

The Addicted Society III Steps to Overcoming Addictions

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Before we get into the specifics of the Scriptures involved—because they're all necessary—to really understand how anyone who is addicted to anything can really overcome. God will give you the help and the strength and the power to do it, if you turn to Him.

Many people are addicted physically. The worst kind of addiction, physically, is substance abuse. Substance abuse comes in many, many different forms from food addictions to drug addictions—hard drugs, soft drugs, prescription drugs—and all of these have varying affects on the body; this includes smoking tobacco, smoking marijuana and other things that go along with physical addictions. These are not only physical—we put them in the category of physical—but they go in the category of mental and spiritual, too.

They are physical from this point of view: Many of the programs which are out there that can help people, and there are many rehab programs: Gamblers Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, state mandated rehab programs for cocaine and heroin users, methamphetamine users, those that are addicted to prescription drugs, and so forth. Many of these programs work. However, there is a great recidivism, or a repeat offending, because many who go through the programs have to go through them three or four times, in some cases. Some can go through them once and pretty well overcome, because their addiction is not so severe.

Nevertheless, in all of these situations we need to realize that whatever help that can be gotten from these programs, by all means use them! Each one is going to have varying degrees of damage that the drugs have done to the body and to the mind. So, with any of these substance abuse rehabilitation and reprogramming, what you're going to have to do is you're going to have to do some real deep research on it so you can understand it, or have someone do it for you, and someone to help you with a health program. You have to change your diet. You probably have to get quiet a few supplements to up-build your system again, because all the drugs take away vitamins, minerals and body strength from you. These have to be rebuilt! And because they're not rebuilt, this gives a re-occurrence of the craving to go back to taking the substances.

It's very hard to get rid of the craving of heroine, cocaine and methamphetamine. These things lodge into the liver, and you can have

repeats—especially with methamphetamine; it's as dangerous as any of the substances that people take—whether it is smoking it or shooting it up or whatever kind that you are addicted to. It destroys the body, so you must—in your program of rehabilitation—rebuild the body; rebuild your health, and it's going to take some help and cooperation to do so.

When you are recovering, do not get hooked on a secondary addiction. What do I mean by that? *A lot of people who have been on drugs then take prescription drugs to counteract what the illegal drugs they have done, and they become addicted to that; that is a substitute addiction.* Many times smokers and those who are alcoholics (alcohol addiction) will revert back—especially with an alcohol program—and they're still addicted. Or a cocaine or a methamphetamine addiction—people will revert back to smoking cigarettes. While cigarettes may be legal to buy over the counter, they're still addicting, and ***you're only substituting one addiction for another!***

Another addiction that alcohol addicts have is that they substitute alcohol for candy or ice cream. Their high sugar content becomes, in the body, another form of alcohol that the body is craving. So, what has to happen with these? ***You must get on a health-building program!*** You must also get on a mind reprogramming regiment, as well. You ***must*** have your health taken care of. You ***must*** be working at that simultaneously as you are recovering.

First of all, let's understand the first point that an addict needs to come to in order to begin. A lot of people want help. A lot of people can admit that they have a problem. Admitting that you have a problem, that's fine, but there are a lot of people who admit that they have problem but still continue in it, because they haven't done what is necessary to do. They haven't really sat down and *talked to themselves* and *come to themselves*.

In the story of the prodigal son and receiving forgiveness and so forth, here's a young man who went out, got his money from his inheritance from his father, and then he found himself in terrible, wretched conditions. He ended up losing everything.

Luke 15:15: "Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he was longing to fill his stomach with the husks that the swine were eating, but no one gave *anything* to him"

(vs 15-16).

Part of the beginning of recovery that all addicts have to come to is that you have got to go the bottom! The bottom may be varying degrees of difficulty, problems, troubles, anxieties and psychological hang-ups and maybe encounters with the law, jail time, prison time, probation time, fines; all of those various things are the signposts of coming down to hit the bottom! That's what happened with the prodigal son. When he came to the realization of what he needed to do—and this is where every addict needs to come—you need to do this before God as well:

Verse 17: “And when he **came to himself**...” In other words he came to himself to be honest, not only to admit he had a problem, but that he was really going to do something about it. That admission was followed by repentance, which is very, very important! A lot of people, before they reach this point, admit it; they begin to quit, but they have relapses. Some give up and just go back and become even worse, rather than try again, rather than see if they can overcome again.

Let's see another example, another parable. Even if you slip back, *there is still hope*. Remember this: **As long as there is life, there is hope!**

- *it depends on what you do with your life*
- *it depends whether you take advantage of the hope*

Luke 13:6: “And He spoke this parable: ‘A certain *man* had planted a fig tree in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it, but he did not find *any*. Then he said to the vinedresser, “Look *here!* For three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and have not found *any*. Cut it down. Why should it *continue* to waste *space* in the ground?’” But he answered *and* said to him, “Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and put *in* manure””(vs 6-8). To do this it will revive the plant. Likewise, a lot of the slipups, fallbacks and reoccurrences happen because there's not the physical nourishing that is necessary to take care of the body to produce the fruit.

Verse 9: “And *see* if in fact it will bear fruit; but if not, after that you shall cut it down.” Here is a chance that people have, but you've got to do something about it.

It's the same way with asking for forgiveness. God is there to forgive, and He will forgive, but you have to do something about it. **You've got to come to yourself!** When you come to yourself, one of the first things you need to do is this: Do not allow yourself any *fudge-factors*. What do I mean by that? *Fudge factor is going back to the*

same situation that you were in.

- the same kind of problems
- the same kind of difficulties
- the same kind of friends
- the same kind of environment
- the same kind of thinking

and you allow yourself a fudge-factor. ‘Oh well, if I slip just a little bit, that won't matter because I'm improving. That is only continuing your *self-deception and justification* of what you do for your bad behavior. You cannot allow yourself a *fudge-factor*.

