

# The Danger of Addictions

by Zac Poonen

---

*We must choose between the downward pull of our physical nature and the upward pull of our spiritual nature, and be careful not to let our addictions control us.*

**Duration:** 30:59

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:7, Genesis 3:1, Ezekiel 16:49, Matthew 5:28, Mark 9:47, John 20:22, Galatians 6:7, Hebrews 12:15, Hebrews 12:17

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Addiction Recovery"

---

## Description

This sermon delves into the creation of man in Genesis, highlighting the unique aspects of humanity compared to animals, emphasizing the internal struggle between the spirit and the flesh. It discusses the consequences of yielding to earthly desires versus responding to the upward pull towards God. The speaker warns against justifying sin using Scripture and the progression of addiction leading to severe consequences. The importance of humility, discipline, fasting, and compassion is stressed to avoid falling into destructive patterns.

---

## Transcript

When God made man, Genesis chapter 2, we read that he made him on the same day as the animals. You've heard me say that before. God could have made the animals on the fifth day and man on the sixth day to show that man is in a different category from the animals.

But he didn't make the fish and the birds on the fifth day, but he didn't make the animals on the earth. Why didn't he do that? I mean, we talk of animal kingdom as birds, fish, and all the living creatures on the earth. But God split them up, the fish and the birds separate, and on the sixth day, the first part of the day, he made the animals from the same dust that he made man, except that he didn't form the shape of the animals.

He just said, let there be animals. But when it came to man, he shaped him. And the internal organs of animals are very similar to the internal organs of man.

Man is very different from the birds and the fish, but very similar in his body structure to animals. And then God breathed into man, you know, and he suddenly became a living soul. He got a spirit as a result of that God breathing, which made him have a conscience.

That was the image of God there that made him aware that he's a moral creature, answerable to his creator. But he had this body as well. So the reason why God made man, as I understand it, in the same day as the animals, was to tell him one thing, and to tell all of us one thing.

You are going to face a downward pull because you're made of the same dust as the animals, to the things of earth. But you're going to be different from the animals in the sense that I breathed into you, and you have an upward pull. And if you're born again, then you remember Jesus breathed upon his disciples in John chapter 20 after the resurrection and gave them the Holy Spirit.

So we've got something more of an upward pull. And all of us face this upward pull and the downward pull all the time. The Bible calls it the spirit and the flesh struggling.

And what the Lord was saying to man is, if you keep yielding to the downward pull, one day you'll be like the animals. That's why I created both of you on the same day. And you can make a choice, either to descend to the level of the animals by keeping on responding to the pulls of the dust part of you, or you can rise up to the heavenlies by responding to that other pull I put within you.

You may ask, why didn't God just remove this downward pull? Well, then we would have been like the planets who obeyed God automatically like these robots. You know, you can make a robot. God could have made Adam a robot in the sense that he had flesh and blood and bones just like us, but exactly like a human being, but inwardly programmed like a robot who would just automatically do what God says, just like the planets.

The planets cannot be sinners, and the planets cannot be holy. And if God had made Adam like that, Adam could never have been a son of God, just like a planet cannot be a son of God. A dog cannot be a son of God because even though a dog got choice, it doesn't have a conscience.

So you need two things to become a child of God or a sinner. A dog cannot be a sinner because even though it has choice, it doesn't have conscience. Planets don't have choice or conscience.

Dogs are a little better. They've got choice but no conscience. Man is choice plus conscience.

That means you can choose, and your conscience tells you which to choose, but you can disobey it. So that's the thing that makes you a sinner or a saint. So that's how God made Adam.

And you know the story how when he went into the garden, Adam and Eve, let's look at them together. They both responded in the same way to the temptation. And it's very interesting to see that the first temptation that Adam and Eve faced was related to the body and the mind.

Remember that. And you'll see later on that the first temptation that Jesus faced in the wilderness was also related to the body and the mind. The addiction of the body and the addiction of the mind is something God has forbidden.

