

# GETTING STARTED

This book will help you learn some exciting things about Jesus Christ, your Savior. Each chapter begins with a list of goals marked with a small star (\*). These goals tell you what you will be learning in that chapter. Then you will read a few lines and answer some questions. At the end of the chapter there is a test. The test questions cover only what you read in the chapter and the questions you have completed.

When you finish answering a group of questions, you will be given a page number where you can turn to check your answers. If you turn to that page, you will find the answers at the bottom of that page. Check your answers carefully, correcting any mistakes that you made. Make sure you understand all the answers before reading any farther.

At the end of the chapter there is also a section marked "Using Your Bible." There you will be told where in the Bible you can find the stories talked about in the lesson. If you are able, try to read the stories directly from your own Bible. We want you to be sure that what this course is teaching is exactly what the Bible teaches.

At the end of the book there is a final test. Before you complete the test, go back and review the chapter tests. When you have completed the final test, you can either turn it in to the person who gave

you this book, or mail it to the address on page 57. Someone will check the test and return it to you.

May God help you to learn more about Jesus Christ, and bless the hours you spend studying His life.

*Chapter One***ITS GOING TO TAKE SOMEONE GREATER THAN YOURSELF TO FREE YOU**

You went into withdrawal when you were first locked up. The pain of being away from people you love, places you like going to and things you like doing is a kind of withdrawal. But maybe you had another kind of withdrawal along with it: withdrawal from a drug like heroin, cocaine or alcohol. When an addict is cut off from his drug, he doesn't sit there thinking, "It would be kind of fun to get high again." His body and mind are screaming, "You have to get high again! You need your drug!"

Most people in prison have a drug or alcohol problem. Usually the drugs had something to do with the crime that they're locked up for. But it isn't just people who get high that have an addiction problem. Jesus said, "Everyone who sins is a slave of sin" (John 8:34). Things like hatred, pride, lust or worry will hook you just as surely as crack cocaine. When you use sin to try to get your needs met, you aren't really using sin; sin is using you.



God doesn't want anybody to be a slave of an addiction. The Bible has a lot to say about God's

plan and His power to free you from addiction's slavery. Jesus said, "If the Son sets you free, you will really be free" (John 8:36). In this book you're going to get a look at some of what the Bible says about getting free of the power of addictions. We're going to use the 12 Steps of recovery developed by **Alcoholics Anonymous** as a framework for this study.

Here are the 12 Steps:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

In this chapter you're going to look at:

- \* How addictions take over a person's mind and life so powerfully;
- \* Why it's going to take God's almighty power to set you free.

If you get a cut or some other kind of wound and you don't clean it up and get a bandage on it, a dangerous infection might enter your body through that wound. Addictions are like a spiritual infection; and just like an infection in your body, they can enter you through a wound. Maybe your parents abused you or left you when you were little. Maybe you've tried real hard to get people to like you and to be a success, and you failed. Things like that wound a person's spirit. And if you start getting high, the addiction gets into you through those wounds.

The drug takes away the pain of being ashamed or lonely or angry for a little while, and you find yourself wanting to get high more and more often so you never have to feel that pain any more. The infection gets worse, and you spend more and more of your time and money on getting high. You start doing things like lying, hurting, or stealing from the people you love. The Bible says, "I will not be controlled by anything" (1 Corinthians 6:12), but that's exactly what happens to someone who becomes addicted; the business of getting high takes over your life.

1. Addictions are like a spiritual \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Things like abuse or feelings of failure give you a wounded \_\_\_\_\_, and addictions can enter you through those wounds.
3. Getting high keeps you from feeling \_\_\_\_\_, and the business of getting high takes over your \_\_\_\_\_.

(Check your answers on page 11)

One reason cravings for drugs can take over so powerfully is because there's a spiritual force behind the addiction. Think of how liquor stores advertise that they sell "Wine & Spirits." The Bible says a lot about evil spirits, called demons, taking over people's lives and torturing them. Those same evil spirits get at people through drugs in our time and take over their lives and torment them.