Luke 15:17: “And when he came to himself...” he started thinking correctly, and that's what you need to do:

- get your mind oriented right
- get your thinking correctly
- get rid of accusing others
- stop accusing the environments
- stop accusing the drug dealers
- stop accusing those who allow it

You have control over yourself and you are responsible to God for yourself, and you must make the choices. God will be there to help you and uplift you and bring you out of it. **But you must come to yourself!**

“...he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have *an* abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger?’” (v 17). You know the story: he went back, he was forgiven, his father accepted him and so forth. You've got to **come to yourself!**

The next thing you have to do is when you are confronted with situations that you will not allow a *fudge-factor* to get hold of you. This applies for every addiction—whether it is:

- TV addiction
- food addiction
- soda addiction
- pornography addiction
- gambling addiction
- sex addiction
- hard drug addiction

—whatever it is! Here is a principle that you need to understand and realize:

1-Corinthians 6:13: “Foods *are* for the belly, and the belly *is* for foods; but God will destroy both it and those. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality...” or addiction, or drugs, or porn, or any of the things that people are addicted to.

“...but for the Lord...” God created you; He created you to receive His Spirit. He created you in His image, and He wants you to change and repent

and come to yourself and come back to Him.

“...and the Lord for the body” (v 13). God wants to do His work within you, but you have to come to yourself.

Here is what you need to do: If you happen to be a baptized member and you have slipped and you’re addicted and you’re into some of these things, and you don’t know how to get out and you’re trying to repent and so forth, then you need to understand what is happening here.

- you can’t *allow* yourself a fudge-factor
- you can’t *justify* your behaviors
- you can’t blame it on other people

Verse 15: “Don’t you know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot?...”—or of drugs, pornography, whatever addiction that there is.

“...MAY IT NEVER BE! WHAT! Don’t you know that he who is joined to a harlot... [or to drugs, pornography, gambling] ...is one body? For He says, ‘The two shall be one flesh’” (vs 15-16). This is applying strictly to sexual problems, and today it’s out there everywhere!

Verse 17: “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.... [here’s what you need to do]: ...**Flee** sexual immorality....” (vs 17-18). Flee drugs; get away from it; temptation comes at us, get out of there, don’t get around it. Don’t go back to the same friends, the same environment, the same hangout. **Flee whatever it is**, be it:

- sexual immorality
- drug addiction
- food addiction
- television addiction

Television addiction is probably the easiest to handle. Hit the remote, kill it!

- music addiction

Don’t let it blast into your ears! Those are probably easier to stop. But

- you still have to *come to yourself*
- you still can’t give yourself a *fudge-factor*
- you still can’t go back and give yourself excuses for doing it
- you have to **flee!**

All of these things you *have to get away from!*

“...Every sin that a man may commit is outside the body, but the one who commits sexual immorality is sinning against his own body” (v 18). That goes along with substance abuse, as well.

You’re putting it into your body.

- You’re sinning against *your body*
- you’re sinning against *your mind*
- you’re sinning against *Christ*
- you’re sinning against *God the Father*

God is not going to be mocked! Until you *come to yourself*, until you realize what you need to do, I recommend people do—when they’re confronted with these things—is sit down, have a good long, hard talk with yourself in prayer to God, and ask yourself:

- What am I doing?
- Where am I going?
- How am I going to overcome?
- How can I change?
- How can I get out of this?

and:

- look at what you’ve done
- look at all the people you have hurt
- look at all the people you have caused great problems for

Drug abuse causes great havoc in families mentally, emotionally, spiritually, financially; and many parents have to go out and shell out thousands and thousands of dollars to help their adult children out of substance abuse. It’s a terrible situation. It leads to divorce, and it leads to all kinds of problems.

Now, let me just mention here—something you need to realize and understand: If you’ve come from a family that has had divorce—maybe once, twice or three times—or if it is a dysfunctional family, or if it is a drug-addicted family, or whatever the family addiction may be, ***you must break that cycle***. You must, by your own self—***with the help of God and His Spirit***—come out of it. You must stop! But *there can be no stopping unless you come to yourself* and make up your mind and realize ‘I’ve got to turn and quit!’

There’s another factor that Jesus said with the woman who was caught in adultery—and it was actually a matter of judgment rather than a matter of mercy there (John 8). When no one accused her He said, ‘Neither do I. Go and sin no more.’ And likewise, when He healed in the account of John 5, He told him, ‘Go and sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you.’

STEPS to OVERCOMING ADDICTION:

Step # 1: Admit it

- recognize it
- do not excuse it
- no fudge-factors
- realize what you’re doing to yourself and other people

Step # 2: **Repentance! Repentance to God!**

The kind of repentance that God wants is not just a superficial thing—like: ‘Oh, I know I got a problem.’ NO! ***It is a deep and profound repentance that comes from within, from the very guts of your being!*** It is not a superficial thing at all, but it is a profound and traumatic and deep and lasting repentance that needs to be.

Here in the book of Joel we find ***how*** to repent. We’re going to look at several verses here on how to repent and what repentance is.

- repentance *to God*
- repentance *to those you have offended*
- repentance *to those you have caused to spend money on you to help you recover*

In many cases people lose their jobs, lose their family, lose their children, lose everything that they have because they’re so intent on shooting up and sticking drugs in their nose, or swallowing them, taking them, and then you add all of this to the ***music and the things that just pounds into your very being!*** You’ve got to *come to yourself* and get rid of ***all*** of it. God will help you. Other people will help you. Maybe some of these other programs that are out there can help you. So, get whatever help and support that you need.

Here’s the kind of repentance that God will honor: Joel 2:12: “‘Therefore, even now,’ says the LORD, ‘turn to Me with all your heart...’” Can’t be any half-heartedness, can’t be any fainting, can’t be any superficial thing; ***your whole heart***, because God knows! If you want God to help you, ***it’s got to be with your whole heart!***

“...and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. Yes, rend your heart and not your garments, and return to the LORD your God...” (vs 12-13).

