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# You Can Overcome Addiction!

By Ken Karacsony

The first step in conquering addiction is to believe that you can overcome. What you believe about addiction and recovery is very important. If you believe that you are helpless, then you will behave in a helpless manner. That is because helplessness is a learned behavior. Some refer to this as “*Learned Helplessness*” and the implications of this idea are far reaching; especially for people who are struggling with addiction and other significant life challenges. I have ministered to Christians who believe that they are unable to change their current situation and give up altogether in pursuing meaningful change. Rather than experiencing freedom, they live in bondage to self-doubt and defeatism.

Unfortunately, the popular view of addiction that is espoused in many recovery programs and methodologies today promotes helplessness. What exactly do I mean? To explain what I am talking about, consider the following description of addiction from the National Institute on Drug Abuse:

*Addiction is a chronic disease similar to other chronic diseases such as type II diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. No one chooses to be a drug addict or to develop heart disease.<sup>1</sup>*

The widely accepted view of addiction is that it is a “chronic disease” or lifelong illness. Ideas matter. The consequence of the disease view of addiction has dire consequences. It promotes self-defeating fatalism because it asks addicts to believe that they are a victim of a disease that they cannot control.

This view is so pervasive that it even reaches deep into the halls of the Christian church where it has some of its strongest support. Many faith-based programs teach that addiction is a life-long disease or struggle. Attendees are asked to publicly profess that they cannot control their behavior or their life. They recite this lie again and again until it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. They are told that they are powerless and that is exactly how they behave.

The very first ‘step’ in the recovery process is not to accept the lie that you are powerless; rather, it is the belief that that recovery is possible. Jesus Christ said, “Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). According to Jesus, the truth can certainly set a person free. A lie, however, has the power to hold a person captive. That is precisely why it is important to reject the lie that addiction is a disease, genetic trait, or brain disorder. The truth of the matter is that there is absolutely no scientific basis for the disease myth of addiction despite what many claim today.

It is important to understand that the disease myth is contrary to the Biblical understanding of human behavior as well. We are capable of great things through the strength Jesus provides. Perhaps that is

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. 2011. *Understanding Drug Abuse and Addiction*. Retrieved October 2, 2011 from <http://nida.nih.gov>.



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why Paul declared, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). He understood that he was able to accomplish extraordinary things. If you are struggling with addiction, you can also accomplish great things – including conquering addiction. However, you will have to change what you now believe. Believing that you can truly do “all things,” including overcoming addiction, will result in positive thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

Paul was not alone in understanding what was possible in his life through Christ. David understood that he could accomplish all things and overcame the odds as he defeated the giant Philistine with a sling, a few rocks, and faith in God. He was confident of victory before stepping onto the battle field because he knew that God prepared the way for success. Even though he did not see God physically standing beside him, David was certain that the LORD was truly at his side.

Like David and Paul, you can accomplish great things when you believe that all things are possible. If you are struggling with addiction, it is time to reject the negative thinking that presently holds you captive to drugs, alcohol, sex, or other things. You are a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and no longer a slave to sin (Romans 6:6). Freedom is a lot closer than you may now believe. It will not necessarily be easy, but recognize that it is possible. God has given you the tools needed to be successful. He only asks that you believe and have faith in His promises. You can overcome!