

5 Steps To Freedom From Addiction

by Shane Idleman

This sermon addresses the struggle of addiction, emphasizing the need for surrender to God for true freedom. It highlights the importance of acknowledging one's sins, repentance, and complete surrender to Christ for transformation. The speaker shares insights on the battle against addiction, the power of obedience, resisting temptation, and the necessity of surrendering excuses and pride to experience God's deliverance and restoration.

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:13, 2 Corinthians 5:17, James 4:7, Philippians 4:8, 1 Peter 2:11, 1 John 2:3, James 1:22, Philippians 3:13, Romans 6:16, Luke 15:11

Topics: "Addiction", "Surrender to God"

Description

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Transcript

Help, I'm addicted. Kind of fits in a little bit, right? Five steps to freedom. Five steps to freedom.

And I don't know why God has given me a desire and a help just this morning, I was on a call at 545 in the morning, helping a gentleman overcome addiction. And I tell Abram, I take the 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. shift, you take the 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. shift. We kind of balance it out well.

And just because God has brought me through so much, I know what it feels like to not be able to stop that first drink or second drink or sixth drink. I remember buying eight balls of crystal meth out here in Palmdale. I know it's hard to believe, but God does amazing things with those who are broke and a contrite.

Because often, one of the ways I encourage those who have come out of addiction is often, those who have been forgiven much, love much. And the deeper you've been hurt, often the more intimate relationship you have with the Lord, because He's the one that's held you together. And so I just have a heart for those.

And I don't like to beat people up. Believe me, they're already convicted. They don't need you quoting scriptures.

I know you blow it again. They need love and encouragement because they are being convicted beyond something you will ever know. They're at the point of despair many times, but they also need the truth.

Evil never surrenders its hold without a fight. I think I have this up here from one of the famous preachers of 100 years ago. Evil never surrenders its hold without a fight.

We never pass into any spiritual inheritance through the delightful exercise of a picnic, but always through the grim contentions of the battlefield. Life is a battlefield. And tonight, I wanna help those with major addictions and minor addictions.

And the reason is, any type of addiction will seek to destroy you or to set you back, or both. The flesh basically says, feed me so I can destroy you. And of course, we can't put the same, in the same camp of, people all the time, I'm praying for that, I can't get off my cigarettes or my nicotine, I'm addicted to chocolate.

Well, me too. Versus fentanyl. I mean, there's a big difference there.

However, at the root of all addiction is a stronghold. We've given over this position in our life to a stronghold. I'm not gonna talk on the demonic elements of it.

I have before. But I wanna just give you five things that will offer some hope, hopefully for those who will listen later. Also, I want to, I put a note in my phone to email our radio producer.

I'm hoping I can get the worship on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at one o'clock if you guys wanna check out on our radio network. It's throughout the high desert here. So we just, we want to encourage those who are struggling in this area.

Galatians 6.9, let it not, let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Guys, I'm telling you, the more I pastor, the more I realize the importance of perseverance, regardless of how you feel. Streams in the desert.

I'm gonna quote that quite a bit this year. They said this, when you have no vision from God, no enthusiasm left in your life, and no one watching and encouraging you, it requires the grace of Almighty God to take the next step in your devotion to Him. We lose interest and we give up when we have no vision, no encouragement, and no improvement, but only experience our everyday life with its trivial tasks.

The things that really testify for God and the people of God in the long run, it's steady perseverance. And the only way to live an undefeated life is to live looking to God. Ask God to keep the eyes of your spirit upon the risen Christ, and it will be impossible for drudgery to discourage you.

Never allow yourself to think that some tasks are beneath your dignity, or too insignificant for you to do, and remind yourself of the example of Christ. It's a little long on that, but the point I was trying to make is, many times we go through life based on our feelings. And we have to pursue God even when we don't feel like it.

And right now in our nation, this is why I believe it's so pivotal for this group to get out and testify and for others to be encouraged, because we are at a crossroads right now. Opiate and alcohol abuse are leaving a path of destruction in their wake. Pornography is desecrating families.

Obesity is skyrocketing, plaguing millions and reaching epidemic levels in children, all because of addiction. Heart disease and cancer are by far the leading killers in America. But are there answers? Yes, there are, if we once again set our sights on God.

Now again, I know there's different people gonna be listening. Some are in some heavy addiction. Others are not.

But I wanna read this poem, an excerpt from it that I took from my book. It was actually written by an unknown author. I tried to trace it down.

