

Restore Series 8: Overcoming Addiction

Intro

Addiction is a complex subject and something that we can't possibly address effectively in 30 minutes. But I hope today to:

- get us thinking about the possibility of addiction in our own lives
- provide some understanding of what addiction is including its cause
- how we can best respond to those with addiction
- reduce any judgment we may harbour towards people with addiction

My primary information source: Dr. Gabor Mate, a Canadian doctor who worked extensively and successfully with people experiencing severe addiction issues and his book *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction*

Addiction Definition

Any behavior that is associated with craving and temporary relief, and with long-term negative consequences, that a person is not able to give up (Mate).

To be trapped by a larger force, and be powerless to do anything about it (Richard Rohr).

Types of Addiction

Activities: sex, gambling, eating, shopping, work, the internet

Substances: alcohol and drugs

All engage the same brain circuitry, the same reward system, the same psychological dynamic and result in the same emptiness.

Addiction is Damaging

Addiction is doing something pleasurable but the continued act or use becomes compulsive and impacts negatively upon the ordinary responsibilities of life, such as relationships, work or one's health.

Why do we continue with damaging behaviours?

All addiction is about self-soothing. Addiction essentially is trying to get something from the outside to fill a gap and soothe pain.

Addiction Cause

Trauma or emotional loss is the universal template for addiction (Dr. Gabor Mate).

Trauma = things that happen that shouldn't happen and things that should happen that don't happen. People are equally hurt by things that should happen and don't as they are by things that shouldn't happen but do.

Introduce Michael from AA to share his journey with addiction.

AA gives us an insight into how we are to best respond to addiction.

Addiction // Response

In term of addictions, first of all recognize that these people are traumatized and what they need is not more trauma and punishment but more **compassion** and **community**. (Dr. Gabor Mate)

People struggling with addiction have been hurt or traumatized by people and their means of healing is people. The role of the church is to represent God by being welcoming and embracing presence for those impacted by addiction. God heals but often does so through the miracle of community.