That’s what it has to be: a ***complete turning around***; that your repentance to God is always on a continuous basis. The initial great repentance that comes when you *come to yourself* and recognize what you are. Then continuous repentance as you see and God unfolds to you step-by-step the depths of your lust and your selfishness and your vanity and your greed, and doing all of these things to ignore and hurt and despise other people. We know the world is wicked out there and we know that it’s filled with a lot of these things. But you can come out of it.

Verse 13: “Yes, rend your heart and not your garments, and return to the LORD your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great

kindness, and He repents of the evil.” All the evil that you have gone through is a direct result of breaking and transgressing the laws of God. That evil that has come upon you and you find yourself down at the bottom of the pit and you don’t know what to do or where to go ***because you have brought upon yourself the curses of disobeying God!***

- He’s willing to lift them
- He’s willing to take it from you
- He’s willing to put it all on Christ

because ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.’ He took upon Him ALL of our sins. He was beaten! He was scourged! He was crucified! (Isa. 53). ***For everyone who comes to Christ in deep repentance that sacrifice is applied!***

Let’s see an amplification here; a very important Psalm because David—who was king—was chosen by God to be over the 12 tribes of Israel. You can read the whole account of his debacle with Bathsheba. ***Great sin!*** When he finally *came to himself*, when God had to send Nathan the prophet to tell him that ‘you are that man!’ then David *came to himself*. So, as we go through here, I want to ask: **What is going to take for you:**

- to *come to yourself?*
- to quit *deceiving* yourself?
- to quit *lying* to yourself?
- to quit *making excuses* for yourself?
- to quit *falling down* and getting back into all of these *substance abuse* problems?
 - ✓ *mental* abuse problems?
 - ✓ *emotional* abuse problems?

—because people become *addicted* to them! As you *rend your heart*, here is the prayer, and see what this is and see how this has to apply, and see what you need to do.

Psalm 51:1: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions”—because God will. God will forgive them! He will ‘remove them as far as east is from the west.’ He will ‘remember them no more.’ But we’re going to see there’s something else you need to do when you repent, because repentance is only a step! Repentance is not a completion, but a step toward completion.

Verse 2: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” Part of *coming to yourself* and with the Spirit of God, He’s got to clean you inside out. He’s got to start with your mind, your heart. You’ve got to admit your lust and your attitudes. You’ve got to admit the

substance and the destruction of your body that it's caused. And you also, in your repentance, have to take care of your body and start building it up.

But here's what you need to do, v 3: "For I **acknowledge** my transgressions..."

- go to God and confess them
- go to God and repent
- go to God and pour out your heart to Him in weeping, mourning and fasting

—that God will turn to you (Joel 2).

"...and my sin is ever before me" (v 3). That's exactly what addicts know. They know that they're in the clutches of sin. It is ever before them. It is ever something that they are held in the grips of. So, you must break—with the help of God through repentance—that bondage of addiction and giving yourself over to your own lusts.

Here's the thing that you need to realize: Yes, you hurt other people in the world:

- your wife/husband
- your mother/father
- your children
- your neighbors
- your employer

They become disillusioned. They become disheartened to see you go through all of these things. Everyone of them are willing and hopeful that you will recover and repent! *And God wants you to!*

But here's what you have to admit, v 4: "Against You, **You only**, have I sinned..." You've gone against God. God has made you. God has given you life and breath, a mind and a body for a great and fantastic purpose, which has been totally corrupted and nearly destroyed by addiction. There is a way out and that way out is Christ, and you have to take it. There is no other way.

"...and done this evil in Your sight..." (v 4). Every time you go through a session of addiction, God knows! *He knows!*

- He knows the evil!
- He knows the depths.
- He knows the degree.
- He knows everything!

And He's willing to forgive you with this kind of repentance.

"...that You might be justified when You speak, and be in the right when You judge" (v 4). Whatever penalty, whatever hardship has come upon you, God is justified in doing so. God has done so to bring you to your senses. God has done so to let you

know that there is a right way, and there is a way that is evil; so that you can change what you are doing.

Verse 5: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." That means you're born with a human nature that has a downward pull to sin and you've just given into it totally!

Here's what God wants with this kind of repentance, because there are other things that you have to do when we get to the part of reprogramming—because you've got to reprogram your mind, your thoughts, all of these things, because it is **repentance, recovery, and reprogramming!**

Verse 6: "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts..." Not all those hidden lies and self-deceits that you go through to kid yourself into thinking that everything is okay. Or you look around and you think: well everybody else is doing it, and if everybody else is doing it, then hey, it's got to be okay. *No!* You judge everything based upon:

- the Truth of God
- the Word of God
- the laws of God
- the commandments of God
- the teachings of the Bible
- the teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles

"...and in the hidden part... [that's between you and God] ... You shall make me to know wisdom" (v 6).

Here's what you have to be willing to let God's Spirit and God's Word do for you, v 7: "Purge me with hyssop..." Just like taking a crusty old dirty pot and cleaning it with steel wool and harsh soap to get rid of all the crud and the scum and everything associated with it.

"...and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (v 7). Then it goes on that there's going to joy and repentance (v 8).

Verse 9: "Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." Here's what has to happen. This is part of the **recovery and reprogramming**. We'll get into more particulars on reprogramming the mind, because that's what has to happen. In order to beat addiction, you must, with the Spirit of God and the Word of God, **reprogram your mind**; because you have destroyed parts of your mind and ability to think, especially by the substances that you have used. If you're into substance abuse, and you have perverted your way of thinking; if you're into pornography and television addiction; food addictions can also, as the book *Excitotoxins: The Taste that Kills* points out, you can actually damage the brain, the connections

in the brain that make you think, that help you to put things together. That's why it's important to get things reprogrammed.

