

Deliverance for Alcoholics (The Road to Recovery)

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

Are you bound to alcohol? Many who drink alcoholic beverage do find themselves enslaved to this substance. In these few pages, I have created a simple Biblical approach that will help alcoholics to begin a road to spiritual renewal and recovery. Many talk about the need for *physical* therapy or recovery for those who have drinking problems but what is needed is a *spiritual* recovery from alcoholism. This is the only true and lasting recovery that is provided for people. It is the delivery that comes through forgiveness and victory provided by Jesus Christ.

I. Do You Have an Alcoholic Problem?

If you have a drinking problem, you have probably felt condemned by yourself and others. But we must remember that it's God that ultimately condemns this sin. Alcoholism is a sin that offends God's holiness and thwarts His plan for our lives which is to live free from the power of sin.

Proverbs 20:1 declares:

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

You would be much wiser to accept God's evaluation of alcohol than man's. This text states that wine mocks the person who drinks it regardless of the quantity that you might drink. Wine by its very nature is a mocker. It is called a mocker because of the *potential* harm that it can have in your life. Wine is personified or pictured mocking us when we drink it. It mocks us because it knows that it can overtake our lives and cause our life to become miserable. Wine also mocks people when it causes them to engage in adulterous relationships with others, when it keeps them from serving God, when it causes them to stumble and stray from God in life, when it causes them to become impoverished, and when it causes slavery and addiction. Alcohol mocks many people the whole way to their grave. They die of liver disease and other alcohol related problems.

Proverbs 23:31 is sound Biblical advice:

“Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.”

Abstinence is God’s plan for deliverance and victory. In fact, we are commanded to not even “look” upon alcohol with the intent to drink it for the simple reason that it can control our lives and bring us under bondage and defeat. It’s the *look* that gets you. It’s the yearning and desire to drink that overcomes us and takes us down the path of endless sorrow and defeat.

II. Is Alcoholism a Disease?

One thing is certain; sin is NOT a disease. Of course, a chemical addiction does have strong physical ramifications. Yes, there is a physical dependency that is related to alcohol just like any other drug. However, more than anything, chemical addiction is a sin problem and sin is NOT a disease. Yes, there are some aspects of alcoholism which resemble a *medical* problem, but it is also a *moral* problem or a sin problem. I must realize by living under the power and authority of alcohol that I’ve transgressed God’s moral boundary and law. I am chemically dependent upon drugs or alcohol, not because I’ve inherited a disease, but because I have chosen to sin against God and to reject His way of truth and live a holy life. This is the clear teaching of Scripture.

1 John 3:4

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

Face your sin head on. Don’t try and give excuses for not being a sinner by concluding: “My alcoholism is a disease and not a sin”; “I’m a victim of my parents and past”; “I’m genetically predisposed to drink”, or “The devil made me do it!” Excuses and refusing to face one’s own sins was seen at the very beginning.

Genesis 3:12-13 records:

“And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

Stop passing the buck! You have sinned by drinking and becoming an alcoholic. It's your fault. You chose to do it. Don't blame others, the devil, or your environment. Blame yourself and bring your sin out into the open. There can be no true deliverance from sin unless you are ready and willing to acknowledge your sinfulness before God.

III. Sin offends God.

Luke 15:18

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee."

Psalm 51:4

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."

Many times people want to stop drinking because it hurts their parent's feelings or is wrecking their marriage. They want to stop setting a bad example for the children. Yes, these are noble reasons to NOT drink but the number one reason that should motivate you to stop drinking is a healthy fear or reverence of God.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

The fear of God is *the wholesome dread of not pleasing God* with my life and giving Him the *reverence* and glory He deserves. It's includes a knowledge and feeling that we have offended God and His holiness when we sin against Him.

IV. I am responsible for my own sin and choices.

James 1:14-15

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of **his own lust**, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Alcohol addiction is sin! Again, there are physical ramifications (a psychological and physical addition) that are experienced because of alcoholism but the root cause is sin! Let's not dismiss this important part of

alcoholism. Writing off alcoholism as merely a disease will often lead people to say, "I'm a recovering alcoholic from a disease" but not bring them to their knees and say, "I've sinned against God and Heaven, I'm responsible for breaking God's holy standard and have offended Him." Luke 15:18 is the real drunkard's confession: "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee."

