

ABC NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2019

SESSION 3: ADDICTIONS: ENGAGING CULTURE BIBLICALLY – MICHAEL SNETZER

Philosophy of Ministry...

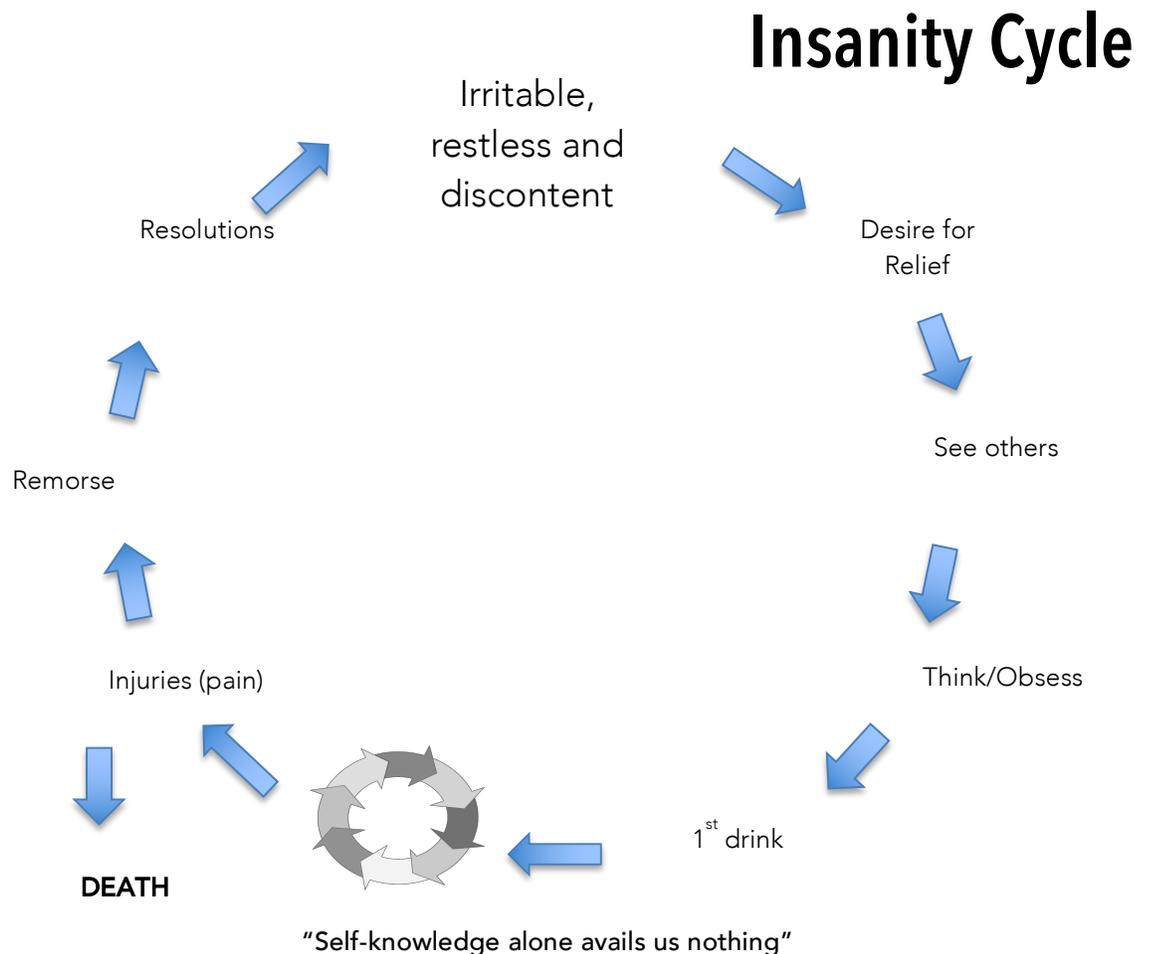
- **Best practice in Engaging Culture...**conceding to the culture as much as possible without contradicting scripture.
 - **Find gospel hooks.**
- **Sensitivity when engaging non-gospel recovery culture**

Understanding the Non-gospel Recovery Culture...

- History of AA
 - Testimony of Bill Wilson – Bill's Story
- Three Part Disease Model
 - Physical allergy
 - Mental obsession
 - Spiritual Malady
- Two tests to determine
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

Connecting to the Experience of Addiction...

- **Observations of Dr. William Silkworth** - "Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks—drinks which they see others taking with impunity. After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery."
- The Insanity Cycle of Addiction



- **Observation apart from revelation has limitations because it's interpretation is based in speculation.**

- **Interpreting the observations and experiences biblically...**

- Symptoms of irritability, restlessness and discontentedness

- Desire for relief, redemption, rescue

- Seeing others – Temptation and Bio/Psycho/Social Footprint

Real personal _____, enticing the flesh, through the _____.

- The Lie:

- ❖ Disorderd _____

✓

✓

✓

✓

- Addiction:

- Think and obsess

- 1st drink

- Injuries (effects)

- Remorse

- Resolutions

- Engaging the 12 Steps (handout). To clarify, we are not trying to legitimize the traditional 12-steps. Instead, we examine each step, claim what truth is there, ascribe it to God, reconstruct within a biblical worldview and apply it within a gospel context.