That's what he's talking about here in v 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." This is something that has to be completely renewed *every* day! Just like they tell you in every recovery programs: one day at a time, one hour at a time, one minute at a time—it has to be. And some of these cravings of addictions will take quite a while to overcome. You really have to exert the effort. You need the help! You need the strength! You need other people to help you if they are willing to help you!

Here's what to realize: Some people are so ashamed of what they have done. Some people are so down and think that they can't come back to God. Some people have ruined their lives so much that they really feel that there's no hope and some even go out and commit suicide. Well, that's not the answer! Yes, it does end the problem, but that's not the answer. **Yes, God will forgive you upon deep and profound repentance!**

Psalms 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy." And everyone who has been addicted to whatever the addiction is, you're poor and needy:

- you need the help of God
- you need the Spirit of God
- you need the Word of God
- you need the strength to build up your mind

Verse 2: "Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You." You've got to trust in God every day, every hour, every minute—begin trusting in God for everything that you do.

Verse 3: "Be merciful to me, O LORD, for **I cry unto You all day long**" (vs 2-3). You can't just have a one-time thing and everything is okay and now everybody's got to get back to normal because 'I have been successful this one day.' ***NO!*** Daily!

- *Prayer* daily!
- *Repentance* daily!
- *Reprogramming* daily!

All of those things have to be done. Then there is hope. Then there is progress. Then there will be no slip-backs. All the way along, as I have said, do not give yourself any *fudge-factors*! You must have it absolutely! Do not go back. If that's a hard thing to do at first, resolve over and over again, and with the help of God and continuing on whatever program you are in, the guidelines for *recovery, repentance*

and reprogramming that we're covering here, ***you can overcome; you will overcome; you will change.*** God loves you and is *for you* and wants you to do His will.

Verse 4: "Rejoice the soul of Your servant..." In other words, let God's Spirit and His Word and the change that's affected in your life give you some joy. You haven't had anything but sorrow and depression and wretchedness.

"...for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul" (v 4). Lift up your whole life, mind, heart, *your very being*, to God.

Understand this, v 5: "For You, LORD, are good, and **ready to forgive**..." God is just waiting for you to repent. He's ready to forgive! He's not going to begrudge you. He's not going to turn His back on you. If you turn to Him, He will turn to you, and *He's ready to forgive*.

"...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You. Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer..." (vs 5-6). It's got to be through prayer—deep, profound, personal prayer—daily. You can accomplish that. Use the Psalms as a guide. Pour out your heart to God. He knows the very depths of your very being.

- He will help you
- He will strengthen you
- He will give you the hope

—***if you turn to Him with all your heart and mind and soul and being!***

When there are difficulties, v 7: "In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me." So, as you go day-by-day, and a temptation comes along, and you resist it and you don't give yourself any fudge-factor—you flee from it; you get away from it; you get your mind off of it—***God will help you!*** Without a doubt!

As we go along we will see that all of these main things are interconnected.

Step #3: Constantly seek God

- He will hear you
- He will answer your prayers
- He will do so and encourage you and uplift you and help you and strengthen you day-by-day.

You're going to have some days that will be other days. You're going to have *up* days; you're going to have *down* days, especially if you've been on substance abuse. There are residuals of the drug within your body—within your liver, your mind, your tissue—that will begin leeching out into your system. That's why it's important that you get on a

good physical rehab program, too, and diet to help purge these things out.

With the different ups and downs you have, you've got to seek God daily! Let's look at the promises that are also contained in Psa. 119. Every verse is a promise from God to do His part ***IF*** you do your part; that's what's important.

Psalms 119:2: "Blessed are they that keep His testimonies..." We'll talk about keeping the laws of God in reprogramming in a little bit, get into that even more specifically.

"...and who seek Him with the whole heart" (v 2). What do we have here? *We have **repenting** with your whole heart, **seeking** Him with your whole heart!* Then we're also going to see **loving** Him with all your heart, mind, soul and being! That's how you overcome the cravings and the temptations. You:

- recognize it
- get away from it
- stop it
- avoid it
- flee from it

and then—with prayer and repentance—*seek Him with the whole heart!*

When you do that, v 3: "They also do no iniquity... [that means you can overcome] ...they walk in His ways"—instead of your own ways.

- walk in the way of God
- walk in the way of His commandments
- walk in the way of His Truth

Verse 4: "You have commanded us to keep Your precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!" (vs 4-5). David was lamenting the difficulties and problems of human nature that is inclined to be carried away by lust and human desires. It's a process.

- You must *change!*
- You must *grow!*
- You must develop!
- You must *reprogram!*

Verse 6: "Then I shall not be ashamed when I have respect unto all Your commandments." Isn't that something?

Verse 9: "With what shall a young man cleanse his way?... [God has His part; you have your part] ...By taking heed according to Your Word." Following God's Word. Seeking His way. They all go hand-in-hand.

Matthew 7:7—here is a promise. When you discouraged, you get down, you go to God and say:

- God, I'm discouraged

- I'm down
- I'm fighting this problem
 - ✓ it's a temptation
 - ✓ it's coming upon me
- Lift me up out of it
- Give me the strength to overcome
- Help me to resist
- Give me Your word
- Intervene for me
- Help me to seek the way
- Give me the strength and resistance that I need
- Help me to not have any more *fudge-factors*
- Help me to not get enticed
- Help me to seek You with my whole heart

Matthew 7:7: "**Ask**, and it shall be given to you..." Claim the promise. Not because you're righteous, but because God promised it, and He's Holy.

"...**Seek**, and you shall find..." (v 7). The Greek in all of this means: *ask and keep on asking; seek and keep on seeking*

"...**Knock**... [and keep on knocking] ...and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks **receives**, and the one who seeks **finds**, and to the one who knocks **it shall be opened**" (vs 7-8).

- God will help you
- God will strengthen you
- God will be right there to give you the ability to:
 - ✓ **repent**
 - ✓ **recover**
 - ✓ **reprogram**

(go to the next track)

Let's see how we can apply this, and let's begin to look at the aspect of **reprogramming**. We've covered somewhat on prayer.