We must realize that people do not have an inherited predisposition to alcoholism and other drug dependencies as so many conclude today. **Each person has a sinful predisposition to reject salvation, repentance, and the way of liberty and freedom in Christ.** As Christians we must be careful not to adopt the term "genetically predisposed" which means people have an inherited bio-physical make-up, or bodies that process addictive substances in a manner that causes them to progress more rapidly toward compulsive use and chronic addiction. **While there are many physical, emotional, mental, and social contributors that lead to addiction, the Bible is quite clear about the fact that we are responsible for our choices and sins and choosing habitual sin which eventually results in slavery or bondage.**

The word **bondage** or **slavery** is a very appropriate Biblical term that sums up the condition of addiction to alcohol and drugs. The word "servants" in the King James Bible means slaves.

Romans 6:16-20

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants (slaves) to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants (salves) of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants (salves) of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants (slaves) to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants (slaves) to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants (salves) of sin, ye were free from righteousness."

This term "**slaves**" carries with it the connotation of a condition that, while it may have begun through personal choices, results in a state that brings a person into spiritual bondage or slavery to sin. **A slave living during Bible**

times could not break free of his state of bondage without his master freeing him. In a similar way, the alcoholic is bound to sin and is in a condition that he will not escape on his own power. He needs a new Master (God and His power) to deliver him. An alcoholic needs God's divine power and enablement to bring freedom and liberty from drinking alcohol.

2 Peter 1:2-3

“Grace (strengthening and enabling grace) and peace (tranquility of heart and soul) be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord (through our relationship with Jesus Christ), According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”

V. Is There Hope?

God does condemn our sin, but He also emphasizes how to overcome this addiction by receiving salvation, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. With these you will have the ability to become free and stay free of alcohol.

The saying "once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic" lacks faith in the delivering power of God. God can deliver you from the power of alcohol and even the desire to drink alcohol. Many will tell you, "I'm a recovering alcoholic." This wording is much different than what the Bible declares and teaches: **“And such were some of you”** (1 Cor. 6:11). I'm not a recovering adulterer, fornicator, thief, or alcoholic. What should we say as a Christian who has and is presently struggling with alcohol? We should conclude that **“We are a victor in Christ”** – not a victim of alcohol. We must change our thinking in order to change our lifestyle. Proverbs 23:7 declares: **“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he ... ”**

Yes, there is hope for you! He's the God of all hope!

Romans 15:13 gives you this promise:

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

There is a way out. **God will make a way!** It is the way of escape by His supernatural power and grace.

1 Corinthians 10:13

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also **make a way to escape (give us the victory)**, that ye may be able to bear it (not be overcome by it).”

God is able to deliver you completely by saving, cleansing, sanctifying, and justifying you (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Again, the Bible says, “**and such were some of you**” (1 Cor. 6:11) which means that you can be completely forgiven before God and deliverance has already been provided for you through Jesus Christ. You can put your addiction to alcohol in the past. Although alcohol abuse is the result of the flesh or old sin nature (Galatians 5:19-21), but the Holy Spirit can, and will, produce the self-control you need to overcome your addiction (Galatians 5:22-23).

There is hope! Christ promises to deliver you completely from alcohol and set you free.

Romans 6:17

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants (slaves) of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”

Romans 6:22

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants (slaves) to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

You probably have tried to stop drinking before and it has NOT worked for you. You may have tried many different approaches. What you need is practical spiritual help. **You need a spiritual plan based upon the Bible and God’s power.**

What is God’s plan for recovery from alcohol? Let’s find out.

Recovering From Sinful Patterns (A General Plan)

- **ACKNOWLEDGMENT** - of sin and wrongdoing (Psalms 51)
- **ACTION** – to rid oneself of sin (confession, truth, submission, and the armor of God - 2 Cor. 7:1)
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – to assist in the recovery process (Prov. 11:14; 24:6)

How do we recover from sinful patterns?