Turn to Genesis chapter 3. We read there when the devil suggested to Eve, you know, has God really said? That's how he starts. You know, that's how he comes to us also. Is there any verse in the Bible which says you can't do this? What's wrong with this? Why don't you try it out? There's not really any particular verse that says you can't smoke or drink or try out drugs or watch movies or have a television.

There are no verses about many things. But remember, the devil starts like that. Has God really said? Has God really said? Genesis 3.1. And whenever you find yourself looking in scripture, not to become holy, but to commit sin, you know that's not the Holy Spirit leading you to scripture, but the devil.

You know, you say, well, there's no verse that says I can't do that. Or you argue about a verse that is in scripture saying, no, it doesn't really mean that. Once you begin to twist God's word to suit your lusts, you're on the downward slope immediately.

It's just a matter of time before you reach the bottom of the pit. Even if you call yourself a believer or a CFC believer or anything, baptized or whatever it is. Once you begin to go to the Bible to find an excuse for your sin, you've already started going down.

Remember that. Don't look in the scriptures to find comfort for your sin. There are preachers who fall into adultery and then where do they find their comfort? In David.

In other words, they go to scripture to find a comfort saying, well, David committed adultery and he still remained king, so I fell into adultery and I can still be a preacher or an elder. Well, what's he going into the Bible for? Not to learn how to repent, but to learn how to unify sin. It's okay, I can still come back to a ministry or be a king or something like that.

So it's very serious when you go to the scripture to find justification for your sin. God did not give us the Bible to help us to find comfort in our sin, but to make us holy. So that's one of the first things you've got to remember.

And then he tries all types of arguments. God knows that if it's like this, he appeals to her reason. God knows, verse 5, that if you eat your eyes will be etc., etc.

That's the other thing you've got to bear in mind. When you start using your reason to justify the wrong that your conscience tells you is wrong. Your conscience tells you one thing that's wrong, but your reason says, but you know this, this, this, this, and finally you justify it and go by your reason.

Okay, then we come to verse 6. What did the woman see in the tree? And we can say Adam also saw the same thing. First of all, it was good for food, bodily desire. Whether it's food to eat or sexual desire or you know there are desires God has placed in our body like for food, for sex, for sleep, rest.

These are all legitimate desires in their proper place. It's all right to eat food if I'm not stealing. It's all right to have sex if I'm married.

It's all right to sleep if I'm not sleeping at work. So these are legitimate desires, but which can be misused. You can be sleeping when you should be awake.

Or you may be eating too much. Or you may be indulging in sex outside of God's plan. Good for food, that's bodily desire.

And a delight to the eyes. You know, sin, looking at something which pleases my eyes, even though my conscience tells me all the time, that's wrong. That's wrong.

If Eve had only stopped looking at it, she wouldn't have sinned. If David had just turned his eyes away from Bhajjiva as soon as he saw her, he wouldn't have sinned. It's because he continued staring at her body that he sinned.

And then there was an appeal to the mind. The tree, verse 6, was something desirable to make you wise. The desire to be intellectually superior, to be cleverer, to show myself cleverer and smarter, etc., to make me wise.

Now, if only the devil had also told her, listen, I want to tell you how this is all going to end. You'll really enjoy it when you eat it. Boy, the taste of it, the appearance of it, and everything.

But you won't see any result immediately, except that you'll suddenly discover your nakedness, you'll be a bit afraid of God, and you'll start hiding yourself from your husband. A distance will come between you and your husband immediately. And then later on, a few years later, you'll have children, and your first child will turn out to be a murderer who will kill your second child.

And then there'll be sicknesses and problems, and you're going to live 900 years having a miserable life with your husband and your children. And then all your children are going to have miserable lives going on and on and on and on. Now go ahead and eat this fruit.

Do you think she would have eaten it? Never. And what you see there is the devil doesn't tell you where this type of tasting something is going to end. He just tells you the pleasure you'll get from it immediately.

But in all the pleasures in the world, whether it's the pleasure of eating, or sexual pleasure, or fantasies, I think women also can have fantasies in the sexual realm or in relation to some boy or something like that. And with men, it's much stronger with pornography and things like that. There is a law that God has placed in this area, even in the matter of eating food.

