



THE PRAYER CLOSET

ENCOURAGING & EQUIPPING BELIEVERS IN PRAYE

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PRAYING FOR THE ADDICTED!

In the past twenty years of *The Prayer Closet*, I'm asked regularly about one topic. It is the one that people contact me about and ask me to pray about the most. It is addiction. People continually ask me, "How do I pray for a person who is addicted?" I'm asked persistently to pray for those who are addicted. There is a place in my prayer journal devoted solely to those who are addicted.

There is great heartache and frustration for those who have a family member or friend who is an addict. It is not so much, what the person is addicted to as it is that the person has lost control and has become enslaved by it. Something or someone else is now controlling the addict. He or she continues on the path of self-destruction, blind to the dangers and the destruction of the addiction.

For family and friends, this creates a sense of hopelessness and despair. Yet, I want you to know that there is hope. The power of Jesus Christ can set the addict free. Through Him, there is hope and power for deliverance and freedom for the addict. This is not just a religious cliché; these are not religious maxims that are empty of meaning or power. This is living truth! Jesus Christ is real and His power to change lives is a living reality. You can see this power flow into the person's life through prayer.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will offer guidance in how to pray for someone who is addicted. These prayer suggestions have resulted from my struggle to pray for those who are bound and in need of deliverance. Please feel free to take them, shape them, and adapt them, as you feel led. My goal is to encourage and equip you to pray about this great need.

Scripture Prayers

If this person is not a Christian, pray that God would draw this person into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:3, 3, 15-17; John 6:44). This person

needs the Lord Jesus Christ and His power. Plead that God would reveal the Lord Jesus Christ to this person. Ask that he will truly turn away from his sins and trust in Jesus Christ as the personal Lord and Savior of his life. Through Jesus, there is forgiveness, power, and restoration.

If this person is a Christian, pray that God would grant this person repentance from this addiction (2 Timothy 2:25-26). The addiction that this person is in bondage to is a sin—the sin of idolatry. In order to be free from it, the person must confess that it is sin before God, turn away from it, and commit through Christ's power and help not continue in this sin. Call on God to grant repentance to this person. Plead with Him to enable this person to turn away from the addiction to Jesus Christ.

Plead that this person will realize that Jesus Christ is sufficient for him or her (Colossians 1:15-23). This person needs to realize that Jesus Christ is sufficient to satisfy, protect, guide, and supply every need. These are not just religious maxims that are to be repeated. They are living truths. Jesus Christ is the complete and sufficient Savior, Lord, and King. This person must come to see that the only way to true peace and fulfillment is by walking with Jesus Christ in a daily, personal relationship.

Plead that this person will come to see clearly the dangers of his or her addiction and the destruction that can happen if he or she does not repent (Proverbs 14:12). The addict cannot clearly see the danger of his or her addiction. This person is blind to the ultimate consequences of what the addiction can do. Plead with God to show this person the danger and the destruction that this addiction can bring. Call on God to take away the blindness of this person concerning this matter. Plead with God to destroy all the excuses and self-justification that this person has.

Ask God to replace this person's addiction with a craving for God and His Word (Psalm 42:1-2). Call on God to grant this person a greater longing for God and His Word – a longing that will far surpass his desire for what he's addicted to.

Call on God to heal the brokenness in this person's life (Psalm 147:3). People often seek to deal with the brokenness by turning to addiction. Seek God for the emotional healing of this person, filling up the broken places so that he or she will not have to turn to the addiction.

Pray that this person will seek and will continue to seek God for His help and power (Psalm 50:1-5). Plead that this person will develop a dependence on God and a confidence that God will not fail or forsake him/her.

Ask God to break any demonic strongholds that have been set up in this person's life; call on Him to remove any influence that Satan or his demons may have in this person's life (1 Corinthians 10:19-20). In this Scripture passage, the apostle Paul declares that the sacrifices of pagans were actually to demons. When people offered sacrifices of meat to idols, they were actually sacrificing to and worshiping demons. Where there is idolatry, there is demonic power. This refers to both idols made with the hands and those made with the heart. When a person is addicted, whatever that person is addicted to becomes the center of his or her life. This person is committing idolatry. When this takes place, demons will be involved to exploit this matter and to lead the person deeper into bondage. Pray that these demonic forces would be hindered and that their work in this person's life would be destroyed.

