Overcoming Addiction Conference



There may be no greater tragedy than when someone is a slave to their escape. But that is the essence of addiction; our escape from pain and stress becomes the very thing creating the pain we are escaping. It is misery for the addict, and everyone who loves the addict.

This helps us understand a common misconception about addiction. Addiction isn't the problem. Addiction is the answer… a broken answer… but the solution an addict tries to apply to every problem in their life. That's why giving up their addiction feels unfathomable.

The *Overcoming Addiction* conference focuses on the early stages of change and maps the full journey toward freedom using a 9-step model that, if a church chooses, can become the basis for an addiction recovery ministry that is rooted in the gospel. It is a conference that can be the impetus for launching a ministry.

Session One: Where Change Begins: Motivation and Honesty. Anyone on the other side of addiction can tell you, "You are only as healthy as your secrets," and, "You will never be more free than you are honest." They can also tell you no one has ever been argued into freedom. That is why session one draws from the principle of doublemindedness (James 1) to help you understand the importance of motivation and radical honesty for change.

Session Two: Contested Questions about Addiction and Change. "Do Christians believe 'once an addict, always an addict'? Is addiction a disease? What about that 'God of your own understanding stuff'?" Too often, conversations around these questions degenerate into arguments. Argument become a distraction from understanding how addiction changes us, God's role in overcoming addiction, and the role of community in the process of change. In session two, we grapple with common tensions between recovery models and evangelical theology to change a better understanding of how to pursue freedom.

Session Three: The Journey from Bondage to Freedom. The longer and harder a journey, the better and clearer our plan needs to be. That is why, in session three, we trace the big picture of the 9-step journey of *Overcoming Addiction*. We gain an appreciation for how these steps are the gospel in slow motion so that our journey away from addiction becomes a sanctification paradigm we can apply to every life struggle we will face thereafter.

Optional: Q&A – Often churches add a Question-and-Answer time to these three sessions. It is wonderful to have pastors or other church leaders participate in a panel discussion. Having the voice of church leaders in the Q&A can be an effective way to help church members assimilate and apply what they have learned.

Optional: Sunday Sermon or Final Session – *Addiction as Worship Disorder (Luke 9:23-24).* In this passage, Jesus reveals that the way most of us try to save our life (i.e., finding peace) results in us losing our life (i.e., pain and disruption). The things we do to find joy and peace destroy our joy and peace. When God invites us to cast our cares on him (I Pet. 5:7), we cast our cares upon our addiction. In effect, we pray to our addictions. This basic passage on discipleship gives us a fresh perspective on addiction. God's invitation to freedom is a call to return to him for things our addiction always promises but can never provide.

The *Overcoming Addiction* conference is designed to be easy for your church to host and provides members with a way to think wisely about addiction, change, community, and overcoming life-dominating sin patterns. If your church is interested in hosting this conference, please visit www.bradhambrick.com/events to identify dates that may be available and to download my FAQ sheet for scheduling external events.