I think she overdosed of a heroin. I had a heroin overdose and passed away and her parents found this. She wrote, I destroy homes and I tear families apart.

I take your children and that's just the start. I'm more costly than diamonds, more costly than gold. The sorrow I bring you is a sight to behold.

Just try me once and I might let you go, but try me twice and I'll own your soul. And we have to realize that serious addictions have to be dealt with. Excuses must die at the foot of the cross.

A wise man once said, when faced with temptation, play the whole tape out in your mind. Doesn't that help? When you're forced with temptation, play it out in your mind. And where is this going to lead me in a month or six months or a year? And we see a lot of incredible things that God does, of course, but we also see a lot of broken families and ruined marriages and people in their fifth recovery home.

And it often starts by small compromises that lead to the bottom down here. It's the little things and not taking those things captive. And so the five points, I'll just go over them briefly.

Number one, you have to remember, there is always hope. There is always hope no matter where you're at. Many trapped in addiction go through life lacking passion, direction, and purpose, often living with a sense of remorse and guilt.

A relationship with Christ changes that completely. 2 Corinthians, therefore, if anyone, not somebody, not a few people, if anybody is in Christ, they are a new creation. Old things have passed away.

Behold, the things have become new. There is hope in that relationship. But what about Christians who need hope? The majority of people that I reach out to and I help and I talk with, did you know the majority of them caught in addiction are Christians? Pastor, if they were really a Christian, oh no, no, no.

Let me tell you, being a Christian doesn't mean you are exempt from temptation and now you walk perfectly. Sometimes it's more challenging. Sometimes it's more difficult.

And there's again a difference between a struggle and a lifestyle. If somebody is struggling with this versus a lifestyle. The Bible calls a lifestyle sin that leads unto death.

A struggle, Paul calls a work of the flesh that needs to be repented of. And there's always hope, even for Christians. Overcoming addiction has a great deal to do with falling forward.

This is not a license to sin, but it is an encouragement to those who keep falling to get back up and fight again. That's what many people need to know. Yes, maybe your spouse has left for now.

They've taken the kids. Maybe you are in your third recovery home. Maybe you've been doing good for years and you fell again, but don't live in the shame and the guilt and lay down there.

Get back up and fight against it. Okay, devil. Okay, you got me.

You got me. You got me. You got me with that Mike Tyson right hook, but I'm getting back up.

I'm getting back up and I'm gonna keep fighting. And that's really how you get through life. If you could see all my mistakes, you wouldn't be here and I wouldn't be at your church either.

Right? We all fall and we get back up and we keep fighting and we keep going forward. God uses our failures to remind us of our need for Him. Once we look to Him, strongholds begin to lose their power.

The allurements of sin begins to weaken its grip and some strongholds don't immediately crumble. They come down one brick at a time. That's why we must pray.

We must fast. We must apply the Word of God. We must worship.

We must trust in God. This is how we fight our battles. I love that song.

This is how we fight our battles, on our knees before God. And I've just seen it over the years that sometimes people think I must not be a Christian if I'm struggling. And I keep falling.

And again, I'm not giving permission to keep falling. I hope you understand that. But we also have to encourage people to get back up and fight again.

We've forgotten that we slip and fall sometimes. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and though he falls, he will not be cast down because the Lord pulls him up. Literally, the Hebrew talks in that verse, pulls him up with his right hand, his arm of strength.

So God says a good man will fall, but God will pull him up. Again, let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Those in recovery know all about the acronym HALT.

Have you heard that before? Teen Challenge people that are here, HALT. Most people fall when they're hungry, angry, lonely, and tired. Basically when they're done persevering.

The enemy looks for those opportune times. Remember he left Jesus and the enemy said he, the Bible says he left and he's waiting for an opportune time. There are moments in your life where you need to know this is a weak area for me.

This is where the enemy, this is my crack in the armor. And we all have a crack in the armor. Mine's different than yours.

Yours is different than mine. But we have to be aware of those opportune times and persevere and get back up. And then number two is so important.

We must change from the inside out. So many of us want to make outside change. If I just don't do that again, why did I do that? And we're focused on the outward, which of course is good.

But real change comes from the inward, man, as your thoughts are renewed. Because the actions, our thoughts become words, our words become actions, our actions form habits, right? So changing from the

inside out. And I had to record this early on years ago and I want to share it again.

An ER nurse reached out to me. And she said, I care for many people caught in addiction in the ER. Do you know that the ER is full of people? Relapsing, overdosing, a lot of it is addiction.