I call it the law of diminishing returns. Diminishing means decreasing. The law of diminishing returns, which means take any area, you take a peg of whiskey, and after a while, one peg will not do.

One peg satisfied you a lot at the beginning, but after a while, it doesn't give you as much thrill as the first time. You need two pegs. Then after a while, even two pegs doesn't give you the thrill.

You need three. It's called the law of diminishing returns. It's the same area with food.

You find something tasty in food, and you're not satisfied in that, you want more and more and more until you become a glutton. It's the law of diminishing returns. It's the area of sex.

You indulge in sex and you get a certain pleasure out of it. It may begin with pornographic books, pornographic images on a computer screen, but then you're not satisfied. You want more.

Each time you see, it doesn't satisfy you as much as the first time. It was a thrill. The second time is not so much.

You want some more. Gradually, you want more and more, and you want to get physical with an actual woman or a man. Then here's where it goes finally.

You can get so fed up that if you really get perverted, you can go to have sex with someone of your own gender, men with men and women with women, and then you can get still more perverted where you can go and have it with animals. It's a decreasing return where you get more and more perverted. It doesn't happen in one day, but that's the direction you're going.

You may say, no, I'll stop well before that. You think so. An addiction of anything, whether it's food, sex, internet pornography, anything, it tightens a grip over you.

Every time you indulge in it, you don't realize it's one more chain, one more chain. It's just closing its grip over you, and a time can come, and it's almost impossible to be free. Whatever it is, drugs, anything, and it's a foolish person who allows somebody to tie him.

You won't allow a robber to tie you up. I saw a cartoon once. It's a pretty hilarious cartoon of a robber tying up a man with a rope around a chair, and the man's in the first knot.

The man's putting his thumb there so that he can hold it tight for the robber to put the second knot. The guy's crazy. I like to show that picture to people who allow the devil to tie them up, and they're putting their thumb over that first knot to hold it tight so it's not loose for the devil to tie the second knot.

It's like that. Some of you may be doing it, and it doesn't matter whether you do it in secret. I always say if a farmer goes out in the middle of the night when nobody's watching and sows some bad seed in his ground and says, boy, nobody saw me, so what? What type of crop is he going to get just because nobody saw him? When the harvest comes, he's going to get exactly what he sowed.

The Bible says a man will reap what he has sown, and everybody reaps what they have sown. The thing is, when we are sowing, the devil hides from us the harvest time, and I tell you, you know, you sow one seed, you get 100 seeds in return, whether it's good or bad, that depends on you. You choose what you sow.

The Bible says in Galatians 6, God can't be fooled. I don't think you can fool God and you sow whatever you like and you won't reap. You will reap exactly the same thing.

I mean, even if you're forgiven, I'll tell you something, even if you're forgiven, there is a reaping that you may never get rid of. No punishment, but the reaping of certain consequences. I'll give you an example of it.

Here's a person who, say, kept his mind pure, and then he started indulging in pornography at a young age, and he indulges, indulges, indulges, indulges, indulges, indulges, indulges for many, many years, and finally, he decides to turn around and give his life to the Lord or get married. For the next 50 years, he's going to be plagued with dirty dreams, with an unhappy marriage, sexual life with his wife. He's forgiven.

He's a child of God. He's really finished with pornography. He doesn't see it anymore, but he's destroyed himself.

Is he forgiven? Yes. Will he go to heaven? Yes, but his whole life on earth is miserable for 50 years. His married life is unhappy.

His sexual relationship with his wife is not satisfying because he indulged, indulged, indulged, indulged, indulged, indulged, forgetting the devil was just tying him around, tying him around, tying him around, making him a fool of himself, and like an idiot and a fool, he just went headlong after the devil. When Jesus was always waiting there, saying, hey, come along this way, he wouldn't listen. Some of you are going that way.

It's obvious from your faces. I can't stop you. Almighty God will not stop you, because if he stops you, he'll make you a robot, where you automatically obey him like the planets, and he doesn't want that.

