them for purchases and cash, and return them before you know it. Or, I will take a picture of your card and use it online or sell it to my drug dealer. Please do not let me use your smart phone or computer. I will buy things on your Amazon and other App accounts and have them mailed to another address.

Do not co-sign for a vehicle or sell me a vehicle with weekly payments. I will trash the car or let a drug dealer use it in exchange for drugs. Don't invest in my business ideas. Do not partner with me in business. I will embezzle the profits for drugs. This is WHEN HELPING HURTS!

If I get locked up, please do not bond me out, unless you're taking me straight to a drug program. Do not help me with my criminal charges, unless it is to get me court ordered to a drug program. If you hire an attorney, have him/her represent you, not me. I am good at manipulating my way out of consequences, and the attorney is required to do what I want.

If I call you to come get me out of this program, please don't come. Remind me I am where I need to be. Please don't fall for my promises of doing better with your help. I need professional help. This is WHEN HELPING HURTS!

When Helping Hurts



VIA 9GAG.COM

**AN ADORABLE PICTURE OF
A LITTLE GIRL**

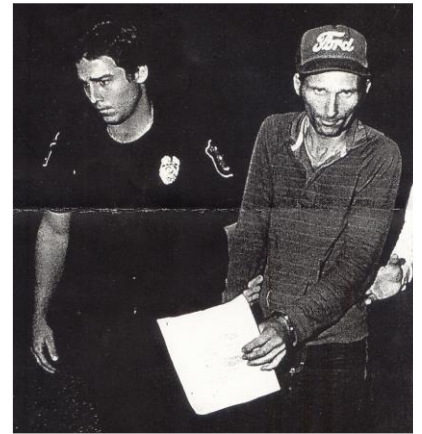
**WHO SAVED A FISH
FROM DROWNING**



I use the pickling process as an illustration to explain how the methods of ministering to an addict are drastically different from the methods used in personal evangelism.

My wife Jeanie and I have lived two drastically different lives! Figuratively speaking, I am a pickle and Jeanie is a cucumber. You saturate a cucumber long enough in vinegar, it will become a pickle. You can never turn that pickle back into a cucumber.

During those years of abusing drugs, I was pickled in a jar (world) of vinegar (sin). I spent 15 years being saturated with evil thoughts, evil words, evil actions, and evil habits. Those bad thoughts, words, actions, and habits changed (pickled) me forever. This is what I mean when I say, I am a pickle.



On the other hand, my wife Jeanie grew up on the mission field of Africa, the daughter of a Gospel preacher. She attended Christian schools and universities. She did not experience the extent of sin which I did. She did not experience the evil pickling process which I did. Hence, Jeanie is a cucumber and I am a pickle.

Now, I stopped abusing drugs in 1984, when I was arrested for the last time. On June 1, 1986 my sins were washed away when I was baptized into Christ. I came up out of that watery grave of baptism to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-4). When I obeyed the Gospel, I became a new creation. Old things were passed away, and all things became new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Defining a 'Trigger'

A stimuli that reminds you of your past drug or alcohol use and encourages those deep cravings

Examples of Triggers

Internal

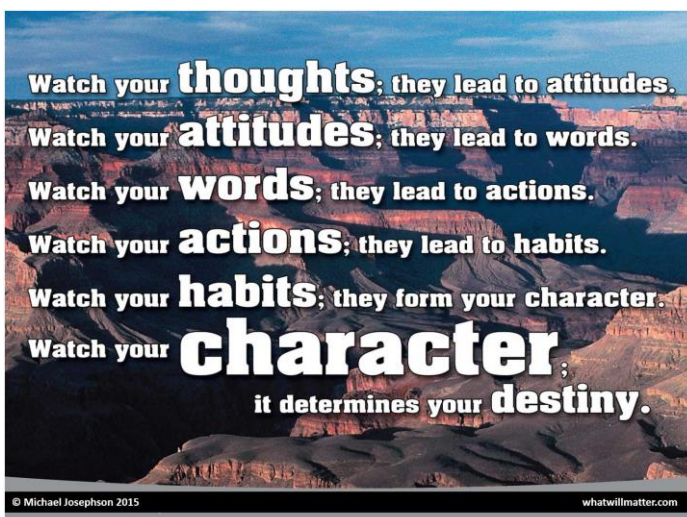
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Sadness
- Anger

External

- Financial Issues
- Loud Noises
- Revisiting Locations
- Witnessing Similar Events