Sadly, they love their sin and often play the victim. Most of them, not all, most of them don't want to change, including believers. They do not want to see themselves for who they really are.

Their pride doesn't allow them to submit themselves to God. And if you think about it, in the Bible, when I read this, every time I'm like, that's interesting. Jesus would often say, do you want to be made well? Well, that seems silly, doesn't it? But the more you talk to people, the more excuses.

I love my addiction and here's why I do it. The victim mentality, the excuses. I've had a hard day.

I'm going to stop by the liquor store and just get one. Well, who knows that one turns into 12? Right? The enemy doesn't lead us down, push us off the building. He leads us down one step at a time.

One wrong choice at a time. Well, you don't know my spouse or my kids put me through this or my back's hurting again. Let me call.

And then before we know it, we're on a year where it's a vixie or we're stressed out and there's a Xanax. Have you ever read the side effects of Xanax? It's like, I'd rather just deal with the symptoms. I mean, and you ever see those commercials? Could cause swelling and cancer and rupture of the heart and bleeding and mass and heart attack and suicidal thoughts.

I'm like, how is this going to help? Now, again, I do a big disclaimer so I don't upset people. I'm not against medication from time to time, obviously. The problem is we run to it, not God first.

Run to God, let him give you wisdom, search your heart and then see what's going on. Because so many things could be happening. It could be a demonic attack.

It could be serotonin deficiencies where you do need a serotonin uptake inhibitor. Or it could be health issues, how you're taking care of your body. There's so many different things.

But we think if you just give me that pill. And often that only masks the pain. And I only say that because a lot of times the people I'm praying with over the years, it started with seemingly innocent compromises in certain areas, and now they can't get off their 12 pills a day.

Now they're meeting dealers late at night. They're changing names and getting different IDs so the pharmacies don't catch them. How did that happen? Addiction, addiction.

So we have to remove excuses. This is an important step. Don't use triggers to justify actions.

Uh oh, do I need to say that again? Don't use triggers to justify wrong actions. Philippians 4.8, fix our thoughts on what is true and honorable and right, and think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable and worthy of praise. How's everyone doing in that? In that area.

That means we need to turn off social media most of the day. And ask, will it build me up spiritually or will it pull me down? Will it fuel my addiction or will it quench it? And nine times out of 10, when we pray for young adults, and it's that dark, sometimes that gothic, dark, depressed, you can really sense it. If you

begin to ask them what they're watching and listening to, it's no surprise that they're struggling with those things.

As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. That's how we have to change from the inside out. Begin putting God's Word in our heart.

Begin putting worship. I know a lot of us already know this, but it's a good reminder that we don't drift off course immediately, often. It's a slow drift.

It's a slow drift. I'm gonna not come to church as much. I don't need to go to the men's study anymore, or the women's group, or Wednesday, or I got a promotion at work, I don't have time to read the Bible anymore.

And see, it's these slow drifts that we need to pull back from. The source of our strength comes from the food that we choose. What we feed grows, and what grows becomes the dominating force within our lives.

Our thoughts become words, our words become actions, our actions become habits. I knew I read that somewhere. And then number three, I'm going quickly here, resist temptation.

Yes, did you know you can resist temptation? Oh, the devil made me do it. No, he didn't. How many of you guys remember Flip Wilson? If you're older than me, you probably remember Flip Wilson.

He was on TV, he said, the devil made me do it. And we see, that devil's after my marriage. No, you're just a jerk.

The devil drove me to the liquor store. No, you did. They might influence and manipulate, and the greater the stronghold, the greater the pressure.

But according to the Bible, as a believer, you can say no to temptation. I'm gonna use, I don't usually use this, I'm gonna use the NLT, but 1 Corinthians, it gives you a phrase, thought for thought interpretation, that temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful, that's key.

I'm not faithful, I'm not strong enough. God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tempted more than you can stand.

When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure it. So there's always a way out. The problem with temptation is, as soon as you recognize it, that's when you turn.

Because if you recognize it, you begin to contemplate it, you begin to think about it, you begin to dwell on it, you begin to justify it, then it's got you. Temptation must be taken captive right away. But we hear things like, it's not our strength, but him working in us, correct? I say it, and that's true.

It's not our strength at all, but it's him working in us. Yes, that is true, but we also have responsibilities. 1 Peter 2, 11 says, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

So the Holy Spirit leads us, but we must act. He strengthens us, but we must submit. He convicts us, but we must respond.

And he will restore us, but we must repent. As unbelievers, we are in rebellion and obsessed with self. We want to run our own lives and are controlled by jealousy, anger, pride, and all the works of the flesh.