Satan has lots of ways to trap you - drugs and alcohol, or porn and sex outside of marriage, or hate and pride and worry - and you are powerless to get yourself out of that trap. You might have told yourself and the people who cared about you, "I can quit any time I want." But that's a lie. In the Bible the apostle Paul wrote, "I know there is nothing good in my sinful nature. I want to do what is good, but I can't. I don't do the good things I want to do. I keep on doing the evil things I don't want to do.

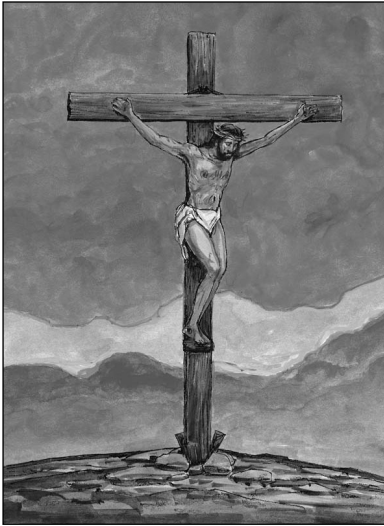
I do what I don't want to do. But I am not really the one who is doing it. It is sin living in me ... The sinful mind is at war with God. It does not obey God's law. It can't. "Those who are controlled by their sinful nature can't please God" (Romans 7:18- 20,8:7-8).

That's why the First Step says, "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable." You don't have the power to fight your way out of the trap the devil has laid for you.

4. Drugs take over an addict so powerfully because evil \_\_\_\_\_ can use them to take over people's lives.
5. The power of sin living in you can keep you from doing the \_\_\_\_\_ you want to do and make you do the \_\_\_\_\_ you don't want to do.

(Check your answers on page 11)

But God isn't powerless. God's power is greater than any other power, including the evil powers from behind addictions. The Bible says that God has chosen to love you and set you free from the devil's trap through His son, Jesus. Jesus left heaven and came into our world. He was born as a human being. He took all the blame for what we've done wrong off of us and put it all on Himself. That's what was happening when Jesus died on the cross. When you put your trust in Jesus you have complete forgiveness for everything you've ever done, said or



thought that was wrong. The Bible says, "Give glory and power to the One who loves us! He has set us free from our sins by pouring out his blood for us" (Revelation 1:5). That means you can be sure of going to heaven when you die, when you trust in Jesus as your Savior.

But you might be thinking, "That's great, but I'm not dead yet. And right now my addiction is pulling me into sin and away from the life God wants for me. Can't God do anything about that?" The answer is yes. The Bible says, "The Son of God came to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8), and that includes destroying the devil's trap of addiction. The Second Step says, "We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves



could restore us to sanity." The Bible tells us that Jesus is that power.

6. God's power is \_\_\_\_\_ than the power of addiction.
7. God sent \_\_\_\_\_ into our world to free us from the devil's trap.
8. Jesus took the blame for our \_\_\_\_\_ on Himself and died on a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. When you trust in Jesus you can be sure of going to \_\_\_\_\_ when you die.
10. The power of Jesus can \_\_\_\_\_ the works of Satan, and restore us to \_\_\_\_\_.

(Check your answers on page 11)

## Review of Chapter One

You've had some bad things happen to you, things that have wounded your spirit. You've tried to use things that went against God's will to ease the pain of those wounds, things like drugs, alcohol, sex outside of marriage, etc. But along with getting relief from your pain for a little while, you got something you hadn't planned on: an evil spiritual force that started taking over your life and turning you into something you didn't want to be. And you're powerless to free yourself from the control of this evil force.

But God loves you, and he has the power to set you free from the powers of hell trying to keep you down. He showed that love by sending His son, Jesus, who died to take away the blame for everything you've done, said or thought that was wrong. And besides promising to forgive you for your sins and give you eternal life in heaven. God has promised you power to live a sane life, free from the control of addiction.

### Thought questions:

1. If you don't get high, or when you couldn't get any drugs, what sinful things have you used to block out the pain of your wounded spirit? (For example: controlling other people, going into rages, homosexual activity, spending most of your waking hours watching TV, working too long and too hard, etc.)



**Test on Chapter One**

1. Your spirit has been \_\_\_\_\_ by bad things that have happened in your life; the spiritual infection called "addiction" entered into your spirit when you \_\_\_\_\_ to block out the pain in your spirit.
  