- Distinctives of gospel-centered ministry...
 - Programs don't heal people.
 - Not just for addicts.
 - Recovery (biblically) can't be reduced to a program.
 - Sobriety is a by-product.
 - Ministry of Movement.
 - Not about a single issue.
 - Righteousness not in number of days.

For Further Reading:

- Michael Snetzer, *Is Addiction a disease?*
- Matt Chandler and Michael Snetzer, *STEPS – Gospel-centered Recovery*

Handout #2: An Overview of Redeemed Truths of STEPS: Gospel-Centered Recovery

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus corrects the culture's misunderstanding of the law by giving a more robust interpretation of that truth and re-orienting it to himself so it might be rightly applied. Similarly, in STEPS we attempt to engage the culture's misapplication of truth by giving a more robust interpretation and re-orienting it around Jesus. Jesus says, "You've heard it said...but I say to you..." revealing what the fullness of that truth is meant to convey, then leading them to the fulfillment of that truth in himself. What follows here are "redeemed truths" of what the culture says (in terms of non-gospel recovery). By placing that truth within a biblical framework and applying it within a gospel context, we ensure that truth is not misapplied.

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over _____, that our lives had become unmanageable.

Man, in relationship to his Creator, has fallen from a place of dignity, humility and dependence to a state of depravity, pride and rebellion. This has led to unfathomable suffering. Any attempts on our own to redeem ourselves are futile, only increasing the problem of independence and self-sufficiency. Any perceived success leads only to empty vanity. Apart from Christ, we are powerless to overcome sin, and our attempts to control it only increase our chaos.

Step 2: We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

God lovingly intervened into our chaos and provided a remedy for the insanity of sin and the way back into fellowship with Him. We believe that by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we can be redeemed.

Step 3: We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as you understood him.

Through the Holy Spirit's illumination of our desperate and helpless condition before God and the hope that comes through the gospel of Jesus Christ, we step out in faith and repent as act of worship and obedience, surrendering our will and entrusting our lives to Christ's care and control. We are reborn spiritually and rescued from the domain of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light, where we now live as a part of Christ's ever advancing Kingdom.

Step 4: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

As children of God, armed with the Holy Spirit and standing firm in the gospel, we engage in the spiritual battle over the reign and rule of our hearts. God set us apart for holiness, and we look to put to death the areas of our lives that keep us from reflecting Jesus Christ to a

dark and dying world. We first examine the fruit in our lives (or moral symptoms). As we move through the assessment process, we will uncover the roots of any ungodly fruit (pride and idolatry) that drive our ungodly thoughts, actions and emotions.

Step 5: We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Under the covering of God's grace, we step out in faith, leaving behind our old, self-protective ways of covering sin and hiding from God. We prayerfully come into the light, confessing our sins before God and to one another so that we may be healed.

Step 6: We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

In attempting to live independent of God, we have developed dysfunctional (sinful) patterns of coping. After careful examination, we have begun to see demonic roots of our slavery to these sinful patterns. We desire freedom.

Step 7: We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

We renounce our former ways, offer ourselves to God and, under the waterfall of His grace, ask Him to deliver and heal us by the authority of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. We also pray for blessing and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to live life according to His kingdom purposes.

Step 8: We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step 9: We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Relationships break down because of sin. If there was no sin in the world, relationships would work harmoniously, evidenced by love and unity. Division among God's people provides opportunities to identify sin and purify the body. The gospel of Jesus Christ brings about justice in a way that the law cannot by inwardly reconciling the very heart of injustice to God. As those forgiven by God, we can humbly approach those affected by our sin and make amends. This change of heart brings glory to God by demonstrating the power of the gospel and reflecting His heart in bringing justice through His reconciled people. As ambassadors of Christ, we are to be instruments of grace as we confront sin and extend forgiveness. We always forgive from our hearts when we are sinned against by handing offenses over to God (judicial forgiveness) and stand eager to extend forgiveness to those who ask for it (relational forgiveness). In this way, fellowship, with God and amongst His people, is preserved.

Steps 10: We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

We continue in the fear of the Lord, putting to death those things which rob our affections for

Christ, while persevering in loving, joyful obedience to Him. When we are out of step with the Spirit, we quickly return to the Lord with a heart of repentance as He trains us in godliness and grows us spiritually.

Steps 11: We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

Since He is our ultimate joy, peace and pleasure, we seek to know Him and fill ourselves with those things that stir our affections for Him. We practice spiritual disciplines so that our hearts, prone to wander, might stay in rhythm with His.

Step 12: Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Before the foundations of the earth, God chose us, the church, to live as instruments of His grace to a lost and dying world, bearing witness to His wisdom and power through the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our joy-filled worship to make much of His name. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we bring a comprehensive gospel demonstrated by our deeds and proclaimed by our words with the goal of glorifying God through making disciples for Jesus Christ. In this way, we embody Christ, being His hands and feet here on earth.

For further reading:

- Matt Chandler and Michael Snetzer, *STEPS – A Gospel-centered Recovery*