Ask that this person will seek the appropriate medical and professional help (Ecclesiastes 11:10). Pray that this person will seek the help that they need both physically and mentally.

Plead with God to take away any pleasure, satisfaction, or comfort that this person receives from his or her addictive behavior (Hosea 2:6-7; Ezekiel 37:23). The power that the addiction has over this person is from the benefit that is derived from it. Call on God to remove any benefit that this person might get from the addiction. Ask God to make this a bitter thing in the eyes of this person. Plead that God will take away any pleasure that this person has from the addiction; ask for a change of heart in this person concerning whatever the person is addicted to.

Plead with God to break the power of this addiction in the person's life through the life-transforming power of the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:2; Acts 2:32; John 16:7-8). The power of the Holy Spirit brought about the creation of all things. The Holy Spirit raised Jesus Christ from the dead. These are magnificent displays of the power of the Holy Spirit. It is through this power that He can transform lives. Plead with God to grant this power to flow into this person's life. This person needs the miraculous power of God to break the chains of this addiction. Plead that the Holy Spirit would cause His power to flow into this person's life, causing the chains of this addiction to be destroyed in this person's life.

Pray that God will enable this person to learn to cope with pain (2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Psalm 86:17; Isaiah 12:1, 49:10, 51:3, 12, 52:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17). Many times a person turns to drugs and alcohol to deal with pain, whether physical and emotional. This person has not learned to cope with and face pain. Because of this, the person turns to drugs, alcohol, or other addictive things. This provides a quick fix, but does not offer a long-term cure. Pray that this person will turn to Jesus Christ rather than whatever he is turning to in order to cope with the pain. Call on God to give this person the grace that he needs to face and deal with the problems that is giving him so much pain and is causing him to turn to something to find relief.

Plead that God will enable this person to face and deal with the pressures of life (2 Corinthians 1:8-9). Many times a person turns to addictive substances in order to deal with the pressures of life. Rather than turning to Christ and His Word, this person turns to a substance in order to cope with the pressure. Plead with God to grant this person the grace to turn to Christ and face the pressures with Him.

Pray that God will strengthen and enable the family and friends of the addict to stand by this person and minister to him or her (Proverbs 17:17; Ecclesiastes 4:10). Those who are the closest to the person who is addicted needs family and friends to stand by him or her and to provide ministry in this situation. The emotional stress on the family of this person is staggering. The family and friends go through a great deal of "silent" pain. Plead that God will give this family hope, grace, and peace. Call on Him to reveal His love and mercy to them. Yet, you also need to pray that God will give them wisdom to minister to this person. The family and friends need to know what to say and

what to do. They cannot allow themselves to enable this person to continue in his or her addiction. They cannot allow themselves to excuse this person's behavior. They cannot allow themselves to fail to understand that this is a spiritual problem that only Jesus Christ can conquer. Plead that God would guide the family and the friends in how to deal with this situation in a Christlike way.

Pray that this person would be cut off from anyone who would enable or encourage them to continue in his or her addiction (Psalm 1:1; Proverbs 1:10-18). This is especially true if the addiction involves a substance like alcohol or drugs. Many times the addict is surrounded by those who encourage continuing in alcohol or drugs by words or actions. This is what happens to teenagers and young adults. Pray that God would bring an end to any relationship that this person may have with someone who is enabling them to continue in their addiction. At the same time, call on God to send into this person's life people who will love and care about them and who can speak truth into their lives. Pray that God will send people into his or her life that will have a burden to help this person break the addiction to which he or she is bound.

Plead that this person will come to understand that there is hope and deliverance in Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Mark 10:51-52). The person who is addicted needs to know that there truly is hope and deliverance in Jesus Christ. Many times the addict will feel as if there is no hope; he or she will feel as if the situation is hopeless. Yet, this person needs to know that Christ has the power, the mercy, and the love to deliver them and rescue them from the dangers and the destruction of addiction. **Where there is sin, Jesus Christ offers forgiveness and the power to cast it off!** Pray that this person will know this and will seek Christ for forgiveness and deliverance. Ask that they will find the hope that only Jesus Christ can give.