2. You can get temporary relief from your spiritual pain through drugs, but you can also get something else along with it: an evil \_\_\_\_\_ can take control of your \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. To be honest, you have to admit that you are \_\_\_\_\_ over alcohol or whatever the devil has used to take over your life.
  
4. God's power is \_\_\_\_\_ than the power of addictions.
  
5. When Jesus died on the cross, He won \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins.
  
6. When you trust in Jesus, you can:
  - A. hope you're going to heaven.
  - B. be pretty sure you're going to heaven.
  - C. be totally sure you're going to heaven.[circle the best answer]

7. Jesus has the power to:
- A. free you from the control of addiction.
  - B. help you cut back on your sinning.
  - C. take you to heaven, but you're on your own in this world.
- [circle the best answer]

(Check your answers on page 52)

### **Using Your Bible**

To find out more about the addictive power of sin, and the greater power of God, you can check it out in the Bible:

The insanity of addiction: Proverbs 23:29-35

Demons trying to take over people's spirits, and Jesus setting them free:

Luke 8:26-39, Mark 9:14-29

Our powerlessness to fix ourselves:

Romans 7:7-25

God's power to forgive us and set us free from the control of sin: Romans 8

*Chapter Five***REVIEW! PLAN! PRAY! GO FORWARD!****Review!**

You have had bad things happen to you, things that have wounded your spirit. You have tried to use things like drugs and alcohol to ease the pain of those wounds. This may have given you relief from your pain for a little while. However, you got something you hadn't planned on. The devil and his demons took over your life.



On your own, you are powerless to free yourself from the control of the devil and your own sinful nature. Yet, God still loves you. He has the power to set you free from the powers trying to keep you addicted. God showed His love by sending Jesus, God the Son, Who died to take away your sins and the sins of all people. He also kept all of God's

commandments for you and for everyone in the world. God promises you forgiveness for all your sins and eternal life in heaven through faith in Jesus as your Savior from sin. Besides all this, God has also promised that He will give you the power to be free from addiction so you can live a new life for Him.

You need to remember that you cannot change your life on your own. Only God can change your life through faith in Jesus. When God gives you faith in Jesus, He comes to live in your heart and gives you a new self. When God gives you faith to believe that He has forgiven your sins for Jesus' sake, you will want to do His will. Yet, even though God gives you a new nature, you still have your old nature which stays with you until the day you die. Paul says of that old nature that nothing good lives in it (Romans 7:18). Things like hatred, lust, and desires to abuse drugs and alcohol still remain in your sinful nature.

When you start your new life with God, you bring along a lot of things from your old life, such as memories of hurt and shame and sinful habits of thinking and living. You may not even be aware of all your old baggage, but it is real and it gets in the way of living a new life for God.

In His Word, the Bible, God tells us how we are to act, what we are to say, do, and think. Every day we need to look into the "mirror" of God's law and see those things which we say and do which are against God's will. Every day we need to admit our sins to God and ask Him for forgiveness. Everyday God assures us through His Word that He has forgiven us our sins. Out of thankfulness for God's forgiveness, we will want to change what is wrong in our lives and live a life of thankfulness to God.

When God changes our lives so that we love Him, He also gives us the power to change our relationships with others. Because God loves us, we

love each other and we care about the pain that other people have. If we have caused other people's pain, we will want to ask them to forgive us. We will try to undo the wrong we have done, if that is possible. We will also want to share with others the reason why our lives have changed. We are showing love to others as a way of saying "thank you" to Jesus for all the love He has shown to us.

**Let us review several important truths.**

1. On your own, you are \_\_\_\_\_ to free yourself from the control of the devil and your own sinful nature.
2. God promises you \_\_\_\_\_ for all your sins and eternal life in heaven through faith in Jesus as your Savior from sin.
3. God has also promised that He will give you the \_\_\_\_\_ to be free from addiction so you can live a new life for Him.
4. Every day we need to look into the "mirror" of God's \_\_\_\_\_ and see those things which we say and do which are against God's will.
5. When God changes our lives so that we love Him, He also gives us the power to \_\_\_\_\_ our relationships with others.

(Check your answers on page 52)



**PLAN!**

When you leave prison, there are a number of practical matters you will have to take care of as you get on with your life. Pray that God will guide you and give you strength to do what will be best for living your life as a Christian. The following is a list of things that you will want to do when you get out.