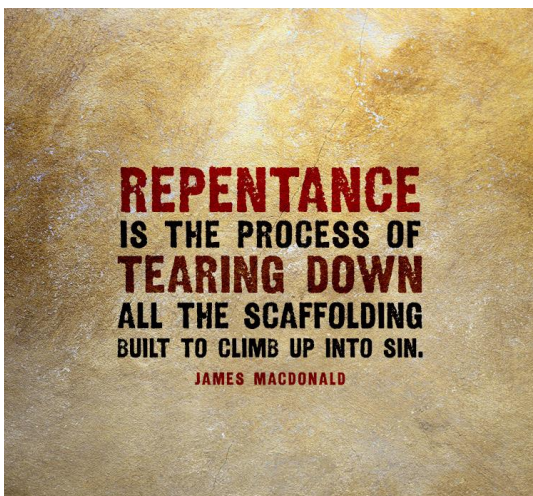
However, my experience with the devil and sin, and my memories of those 15 years in the pickle jar were not washed away. For the rest of my life, I have to be aware of, live with and even fight against my past pickling process (Galatians 5:1; Romans 6:17,18). In this regard, my fight of faith is very different from Jeanie's fight of faith! I have triggers (memories) that she doesn't have. She is a cucumber, and I am a pickle.

The hardest stage of ministering to a recovering addict is the beginning stage (first 3-months). The pickling process corrupts one's character (1 Timothy 4:2; James 3:14,15). I once heard a preacher who ministers to addicts say, "An addict can talk a cat off the back of a fish truck!"



The Apostle Paul wrote about the corrupted conscience: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron." (1 Timothy 4:1.2)

The Gospel Advocate's commentary on 1 Timothy 4:1,2 explains how living in sin corrupts the conscience: {branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron;—These men have become hardened and insensible to all feelings of justice and right. To live in neglect of a known duty or violation of a principle of right is to demoralize the spiritual man, weaken his moral character, and sear his conscience. This unfits man for the higher duties of life and gradually fits him for a life of sin and wrongdoing. Habitual violation of the sense of right educates a man for doing what is wrong. An occasional outburst, a great wrong repented of is not so fatal in its tendency, not so hardening in its influence on the heart and character of men as a continual violation of the principles of right in what are regarded as small matters. Peter, under the impulse of fear, could deny his Master and repent of it, and yet have a better conscience and a truer character than Judas Iscariot, who, during the time he carried the bag for the disciples, was doubtless guilty of petty peculations and pilferings continually. The man who cherishes some private or secret sin, which he thinks is petty and unimportant, is gradually hardening his heart and fitting himself for a total breakdown of his moral character that will develop itself in permanent open sinfulness and degradation. The conscience should be kept good and tender; the heart pure. Gospel Advocate Commentary on 1 Tim. 4



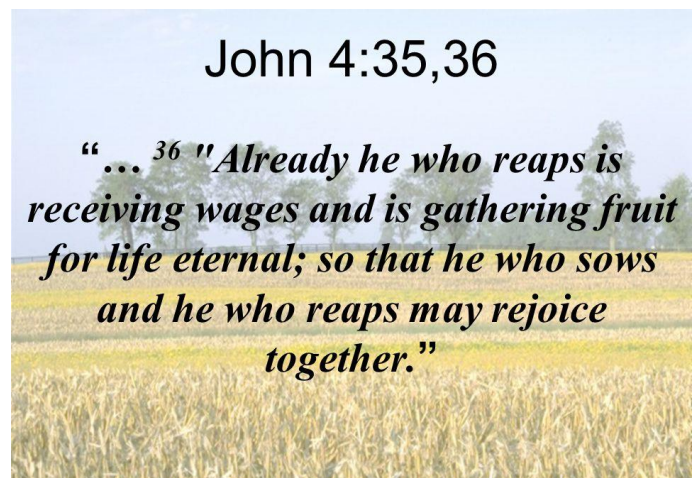
Before restoration can begin, the pickling process must be stopped. Let me explain:

Quitting the drugs and alcohol is a beginning, but it does not necessarily stop the pickling process. Many come into our program and continue the evil thoughts, words, actions, and habits. They continue to resist God instead of the devil (James 4:7).

Many of the souls in our care are like the prodigal son (Luke 15) who went out to conquer the world and the world conquered him. Most of them come to us after having destroyed almost every good thing in their life. Some have already surrendered (Romans 12:1,2), but the typical program member has not.

