

# CROSSING ATTITUDES

## Study Guide Lesson Six – Habitual Sins

*Linda Pringle*

Habitual sins are recurring selfish responses to situations in our lives. When a Christian allows a sin to become a habit, they begin to neglect God as they pursue their lust. Fortunately, God never neglects the Christian. The Holy Spirit will continue to convict the person of sin. The Father disciplines those whom He loves (Hebrews 12:6). Sinful habits can include alcohol, drugs, sexual immorality, pornography, preoccupation with body image, greed, laziness, lying, anger, bitterness, fear, anxiety, negative thinking, criticizing others, etc. Since we have already discussed some of these sins in previous studies, we will now concentrate on what the secular world would call “addictions.”

An article in *Psychology Today* said, “Ask 10 Americans what addiction is and what causes it and you might get at least 10 answers.” It goes on to list some of the theories of addictive behavior including failure of morality, addictive personality, conditioned response, genes and heredity, culture, the breakdown of family values, and finally, the most popular theory, addictive behaviors are diseases. “In this view, an addict, like a cancer patient or a diabetic, either has it or does not have it. Popularized by Alcoholics Anonymous, the disease theory holds that addictions are irreversible.”<sup>1</sup> The lengthy article then goes on to tell what the author’s new theory is, of course without God’s word, the mention of sin, or the freedom found in Christ.

- 1) Read Proverbs 23:29-35. If you are, or have ever been, around the drinking (or drug) party scene, you will relate to this. List the negative effects of alcohol abuse. This can be said of drug abuse as well.
  
- 2) Read Isaiah 5:11-12. How do those who pursue strong drink neglect God?

Note: As we saw in Lesson One, sinful lusts are desires to enjoy or possess anything more than we enjoy our relationship with God and trust in His love. Dependence on alcohol or drugs replaces our dependency on God. People seek after lusts to soothe and deaden emotional pain and feelings of inadequacy. The answer is not to boost their self-esteem but for them to surrender to God’s love and have genuine concern for others without obligation and guilt. When people feel obligated to love others, and then feel guilty when they don’t, they turn to alcohol or drugs (or other lusts) to deaden their guilt. This cycle becomes a trap. Realizing that Christ died to free us from guilt will produce genuine love.

- 3) As you think about how prevalent alcohol and drug abuse are in our society, name some reasons you think people are drawn to this lifestyle? What lies are attached to those reasons?

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<sup>1</sup> Addiction: A Whole New View, by Joann Ellison Rodgers, published on September 01, 1994 - last reviewed on October 17, 2011  
<http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/199409/addiction-whole-new-view>

- 4) Drinking alcohol is not a sin unless we begin to depend on the “buzz.” We sinfully use it to relieve emotions or to help us feel accepted by others. Read John 2:1-11 and Luke 7:33-34. What do you learn from these passages?
  
- 5) Read 1 Timothy 3:1-3, 8-10. What were Paul’s instructions concerning overseers and deacons of the church? What did he also tell Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23?
  
- 6) Read Romans 13:8-14. In verses 8-10, what is the fulfillment of the law?
  
- 7) In Romans 13:11-14, What are we to put aside? What are we to put on (or clothe ourselves in the NIV)? See if you can memorize verse 14.

Note: The Bible often associates carousing (meaning revelry or the party life) and drunkenness with “deeds of darkness.” This means more than the fact that people usually party at night. When people are in rebellious, habitual sin, they become very good at living in secrecy. Lying becomes a way of life. Friends and loved ones learn to not trust them, causing continual drama. When the drunkard or drug addict believes that people don’t trust them, it reinforces the “loser” feelings, giving them more reason to drink.

We should “put on the armor of light” and “behave properly as in the day.” In other words, our lives should be an open book. Someone coming out of a sinful lifestyle who wants to build trust should have an attitude of wanting to be held accountable. They should not mind if a loved one “checks up on them” (e.g. looking at text messages, e-mails, phone bills, bank statements, calling work, knowing where the person is at, etc.).

- 8) A couple of weeks ago we studied 1 Corinthians 6:12, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” Drinking a glass of wine or a beer as a refreshment is not a sin unless alcohol has become a stumbling block. In Paul’s day, the issue was not just drinking wine but also eating foods that in the Old Testament were considered unclean. In the New Testament, we are no longer under the law (do this and don’t do that). We are now motivated by love. Read Romans 14:12-23. In your own words, sum up these verses. Write down what your personal conviction is about the issue of alcohol.

9) Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. From verse 9, what is the one word that describes the list of people who will not inherit the kingdom of God? Does this word describe you before you were saved?

a) Verse 11 says that some of us used to be involved in these types of sinful lifestyles. What three words describe us now? Put them in the box on the left. A description is provided on the left.

	God has picked you up out of the mud pit of sin and fully cleansed you. He sees you as a beautiful bride, dressed in white, with no spot or blemish.
	He sees you as holy as His Son, Jesus Christ. He therefore sets you apart for His service. This continual process allows your life to glorify God more and more.
	You are rendered just or innocent. Your walk with God is no longer based on an obligation to perform. It is no longer based on laws of “do this and don’t do that.” It is based on love. When you are saved, you are considered righteous.

10) As you think about the three words above, the Spirit of God will help you defeat the lies that keep you trapped in habitual sins (of any kind). Read Romans 8:5-6. The “flesh” means the law or doing things out of obligation (e.g. “I must quit drinking to be good and to please God”). The “Spirit” means that I am doing things out of love for God and appreciation of His mercy and grace (e.g. “I want to quit drinking because He sees me as holy as His Son, Jesus Christ. I want Him to use me in the lives of others who may be in bondage.”) In the Romans passage, what is the outcome of a mind set on the flesh? What is the outcome of a mind set on the Spirit?

11) Ephesians 5:11-20. Focus on verse 18. The word “dissipation” (in some versions) means a self-indulgent wasteful lifestyle. Just as a drunkard craves to be filled with alcohol, we should desire to be filled with Who? What is the result of this filling?

**Psychology Myth:** “Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic.” “Alcoholism and drug addiction are diseases.” How does what we’ve learned in this lesson (including the teaching) refute this myth?