Step #4: **Prayer**

Daily prayer! Coming to God in a repentant attitude and broken heart and mind and praying to Him:

- yielding to Him
- asking for His guidance
- asking for His help
- asking for His deliverance

in everything. We find we have the model prayer (Matt. 6). If you analyze all the Psalms, you will see that they very carefully follow the model prayer that Jesus gave here. That is not to repeat this prayer; this is a guideline.

Matthew 6:8: “Now then, do not be like them...”—the heathen, who, in just vain repetition kind of pray. They think that in multiplying words that they shall be heard. Jesus says, ‘Don’t be like them.’

“...for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him.... [God knows!] ...Therefore, you are to pray after this manner: ‘Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name’” (vs 8-9). ***You pray directly to God the Father in the name of Christ.***

- He is Holy
- He is there in heaven
- He controls the vastness of the universe
- He is the sole Sovereign of everything that there is
- He loves you
- He cares for you
- He wants you to change and grow and overcome
- He wants you to overcome your addiction
- He wants you to solve the problems that have been the result of it
- He will help you
- He will strengthen you

That’s why you go to Him first!

Verse 10: “Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven... [let God’s will be in your life] ...give us this day our daily bread” (vs 10-11)—which means ***every need*** that we have: our physical needs, our spiritual needs, our mental needs, everything that we have *daily*; not just once whenever you’re in trouble, *but daily!* This is an outline on how to pray daily.

- sometimes your prayers will have a lot of joy
- sometimes they’ll have a lot of sorrow
- sometimes they’ll be a lot of repentance
- sometimes there will be a lot of thanksgiving and praise to God

All depending on how your particular day is going!

And here’s another thing that’s important to remember, v 12: “And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors... [‘our sins’ (Luke 11)] ...and lead us not into temptation...” (vs 12-13). Don’t let us be led into trials and difficulties, because Satan is there ready to entrap you.

“...but rescue us from the evil one....” (v 13). Satan the devil is the one out there perpetrating and causing all of these things, as we’ve seen in *Addicted Society #s 1-2*, and he is making it happen! We need daily to be rescued from the evil one. Then to acknowledge that all the authority and all the power comes from God the Father, through Jesus

Christ, to everyone.

“...For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (v 13).

Step #5: Reprogramming

Let’s begin on the reprogramming aspect of overcoming. Remember this is: ***Repentance, Recovery and Reprogramming***. So, we’ve seen:

1. resist and you flee—you get away from it
2. repent
3. seek God
4. have prayer daily
5. reprogramming

Let’s understand something that’s important, and, of course, these points will interlock and overlap. We find here how they do that.

James 4:6: “But He gives greater grace.... [than our own lust and our own envy (v 5)] ...This is the reason it says, ‘God sets Himself against *the* proud...’ God was against you when you were addicted. And every time you go back to that addiction and give yourself a *fudge-factor* you’re going against God. You are tempting God to set Himself against you again.

“...but He gives grace to *the* humble” (v 6).

- that’s why the repentance
- that’s why the confession of sin
- that’s why all of these things are so profound and important

Verse 7: “Therefore, submit yourselves to God. **Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you.” First you submit to God, then you can resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Verse 8: “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners, and purify *your* hearts, you double-minded!” It has to be a wholehearted effort on your part. You can’t have one foot in *your* way and one foot in God’s way, and have a split mind. You want to change, You want to overcome, but you’re really not willing to put forth the wholehearted effort, because that makes you ‘double-minded.’

‘A double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways.’ (James 1). It will just be a repeat, relapse, going back into it, *unless you draw near to God and humble yourself to Him*, and unless you apply yourself. God will help you! He’s not going to do it for you. ***You must do it, but He will help you!*** That’s important to understand and remember.

Now, let's go back here to the book of Proverbs and let's see how we begin *reprogramming* the mind. That's the whole point of true Christianity: ***Reprogram the mind with the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and develop the mind of Christ.*** Instead of thinking on your own ways and your own lusts and your own things, ***you think on God's way and His plan and His Truth and with His Word and it's a wholehearted effort***—a complete fulltime effort! Wherever you are, whatever you are doing: *to be reprogrammed!*

And lots of times it's going to take the nutritional things that I have mentioned in order to physically help repair the mind and get it going again. Help clean out all of these toxins ***out of your mind, out of your liver, out of your system:***

- if you're addicted to porn, to get erased out of your mind, cleaned out of your mind
- if you have a craving for something
- if you have an addiction to gambling

whatever it may be. You cannot give yourself a *fudge-factor* because you always end up being double-minded and unstable.

Let's see how you can be established; here are the keys. Proverbs 16:1 "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, are from the LORD.... [He created it in you, it's part of you] ...All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes..." (vs 1-2). We covered that previously. Just don't look to your own ways and think 'well, I'm doing better than so and so; I've improved here'; or 'I've been good for one day.' How about two? How about ten? How about many months? How about a year? Two years? Five years? Ten years? It's not just what you've done in a short time.

"...but the LORD weighs the spirits. **Commit your works unto the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established**" (vs 2-3). *Reprogramming your mind* is establishing your thoughts! ***Gaining control and discipline:***

- over your mind
- over your passions
- over your urges
- over your desires
- over your addiction.

Verse 6: "By mercy and Truth iniquity is purged..." Mercy is showing *repentance*; Truth is the *Word of God*.

- being truthful with yourself.
 - being truthful about your circumstances.
 - being truthful with other people
- quit*
- lying
 - cheating

- deceiving
- hiding
- excusing
- justifying

- When you repent, *replace it with Truth*
- When you recognize error, *replace it with Truth*
- When you get rid of self-deception, *replace it with Truth*

"...is purged... [it is a process. It is a reprogramming of the mind.] ...and by the fear of the LORD *men* turn away from evil" (v 6).

How do you handle evil? That which held you in its grips?