But as believers, for most of us here, although the wages of sin is paid in full at the cross, the fallout still remains. We struggle with the flesh. Isn't that interesting? We've been free of the penalty of it, but it sure has a pull.

It's like, I imagine sometimes people, they're free from jail, right? They've been, the jail doors have been open, and they walk out free. But, oh, I miss that three meals a day. I miss that, I TV whenever I want.

And there's something, they're free, but there's something that pulls them back into that prison. And that's what the flesh does. That's why I abstain from the works of the flesh and make no provision for the works of the flesh.

Crucify the flesh. All these biblical words on taking authority over this in our lives. And then number four, it goes right with this.

Do not at any time whatsoever overlook the power of obedience. I was gonna give a sermon here in the future, and I did a little bit, kind of played a play on words, and I talked about this a little bit already a year ago or so, but when a little thing is a big deal, it's often God's going after the little things in our lives, isn't He? And we have to deal with those little things before they become a big deal. We must seek to identify the middle ground between our responsibility and God's role in changing us.

If the pendulum swings too much in the grace direction, amen for grace. Thank God for God's grace. Thank God, if it wasn't for your grace, I would not be here.

There's a famous song, Amazing Grace says, how sweet the sound saved a wretch like me. I was lost, but now I'm found. I was blind, but now I see.

It's grace that's brought me here thus far, and it'll be grace that leads me home. But if all we do is focus on grace, obedience will suffer. And that's why they call it, if it's all about love, if it's all about grace, it's very soft on sin, candy-coating the gospel, that's where all those phrases come from.

But then if you're over here on obedience, then you become a rigid, legalistic Pharisee beating people up with the Word of God. And that really doesn't work well. But you have to find the middle.

You have to give them the grace, but shoot them straight. Shane, do you have any proof for that? Yeah, just read Jesus. Just read all the red letters in the Bible, full of grace and truth.

And people always say, but Shane, he loved the sinners and ate with them and didn't. Well, yeah, but he also said, I cannot do many works there in your cities because you do not repent. When he talked harshly to the religious leaders, they're actually unbelievers.

Did you know that? The religious leaders were not Christians. They were prideful, arrogant men. And he said, you whitewashed tombs.

Oh, you look great on the outside, but you're just like dead men on the inside. And he would call them out. He had that wonderful balance.

James 1.22, be doers of the word and not hearers only. Deceiving yourself. Obedience is a hallmark of faith.

1 John 2, now by this, we know him. Here's how you know, this is amazing. I wish I had more time to open it up.

I'm gonna do it Sunday, hopefully. Here's how we know that we know Jesus. If we love people, that's a hallmark.

If we've studied the Bible and read it every day, that's good, but what is it? Here's how we know him if we keep his commandments. And thank God that word keep there is like a sailor, a captain of a ship keeping the ship due north. Doesn't mean it doesn't drift, but it gets it back on course.

I'm drifting, but I get back on course. He keeps the commandment. He falls forward.

He gets back on track. He has a love for God in his word. Does it break your heart when you break God's heart? That's a good thing.

When my kids are convicted, I'm happy. Woe be the person, I didn't do anything wrong. Lying's not wrong.

I don't care, and they start to justify sin. There's no excuse. And that's why Paul says neither drunkards, homosexuals, covetousness, adulterers, all these things, he says none of them will enter the kingdom of heaven.

But then he says, such were some of you. What, wait a minute here. See, it's not a specific sin.

Oh, your sin is really bad. You're a sexual deviant, where you're a drunkard, so you're not as bad. All of those sins are just a manifestation of a wrong relationship with God.

And so Paul's saying, if it comes out this way, or this way, or this way, we're gonna get in Revelation where he actually says cowards are appointed to the lake of fire. Cowards? Lord, I struggle with that sometimes. Help me.

But see, a struggle versus a lifestyle. And so those people are not convicted that I'm really concerned about. And I've seen them over the years.

They just lie, and they cheat, and they have no conviction whatsoever. That's the inner alarm clock of the Holy Spirit convicting you. So remember, sanctification is God's job, but obedience is yours.

Yours. Actually, obedience is better than sacrifice. I'm not gonna get into the whole passage, but basically, one of the kings, Solomon did something, and he did what he thought would be right.

He kind of disobeyed, but at least he did what was good. And the prophet rebuked him. He said, obedience, rebellion is the sin of witchcraft.

Obedience, obeying God, it's better than sacrifice. It would be like not obeying God. Okay, I'm not gonna obey God.