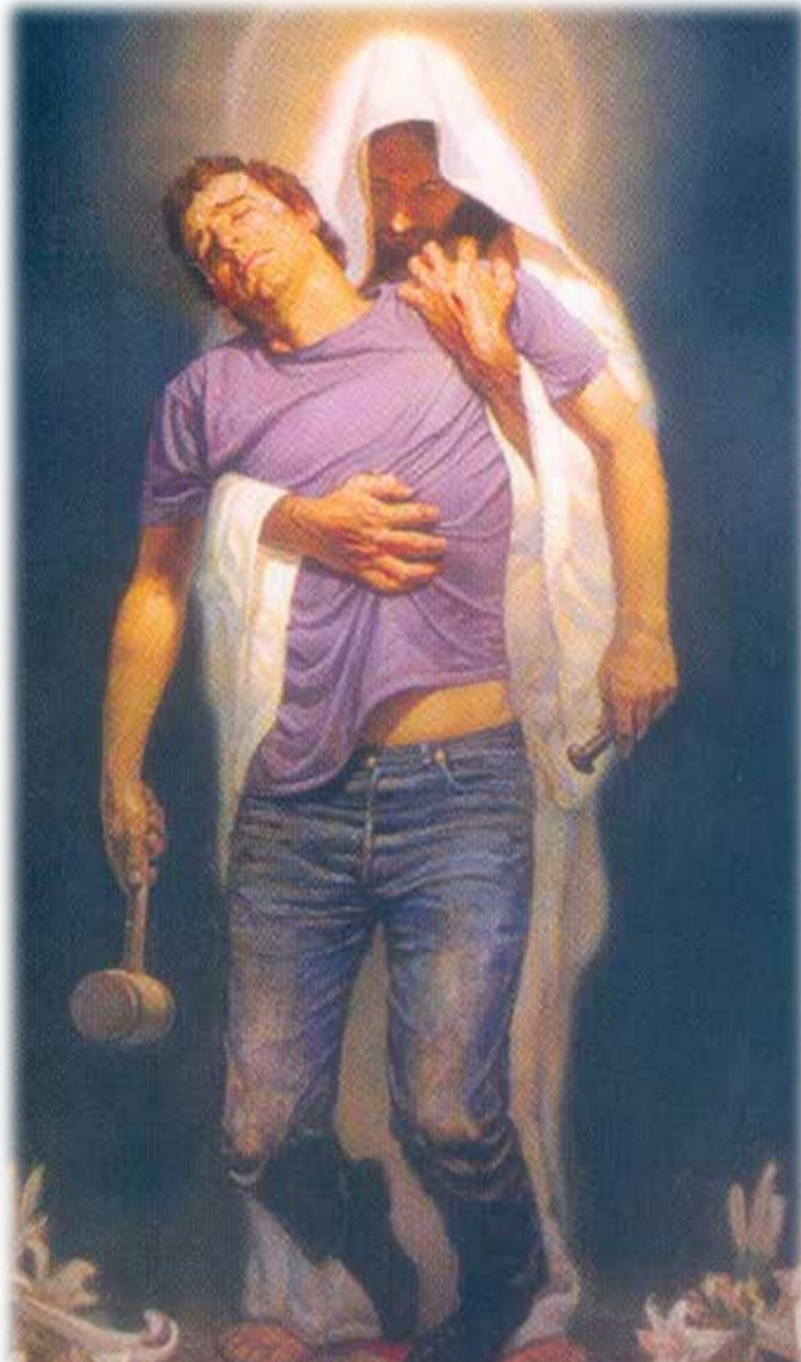
The prodigal son surrendered ("came to himself") only after all the money was gone, a famine hit his life, he was living with the pigs and considered eating the pigs' food. It was at this point he thought of returning to his Father and then actually returned to the Father!

There are a few who come to the program already tired and in total surrender to God. These are a joy to study with and see prosper!



Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

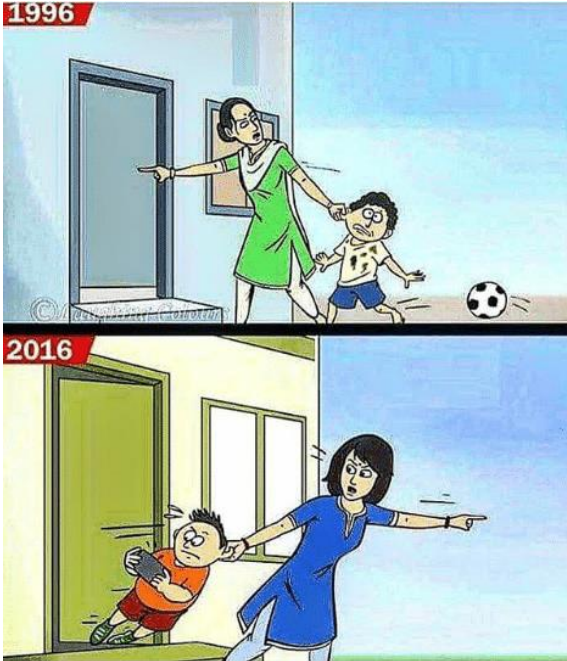
Matthew 11:28



“It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.” Luke 15:32

The Evils of Enabling

by Jeanie Crocker



How times have changed...

Life wasn't easy when we were kids. Some of us remember getting up early to chop the wood, feed the chickens or collect the eggs. Maybe we had to work in the fields or clean out the barn. Some of us can remember life without computers, video games, cell phones, I-Pods, TVs and DVD players. We had chores to do, and if we had free time, we used our imaginations to entertain ourselves by making mud pies or creating our own entertainment. If we were lucky, we might have a doll or Lincoln Logs or other creative toys to stir our imaginations. We might wear ourselves out playing ball in the park.

We weren't afraid to get sweaty and dirty. We found bugs, frogs and other strange things interesting. If we got in trouble at school, we were in double trouble at home. Life was much slower then, so we spent a lot of time just waiting. There were times we sat in a chair and did nothing with only our thoughts to keep us company.

Times have changed. We look back at our childhood and all the hard things we had to endure. We determine to protect our children from such a fate. We give them all the things that make them happy and shield them from hardship and difficulty.



Our children learn from the earliest age that entertainment is their purpose in life. We place their cushy baby swings in front of the TV when they are tiny. They have toys of every description which they immediately learn to throw in the floor from their highchairs. They are rewarded for this by watching Mommy or Daddy pick them up continually.

As they grow, they are not expected to experience any down time free of entertainment. Strapped into their car seats, they have their choice of snacks, drinks, movies and cartoons to keep them happy in their air-conditioned comfort. Any discomfort or inconvenience is immediately rectified by parents who do not have time to tolerate the annoyance of childcare in their busy lives.

As baby grows up, this pattern of life continues. Junior resents being reminded to take out the garbage for the third time because he is advancing to another level on his video game. Any family chores are such an intrusion into his life that parents tire of nagging him away from his computer or TV. It's easier for them to do the job themselves. When Junior gets in trouble at school, the parents blame the teacher for being unreasonable. So life goes on, and Junior grows up feeling entitled and imposed upon if asked to do anything out of his comfort zone. His brain is programmed to demand constant entertainment and avoid any form of discomfort.



In time, Junior may become bored with his usual toys and start to look for even more things to bring him pleasure. He may choose to get high and experiment with drugs or alcohol.

Or as time and chance unfold in Junior's life, he experiences hardship or disappointment of some description. How does he respond to such a

development? From his earliest childhood, he has been trained to avoid all discomfort. So what else can he do but take a pill to relieve the crisis or perhaps drink alcohol to dull the pain? Endurance is not an option, so escape is the natural choice.



Before those devoted parents know it, addiction has set in, and that rosy future planned for Junior's life crumbles before their eyes. Instead of college, career and family, they are looking into detox, rehab and probation. They have tried everything to help him but must admit they have no idea what to do now. Mama remembers that day in the delivery room when they wept with joy at his birth and all the cute things he used to do. He will always be their baby, so they continue to search for answers for him.

They find a program to help him overcome his problems. At first Junior is relieved and thankful to get help. But in the course of his recovery, he is required to do things that appear difficult to him. This is not the way his brain has been programmed. Instead of addressing his problems, he looks for relief. Maybe he will find a way to relapse and avoid confronting his issues. Or in the absence of drugs or alcohol, he must play the blame game in order to transfer his problems to someone else. He finds someone to blame for his failure. He calls home to talk to his parents and explains how useless this program is. His counselor is a know-it-all and a real jerk who makes him obey ridiculous rules. He paints life as so miserable that he just can't take it anymore. He plays the victim and uses emotional blackmail on his parents. Mommy aches for her boy and becomes angry at the counselor who is causing him so much grief. She and Dad swoop in and rescue their precious son from the clutches of oppression he is experiencing in that program. They search for another program, and the pattern continues.