- 1. Pray for and make Christian friends** who will encourage you, will listen to your frustrations, and will offer you good advice. You will also want to avoid contact with your old friends who helped you to get into trouble. Stay away from anyone who wants to lead you away from Jesus.
- 2. Ask God to help you avoid having sex with anyone but your husband or wife.** Say “No!” to tempting invitations from old boyfriends or girlfriends. Sex is a gift Jesus gives husbands and wives in marriage. People who want you to have sex outside of marriage are trying to lead you away from Jesus.
- 3. Ask God to strengthen your faith. Spend time every day with Jesus.** Read a portion of the Bible every day, especially in the morning. Talk to Jesus in prayer every day. Thank Him for saving you from your sins. Thank Him for all the blessings He gives you. Ask Him for help in your life. Ask Him for strength to remain faithful to Him. Reading the Bible and learning about God’s love for you will strengthen you so you can remain close to Him. Jesus will give you the power to overcome any addiction that might be

controlling you. Examples: alcohol, sex, gambling, drugs, money, pornography. He sometimes gives you help through recovery groups, which give you ideas, warnings, and encouragement to overcome your addiction

**4. Pray for and look for a job where you can earn an honest living.**



It is better to bag groceries in a supermarket out of love for Jesus than to get lots of money dishonestly. Money soon disappears. Jesus is with us now and will be with us forever.

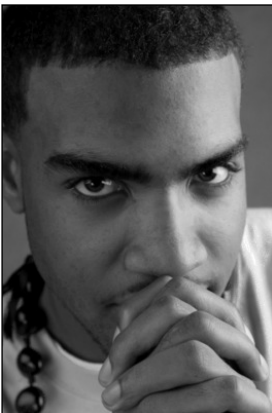
**5. Ask God to help you show respect to police officers, sheriff's deputies, and parole or probation officers.** Jesus has given these people to you to help you and to hold you responsible if you return to law-breaking behavior.

**6. Ask God to help you stay calm in all situations.** Uncontrolled anger is sinful and will get you into trouble again. Remember that Jesus is always with you to take care of you and to help you stay calm. In all of your dealings with people, tell the truth. Telling lies is sinful. If speaking the truth reveals some of your shortcomings, ask people to be understanding.

**Pray!**

As you plan for the time you will be free, you may find the following prayer helpful:

**Dear Jesus, You have set me free from the power of sin and addiction by Your death on the cross. I believe that You have forgiven me all of my sins. Because of Your great love for me, I now want to live my life for You. Give me the strength to say no to my addiction and to any other temptation which tries to enslave me again. Walk with me throughout my life. Help me to realize that it is not the bars of prison or jail which enslave me, but it is slavery to my own sinful desires which keeps me addicted. You have freed me from the power of sin. Help me to live a new life for You. Help me to show love to others, and to share with them the good news about the salvation from sin and addiction we have in Jesus. In Your name I pray. Amen.**

**GO FORWARD!**

Your addiction probably got you into trouble in the first place. How can you do any better in being free from addiction when you get out into the free world again? Remember that God is with you. He loves you. He has forgiven all of your sins. His love for us changes our hearts. We can look at other people

and love them, even when they hurt us. Jesus prayed for those who were crucifying Him on the cross. He loved those people and died to pay for their sins. We all have hurt Jesus with our sins. Yet, He also suffered to pay for our sins. When you feel yourself drawn again to addiction, remember all that Jesus did for you. Ask Him to send His Holy Spirit to give you the strength to say “no” to addiction. Ask Him to help you to love others as God has loved you. Always remember that God loves you. He wants you to succeed. He will give you the strength to live free from addiction.

**Let us review several important points.**

6. We can look at other people and \_\_\_\_\_ them, even when they hurt us.
7. Jesus also suffered to \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins.
8. When you feel yourself drawn again to addiction, \_\_\_\_\_ all that Jesus did for you.
9. Ask Jesus to send His Holy Spirit to give you the \_\_\_\_\_ to say “no” to addiction.
10. God will give you the strength to live \_\_\_\_\_ from addiction.

(Check your answers on page 52)