- you must learn to hate
- you must learn to abhor
- you must see the power that that has done to you
- you must overcome it
- you must realize that only with the power of God and His Spirit...

That's why it's important not only to repent, but when you do that and you're *recovering*, if you have not been baptized and buried your sins in the watery grave and have come to Christ, that you can, after baptism—which is the full burial of the self in the watery grave—when you come up out of that, then you can have hands laid upon you to receive the Holy Spirit so that you can have the strength and power to overcome even more.

In the final analysis, unless you turn to God with all your heart, mind, soul and being, you're going to have, at best, an uphill battle. Here's part of the *reprogramming* of the mind that you have to have. That which you liked before, that which you craved before, that which you were addicted to before, ***you must learn to hate!*** There's a proper Godly hatred; hating iniquity. Christ was commended because He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Those who are addicted are lawless. You've got to change that! You've got to change your thought process by being reprogrammed with the Word and the Spirit of God.

Proverbs 8:13: "**The fear of the LORD is to hate evil**..." Because if you hate it, if you despise it, if you just absolutely cut it off as an abomination, then you can begin to reprogram your mind, and you can begin to change.

"...I hate pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth" (v 13)—says God. And every one of these addictions are all involved in self, pride, arrogancy and evil ways; and it's just got you right in its grip. What is that song? *He's Got the*

Whole World in His Hands. That's not of Christ, that's of Satan—he's got the whole world in his hands. You've got to come out from underneath it.

Let's see how you need to do it. That's why I said that the book of Proverbs is the way to start. I'm going to encourage everyone of you to read and study the book of Proverbs; do so on your knees; do so in a prayerful way. Not only when you're reading and studying and you learn from each proverb as you go through, but that gives you a chance *to talk with God, to repent, to cleanse your heart, cleanse your mind* with the Spirit of God.

Here's the attitude we need to have. This is not just kind of a half-hearted thing that you can get away with. This is a full-time thing. This is a complete absolute, with repentance, turning around and going the other way. That's what repentance is all about. Repentance is not just being sorrowful. Repentance is turning *to God* and turning *from sin*. Then when you have done that, here shows how we do it, how we become reprogrammed.

Proverbs 2:1: "My son, **if**..." I want you to understand how these are all conditional for every single one of us.

"...you will receive my words, and treasure up my commandments within you... [they become a very part of your being] ...so that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding... [notice all of these conditions] ...yea, **if** you cry after knowledge..." (vs 1-3). You've got to go after this tooth and nail; just as you were hooked and addicted to whatever addiction that you have, now you've got to turn around and apply yourself in the total opposite direction. You've got to *cry after knowledge*. That only comes from God's Word.

"...and lift up your voice for understanding.... [that implies daily prayer] ...**If**... [we have three *ifs* here; use this as a test for yourself: Are you doing this?] ...**if** you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures" (vs 3-4). That is God's way, God's Word, God's Spirit, everything about God.

Verse 5: "Then shall you understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God." This means

- you've got to be thorough in it
- you've got to follow through in it
- you've got to realize that these conditions you have to meet

God has given His promises that He will fulfill and He will provide. If you do these things, then:

- He will give you wisdom
- He will give you understanding

But you have to apply the effort as if you're searching for "...silver and search *for* her as for hidden treasures, then you shall understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom.... [that's where it comes from] ...out of His mouth *comes* knowledge and understanding" (vs 4-6).

Please understand this: Every word that God wants you to know He has caused to be recorded in the Bible and these are the words of God. That's why Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live.' He's had them recorded. He's had them preserved. God down through all the centuries of time:

- has watched over His Word
- has preserved His Word
- has inspired His Word
- has given this as a spiritual guide and understanding

so

- we can come out of our sins
- we can come out of our addictions
- we can come out of our problems
- we can solve our difficulties
- we can draw close to God

They are here, but we must apply ourselves. God is not going to come down and put a funnel hole in the top of your skull and put a funnel and insert it in there. That's why Prov. 2 is important. But you've really got to apply yourself for it.

Verse 7: "He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous... [and you'll be able to begin to think straight] ...*He is* a shield to those who walk uprightly.... [that means a defender] ...He keeps the paths of *right* judgment and preserves the way of His saints.... [Compare that now with v 9—all the other first 8 verses apply]: ...**Then you shall understand righteousness and judgment and equity, every good path**" (vs 7-9).

- that's the way out of it
- that's the way you reprogram
- that's the way you overcome
- that's the way that you build the right pattern of living and thinking

so you can resist against the evil and sin that is engulfed and enveloped your life.

Verse 10: "Wisdom shall enter into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasing to your soul; discretion shall preserve you and, understanding shall keep you" (vs 10-11).

- you're going to make the *right choices*
- you're going to be *able to resist*

- you're going to be *able to flee*
- you're going to be *able to get away from it*
- you're going to be *able to get your life and your mind squared around*

Verse 12: **"To deliver you from the way of the evil man..."** That's what got you where you are: your own lusts, your own deception, and giving in to evil people. Who first gave you or sold you 'meth'? crack cocaine? cocaine? heroine? whatever substance abuse there is? Teenagers now die from taking 'ecstasy' and all of those things. Whoever first gave it to you or sold it to you, *you walked in the way of evil men!* You've got to come out of that.

Look at all that it takes. This is all the effort that you have to put forth. God will bless you in it, but you've got to put forth the effort. You've got to take these Proverbs, and as I said, get on your knees and study them and ask God to make them a part of your heart, your mind, your thinking, your will and your way.

- God will do that!
- God loves you!
- God is for you!
- God wants you to overcome!
- God wants you to change!

He doesn't want you addicted to any of these addictions that we have mentioned. You can come out of every single one of them and have a clean heart and have a clean mind. Over a period of time begin to put it away from you further and further and further. The more of God's Word and God's Spirit that you put into your mind and your heart and your way of doing things, as God blesses you and gives you His strength and His Spirit, the more you're going to be away and forgetting these things and overcoming the temptations and the urges that are deeply rooted in your system. Some of them you're going to have to fight for many, many years because of how you may have been addicted to them—just depending on your circumstances.