Your Child And Addiction

Satan wants your children and he will attempt to capture them and destroy them any way that he can. Some of his most effective lures are drugs, alcohol, and other addictive behaviors (like eating disorders).

It is never too soon to start praying for your children to avoid alcohol, drugs, and other addictive behaviors because the exposure to and the possibility of addiction to these things can happen at a very early age. It's also never too late to pray about it either, because

temptation can take place at any point in your child's life. The following is a sample prayer to help you in praying about this matter. You can use this prayer or develop your own. Regardless of what you do, please make this a matter of concern when praying for your children, no matter what their ages.

Heavenly Father, I pray that You would keep (your child's name) free from any addiction, especially to drugs and alcohol. Make _____ strong in You, draw _____ close to You and enable _____ to put You in control of (his/her) life. Speak to (his/her) heart; show (him/her) the path that (he/she) should walk. Help (him/her) see that protecting (his/her) body from things that destroy it is a part of (his/her) service to You.

I pray that You, Lord, would destroy any plan that Satan has to destroy (his/her) life through alcohol and drugs. I plead that You will remove anything from (his/her) personality that would be drawn to those substances. Your Word says that there is a way that seems right to a man, but actually leads to death (**Proverbs 16:25**).

Give _____ the discernment and the strength to be able to say "no" to the things that bring death and "yes" to the things of God that bring life. May _____ clearly see the truth whenever tempted and be delivered from Satan whenever he attempts to enslave (him/her). Enable _____ to choose life in whatever (he/she) does and may (he/she) be so interested in and excited about the things of God that (he/she) will have no interest in alcohol, drugs, or any other thing.

In the name of Jesus, I pray that everything that _____ does with (his/her) body will be done to Your glory. Amen.

Beginning With Your Own Heart

As I mentioned earlier, I've received numerous prayer requests for people who are addicted. Through the years, I've labored to pray faithfully for them. As I prayed one night, the question came to my heart, "What about you, Kevin? You're praying for all these people. However, what about you? What about the idols of your own heart? What have you put ahead of the Lord in your life?" The Holy Spirit's conviction flooded my heart.

That night I began asking the Holy Spirit to point out the idols in my life. I asked Him to reveal anything in

my life that I had put more trust in, depended on more, and loved more than God. As the Spirit convicted me, I

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began confessing those things, asking for help to root them out and to love the Lord and depend on Him with all my being. It's an ongoing battle because our hearts are idol factories. Yet, I'm waging war against those things that attempt to capture my heart and take me away from trust and dependence on the Lord.

It's crucial to pray for those who are addicted. Intercession for those who have surrendered the control of their lives to something or someone else is a necessity. Yet, the best place to start is our own lives. We have to begin with our own hearts. How can I pray for someone else's heart to be changed if I'm not praying for my own heart to be changed?

I encourage you to begin with your own heart. What have you become more dependent on than God and His Word? What has captured your heart? What do you love and desire more than God and His Word? As the Spirit of God convicts you, confess these things. There is mercy and forgiveness with the Lord. There is hope and power. Pray for strength to wage war against the idols of your heart. Then, pray in confidence and power for those who also need His power to change

Thank You

As this year ends, I want to thank you for reading and using these materials. Thank you for your gracious donations. This ministry is supported solely through the giving of God's people. Thank you also for your prayers. God has indeed heard, blessed, and sustained this ministry.

2018 will make the 20th year of The Prayer Closet. We started publishing *The Prayer Closet* newsletter in 1998. God deserves all the glory and honor. This is His ministry and He has been faithful to it. I praise Him and thank you for being a part of this. I would ask You to consider supporting this ministry financially. We need to donations of God's people to continue to do what God has called us to do. Please persist in your prayers for this ministry and me. God truly does use the effective, fervent prayers of a righteous person! May God bless and keep you!

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