

(Amazing Facts) 5. Amazing Facts About Addiction and Frustration

by Zac Poonen

The pursuit of pleasure, fame, wealth, and power leads to addiction and frustration due to the law of diminishing returns, but true and lasting satisfaction can be found in acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord over every area of life.

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 5:10, Matthew 6:19

Topics: "Addiction", "True Fulfillment"

Description

Zac Poonen addresses the futility of pursuing pleasure, fame, wealth, and power, emphasizing the law of diminishing returns that leads to addiction and frustration. He illustrates how initial satisfaction from these pursuits fades, requiring greater indulgence to achieve the same pleasure, ultimately resulting in emptiness and despair. Poonen highlights that true fulfillment can only be found in God, as human hearts are designed with a spiritual vacuum that worldly pursuits cannot fill. He stresses the importance of cleansing our hearts from sin through Christ to experience lasting satisfaction and peace. The sermon calls for acknowledging Jesus as Lord over every aspect of life to overcome inner unrest.

Transcript

People all over the world are chasing after one or more of four things: PLEASURE, FAME, WEALTH and POWER.

But there is a law connected with these that we would all do well to know in advance. We could call it the law of diminishing returns.

Take for instance, the pursuit of pleasure as an example, to understand how this law operates. Initially, a pleasure gives quite a bit of satisfaction, when indulged in, in small doses - whether that pleasure be from tobacco, alcoholic drinks, rock-music, drugs, pornography or illegitimate sex. But once indulged in, these things begin to tighten their grip on their victim, until he becomes an addict, unable to live without the stimulation of that pleasure.

But further, the addict gradually finds each time, that the dose of the stimulant that he took on previous occasions does not give him the same degree of satisfaction now as it did previously. He needs to take a greater dose now to get the same degree of pleasure. This is the law of diminishing returns. In the case of

addiction to alcohol and drugs, the body and mind of the individual are finally ruined. In the case of addiction to pornography and sex, the addict goes on from normal sex to perversions and thus becomes subhuman and in some cases even worse than the animals. In each case, the victim finds himself gripped as in a carpenter's vice, unable to extricate himself.

Even the pursuit of the more refined forms of pleasure - such as the pleasure that comes from some accomplishment in the realms of science or music - does not fully satisfy; this too being subject to the law of diminishing returns.

This law operates in exactly the same way in the pursuit of fame, wealth and power as well - making addicts and ruining them - though perhaps in less ugly ways than the drug addict or sex-addict.

Consider the pursuit of fame. In school-days, this begins with just seeking to be popular with one's friends. Then the pursuit of fame continues - whether in the field of athletics, cinema, sport, or whatever - from one degree to another. One who achieves city-wide fame now looks for nation-wide fame and then for world-wide fame. In this pursuit, the person may develop ulcers in his stomach, compromise his convictions and even climb on the shoulders of others, ruining them, in order to get to the top himself. And what is his reward at the end of it all? With nothing more to conquer he is frustrated. Many film stars and other famous people have committed suicide because of their inner frustrations, despite their popularity.

Consider how this law operates in the pursuit of wealth. Initially, a man may start a business enterprise purely with the aim of earning a living. But gradually the accumulation of profits beyond his family's needs, leads him to think in terms of the expansion of his business empire. Thus begins a heated chase after wealth that never ends - for although this world has enough material resources to meet every man's needs, it does not have enough to satisfy even one man's GREED. Money and material things have a power to grip a man and to give him less and less satisfaction in life. The accumulation of material things, which a man once thought would make his life and his home happy now ceases to bring happiness. The law of diminishing returns operates here too. The electronic gadgets, the rich food, the thrill of travelling and seeing places, the high society life, etc. which he has attained through the accumulation of wealth, now satisfy him less and less. There is something hollow and empty about them all. He finds that he was happier and less tense when he had less wealth. His marital happiness, he finds, has also decreased. Thus the words of the Lord Jesus Christ are proved true, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of things that he possesses".

Consider, how this law operates in the pursuit of power and positions of honour too - whether in politics or in any other realm. In politics, for example, a man who once longed just to be elected as a Member of Parliament, now finds that he is not satisfied. He now has his eyes on a ministership. He will find at last that even if he attained the highest position in the country, he would still be frustrated and uneasy. As the old saying goes, "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown". He was not in danger of being assassinated when he was unknown!

Why is it thus in all these realms?

Within each of us there is a vacuum that can be filled only by God. Man is constantly seeking to fill that vacuum with pleasure, fame, wealth or power. But it is a futile pursuit. The ultimate result is always frustration because we are never satisfied.

The Bible says that God has placed eternity in man's heart. Someone has expressed it like this: "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God".

The law of diminishing returns is a law that God Himself has placed upon the pursuit of all that is great and attractive in this world, so that man will realize that he is a creature of eternity. He has been made with a spiritual vacuum that cannot be filled apart from the Holy Spirit of God.

But just as a cup needs to be clean before it is filled with anything worth drinking, so too our heart needs to be cleansed from sin before it can be filled with the Spirit of God. Christ died for our sins, so that our hearts might be cleansed from sin and made pure.

True and lasting satisfaction that overcomes all unrest in our hearts can be found only as we acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord over every area of our life.

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