

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Proverbs: Topical Applications of Proverbs
III. The Proverbs Themselves, Proverbs 10:1-31:31
M. God's Directives On Addiction

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Addiction is a big problem that affects many people in various realms today:

(1) Addiction affects many teens: "An employee and the owner of a local liquor store were arrested" on July 28th "after police learned one of them sold alcohol to an 18-year-old before he died in a scooter-truck crash . . . (Middlebury) First Selectwoman Jennifer Mahr . . . (then) urged adults . . . in a Facebook post, 'Parents, there is a role for you to play here as well. If you or your teenage children know of other locations in town where minors are able to purchase alcohol without an ID check, please reach out to MPD . . . Someone's life may depend on it.'" (Christine Dempsey, "Two charged with selling alcohol to Middlebury teens," Republican-American, July 31, 2026, p. A3)

(2) The problem can show up even in a police station: "Alyssa Insogna, 29, died on May 10, 2025, in a woman's jail cell" in Waterbury "after ingesting narcotics . . . (A) motion-activated video camera . . . 'captured Insogna . . . moving her right hand toward her mouth, holding that position for over a minute before flushing the toilet, conduct consistent with the retrieval and consumption of narcotics concealed on her person'" according to the complaint. (Michael Walsh, "Waterbury faces lawsuit over woman's jail-cell death," op. cit., p. A1)

(3) The use of illicit drugs in our state is so prolific that researchers at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station recently found cocaine and fentanyl in treated wastewater that was discharged into Long Island Sound. (Austin Mirmina, "Cocaine, fentanyl and PFAS detected in Conn. wastewater, researchers say," op. cit., August 10, 2026, p. A1)

(4) Addiction can affect even famous actors: "Hayden Panettiere, a onetime child star who soared to fame in the TV shows 'Heroes' and 'Nashville' while enduring struggles with alcohol addiction and depression, has died. She was 36 . . . She (had) said she was in a 'horrible cycle for years of battling depression and anxiety and alcoholism and substance abuse' while 'just trying to find my way back, my way out of the darkness.'" (Hannah Schoenbaum, "Panettiere, starred in 'Heroes' and 'Nashville,' dies," op. cit., August 18, 2026, p. A8)

(5) Addiction can reportedly occur in the mental realm: The story, "Meta and Google lost landmark trial as jury finds them liable for harming young users' mental health" by Kelsey Vlamis and Sydney Bradley (March 25, 2026; businessinsider.com) reported on the "social media addiction trial" involving corporate giants Meta and Google. The latest report is that Meta could face damages of up to \$1.4 trillion, and Meta is worth \$1.5 trillion. (Daniel Howley, "Meta faces massive media additions trial Tuesday," August 18, 2026; finance.yahoo)

(6) The problem of substance abuse extends to our local Christian community: Years ago, a Christian teen told me that students in a Christian day school in our area could obtain illicit drugs from a student in that school, and two people who were once members of our Church during my time as pastor here have died as a result of substance abuse.

(7) As for the cause and cure of various forms of addiction, some hold that "a physical, moral, or psychological defect" produces alcoholism. (Howard Hendricks, Christian Counseling For Contemporary Problems, 1968, p. 157) Drug abusers often come from troubled, abnormal homes and have basic personality defects. (Ibid., p. 229) Nevertheless, a lack of access to alcohol, drugs and social media leads to the absence of alcohol, drug and social media addictions! (Ibid., p. 158) Thus, we need God's view on the cause and cure of addiction in all of its forms.

Need: *So we ask, "Since various forms of addiction is a big problem today, what does God direct regarding it?"*

- I. God's "wisdom," His *hokmah*, or fixed eternal moral order for success and blessing, applies to many issues of human concern, including the issue of addiction.**
- II. We thus view proverbs as translated from the Hebrew Biblical text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica) in the Book of Proverbs that provide God's directives on addiction (as follows):**
 - A. Addiction produces great costs for those who are affected by it:
 1. It leads to mental and emotional problems:
 - a. Proverbs 23:33 claims of alcoholic addicts, "Your eyes will behold strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things." The same can be said of various forms of drug addiction.
 - b. Speaking of those "who linger over wine," Proverbs 23:29 asks three rhetorical questions that reveal that drunkenness produces "woe," "sorrow" and "complaints," referring to the grief and unhappiness that accompanies substance abuse.

