

Pastoral Lessons from Dealing with Addictions

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Lessons Regarding the Offender

1. The negative role of ungodly friends/influences (Psa. 1:1; Prov. 1:8-19; 12:26; 13:20; 22:24-25; 1 Cor. 15:33)
2. The insidious nature of sin (Gal. 5:16; Heb. 3:12-13)
 - Sin is powerful
 - Sin is brutal and cruel
 - Sin is subtle
 - Sin is deceitful
 - Sin will harden the heart
 - Sin will enslave
3. Drug/alcohol abusers become deceitful and manipulative (Jer. 17:9)
4. Counseling in these situations is incredibly consuming
5. The ordinary means of grace must be emphasized (Psa. 19:7-11; 119, 9, 11; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 3:12-13; 1 Pet. 2:2)
6. Church discipline must be explained and implemented seriously (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13).

Reflections on Mistakes

1. The use of AA
2. Overly sympathetic to the spouse
3. Allowing too much flexibility for the offender

Things We Are Still Working On

1. How can biblical intervention begin sooner?
2. How can we utilize ministry structures for earlier intervention?
3. How can we create a more effective one-another culture so that people are both equipped and emboldened to confront and give counsel and be humble and receive counsel?
4. How can we better teach the Word to help prevent going down this road?
5. How can we develop local resources for dealing with these time-consuming sins?

Important Reminders

1. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)
2. The Goal in these matters is not merely sobriety, but genuine repentance and sanctification (2 Cor. 7:9-11; Col. 3:5-11).
3. The Standard of Success is whether or not we have dealt faithfully with the offender.