"...from the man who speaks wicked things, those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness" (vs 12-13). ***That's where you have gone:***

- in the ways of Satan
 - in the ways darkness
 - in the ways of this world
- Think of what it has done:***
- it has made you addicted
 - it has brought you low
 - given you mental anguish
 - give you emotional anguish
 - ✓ the loss of family

- ✓ the loss of friends
- ✓ the loss of job
- ✓ the loss of financial ability
- ✓ the loss of ability to work
- ✓ the loss of ability to think

—because you sold your soul to the devil by the hands of evil men!

Verse 14: "Who rejoice to do evil *and* delight in the perversities of the wicked." These are the things you have come to hate. You cannot guard against any of these things unless you make a part of your being and the way of thinking (Prov. 2:1-13)—then you can. This takes time. This takes practice. This takes determination. This takes the will and *the will* is what you must recover! ***You must recover your free choice out of the depths and the dregs addiction!*** You can do that through Christ! It is all possible; every bit of it is possible. It's possible *because God loves you! Christ gave Himself for you!* He's ready to forgive your sins. He wants you to change and overcome. ***But you have to make the choice.***

Verse 15 "Whose ways *are* crooked, and *are* devious in their paths; to deliver you from the wanton woman... [this can be ***any*** sin] ...*even* from the stranger *who* flatters *with* her words, who forsakes the guide of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God" (vs 15-17).

This can be applied to any addiction—not just sexual immorality; not just to adultery or fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, or any of those things; but it can be applied to heroine addiction, cocaine addiction, prescription addiction—any of these things! God gives you the guarantee that if you do the things that He has given you to do:

- You can overcome!
- You can change!
- You can come out of the addition!
- There is forgiveness!
- There is mercy!
- There is kindness!
- There is help!

Verse 18: "For her house sinks down to death, and her paths to the dead." Look at the bodies that are strewn all over. If you want an eye-opening experience, talk to a nurse who works in emergency and ask her what happens at their hospital every Friday night: drug overdoses, drug addictions, all of these things, because people have just been hooked! God says that that's the way these things are.

Verse 19: "None that go unto her return again, nor do they take hold of the paths of life in order that you may walk in the way of good and

keep the paths of the righteous” (vs 19-20).

If you avoid it, you’re going to avoid all of these things. If you have been in the clutches and grips of it, you’ve got to determine to come out of it.

- you’ve got to flee these things
- you’ve got to repent to God
- you’ve got to pray to God
- you’ve got to seek God
- you’ve got to now reprogram your mind

Let’s understand this: ***You must have the laws and commandments of God in your mind!*** When you’re baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God, God says He ‘will remember your sins no more.’ He will begin to *write and inscribe* in your heart and in your mind *His laws and His commandments*. It cannot be done unless you obey God! It also includes the Sabbath and the Holy Days of God. If you are going to really change and overcome from addiction, and live by every Word of God and have the Spirit of God, ***it must encompass all of God’s way***—not part of it! That’s only a patch job.

Proverbs 3:1: “My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commandments.” Jesus said: ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments’ (John 14:15). John said, ‘And hereby we know that we love God when we love the children of God and keep His commandments—and His commandments are not burdensome. By this we know that we love God.’ That’s all New Testament doctrine.

The truth is that the Bible agrees with itself from one end to the other. There’s *no contradictions* in the Word of God. There are *no loopholes* in the Word of God. There are *no fudge-factors* in the Word of God. The only way, if you’ve been addicted, that you can come out from being in the grips of addiction is that you’ve got to understand the absolutes of right and wrong, good and evil—Truth and righteousness, the commandments of God. You need to know what sin is and how it destroys.

“...but let your heart keep my commandments; for they shall add length of days, and long life, and peace, to you. Do not let mercy and Truth forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart” (vs 1-3). There is the active, ongoing *reprogramming* that everyone must do. Not only if you’re recovering from an addiction, but if you’re going to grow in grace and knowledge as a Christian, you must do the same thing.

Verse 4: “And so you shall find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.” ***God will bless you:***

- you’ll be able to retain your job
 - you can recover your health
 - you can recover your dignity
 - you can recover from the shame that you have put on
 - ✓ you
 - ✓ your family
 - ✓ your children
 - ✓ your relatives
 - ✓ everyone through
- because of your inordinate addiction*
- you can recover

This is all a part of the reprogramming, v 5: **“Trust in the LORD...** [not in your own way; not in other men; not in ministers and preachers—but in the Lord] **...with all your heart...**” That’s what God wants; that’s how you can change and overcome; that’s how you can come totally out of the grips of any addiction.

“...and **lean not unto your own understanding**” (v 5). Don’t just do it your way. ***Look at what your way has done to get you where you are.*** Do you want that again? “...**lean not unto your own understanding**”—but to the understanding of the Word of God. You have to study and you have to know to know what the Word of God is, and that way you won’t be leaning to *your own* understanding, but to the ways of God.

Verse 6: “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths.”

- Do you want God to direct your paths?
- Do you want God to help you in time of trouble?
- Do you want God to help you overcome?

Here’s the formula—this is all part of the *reprogramming*.

Verse 7: “Do not be wise in your own eyes... [don’t go *your own way*] ...fear the LORD, and depart from evil.” There is Psa 34: depart from evil, seek the Lord—all of these things. When you start going through the Psalms and the Proverbs in your program of reprogramming your mind and overcoming addiction, you’re going to be surprised how much strength and power comes from the very words of God, because Jesus said that *‘these words are spirit and they are life.’*

Verse 8: “It shall be health to your navel... [the innermost part of being] ...and marrow to your bones.” The bones are what produces the blood and the life is in the blood. It means you’re going to be healthy.