A. What Scripture Says (A specific plan of action)

1. **Repentance and faith in Christ for salvation**

Luke 24:47

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Acts 20:21

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty of sin that we deserved (hell) and He rose again the third day to give us the promise of eternal life (Romans 6:23). When we **repent** we actually change our attitude about our sins (they are wrong and offend God) and we are willing to forsake them and leave them behind. Not until we repent are we are ready to express faith in Christ for our personal salvation from hell and the free gift of eternal life.

Romans 6:23

“For the wages (penalty) of sin is death (separation from God in hell); but the gift of God is eternal life (everlasting life in Heaven) through Jesus Christ our Lord (His death and resurrection).”

Expressing faith in Christ for salvation delivers us from hell and also brings us into a new relationship with God whereby we can be freed from the

power of sin in our daily lives, which includes our addiction to alcohol. Jesus Christ, through His delivering power on the cross, promises to grant spiritual deliverance from the power of every sin, including alcoholism.

Jesus said in Luke 4:18:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives (those held captive to sins), and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.”

Jesus also said in John 8:32:

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

In John 8:36 Christ adds these words:

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

Prayer for Salvation: “Dear God, I know that an unforgiven drunkard cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:10; Gal. 5:19-20). I come before You with a broken and repentant heart, wanting to change my life from my alcohol addiction. I place my faith in Your Son, Jesus Christ, who died in my place, to save me from hell and deliver me from my powerful addiction to alcohol. I claim His promise for salvation and deliverance today. I want to be freed from this sin. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

2. Confession to God in our Christian life

Proverbs 28:13

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

1 John 1:8-9

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Whenever we sin in our Christian life, we must immediately confess our sin to God and restore our *relationship* and *fellowship* with God once again (not our salvation). Learn to keep short accounts with God!

Prayer of Confession: “Dear God, I have fallen but do not want to remain defeated. I admit that I’ve sinned against You. I want to be restored to a right relationship with You again and experience Your fellowship and victory in my life. Thank You God for Your forgiveness. You forgive me every time I fall. Thank You for your amazing grace and mercy. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

3. Relying on God’s power for deliverance

Ephesians 5:18

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”

This verse means that we should not allow alcohol to control us. Instead, we should allow the Holy Spirit of God to fill or control our lives by His power, so we can manifest self control and victory over alcohol.

Here is the key to beating alcoholism. We can have victory over alcohol through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:16

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit (His power and victorious provision for our lives), and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (drink alcohol and follow the old way of life).

Galatians 5:25

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (His power and victorious provision for our lives).

Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, **temperance (self control)**: against such there is no law.”

B. Recovery and the Sin Nature

The Bible makes a clear case for the fact that the sinful nature still exerts an influence on the believer that is not always apparent (Romans 7:15-25). In other words, the sin nature can deceive addicts into thinking they don’t necessarily have a real problem and need to be released from the power of alcohol (Heb. 3:13 – “the deceitfulness of sin”).

Also, the desire to drink and become drunk (escapism) emanates from the sinful nature (Gal. 5:21 – “drunkenness”). The sinful nature can rise up and cause the individual defeat. Addicts need the help of informed Biblical counselors who, through a process of intensive discipleship, will teach them to be "transformed by the renewing of their minds" (Romans 12:2) and learn how to "walk in the Spirit" so they might not fulfill the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). There is deliverance that can be experienced on a daily basis. **You don't have to be overcome; you are an overcomer in Christ already.**

1 John 5:4

“For whatsoever (our inner spirit and life) is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

Prayer of Initial Deliverance: “I have sinned against You God. My alcoholism is not a disease. It's a sinful deviation from the path of freedom and liberty that you have for me in Christ. I **repent** of my sinful involvement and control with alcohol and **renounce** its power over my life. I ask for your forgiveness, your **renewing** power, the power and control of the Holy Spirit in my life.

