

Claiming My Addiction, Claiming Jesus' Victory

Lesson 2

How does a Christian who is dealing with an addiction describe himself? Can he simply say, "My name is Joe, I am an alcoholic"? Should he avoid saying things like that for fear that his words will set him up for failure? Does he need to find a way to say it that gives glory to God and not to his addiction? What about the need to keep himself out of denial about his addiction?

As with just about everything else, God made very few rules for us here. This is an area of life where God has only given us a few guidelines and left us free to make our own decisions.

Paul's writings help a lot here. Paul made it very clear that it's the blood of Jesus that makes us right with God, not our efforts to follow rules. Because we are free from guilt through Jesus' dying for us, we are free to find ways that work best for us to live out our new Christian lives. He wrote, for instance, in Titus 1:15, "**To the pure, all things are pure.**" Because I am pure through the blood of Jesus I can now use different methods put them to work for God's purposes in working my recovery program. I can work with the Holy Spirit in me to make decisions for myself about what will work best *for me*.

Paul wrote, "**I can do everything through him who gives me strength**" (**Philippians 4:13**), talking about how Jesus gives him victory over limitations. He also wrote about how God sometimes let him live with weaknesses and limitations: "**Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'**" (**2 Corinthians 12:8-9**).

Paul talked about his new identity in Jesus: "**If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**" (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). He also talked about his sinful human condition in the present tense: "**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst**" (**1 Timothy 1:15**).

So it comes down to this: What helps *me* with *my* recovery? Do I need to...

- Proclaim the Holy Spirit's victorious power over the power of my addiction?
- Claim ownership of my condition so I can hand it over to Jesus?
- Emphasize my powerlessness over my addiction?
- Emphasize Jesus' power over my addiction?
- Confess my sinful condition, to glorify Jesus' power to forgive and heal?
- Claim my new identity, so I don't get bogged down in my old stuff?

What have you found useful in describing your condition?