No, I'm gonna come in here, I'm gonna take communion. I'm gonna sacrifice myself on the altar. I'm gonna act all spiritual and go home.

That, you might as well not even come to church, and you might as well have dealt with that attitude at your house before coming to church. Obedience. Some prayer request, I'm gonna get controversial.

Are you ready? Some prayer requests need to be backed by action. Some prayer requests need to be backed by action. I'm just telling you.

Here we go, here's some examples. Lord, if the shoe fits, wear it. Lord, help me with my anger.

Help me with my anxiety. Help me with my fear. Help me with my depression.

It's like God is saying, I will, but you must die to self, and you must remove those things that are causing them. You must remove certain things. One of the, when you talk to, get involved in men's ministry, do you know what makes, this is amazing statistic too, what makes men, many, many Christian men angry? Is because they are bound to pornography.

And they know it, and they're caught, and they don't repent, and they stay there, and they're angry, and they're frustrated, and they lash out. Caught, but Lord, take this away. I will, but you also gotta make some changes.

Lord, help me with my addiction to alcohol. I will, but you must stop going to the bar and hanging out with the wrong people. Don't justify your actions and look for excuses.

Lord, help me with my gambling. I will, but don't drive to Vegas. Come on, Joker.

Come on, Jack. I don't know what I'm saying there. It's just, I was gonna say other things, but I caught myself.

Lord, help me with, and I just dealt with this with someone a while back. Help me with my addiction to opioids. I will, but you need to stop asking your doctor to prescribe them every time you get hurt.

Do you know that's where a lot of people get on the pain meds? My back's hurting. So is mine. So is mine.

I would love to take a Vicodin before I preach, but I don't think it's gonna work out good. Last resort, not a first resort. Lord, help me with my addiction to porn.

I will, but you need to stop going online during vulnerable times and not in private. Lord, help me with my, you fill in the blank. I will, but.

Now, am I saying there's always a but? No, of course not. God answers prayer in spite of our actions, in spite of what we do, but we also know that many times we are the cause of our situation. And instead of repenting and changing some things, we continue to just bring it to the Lord in prayer.

When God wants to deal with us first. Praise God if your addiction vanishes once you surrender to God, but many times it's not easy. It's a battle.

Just curious, how many of you have completely delivered, set free, never had the desire ever again for something that was pretty strong? Okay. How many of you, once being delivered, still tries to knock on the door every now and then? Anybody out there? Okay. Correct? Sometimes it doesn't vanish.

Sometimes there's still a little something, something there that draws you back. I told some people and some friends and my wife, she knows, we visited Nashville, Tennessee. Opryland, everything, I love it.

But man, all the alcohol and country music, I'm like, I can't stay here too long because it's gonna, man, the old Shane is, I remember those days now. And see, because that album is right, it's like, what's wrong with

me, Lord? Well, because that dormant addiction can be awoke, woke again? Woke again? Awaken, thank you. Right, and so sometimes people beat themselves up, like, what's wrong with me? The Lord took it away.

Thank God when He does, but sometimes it's a battle. This is why many of us and many others need grace, not condemnation. In the book Tested and Tried, the author wrote, sometimes we actually empower Satan by the way we speak of Christian conversion.

We highlight the testimony of the ex-alcoholic who says, since I met Jesus, I've never wanted another drink. Now, that happens, and we should thank God for it. But this liberation is no more miraculous, indeed, in some ways, less so miraculous than the testimony of the repentant drunk who says, every time I hear a clink of ice in a glass, I tremble with desire, but God is faithful in keeping me sober.

And I don't know, I might add this late. I have a special note in there. It just dawned on me.

This is so important, maybe not for some of you, but those listening later, because I know people are gonna share this with their friends and family. Caught in addiction, you need to view the withdraws. When your body is withdrawing from something, this is not a time to cave in.

This is a used detox as a stepping stone, not a stumbling block. Because so many people, that's when they go back into addiction, when the withdrawals get too intense. They actually have something called POS, post-acute withdrawal syndrome.

You're doing good for a month, and then bam, the chemical imbalances, your brain, your body starts withdrawing again, and the only way I can fix this is to go get that whatever it was, or three days, four days, five days, and the body's sweating. I need that again to fix this. Yes, it will fix it temporarily, but you've gotta ride it out.

Look at those withdraws as healing signs, good signs for your body, versus stumbling blocks to fall back in. It's so important, because that's where many people go down. So many times I've talked to people, they're doing fine.