2. Addiction harms one's health: Proverbs 23:29 tells of "bruises" and "bloodshot eyes" drunks face in the short-term and Proverbs 23:32 states that long-term, alcohol "bites like a serpent and poisons like a viper."
 3. Addiction hurts one's relationships: Proverbs 20:1 asserts that "wine is a mocker, and beer a brawler," implying that drunkenness leads others to disrespect one and causes him to get into conflicts with others.
 4. Addiction fails to gratify the addict: Proverbs 23:35c claims that the drunkard asks, "When will I wake up so I can find another drink?"
 5. Addiction produces great financial costs: Proverbs 23:21 warns, "... (D)runkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags."
- B. Thus, Proverbs 23:19-20 warns, "You hear, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path. Do not join with those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat . . ."
- C. The cause of addiction is one's living by means of his sin nature:
1. When the first man Adam sinned, he plunged all of his descendants into a state of sin (Romans 5:12) so that all mortals have sin natures (1 John 1:8) and have committed acts of sin (Romans 3:23).
 2. One of the works of sin that is produced by the sin nature is drunkenness (Galatians 5:19-21), and since one's being controlled by the Holy Spirit leaves him self-controlled opposite his addiction to alcohol according to Galatians 5:16 with 5:22-23, all forms of addiction, be it alcoholism, drug abuse, social media addiction, etc., are similarly products of the sinful nature!
- D. Accordingly, the cure for addiction is one's being controlled by the Holy Spirit:
1. Galatians 5:16 claims of Christians that if they order their way of live by the indwelling Holy Spirit, they will not fulfill the lusts of the sinful nature.
 2. Indeed, the "fruit" of the Holy Spirit as described in Galatians 5:22-23 NIV includes characteristics that cause one to live above all forms of addiction, for the Holy Spirit produces "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control," qualities that counter all forms of addiction.
- E. However, to acquire the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, one must believe in Christ as his personal Savior from sin, acknowledging that Christ died in his place on the cross for his sin, John 3:16. As a gift from God, the Lord then sends the Holy Spirit to indwell the believer (Ephesians 1:13) so that as the believer relies by faith on the power of the Spirit of God, he *will* live *without any form of addiction* (Galatians 5:16, 22-23)!

Lesson: *All forms of addiction, be it drug abuse, alcoholism or social media addiction, are very harmful in many ways and are the product of living by the sin nature inherited from Adam. To avoid addiction, one must believe in Christ and rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit as noted in "(1)" and "(2)" in the "Application" section below.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) Since faith in Christ for salvation results in God's giving one the indwelling Holy Spirit, may we who have believed in Christ rely on the Holy Spirit to live without addiction.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

An illustration that supports this sermon's assertion that all forms of addiction are spiritual problems comes to us by way of a recent report by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The report told of Luke Healy who "was just 10 years old when he . . . found himself in the thick of a community full of adults discussing transgenderism . . . Within three years, Luke had become convinced he was a girl, and when he went to his parents about it, they took him to a counselor to discuss it. 'The only people who seriously asked what might have caused his distress were his parents,' the report read. 'Meanwhile, institutional figures . . . treated his new identity as settled.

'Luke's parents refused to consent to puberty blockers or hormones while he was still a minor,' the report added. 'Luke now describes their refusal as one of the bravest things they ever did.'

By the time he turned 18 Luke . . . began pursuing transitioning treatments. 'Each intervention led to pressure for further intervention,' the report read. Instead of trying to become a girl, Luke . . . focused on fighting the substance-abuse problems he had developed . . . and in doing so found something oddly familiar . . . 'He recognized the same obsessive, destructive pattern in gender ideology that he had seen in addiction,' the report read." (Chris Nesi, "Hosp(ital)s In \$120 M Gender 'Scams,'" *New York Post*, August 14, 2026, p. 5)

Thus, the spiritual realm is where addiction with alcohol, narcotics, social media and even the transgender destructive obsession must be addressed. The sure solution is Christ's salvation and spiritual provisions.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we then rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit of God to live above all forms of addiction.