

Generosity or Selfishness - Lesson

Lesson Summary: The root problem in addiction is selfishness, and the best way to reduce this in your life is to focus on becoming generous.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:11 (NIV)

You will be made rich in every way so that you can **be generous** on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

PSALM 37:21 (NIV)

The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously;

Begin to become generous in giving to others in order to kill selfishness and reduce temptation.

Those who have struggled with addiction have one thing in common—selfishness. The whole concept of addiction is going to great lengths to feel good. So a powerful tool to bring change in your heart is to become generous.

1. Temptation loses its grip on our lives when we become generous.

a) Our hearts begin to change and become absorbed in giving instead of taking.

2. Learn to give and serve selflessly

a) Do so in such a way that nobody will find out about it.

- Don't go so far as to lie about it.

b) Make it a goal to give someone something each week, as small as a Coke.

c) Don't give expecting something in return, even thanks or affection.

Illustration - I knew a graduate who would give pretty generously. But he would get very upset if those he gave to didn't give things to him when he wanted something. That is giving and expecting something in return, not generosity.

3. You can either have a mentality of Contentment or Neediness

a) Neediness says there's not enough, so I can't share or give anything.

- This goes for money, time, energy, even love or appreciation

b) Contentment says I am content and thankful and want to share what I have with others to bless them because I am not worried about myself.

- This brings a healthy spirit of generosity and thinking about others in love.

4. This requires that you trust God and use self-control in your life habits.

5. Think about others and what they might need, so you can help them.

a) Giving something special that someone else needs in the proper time that they need it, it is a powerfully special thing for them.

b) When we focus on someone else's needs, we are not thinking about satisfying our own desires.

6. Beware of the enemy trying to bring pride in your spirit because of this.

- Resist the temptation to think you are better than others because you are giving.

The less we desire the material things of the world, the less power the enemy has over us to tempt us. The more we want of these things, the more vulnerable we are to his temptations. (Source: At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry, by Steve Gallagher, chapter 16)