



## ST. MARK'S, ADDICTIONS AND ME??

Are there things in life that seem to be controlling you? That you can't get a handle on, but seem to continually direct, limit, and upset your life? Read the following situations:

1. It's been years, but a mother is still emotionally stewing about an embarrassing incident caused by her daughter-in-law.
2. A teenager is so engrossed in a new video game that he loses sleep, misses classes, is unable to concentrate on homework, and is oblivious to the concerns of his family.
3. It's one thing to enjoy watching sports. But what about the individual who tapes every football game in the NFL and spends hours each week watching all the games, much to the detriment of relationships within his family.
4. The surface issue is not food, yet it becomes the tool. One eats normally with family and friends, but then in private cannot control the urge to consume more and more, again, and again. It's just out of control!
5. A friend or relative goes through money like water, spending on unnecessary material items, unable to save or even pay his or her fair share of normal living expenses.

My friends, for the next 50 days we are going to focus on God's care, power and help to speak to the addictions in our lives. Addictions you say! That's a word one uses to describe drug users and alcoholics, not me or my family. Well, let's step back a moment and examine this word more carefully, more openly. Webster's Dictionary speaks of an "addiction" as a habitual or compulsive pattern, almost like a slave. Being out of control. Yes, normally we use the word "addiction" to speak of an unhealthy drug, alcohol, or gambling habit. But as we unpack this term and we might ask, "How might my life or that of those I love and know be "out of control" or affected by a compulsive, even slave-like habit?" And if so, it becomes clear that the definition of addiction is greatly expanded.

Looking at just a few of the many examples printed above, we see how an addiction can impact many, many lives. Who do you know who cannot control their anger, the use of the computer and the Internet, the fear of death, negative feelings toward people who are different from them, anxiety over aging, and more. The list is endless.

Our next 50 Day Spiritual Journey is entitled: "Surrendering to God: Overcoming Modern Addictions." No matter what besets or afflicts us, Christ came to this earth to help set us free, from sin and death, unhealthy habits and anxiety filled experiences. Travel with us this Lent as we move towards the cross of Christ, where everything dies in Christ, and to the empty tomb, where God's power over death proclaims God's victory over everything that might try to separate us from God.

Come, let us learn new ways to surrender our lives to God, who can surely bring healing and newness of life.