Verse 9: “Honor the LORD with your substance and with the firstfruits of all your

increase.” Then you need to come to God. The way that you thank God is not just through words alone, but through tithes and offerings; through giving. God will honor you and bless you even more if you do.

Verse 10: “And your barns shall be filled *with* plenty, and your presses shall burst *with* new wine.” In other words, you shall be prosperous in what you are doing, regardless of what occupation you have or work that you do, God will bless you in.

God is going to continue to correct you. This is not going to be a one-time, five step program as we’re outlining here. There are going to be *corrections!* There are going to be *circumstances!* There are going to be *difficulties!* You’re going to have to work your way through it, just like every one of us. When I’m saying ‘you’ I’m also talking to myself! Because if I don’t teach myself from the Word of God while I am teaching others, I am nothing! I’m just like so much blowing of the wind.

Verse 11: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be weary of His correction”—because it’s going to come. There are going to be tests that you’re going to face. There are going to be difficulties that you’re going to be confronted with. But you can come through all of them!

Verse 12: “For whom the LORD loves He corrects, even as a father *corrects* the son *in whom* he delights.”

- this is how you can do it
- this is how you can change
- this is how you can reprogram your mind

Proverbs 4:1: “O children, hear the instruction of a father, and be attentive in order to know understanding, for I give you good doctrine; do not forsake my law, for I was my father’s son, tender and the only *beloved* in the sight of my mother” (vs 1-3). This is Solomon writing about his personal circumstances.

Verse 4: “He taught me also, and said unto me, ‘Let your heart hold fast my words... [think of this as God the Father talking to you] ...keep my commandments and live. Get wisdom; get understanding; forget *it* not, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she shall keep you; love her... [the wisdom of God and the Word of God] ...and she shall preserve you. Wisdom *is* the principal thing; get wisdom; and with all your getting get understanding” (vs 4-7). So these are some practical steps that you need to do.

Let’s see some other things that will come with it, a very important Psalm in reprogramming.

Psalm 112:1: “Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments.”

Psalm 111:10: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.”

Psalm 112:2: “His seed shall be mighty upon earth... [God will bless you and bless your children] ...the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house... [God promises that in a right way and a right balance] ...and his righteousness endures forever. To the upright there arises light in the darkness... [and that’s what you want in your life: the light Christ, the light of His Word; the light of His Truth] ... he is gracious and full of compassion and righteousness” (vs 2-4). That’s how God is. That’s how you get reprogrammed and straightened out.

Verse 7: “He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his **heart is steadfast**, trusting in the LORD.” That’s where you need to come to in the resolve. Like I mentioned, ***no fudge-factor!*** Now you’ve got to graduate to the point of ***having your heart fixed:***

- fixed on *God’s way*
- fixed on *the love of God*
- fixed on *the Truth of God*
- fixed on *His commandments*
- fixed on *His Word*

Then these things replace all lust and desire and craving for evil.

“...His heart is established; he shall not be afraid until he sees his desire upon his enemies” (vs 7-8). Addiction is your greatest enemy! You want to see your desire come upon overcoming those. That’s what it’s talking about. Let’s go one step further and see what God wants us to do.

Luke 10:25: “Now, a certain doctor of the law suddenly stood up, tempting Him and saying, ‘Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’” We need to move from beyond just overcoming addiction; to how do you receive eternal life. You must have the Spirit of God to do it, that’s true, absolutely! You must keep the commandments of God, that is true, absolutely!

Verse 26: “And He [Jesus] said to him, ‘What is written in the law? How do you read *it*?’ Then he answered *and* said, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.’ And He said to him, ‘You have answered correctly. Do this, and you shall live’” (vs 26-28). That’s what

God wants you to do.

Let's see that upon loving God and neighbor the whole of God's Word has been completely structured. This is a parallel account of what we just read in Luke 10:

Matthew 22:35: "And one of them, a doctor of the law, questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, 'Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?' And Jesus said to him, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is *the* first and greatest commandment" (vs 35-38).

This is how you replace the addiction that has held you in its grips. The ultimate of these steps that I have given is coming to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. That's why:

1. you've got to resist and flee it
2. you've got to repent
3. you've got to seek God continually; continually ask, and God will hear
4. you've got to constantly pray daily, wherever you are—
 - ✓ at work
 - ✓ in the carpray in your mind silently to God
That's what Paul talks about 'pray without ceasing.'
5. you've got to reprogram your mind which entails building up
 - ✓ your physical health
 - ✓ your mental health
 - ✓ your spiritual health

and

- reprogram the way that you think
- reprogram the way that you operate
- reprogram you mind with:
 - ✓ the Word of God
 - ✓ the love of God
 - ✓ the commandments of God
 - ✓ obedience to God

And Jesus said: "And *the* second *one is* like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (vs 39-40).

- there is hope
- you can overcome
- God wants you to overcome
- God wants you to get rid of your addiction
- God wants you to put them aside

There is a way to do it and that way is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 15:15-17
- 2) Luke 13:6-9
- 3) Luke 15:17
- 4) 1 Corinthians 6:13, 15-18
- 5) Joel 2:12-13
- 6) Psalm 51:1-7, 9-10
- 7) Psalm 86:1-7
- 8) Psalm 119:2-6, 9
- 9) Matthew 7:7-8
- 10) Matthew 6:8-13
- 11) James 4:6-8
- 12) Proverbs 16:1-3, 6
- 13) Proverbs 8:13
- 14) Proverbs 2:1-5, 4-20
- 15) Proverbs 3:1-12
- 16) Proverbs 4:1-7
- 17) Psalm 112:1
- 18) Psalm 111:10
- 19) Psalm 112:2-4, 7-8
- 20) Luke 10:25-28
- 21) Matthew 22:35-40

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 8, 5
- Isaiah 53
- Psalm 51:8
- Luke 11
- James 4:5, 1
- John 14:15
- Psalm 34

Also referenced: Book:

Excitotoxins: The Taste That Kills by Russell L. Blaylock

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