“I **surrender** my total life to God. I turn my mind and soul over to You, I want to experience the abundant and fulfilling way of life that Jesus promised I could have (John 10:10). I claim deliverance over alcohol psychologically and my physical dependence upon it. Dear Lord, I need Your help and power for the days ahead and right now as I make this new commitment. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

You may need to use this prayer for a while, as you “dry out” and get over the initial phase of physical dependence upon the alcohol. Of course, you can incorporate your own daily praying to God as well. In fact, you can use both of them as you see the need. Prayer brings victory into our hearts and lives.

Ephesians 6:18

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

Prayer for Daily Practical Deliverance: “Dear God, I am tempted to drink right now. I feel weak but I am going to turn away from the temptation by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. Right now, I claim His power and assistance to grant me victory. I refuse to drink as I rely upon the Holy Spirit’s indwelling power. Right now, I claim His power, presence, and help to overcome this temptation. I reject the spirit of fear and failure and claim God’s power, love, and a sound mind, so I will do what is right (2 Timothy 1:7). I can by God’s amazing grace and power refuse to sin and be overcome by this substance. Neither my own flesh nor the devil will defeat me since I am trusting in the Holy Spirit’s provision for my life **at this very moment**. Thank You God for making **this way of escape for me right now**. I claim Your way of victory as my own and refuse by Your power to follow the temptation to drink. Jesus said I can be free from the power of alcohol. I claim this freedom and promise right now. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

C. Practical Advice

1. Don’t set yourself up for a fall.

Romans 13:14

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

This verse means to practice living according to the power of Jesus Christ which the Holy Spirit reveals to you and do not make “provision for the flesh” **Making provision for the flesh means to set yourself up for a fall**. I do this by keeping alcohol in the home, going to those places that sell alcohol, and not telling the truth.

2. Be accountable to others.

Proverbs 11:14

“Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.”

Counsel and a “buddy system” is important as one seeks to leave the world of alcoholism behind. Do not underestimate the power of counsel and accountability. Any accountability is better than no accountability. You need consistent friends and people that care about you, which are committed to helping you. Proverbs 27:6 says, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but

the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” Regular meetings and focus groups can be of help when it comes to accountability. Of course, strong and spiritual Christians need to be ready to pray for you at certain times (Eph. 6:18). During the time of temptation, especially initially, as the addict begins to release himself or herself from the power of drink, it is good to call and meet with others. Be accountable to others. Know their cell phones and ask for prayer when you are weak. Have a daily check-in-time for a while.

Proverbs 27:17

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

Accountability means that you make time to be accountable to others in meetings and at church. This includes faithful church attendance.

Hebrews 10:24-25

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

When you start missing the gathered church meetings on a regular basis you set yourself up for a fall. Like a car, you start sputtering and missing and eventually break down. Don't do it! Make the right choices in life. Stay accountable and in contact with God's people. You will receive encouragement and renewal.

Others, especially Christians and the preaching of God's Word, builds us up and gives us a spiritual point of reference.

If need be, confess you sin to others, and remain open and transparent to them. Don't ostracize yourself and live a hermit's life. You will end up in defeat.

James 5:16 adds:

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

There are times when sharing with one another is needed, as one turns away from certain sins which have had a long term impact upon one's life and the lives of others.

3. Realize the fallout of your sin.

God's power is able to deliver individuals from the compulsion to drink and to set them free from the **emotional, psychological, social, spiritual, and physical consequences** of an alcoholic or drug addiction lifestyle. Yet, we must never forget that enslavement to drugs or alcohol goes far beyond a simple habit (like eating too many jelly beans a day). After an addict is saved and *stops using mind and mood-altering chemicals*, he must work through a special set of problems that are the "fall-out" of chemical addiction (work, relationship, and emotional problems). Without the proper spiritual help, an addict will either fall back into use of alcohol and drugs or will transfer his addiction to some other compulsive behavior.

Proverbs 23:31 commands abstinence:

“Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.”

Why should we stay sober and not allow alcohol to control us? It's because of the spiritual and life-altering side effects.

Proverbs 23:32-35 tells us what happens when we drink:

“At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women (fornication and adultery), and thine heart shall utter perverse things (vulgar speech). Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast (hallucinations). They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again” (repeating the habit – the downward spiral).

