

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Day 1 – The Hidden Chains

Scripture: *“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” – John 8:36 (NIV)*

Over the weekend I was thinking about addictions and how people perceive them. Addiction is not always obvious. When we hear the word, we often think of drugs or alcohol — things that alter the mind or body. But addiction can take many forms: gambling, pornography, food, social media, shopping, approval, or even toxic relationships. Anything that takes the place of God in our hearts or dictates our emotions can become a chain that binds us.

We see it a lot more these days. We also see a lot of people pointing fingers at other folks and gossiping about what people are going through. Let’s face it, everyone has someone in their family that struggles with something. In our family, we’ve suffered with depression, suicide, death by overdose of fentanyl, toxic relationships that turned abusive emotionally and physically, shopping addictions, drug addictions and alcoholism. While recovery isn’t easy in our family, I’m sure it’s not easy in yours either.

For some, that chain might look like a bottle or a pill. For others, it’s a phone that never leaves their hand, a relationship that drains them, or a habit they keep hidden in shame. The substance or situation may look different, but all addictions speak the same lie: *“You need this to feel whole.”*

Toxic relationships can be one of the most deceptive addictions. We cling to someone who mistreats or manipulates us because we're afraid of being alone. We confuse chaos with passion and dependency with love. The cycle becomes predictable — pain, apology, false peace, repeat. And even when we know it's destroying us, we stay, hoping for a change that never comes. But just like any other addiction, the hold of a toxic relationship feeds on fear, guilt, and emotional dependence.

Addictions are masters of disguise. They promise comfort but leave us empty. They promise escape but enslave us deeper. They promise identity but strip us of who we are in Christ. The more we feed them, the stronger they grow — until we feel powerless to stop.

Have you ever watched your love one go through something so tough and as a fixer you just want to mend the parts of them that's broken, hurting and holding them back from fulfilling the path that God has written for them?

But there is *Good News*. Jesus came not just to forgive our sins, but to break the power of whatever holds us captive. The cross was not just an act of salvation — it was an act of liberation. When He declared, "*It is finished*," He broke the curse of bondage in every form. He offers real freedom — not temporary relief, not a momentary fix — but total release from the things that have claimed ownership of our hearts.

Freedom begins with recognition. You can't break what you won't name. So take a moment today to ask God to show you what has control over your thoughts, emotions, or peace. It might not be a substance — it might be a person, a need for validation, or a pattern

of running from pain. Whatever it is, Jesus sees it. He knows it. And He has already paid the price to set you free.

He doesn't just want to change your habits; He wants to change your heart. He doesn't just want to remove the addiction; He wants to restore your identity as His beloved child — one who is free, whole, and complete in Him.

Reflection Questions:

- What do I turn to when I'm hurting, lonely, or afraid?
- Is there something or someone I depend on more than I depend on God?
- What would freedom look like for me if I fully surrendered this to Christ?

Prayer:

Lord, reveal to me the hidden chains I've been carrying — even the ones I've convinced myself aren't there. Open my eyes to the addictions that disguise themselves as comfort, especially relationships or habits that pull me away from You. Give me the courage to let go of what keeps me bound and the strength to trust You to fill the empty spaces. Jesus, I believe that You alone can set me free. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.