The Emperor Moth and The Struggling

In order that it become a moth, the pupa of the moth must squeeze its way out of the narrow neck.

One day a man found a cocoon of an emperor moth. He took it home so that he could watch the moth come out of the cocoon. He sat and watched the moth struggling to force the body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no farther. It just seemed to be stuck.

Then the man being kind decided to help the moth. So he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The moth then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. He expected that the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the little moth spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly. A few days later, it died.

What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the moth to get through the tiny opening was the way of forcing fluid from the body of the moth into its wings so that it would be ready for flight. Once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon. Freedom and flight would only come after the struggle. By depriving the moth of a struggle, he deprived the emperor moth of health.

Responding Right to God's Chastening

Series on the Tough Love of
God For His people
Hebrews 12



You see, the struggles of life, heartaches and pains are necessary if you want to be great. Instead of cursing them, understand them while you are experiencing them. They are part of the making of a man.

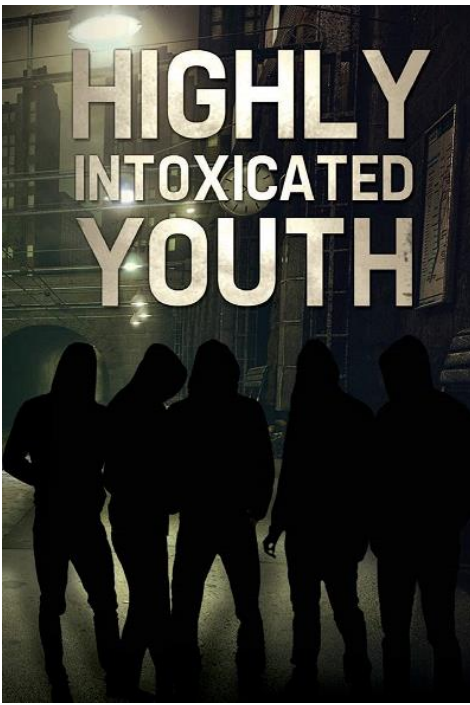
When we rescue an addict from his misery, we do him a great disservice. We are just continuing in the pattern that got him where he is. Typically, the only way for an adult to find God in his life is through pain. Human beings tend to finally look up only when we are flat on our backs. When we (with all our good intentions) step in and prevent that process from occurring, we are encouraging addiction and discouraging any chance of the addict connecting with the only source of true recovery - a relationship with a loving God.

As in the illustration of the Emperor Moth, we need to allow the addict to experience pain so he can learn to be strong. He must develop a faith in God, overcome his weakness, stand on his own two feet and become a positive force in life.

Watching someone we love suffer is hard for parents and care givers who just want everyone to be happy. It requires sacrifice, but the end result is worth it all.

Hannah wanted a son so badly. She promised to give him back to God if He would give her a son. Can you imagine the sacrifice that required of this loving mother? She left her little boy at the temple. Did he cry for her when she was leaving? The Bible doesn't say, but that would be a normal reaction for a little child being separated from his mother. She only came to visit him once a year, bringing little tunics she had made for him. She cared for his physical needs, but she cared more for his soul. She sacrificed her chance to nurture him and watch him grow so she could give him to God. As a result, he became a great servant of God.

On the other hand, Eli the priest let his boys do whatever made them happy. They were out of control, and he did not restrain them. They not only brought destruction to their father but also to the nation.



Our nation is being destroyed by mind numbing drugs. We have created a generation who believes the world revolves around them. They don't know the meaning of sacrifice or struggling for a worthy cause. As long as we tolerate them in their addiction, they will never enjoy the satisfaction and the positive self image that comes as a result of overcoming hardship. We need to stop coddling our young people and allow them to experience hard times so they can develop strength of character and faith in God.

The prodigal son did not think of going home while he was involved in riotous living. It was only when the party was over, and he found himself in the pig pen that he remembered his Father. What would have happened if someone had taken him in before he landed in the pig pen? Would he have returned home and begged for forgiveness at his father's feet?

Addiction recovery is hard. It not only involves breaking the drug habit but learning a whole new mindset. It doesn't happen overnight. During the long hard process, an addict needs a strong support group who understands the necessity of struggling through it. When he wants to give up, they will not step in and put an end to his misery but practice tough love. They will offer encouragement, but allow (even demand) the addict to continue in the battle even when times are tough. Freedom from drugs can be achieved if we all work together to that end with Heaven as our ultimate goal.