There are many side effects of drunkenness as this verse suggests. A life of addiction results in destructive attitudes, failing marriages, distorted emotions, and warped patterns of thinking. These do not simply disappear when an addict experiences spiritual rebirth. Some of the deep-seated attitudes that keep an addict locked in his addiction include; pride, rebellion against authority, dishonesty, manipulation, blame-shifting, resentments, procrastination, etc. While these "character defects" are common problems with practically all addicts, unless they are "hit head-on" they will lead to defeat once again. **For this reason, there needs to be involvement in a definite program of personal growth, dealing with wrong thinking,**

commitment to church attendance to a Bible-believing and teaching church, and accountability to other strong Christians.

4. Do not drink socially.

When an addict is delivered from the compulsion to drink and refuses to imbibe alcohol, he is no longer a "drunkard" in the spiritual sense. "And such were some of you" (1 Cor. 6:11). Thank God for this! However, returning to any use of alcohol can feed the old nature once again (James 1:14) and also "reactivate" the *chemical mechanisms of addiction* that lead to compulsive drinking and behavior, which once again brings a person into a state of spiritual slavery. **Total abstinence, therefore, is a must!**

Previous drunkards are more prone to physical addiction. With the acknowledgment of this fact, the individual should be all the more diligent to abstain from drinking or casual use. He or she recognizes the dire consequences of even "moderate" use of alcohol.

Again, the Bible reminds us of the error of even **looking upon wine and thinking about drinking it.** "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright" (Proverbs 23:31). Abstinence is the only *Biblical way, right way, and safe way* to live for every Christian. This is importance advice in the midst of our cultural epidemic of enslavement to drink. Here is the point. **If the individual remains abstinent, the physical consequence of addiction will not affect his life and Christian walk.** If you are obedient, you can be victorious. Don't drink. Period!

5. Identify why you drink.

Maybe you are trying to **cover up personal problems** in the home or **sins of your past**? You may be looking for a way or **escape**, so you don't have to deal with reality. Maybe you are enjoying the escapism of alcohol and are having **carnal fun** in doing it (Heb. 11:25). Whatever the reasons might be, you need to deal with them from a Biblical perspective and get victory over those things that are triggering your drinking binges and habits. This brings us to the next area of our study.

6. Take one day at a time.

The pressure of having to face life without drinking may be overwhelming. You need to focus on the present. Decide that you will not have a drink **right now**. Jesus taught in Matthew 6:34, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself ..." In other words, deal with your life right now. Right now refuse to drink and start on a new path. God gives us new beginnings! Today or right now is a new beginning. One day at a time!

7. Change the way you think.

You need to modify and change your lifestyle. The Bible speaks of being transformed by the "**renewing of your mind**" (Romans 12:2). You can renew your mind through your reading and thinking habits. **Dwell on God and His Word rather than on your problem ("think on these things" – spiritual things and not alcohol or your past - Phil. 4:19).**

Here is one example. You can learn to follow the principle of praise (give honor and respect to God) each time you are tempted to drink. Hebrews 13:15, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." **It is important to change your perspective from yourself to God, and from the drink that controls you, to God and His victory.** Praise God for being the problem-solver rather than dwelling upon your problem of alcoholism. As long as your attention is on the sin, you are honoring it. But if your attention is on God, you are honoring Him.

Hebrews 12:2

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.."

8. Don't deny that you have a drinking problem.

Jesus said, "The truth will make you free" (John 8:32). This means we must face our sins and actively apply God's liberating truth to our lives. Truth frees us! Denial buries us. This verse has a special application to the dangerous stumbling block of denial that every addict must overcome. Denying one has an addictive problem will lead one to stumble in his Christian life and eventually relapse into active use of drugs or alcohol.

We must face the truth about ourselves and come to grips with what we are. So often, to us, everything seems fine, but underneath the surface God

sees something totally different. The Bible makes it so clear that man has a fearful ability to become self-deceived (“**the deceitfulness of sin**” - Heb. 3:13). Nowhere do we see this illustrated more powerfully than in the area of addiction! In order for addicts to live the abundant life (John 10:10), usually they need the help of knowledgeable counselors who can help them to break through their denial and initial freedom from the addiction.