Oh man, it's a couple weeks, I'm doing great. Just be careful, be careful. Oh man, I'm doing great, I just left church, and then on Monday, oh me and my wife got into it, and it took them down.

Those opportune times again. And then finally, number five, I'll leave you at this point. Surrender, you must surrender to win.

Surrender to win. Full surrender to God is not optional. In this battle, we surrender to win.

You will seek me, and you will find me when you search for me with all of your heart. So I wanna encourage those listening, maybe later, or some here tonight, surrender excuses tonight. Own it and repent.

It's a beautiful word, repentance. Own it and repent. Apologize and repair the damage.

Crush your pride before it crushes you. Don't entertain compromise. Those are all signs of genuine repentance.

Why wait? Why wait for some of you, the train wreck could just be around the bend. We must surrender to win. I'll leave you with this thought about overcoming regret.

How many of you, you don't have to raise your hands, but usually on this topic of addiction, there's lots of regret. If I could go back, oh, if I could go back. Maybe you lost kids, you lost family members, you lost a good job.

Don't become discouraged. Who said this? Forget the past and look forward to what lies ahead. Anybody know? Forget the past and look forward to what lies ahead.

The Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul. God will use regret as a stepping stone to what he's called you to do.

Sometimes it amazes me. Do you know who Solomon, King Solomon, right? A great king. Do you know whose mom was? Who was Solomon's mom? Bathsheba.

Uh-oh. How many of you heard of Rahab the harlot? Any guess whose lineage that is part of? The lion of the tribe of Judah came from Rahab. Amazing what God does with brokenness.

Amazing. Sometimes, I don't wanna give people the permission to mess up their lives, but sometimes God will take that brokenness and rebuild it greater than you could have ever done without, when you were stuck in your pride and your arrogance. You know that song we used to sing when I came back to the Lord? I don't remember who sang it, but out of the ashes I will arise.

God will take those ashes. He'll take that brokenness. He'll say, okay, hotshot, now that you're broken, now that you're dependent on me, watch what I can do with you now.

Watch what I can do with you. Yes, you failed. Yes, you're a drunkard.

Yes, you're a user. Yes, you're an addict. That's what people call you, but I don't call you that.

Get up and fight again and watch me work through you. I don't listen to too many pastors because I don't wanna listen to men who haven't been broken by God. So I have to share this final point with you.

Sober but not saved. Sober but not saved. When I was working on this book on addiction, I think in 2018, I visited a lot of AA, right? Yeah, AA meetings, and I went to different celebrate recovery groups, and I would listen to testimonies and just, I wanted to understand.

I mean, I kinda knew, of course, but different, the nuances and how could these people who were unbelievers quit and different things, and it would break my heart hearing a lot of these testimonies and they're just like 20 years or 15 years, and that thought kept coming, sober but not saved. They're sober, but they're dying. They're going to hell.

We've gotta get our priorities straight. No matter what you've done or no matter what you've been through, you can repent and turn to Christ today. A true measure of a person is not who they were, but who they will become.

All you have to do is this right here. Acknowledge that you're a sinner. Acknowledge that Jesus died for you and repent and turn completely over to Him.

Amen. I wanna finish that poem, just a section of it. I destroy homes and tear families apart.

I take your children, and that's just a start. I'm more costly than diamonds, more costly than gold. The sorrow that I bring is a sight to behold.

Just try me once and I might let you go, but try me twice and I'll own your soul. You could have said no and just walked away. If you could live that day over, now what would you say? I'll be your master and you will be my slave.

I'll even go to you when you go to your grave. Now that we have met, what will you do? Will you try me or not? It's all up to you. I can bring you more misery than words can tell.

Come, take my hand. Let me lead you to hell. That is the true cost of addiction.

If it's unrepented. That's why God said through Paul, liars, thieves, covets, adulterers, drunkards. All those types of things are the working of the flesh.

You have to make sure you know the Lord. And then maybe for believers, the title of the message is help, I'm addicted. So maybe some of you need to say, God, help, I'm addicted.

God, help me, I'm addicted because prayer cannot be successful without a consuming desire. Ian Bound said, without desire, there is no burden for souls. There's no sense of need.

There's no urgency. There's no strength. There's no power of faith.

There's no mighty pressure to hold on to God with a death-like grip that says, I will not let you go until you bless me. So as believers, we need to cry out to God as well. Lord, humble us tonight.

Break us tonight. Renew us tonight.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/g0G9WoozFuM.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/5-steps-to-freedom-from-addiction/>

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