

assessed that the core human sickness is **addiction to self**. We all tend to play God and try to get life, people, and even God to do our will. That's why putting God at the center—doing His will only, moment by moment—is the key not only to successful recovery, but also to experiencing an **abundant life**.

Acknowledging that we all desperately need God's help to overcome our addiction to self will not only help our church set captives free from the outwardly obvious symptoms of addiction, but also help **free a lot of Pharisees** from the insidious addiction to self.

### So how do people become all God intended?

How do we help greedy people become generous, divorcing people reconcile, sexually entangled people honor God, and addicted people find freedom? Do we need more Bible study, prayer, more frequent church attendance, greater commitment to obedience, or community?

All good things, but Jesus said to Martha, who was busy doing lots of good things, **"Only one thing is necessary."** What is the "one thing"? Jesus tells us Mary was doing it. She was listening. The way we love God is by listening and responding moment by moment in constant connection to him.

Jesus knew this one thing is precisely humanity's problem: **our addiction to self pushes God to the periphery**. So his last night on earth, with this *One Thing* foremost on his mind. Jesus picks up a branch and says, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."*

Stay connected—fruit happens!

That's how people change—by living moment by moment listening and responding to God's Spirit.

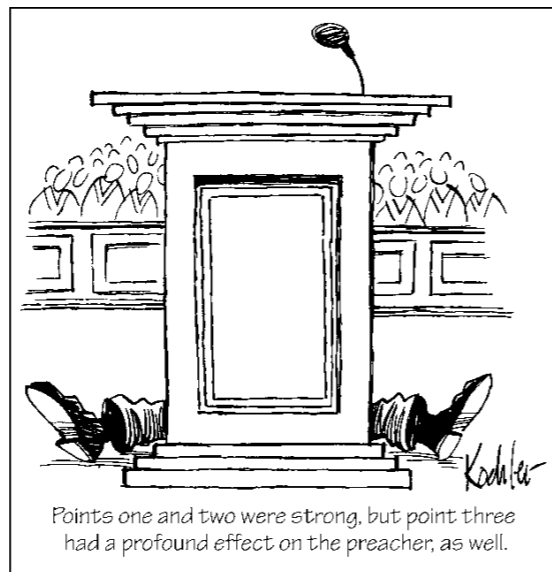
As Paul said, walk/live (each moment) by the Spirit and you won't do the evil deeds of the flesh. You'll see fruit like love, joy, self-control, and peace growing naturally.

Jesus reiterates this one thing over and over. All you have to do is stay connected to his Spirit, and God does for us what we can't do for ourselves.

This is how Jesus lived: *"The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing"* (John 5.19).

Go and do likewise—and be free!

*Jack*



## ARE YOU ADDICTED?

Let me start by stating the obvious: Christ's community should be a place of healing for people whose deep wounds fuel the addictive behaviors that rob so many of peace. I believe we can all agree on that.

But we are living with a generation spawned in brokenness, and **it seems addictions rule!** Emerging generations now struggle with addictions to alcohol, drugs, pornography, tobacco, spending, sex, eating, working, dieting, and gambling—all to escape the pain of brokenness. Looking at the statistics, it appears that half of twenty-somethings today may battle some form of addiction. We, the church, can't be caught flat-footed if we want to see a generation redeemed.

But for the church to have a healing influence, we must understand how to break the **slavery of addiction**. Just telling people their behavior is immoral or wrong won't set them free—in fact, it may make the problem worse since shame often fuels the addiction. We need to cultivate a church culture that

facilitates **healing and growth**.

What would people say about our church? Is it the place to come to get well? Or do you need to "get well" before you come?

One thing that inhibits grace and its reach to set captives free is the **"us vs. them"** mentality that many churchgoers unconsciously project. If we think of addicts as **"those people"** with the serious problems, unlike us who don't **"desperately"** need God's help, we sound a lot like the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like "that tax collector."

Jesus went to a party that Matthew threw for his friends. The religious leaders asked Jesus' followers: *"Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners" (i.e. 'those people')?"* Jesus said to them, *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."* Jesus' point was that he came for all who realize they **desperately need God's help**.

The founders of the Twelve-Step program rightly

## ARE YOU A GOOD WAITER?

We live in a noisy, restless day when no one wants to wait on anything. The symbol of our day could be a picture of a person running up an escalator -- too busy to wait for the escalator to reach the top. Or the symbol could be the cartoon which showed an American couple dashing up the steps of the Louvre in Paris. As they approached the guard at the door, they were shouting, "Quick! Where's the Mona Lisa? We're double-parked."

We hate to wait -- elevators that stop at every floor tax our patience. Cars waiting for the light to change to green poise like rockets on the launching pad. Jets fly the Atlantic so quickly that it's possible to get mugged in London and New York on the same day.

Whatever else can be said about our day, we are in a rush. We do not like to wait. Waiting runs counter to the spirit of our day. It runs counter to the spirit of our lives. And yet ....