The following is a YouTube link to and excellent message Gary Bradley Jr. delivered at a seminar on Addiction hosted by the Priceville church of Christ. Gary addresses the problem of enabling :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrJKR2fIV9A>

The Worth of a Soul

JESUS
LEAVING
99 TO FIND 1
SEEMS CRAZY

UNTIL YOU
ARE THAT

1

 the
message



Speaking Pickle

by Jeanie Crocker



In 1992, a book was released called "Men are from Mars, Women from Venus". The writer expresses the relationship problems caused by the view that the genders basically speak different languages. Since the author's explanation required 286 pages, we can assume the problems are legion. That approach to relationship struggles can be applied in other areas of life.

I have recently read a book entitled "Speaking Alzheimer's". This has helped me step into the world of my aging mother who just doesn't speak my language anymore. I'm trying to learn her language so I can help meet her needs during this time.

In the world of alcohol and drug addiction, an addict is known as a "pickle" while the rest of us are called "cucumbers". There is no doubt there is a language barrier between these two groups of people. It seems that father and mother cucumbers are at a total loss when it comes to dealing with their pickle son or daughter. The basis of their frustration lies in their inability to speak pickle.

This language has evolved from a life that is foreign to the average person. It comes from a process required for maintaining the addict's habit which has led to his way of life. The process goes something like this. The addict must get his hands on some money (beg, borrow or steal), make arrangements to meet his drug dealer, make the transaction without getting caught, possess the drug on his person, get high, then repeat the process. It seems the thrill of the chase is even part of the attraction as well as the risk involved. In

the course of this process, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see there is manipulation, deception and a lot of evil going on.



Typically, an addict can spin a tale of woe that plucks at the heartstrings. He can create sympathy for his sorry plight and manipulate some well meaning individual into giving him money or housing or items he can pawn.

All of the above serve his primary purpose which is to get high. He is an expert in taking truth and adding a spin that changes the whole story. With that ability, he is able to trick his family and acquaintances into getting what he wants. Of course, in time the truth emerges, the charitable enabler realizes he has been used and becomes discouraged - often determining never to help anyone again. So the addict moves on to his next victim with his game of deception.

Another approach the addict will try (if all else fails) is to destroy the people around him who are trying to help him. Anyone who stands between him and his drug of choice is in danger of being slandered and accused of various forms of abuse. This is understandable since a wounded animal will bite the hand that reaches out to help. Those people who understand pickle are able to overlook these outbursts since this behavior is expected at certain times in an addict's recovery. However, it becomes of great concern, when those who don't understand the normal process (don't speak pickle) are sucked into the addict's stories. They often even join into the attack against the ones who are trying to help.

It is a common occurrence in our addiction recovery program, that we are accused of being too hard on these men. We are painted as ogres who just live to make life miserable for them. These stories have circulated from the few who are not yet ready to cooperate and give their total focus to recovery. Their hearts are still in that process described earlier. They haven't broken free of that lifestyle. As long as this process is allowed to continue, the addict will sink further and further into destruction leading to total loss of brain function or to the grave.

My mother was very hard on me and my two sisters when we were small. We had to sit still in church, face-forward and behave at all times. If we stepped out of line for one minute, we were jerked up and hauled out of the building where we received the consequence of our misbehavior.



Then we were returned immediately to our seats where we faced forward and behaved. Other church members were horrified at how hard she was on those sweet little girls. They would try to comfort us by handing us gum and candy only to be quickly retrieved by Mom who did not allow gum or candy during church services. There was a lot of talk about how cruel this mother was with her little girls. The talk then evolved into how well behaved we were and how we didn't deserve that kind of treatment. They never seemed to make the connection that the behavior was a result of the training from a concerned mother who taught us discipline.

Addicts require tough love. If left to their own devices, they will continue in the pattern they have created for their lives. Not only will they lose everything in this life, but most importantly, they will lose their souls for eternity. We have dedicated our lives to preventing that terrible loss.

I am a cucumber who married a pickle. As a result of his own recovery from addiction plus 25 years of helping other pickles, he definitely speaks the language. I have learned a few phrases through the years, but I will quickly admit to not being fluent in pickle. Frank Parker, the preacher who taught the Gospel to Ronnie in prison, came to work with us for a year.



