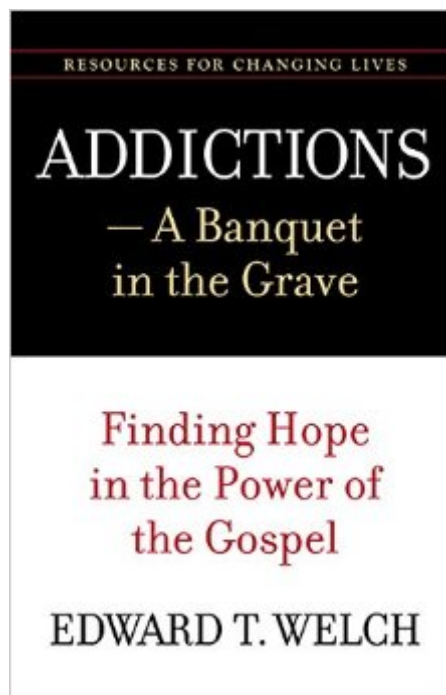


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Addictions: A Banquet In The Grave: Finding Hope In The Power Of The Gospel (Resources For Changing Lives)



Synopsis

A worship disorder: this is how Edward T. Welch views addictions. "Will we worship our own desires or will we worship the true God?" With this lens the author discovers far more in Scripture on addictions than passages on drunkenness. There we learn the addict's true condition: like guests at a banquet thrown by "the woman Folly," he is already in the grave (Proverbs 9:13-18). Can we not escape our addictions? If we're willing to follow Jesus, the author says that we have "immense hope: hope in God's forgiving grace, hope in God's love that is faithful even when we are not, and hope that God can give power so that we are no longer mastered by the addiction." Each chapter concludes with "Practical Theology," "As Your Face Your Own Addictions," and "As You Help Someone Else."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The author is a redeemed ex-heroin addict and has been a Christian counselor and seminary professor for almost 30 years. It is written explicitly for both people who are addicts or recovering and also family members. This book is Bible saturated and unimaginably helpful! The Dry Drunk The book opens by describing what Welch calls a dry drunk. It is a man that he meets with who has managed to stay sober for a year now, through meetings, etc, but displays all the same thought patterns and habits that led him to drink in the first place. Welch describes the conversation as "Jim" complaining that God gave him this disease that he has to struggle with. He's frustrated that his

church doesn't speak to his alcoholism more, and that his family doesn't understand his "fight." Although staying sober for a year has been a great victory, one feels uncertain as to if he might go back to it at any moment. Welch believes that just staying sober is not the true answer to alcoholism and other addictions, but addressing the heart issues that led to the drinking in the first place. To address that, Welch builds a theology of addiction from scripture. Addiction is sin. Welch's first point is that the problem of addiction is the age-old problem of sin. Addiction is a very obvious, enslaving, and destructive type of sin, but it is still, at its root, sin, and not a disease. He draws some parallels between the sin of addiction and other types of sin. Addiction may be enslaving and deceptive, but so is pride, so is greed. When we sin, we are saying that God is not providing me with what I need to overcome my problems, He is not my help, I am going to find help for myself. (He defines an addiction as something that gives a mind and body-altering experience that is immediate.

Similar to the central themes of the other books in the "Resources for Changing Lives" series, Welch explicitly states the "point" to the book in the preface: "Theology makes a difference" (xvi). With relation to addictions specifically, then, this means that "Addictions are ultimately a disorder of worship." In keeping with this central theme, the first part of the book, "Thinking Theologically" lays the foundation for the approach, while the second part develops specific "Essential Theological Themes." Welch begins by discussing the very idea of "practical theology." Why is it that a faithful Christian who knows theology well, even teaching it at church, can respond to sin in such a way that seems to betray a lack of any theological knowledge at all? This is a common problem—the problem of a disconnect between faith and life—that Welch argues has at least two sources. First, due to the influence of unbelieving authorities, many of us have wrong theology in the first place. Second, even when we believe true things, our actions betray not a disconnect between faith and life, but a failure to really believe that which we say we believe. The solution is to turn to God's Word for perspective, and to listen to the counsel of others when we may think we are self-deceived (3-10). In my estimation, this basic approach is of great usefulness, even far beyond the specific issue of addictions. When it is clear that we are living in a manner inconsistent with our confession, there are two things we need to do: turn to God's Word and involve ourselves in the church. The usefulness of the rest of the book flows from this fundamental insight: addictions betray theological error; specifically, they betray a worship problem. Diagnosing the problem rightly is key to fixing it.

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