Waiting is a necessary part of life—it always has been. Early in Jesus' experience, His life crossed the path of one who had been waiting for a long time. In fact, Jesus was just forty days old when it happened. His parents had carried Him to the temple in Jerusalem to present a sacrifice to God for Him.

As they entered the temple courtyard, they met Simeon. Luke 2:25 records that "*Simeon ... was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.*"

The "consolation of Israel" was a reference to the coming of the Messiah. This man had spent a lot of his years waiting. He had prayed a thousand prayers to God to send the Messiah. He

had had a thousand false hopes. You could sum his life up in the word "waiting."

Then, at the end of Jesus' life it happened again. Chapter 23 of Luke tells the story. Verse 51 records that Joseph "was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God."

All of Joseph's life had been spent waiting for the Messiah to come to establish the kingdom. This had been his hope and dream. He had waited and waited.

Anytime you dare to dream a big dream, you are setting yourself up to do some waiting. If you never have to wait, if all of your plans can be completed by sundown, you are not planning enough. Your dreams are too small.

The size of your dreams measures the greatness of your soul. What do your dreams say about the size of your soul?

Simeon and Joseph chose to dream dreams of the kingdom. They longed to be part of God's enterprise in this world.

That's what you need to do. Be part of something big. Invest your life in the kingdom of God. You won't finish the job by this afternoon. You will do a lot of waiting. But you will have a sure conviction that you are participating in something big and of lasting importance.

How about you? Are you a good waiter?

What are you waiting on today? Are you waiting for the door of opportunity to open on your job? Are you waiting for the right person to come along to marry? Are you waiting until

graduation? Are you waiting until retirement?

Are you a good waiter? When you are willing to wait on God, God can use you. Who knows all the ways that God wants to use you? Who knows what tasks He has for you if you are willing to wait on Him and be available to Him?

*Are you willing to do that? Are you willing to wait?*

## EXCESSIVE EXPECTATION?

Excerpt from [LeadingSmart.com](http://LeadingSmart.com) by Tim Stevens

Have you been burdened with excessive expectations at church? The Average Joe church member can't possibly do everything that is expected. Don't believe me? See if this list defines some of your expectations of the folks who attend your church...

1. Attend church service weekly.
2. Volunteer during another service.
3. Attend Bible study or Sunday school or midweek service (whatever brand your church offers).
4. Serve in a ministry that helps the poor and needy.
5. If you are a leader (and we know who you are), then we'll have a few more meetings to attend, contacts to make, events to organize and teams to rally.
6. Attend periodic special events hosted by the church.
7. Be a great husband or wife and invest time in your marriage.
8. Oh, and make sure you are involved in men's or women's ministry.
9. Get in a small group and meet regularly.

10. If you are a man, you must be in a men's small group for accountability. Otherwise we know you look at porn.
11. If you are married, you probably should also be in a couples group if you care about your spouse.
12. Read your Bible every day. Anything less than 30 minutes is probably not enough.
13. Be a good citizen. Vote and get involved in your community.
14. Give ten percent of every penny that you make. And give to the special offerings. And give to the kids going on the missions trip. And give to the building fund.
15. Go on a missions trip. Been on a local trip? Overseas is your next step.
16. Invest in relationships in your neighborhood and at your workplace.
17. Invite people to church. Every week. The purpose of that, of course, is so you can get them to church so they can do #1 through #16 above.

This list wears me out just reading it...and I'm a pastor! Just think what this kind of expectation does to the people in our church.

They keep trying and trying, doing and attending, but then life catches up and they feel like they can't ever keep up with our expectations. They feel deflated.

Our culture is becoming ever more complex and insanely busy. How do we help? *By finding ways to help each person that is a part of our church integrate a walk with Jesus in the context of their lives.* Ease up on our expectations of attendance and activity - and instead *focus on spiritual outcomes.* This means making Jesus Christ **Lord** in every aspect of life. We can do that!



**WELCOME TO THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE CCC FAMILY:**

**MAY 31:**  
**Renee Patterson by immersion**

**JUNE 21:**  
**Gary & Cindy Parr by transfer of membership**



**The Word of Truth**

July 05	<i>Live Holy Lives in an Unholy World</i>	Titus 2.11-15
July 12	<i>Express a Sweet Spirit</i>	Titus 3.1-8
July 19	<i>Maintain Harmony</i>	Titus 3.9-15
July 26	<i>Jack will be gone on vacation, Bob La Pierre will preach</i>	
August 2	<i>Death by Church</i>	Part 1 of 4
August 9	<i>Death by Church</i>	Part 2 of 4
August 16	<i>Death by Church</i>	Part 3 of 4
August 23	<i>Jack will be gone on vacation, Matt Miles will preach</i>	
August 30	<i>Death by Church</i>	Part 4 of 4