Frank made a comment one time that went something like this, *"I used to think Ronnie was too hard on these men, but now I realize he speaks their language. I know he also has a heart full of love and compassion for Project Rescue members since he stood right where they are now. He wants them to have what he has...freedom from addiction that is found in Christ."*

One thing I do know is - to borrow from another book title - it takes a village to accomplish this mission. Having a lot of people involved is not only a blessing but a necessity. However, with the increasing number of workers comes the problem of the language barrier.

To all you cucumbers out there who would like to help, please don't hesitate to come. Here are a few suggestions you might find useful to be most effective in this great endeavor:

1. Share your spirituality and help them see Christ in you.
2. If they begin to tell you their problems, don't take action to help until you know the whole story.
3. Do not receive accusations against the staff. Instead offer to call the staff member in question for a meeting. The addict will likely not want to be involved in such a meeting since the other side of the story will be revealed.

4. Never, never, never give an addict money.
5. Keep in mind the fact that you don't speak the language. You will likely need an interpreter who is fluent in pickle to fully understand what's going on.

6. Remember they each have souls worth more than the world. They are going through a phase and with effort and God's grace, they will one day be able to overcome and we can all speak the same language again. Let's all work together toward that end.



7. Stand behind us. We desperately need you to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. During years of prison and jail ministry, it was common for the inmates to try to drag us into their legal battles. Naturally most of them perceive themselves as innocent victims of the system. We realize there can be rare cases when they could possibly have been framed or set up. But getting to the truth is like peeling an onion. There are victims, witnesses, policemen, investigators and attorneys who have a lot more evidence regarding the case than we can ever receive from the inmate. Our response to the situation was to let them know we were not there to get involved in their legal cases. We were there to encourage them, share God's love with them and teach them the Bible.

This mindset is what we need from you. When you hear criticism of the program, immediately give us the benefit of the doubt.



Like peeling the onion, there are layers of information you have not received. We are in regular contact with their parents, grandparents, wives, girlfriends, preachers, elders or mentors from their home congregations. We observe their actions and attitudes on a daily basis - how they keep their rooms and common areas, their work ethics, how they respond to teaching and correction, how they interact with other program members, how they deal with conflict, their daily mood swings, their desire (or lack thereof) for spiritual things, their medical conditions and the medications they are taking, their financial situations, and the list goes on and on.

Like you, we are often touched by their stories initially, but as the layers begin to peel away, the underlying problems and complications are revealed which we must address - often with tough love. Please rest assured that we always have their best interests at heart.

We are not surprised when they relapse, lie, manipulate and attack us. It's all part of recovery. Yes, it's difficult. We are not in this work for our own entertainment. It's a 24-hour a day, grueling process. We are here because this is what the Lord did when He walked on the earth. He reached out to "the least of these." We're here because this is our chosen mission field. We want to help these guys get back on their feet and become strong in the Lord. We want them to prosper in this life and most of all, we want to meet them in Heaven one day. We realize the success rate in this work is not impressive. Considering the value of a soul, if we can reach one, it will be worth it all.