9. Self help versus God's help.

Let me be as clear as possible here. Recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction is not about *self-help*. The solution is *not* to gain knowledge and strength and willpower so you can beat it on our own. Recovery is about recognizing that, alone, you are powerless to solve your addiction problem. To receive the empowering and strengthening grace you need to recover, you must admit you need help or divine assistance from God Himself.

Jesus taught in John 15:5:

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

The problem is spiritual and so is the answer! This is why sobriety, or at least a happy sober life, depends on looking after your spiritual health. An alcoholic doesn't drink *because* they're irritable; they drink because they're an *alcoholic*. And yes, they drink because they are a sinner! But without living a fruitful and spiritual life (Gal. 5:22-23, 25), alcohol or drugs can start looking like a good answer once again. Countless people struggle to stay sober with just their *own willpower*. As a result, many relapse again and again into drinking. Some others give up and never make it back. However, God has promises to give us new will power, drive, and divine incentive to live above life's sinful vices and addictions.

Philippians 2:13

“For it is God which worketh in you both to **will** (new drive and determination) and to **do** (new power) of his good pleasure” (living free from alcohol's bondage).

D. The Way of Escape

God has promised a way out! He has made a way of escape for His children, those who are saved and ready to surrender to Him and His way!

1 Corinthians 10:13 is worth repeating:

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also **make a way to escape**, that ye may be able to bear it.”

The way of escape is God’s empowering and strengthening grace which enables us to overcome sinful addictions. We know that the therapeutic and medical communities dissect the *psychological* and *physiological* aspects of addiction but often neglect or even deny the *spiritual* component. Self-help gurus say you can beat an addiction by learning their secrets. But Jesus taught that there is a way of release victory from any addiction (Luke 4:18). In fact, you need to pray for deliverance from the fear that “I won’t be able to make it” (II Timothy 1:7). This is because God is the Great Deliverer! He’s able to deliver you!

’Tis the grandest theme through the ages rung;
’Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue;
’Tis the grandest theme that the world e’er sung,
“Our God is able to deliver thee.”

E. A Word of Caution

A spiritual practice alone, without some specific work for addiction (drugs and alcohol) can be problematic, especially until the person “dries out” or is over the initial phase of his or her physical addiction. It’s all too easy for addicts and alcoholics to *convince* themselves they’re *covered* through church attendance or reading the Bible and forget that they need special help and assistance to initially come off a long-time addiction. After the physical dependency is gone a spiritual dependency upon God’s victory and power must be maintained throughout the believer’s life so he does not return to their addictive state.

In short, to stay sober you should stay connected to God (devotionally and living for Him) and God’s people as much as possible.

James 4:8

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”

Psalm 122:1

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”

You need to be constantly reminded about living close to God, relying upon His power, and meeting with God’s people. This is because you can slip back into disconnectedness and possess the illusion that you are in control without God’s help and the encouragement of God’s people. Of course, self-control without God’s intervention in your life leads to failure. Staying connected with God through devotional study, meditation, or prayer, and staying connected with God’s people and not the old crowd since the Bible wants us that “Evil communication corrupts good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). Spiritual accountability is the answer to living a consistent victorious life over past sinful addictions. Stay accountable to others, stay committed to God’s ministry and church, and stay victorious!

You are an overcomer through Jesus Christ! You are a victor – not a victim! By God’s grace, you are no longer a drunkard. “And such were some of you” (1 Cor. 6:11). If you think right; you will live right!

“I heard an old, old story, how a Savior came from glory,
How he gave His life on Calvary to save a wretch like me.
I heard about His groaning, of his precious blood's atoning,
Then I repented of my sins and won the victory.

I heard about His healing,
Of His cleansing power revealing.
How He made the lame to walk again
And caused the blind to see;
And then I cried, "Dear Jesus,
Come and heal my broken spirit,"
And somehow Jesus came and brought
To me the victory.

O victory in Jesus, my Savior forever!
He sought me and He bought me with his redeeming blood.
He loved me ere I knew him, and all my love is due Him.
He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.”