

I Declare War on Things that Control Me
Message 3 of 6 in the series: "I Declare War"

A. We live in a sinful world where it's easy to develop habits and addictions that control us and ruin our lives.

"Who has anguish? Who has sorrow? Who is always fighting? Who is always complaining? Who has unnecessary bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? It is the one who spends long hours in the taverns, trying out new drinks. Don't gaze at the wine, seeing how red it is, how it sparkles in the cup, how smoothly it goes down. For in the end it bites like a poisonous snake; it stings like a viper. You will see hallucinations, and you will say crazy things. You will stagger like a sailor tossed at sea, clinging to a swaying mast. And you will say, 'They hit me, but I didn't feel it. I didn't even know it when they beat me up. When will I wake up so I can look for another drink?'" Proverbs 23:29-35 (NLT)

Note: Many things can control us besides alcohol: opioids, illegal drugs, gambling, pornography, work, social media, sex, food, etc.

"I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway." Romans 7:18b-19 (NLT)

Note: Christ paid the penalty for our sins on the cross, and we are saved by His grace. But this DOES NOT mean we should go on sinning.

"Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace. **Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.** Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living. Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:12-23 (NLT)

"You say, 'I am allowed to do anything'—but not everything is good for you. And even though 'I am allowed to do anything,' I must not become a **slave** to anything." 1 Corinthians 6:12 (NLT)

B. Six things we can do to declare war on things that control us:

1. We can conduct an honest, spiritual assessment of ourselves.

"Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord." Lamentations 3:40 (NIV)

"I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you, though I was sorry at first, for I know it was painful to you for a little while. Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death." 2 Corinthians 7:8-10 (NLT)

2. We can surrender any sinful habits and/or addictions God reveals to us and ask Him to change us.

"So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor." James 4:7-10 (NLT)

“For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.”

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

3. We can confess our sinful habits and/or addictions to another believer and seek his/her help.

“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” James 5:16a (NLT)

4. We can run from people or circumstances that will tempt us to keep on sinning.

“Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’” 1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)

“Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.” Proverbs 23:20-21 (NIV)

5. We can run toward Christian fellowship.

“Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.” 2 Timothy 2:22 (NLT)

“Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.”

Galatians 6:1-3 (NLT)

6. We can pray for friends, coworkers, and family members trapped in sinful habits/addictions.

“Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!” Matthew 26:41 (NLT)

“The Lord says, ‘I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them.’”

Psalms 91:14-15 (NLT)

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Helpful Resources:

Alcoholics Anonymous – for people struggling with alcohol addiction – www.aa.org

Al-anon / Al-ateen – for people affected by someone else’s alcoholism – www.al-anon.org

Celebrate Recovery – A Christ-centered 12-step program – www.celebraterecovery.com

Gamblers Anonymous – for people struggling with a gambling addiction – www.gamblersanonymous.org

Narcotics Anonymous – for people struggling with drug addiction – www.na.org

Overeaters Anonymous – for people who have an unhealthy relationship with food or body image – www.oa.org

Route 1520 - for men struggling with porn addiction – www.route1520.com

The Life Recovery Bible – Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. (New Living Translation)

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference, living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; taking this world as it is and not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.” *Reinhold Niebuhr*