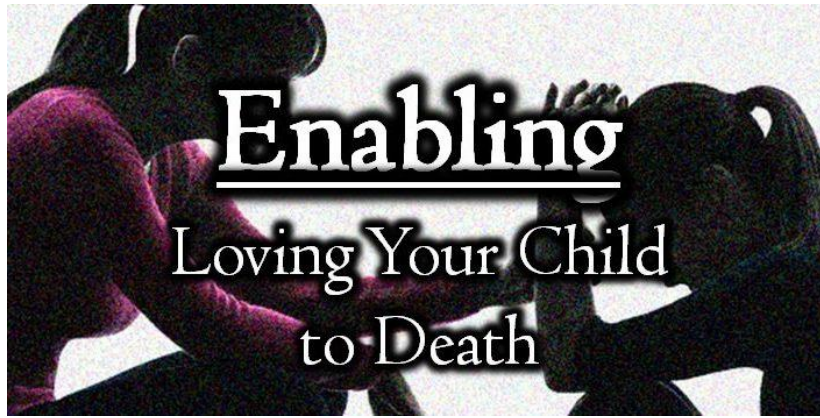
**FACT: IF AN ADDICT IS
HAPPY WITH YOU, YOU'RE
PROBABLY ENABLING THEM.**



**IF AN ADDICT IS MAD
AT YOU, YOU'RE PROBABLY
TRYING TO SAVE THEIR LIFE.**

I'm your child, or spouse, or friend.
But I've changed.
I don't belong to you anymore.
I don't care about you.
Not in the way you want me too.
I care about getting high.
I WANT to get high.
I will do ANYTHING to get high.
I LOVE getting high.
I NEED to get high.. and I will step over you to do it.
When I look at you, I don't see YOU.
I see a means to an end.
You have money.
I want it.
End of story.
I don't care if you can't pay the rent.
I don't care if you need groceries.
I don't care if you promised not to give me money again.
I don't care if you lie to Dad.
I don't care if you're broke.
Sell your rings, take a loan, sell your electronics, max out your credit cards,
borrow the money from someone else, because if you don't, I will STEAL it.
I WILL find a way to get HIGH.
You think you can CHANGE me or SAVE me.
But you're WRONG!
Something cold and dead slithers in me.
You can CRY all you want.
Your tears won't change anything.
I have no integrity or values.
My morals are a thing of the past.
I will say anything, do anything, hurt anyone, to get my next FIX.
Although I play the game with you, make no mistake.
I don't play it because I care, I play it because I want my DOPE.
I'll tell you what you want to hear,
I'll promise you the world,
I'll look you in the eyes, and I'll break your heart.
Over and over again.
I don't have a heart.





I have a HUNGER.

It's calculating and manipulative, and it OWNS me.

In a strange way, you're thankful for this. For when I need something I find you, quick!

Then when I've gotten what I want from you, I leave.

You're anxious without me.

You offer to buy my food or pay my rent.

By now, your NEED is almost as great as mine.

I can't stay SICK without you.

You can't breathe without ME.

You think you're helping me.

You believe you're making a difference, but what you're really helping... is my ADDICTION.

I won't tell you this, but you know it, deep down.

If we keep going like this, one or both of us will die.

Me from an overdose, that you paid for, and you from a heart attack, or stroke.

You'll wait YEARS for me to change or see the light.

You keep my secrets and protect my lies.

You clean up my messes and bail me out.

You love me to the exclusion of EVERYONE else.

But I'm not the only one who changed

You're bitter and resentful. You hide from your friends and isolate.

Your world revolves around one thing only... ME.

But will your LOVE ever become greater than your FEAR?

Would you be strong enough to reach out for help?

Will you learn to say NO?

Will you allow me to experience the consequences of my actions?

Will you LOVE me enough to feel your guilt and stop enabling my addiction?

I lay trapped within the confines of this cold dark, serpent –
addiction, and I am... dying.

When You Hit Your Spiritual Wall

This January, Jeanie and I will have completed 9 years living among and interacting with recovering addicts in Alabama. On a daily basis, we see the effects of sin up close and personal. Our experience has given us the ability to see a relapse coming before a member actually gets drunk or high. What we see is him hitting his spiritual wall.



Here is a typical process that leads to hitting a spiritual wall: When a new Project Rescue member arrives, he is sick and tired of being sick and tired of the consequences of his addictions. His gratitude is as strong as a Titanic survivor's sitting in a lifeboat! Then, after about 3 to 4 months, he is afflicted with Addiction Amnesia. All the suffering from which he was rescued has faded in his memory. At this point, he puts his spiritual life in neutral. As he drifts away from gratitude and joy, he falls overboard into resentment and bitterness.

James 1:14,15 describes what will happen if he doesn't quickly begin to climb his spiritual wall: "When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." When sin is born in a man's mind, addiction, ruin and death will soon follow. Here are the steps to take, when you hit your spiritual wall:

Romans 8 reveals the inward steps of climbing your spiritual wall:

1. Aggressively abide by "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (8:2).
2. Intentionally acknowledge that the "Spirit of God dwells in you" (8:9-11).
3. Deliberately resist setting your mind on "things of the flesh" (8:5,6).
4. Persistently place your thoughts on "things of the Spirit" (8:5,6).
5. "By the Spirit, put to death" your evil thoughts (8:13).

Here are the outward steps of climbing your spiritual wall:

1. Increase your prayer, Bible study and meditation time.
2. Volunteer to do servant activities.
3. Listen to and help someone else going through a hard time.
4. Prepare and teach a devotional or Bible study.
5. Last but not least, become more involved in your church, serving in a benevolence program, joining a discipleship group, cleaning the building, cutting the grass, etc.

It scares us when a member hits a spiritual wall, but it is a wonderful sight to see someone climb their spiritual wall! Jeanie and I enjoy the privilege of witnessing the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set souls free from the law of sin and death!