God doesn't even stop people from going to hell, and I'll tell all of you, God will not stop you from going to hell. He will not. If you keep on indulging, Jesus said that, if you don't take radical steps to pull out your eye and cut off your hand, metaphorically speaking, you will end up in hell.

Those are the words of Jesus, even if you sat in CFC for 20, 30 years. So please take it seriously. Nobody spoke about hell in relation to sexual sin as much as Jesus, and he was the one who died for our sins.

He's the one who knew how serious it is, and nobody tells us, ah, it's okay, you'll be all right as the devil. So you have a choice as to which voice you're going to hear. I've decided to hear the voice of Jesus.

I know it's gone well with me. It's not that I lived a perfect life, but there was a day in my life when I decided Christ is going to have everything there is of me, and it was a battle. You know, it's like learning how to swim.

In the early days in the swimming pool, it's a struggle, it's a struggle, it's a struggle. You wonder whether you'll drown, but then you see how people swim so effortlessly after a while. They enjoy it.

So it is. The Christian life really becomes enjoyable after a while, and I can tell you that from my own life. But in the beginning, it's a struggle, and if you're afraid of going through that struggle, it's like a person who just doesn't want to struggle the early part of learning swimming or learning typewriting or anything.

You're just not going to learn it. You've got to struggle in the beginning. Look at these people who type so fast.

You think they learned that the first day? No. They may have had so many blunders in their typing the first day, but look at them, how fast they type. Boy, how in the world do they do it? They enjoy it so much.

So I want to encourage you when you're young to develop some good habits and be very careful about the things which the devil says that appeal to your body and appeal to your mind, appeal to your reason. Think about what you're going to reap, the harvest you're going to reap finally. Whatever thing it is.

We read about Esau in Hebrews chapter 12 that it says, we're given a warning in Hebrews 12 and verse 15. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God. Now, do you know that he's writing to believers? He's not writing to a bunch of unconverted people saying don't come short of the grace of God.

He's telling believers, you guys have been forgiven. You guys are in a good church, but now make sure that you don't come short, miss out on what the grace of God has for you. Example, don't be an immoral, godless person like Esau who sold his birthright for a single meal.

The birthright was a spiritual blessing. The food which his brother Jacob offered him was something physical that satisfied his need right now. And Jacob, his brother, was a shrewd man.

Esau came tired from hunting and Jacob had made this wonderful, it says it's a lentil soup, which was dal curry. I can't imagine a man selling his spiritual birthright for dal curry. Would any of you do that? I mean, it's just as stupid to sell your birthright for pornography, I'll tell you.

It's as stupid as selling your spiritual birthright for some dal. I mean, it was ice cream, at least something, but dal. Imagine that.

It's as stupid to be addicted to something on your birthright that he said, give me that and I'll give you my birthright. The birthright was in the future, it was spiritual. The food was what satisfied my need right now.

And he thought, I'll make a fool of this, Jacob. I'll get this now and I'll get my birthright also later. Isn't that what some of you are thinking? That yeah, I'll indulge myself in these little sins.

Always remember the thief on the cross, how he got forgiveness at the last moment. The thief on the cross would not have got forgiven at the last moment if he had kept on rejecting it earlier on from the time he was 16, 17, 18, 19. By the time he hung on the cross, he'd have been so much turned off that his conscience would have been worn out that he would not have been able to respond.

You're not in that category. That was probably the first time he really was aware of how serious he was sinning. There's no question of last minute repentance for people who keep on rejecting it.

That's written here. You know, verse 17, Hebrews 12, that afterwards when Esau desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected because he could not repent. Is it possible that a person can come to the place where he cannot repent? You think you can repent anytime you like.

You cannot. You can for a while. I feel it's like this.

Every time you sin, keep on sinning, you're like approaching a red line that God has drawn in front of you. You haven't reached there yet. You can still repent, you still repent, you still repent.

You keep on indulging in that addiction which you know God hates and the very thing Jesus died for, remember, is to save you from pornography and drunkenness and filthy movies and everything else that Jesus died and fooling around with the opposite sex. And you neglected, yeah, so what if he died? I want to enjoy myself, enjoy myself. Every time you do that, you're rejecting the cross of Christ even though you sit like a holy person in CFC and you're approaching a red line and one day you'll cross it.

And when you cross it, even if you want to repent, you will not be able to repent. It'll happen. It's happened to people.

I know one or two people I've seen like this in my life. There was absolutely no possibility. If I talked to them about the Lord, they'd laugh.

I was amazed. The guy was a Christian but he would laugh when he sort of committed adultery and come home. This is in the naval days, I remember.

And I would speak to him and he'd just laugh it off. The guy hadn't crossed the line. I couldn't do anything for him.

I'll never forget that. Well, I don't know about his past life, but he'd probably gone on and on and on and on and on till his conscience stopped bothering him. Haven't you seen how little children, when they tell a lie, they're immediately convicted, but time goes on and on and on and on.

They're not even bothered when they tell lies. So remember that. Afterwards, even though he cried and with tears, he could not repent.

Let me show you one more verse, Ezekiel chapter 16. It speaks about the sin of Sodom. Sodom was addicted to sexual sin.

We read that in Sodom, they would even indulge in sex with the same gender, men with men. And when Sodom has sort of come to symbolize that type of sin, any sex outside of marriage is sin. Even men with women is sin, if it's outside of marriage.

And men with men is always sin. In Ezekiel 16, it says here in verse 49, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom. What was it? The sexual sin was because of what? Pride, too much food, laziness, and lack of compassion for other needy people.

How did they go into such terrible addiction of anything? One pride. I want to tell you this, every addict, whether it's addiction to drugs, pornography, sex, food, is always, first of all, due to your pride. That means when you're proud, God withdraws His grace from you.

You don't get grace to overcome sin, even though you want to. So first, humble yourself if you want to get grace and the power of the Holy Spirit. Second, is plenty of food.

You can overcome many addictions if you learn to fast once in a while. And it's not such a big thing. I remember I used to fast when I was 21 years old, sometimes for two days, because I said, Lord, I want to overcome these desires in my body.

I would just drink some liquids, some milk or something, and not eat any solid foods, while I was working on a shift. Because I said, Lord, I want to count for you. Have you ever tried that? Have you ever tried fasting for a whole day and continuing with your work? You won't die.

I'll tell you that. You'll be healthier. I feel so sad when I see young men and women getting fat.

It says, you read in 1 Kings chapter 18, how Elijah, when he went up to pray, could put his head between his knees. The moment you can't put your head between your knees, you know you're going the wrong direction. I could do that for a long, long time.

I think I can get pretty close even today. Put your head between your knees. It's sad to see people who have no control over how much they eat.

That's how you get addicted to other things. Number three, laziness. Laziness.

Plenty of laziness. That's the problem with a lot of young people today. Plenty of money to waste, indisciplined life, laziness.

There's a truth in the worldly proverb that an idle mind is the devil's workshop. He works pretty hard in an idle mind. Keep yourself busy, studying God's word.

Keep yourself busy seeking fellowship with others. Keep yourself busy doing something for the Lord. That's how I was saved from many things in my younger days.

And number four, no care for others who are in need. Try serving others who are in need instead of selfishly thinking about yourself, and you'll be saved from many addictions in your life. I really believe that if you take these things seriously, you'll find that God takes you seriously.

You play the fool with God, you'll find God cannot be fooled. So I want to encourage you to take these matters seriously. I believe that many of us who come along to CFC, there's a tremendous lack of discipline in today's young born-again believers in all these areas.

In the matter of humbling themselves, in the matter of undisciplined eating, in the matter of laziness, in studying God's word or using time profitably, and in the matter of compassion for others who are in need, indulging themselves with all the money they get. Well, that's how I ended up in Sodom. So make sure you don't end up there.

There's salvation for you today. God bless you.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/LM7WLOk--ZM.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/the-danger-of-addictions/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**