

# Descent Into Addiction

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     This morning, we're focusing on our lessons that we started last week, this topic of addictions, seeing what God's word has to say to us about this and eventually what our response should be.
- Of course, we'll hear some of that today, but hopefully in the future learn more about how we respond to this and how we help others to respond to this as well.
- We hear more and more in our day this challenge that is facing many people, and not just people outside of the church, of course, but people inside the church, both those who have loved ones involved with addictions and themselves as well.
- So the challenges are out there, as we saw in the quote that was on the screen before class. It was a quote from a man, a pastor, whose daughter died from an overdose just, I believe, recently.
- The whole article was an interesting article to read on the Gospel Coalition. You want to look that up, and I could give you further information as to where to get that, but a very enlightening article from a man whose heart was broken as a result of this challenge that his daughter faced unsuccessfully.
- [ 1 : 2 3 ]     But another quote from Ed Welch's book, *Addiction is a banquet in the grave*, *Idolatry is a gradual journey that begins even before the first shot of booze, internet hit, tokes of a marijuana cigarette, or bulimic binge*.
- And so for the next couple weeks, we want to take a look at what that gradual journey looks like. And we rely heavily on Ed Welch's book and Mark Graham's book and others who have spent years working with people caught in addictions, enslaved to addictions.
- But even as I start class, I want us to really begin with a caution. And that caution is that we must be careful that we don't fall into the thinking that we're not on this spectrum as I described it last week.
- Or this journey that we're learning about this week and next week. Another quote from Ed Welch in his book, he says, *People tend to divide humanity into two groups*.
- Those who are prone toward addictions and those who aren't. The reality, of course, is very different. All human beings have already fallen into sin.
- [ 2 : 4 4 ]     We took a look at that last week as well. We were born in the pit. Then, without Adam's help, we made further descents on our own.
- We may not be all in the same direction. There are different issues that each one of us deal with in our hearts. If we're not careful, we could descend further in that direction.
- We've all experienced ungodly cravings. We all know something of voluntary slavery. The only difference is that some people have addictions that are more noticeable and have more tragic consequences.
- Also, some people are clinging to Jesus Christ, having been liberated from slavery and power to climb and even to soar. So we rejoice in that grace of God as it's been declared to many.

And as we've responded in our journey, this downward journey that we were on before has been turned around. And ascending more, being transformed more into the likeness of Jesus Christ, the true image of God in us as human beings as we were designed to live.

[ 3 : 58 ] So we can rejoice in that. And that's why we're sharing these lessons, why these other individuals have written this material, showing that God's word is sufficient to meet these challenges of life that we're facing today.

And we need to be those messengers taking that message of grace, the gospel, to people. So there's no us and them when we're talking about this topic.

We can each understand something of the progression or this descent on the journey. We've each lived it to some degree and to some point.

And so we're familiar with that. And even those of us who have come to true faith in Jesus Christ, we're still familiar with the struggle, with the various elements of sin that still remain in us and that express themselves, described in the scriptures as the flesh or deceitful desires that exist within us.

We don't have to be slaves to sin anymore. We no longer have to live in bondage to those deceitful desires and to the flesh. We're no longer part of that domain of darkness that we're saved out of.

[ 5 : 13 ] But now we can make those choices to hear, to listen to the counsel of God, the wisdom of God, and live by them and enjoy the riches that come with them.

So with this newness of life that we have and the wisdom and the counsel that we have from God, we don't draw away from others. Even as Jesus Christ, he didn't choose to remain in heaven and hold on to all those things that were his there, but he left those things behind and came and made himself of no reputation.

And so we don't draw away, but characteristic of Jesus Christ, now we're looking for how we can draw near to individuals with the truth of the gospel and help them experience that same deliverance that we've experienced in Jesus Christ and are continuing to learn to live out while we're yet in the world where all these struggles exist.

So we're experienced travelers on this journey, and we can offer some guidance to individuals that are still on this downward journey.

So let's examine and become a little bit more familiar with some of the various stages of this downward journey. That's what I want us to take a look at this morning. There's five different stages.

[ 6 : 39 ] It can be described different ways by different writers. I've chosen to work from Ed Welch's description, and I'll interject others that would fit in in different places.

But we'll use his as a bit of a guide and add additional information along the way. But he describes it at first stage as being unprepared or indifferent.

And I would also use the description, descriptive word of being naive. And then this beginning of this journey, way over here on this spectrum.

The journey doesn't usually begin with one giant leap of rebellion overnight. It's like, what happened? One day they're like this, the other day like this.

Now, when we look at that individual who was caught in the tragedies of addiction, again, we don't conclude that they got there overnight. There are things that the individual loves and has loved.

[ 7 : 45 ] There are thoughts that the individual has considered over time that would flow out of these loves, these affections that they have within their own heart for something.

And out of those thoughts, plans have been made. Some decisions have been made. And as a result of those decisions, actions have followed.

And actions that the individual probably would think, never will they even lead to what's happening way down here.

They just couldn't imagine that that would be the case. As far as they're concerned, they're totally unrelated. But as we're seeing, and we'll see, and as others can testify, that's not the case.

At this stage, there's a casual, unconcerned mindset that disregards the warnings. And instead you might find yourself thinking, or find yourself saying, or hear someone else saying things like this.

[ 8 : 54 ] I'm in control. There's no danger ahead. You're exaggerating things. What you're warning me about won't happen to me.

Life is good. I'm finally happy. It's no big deal. Why are you trying to keep me from being happy? You talk like I'm an addict already. So you can probably think of other things that maybe you have thought in the past, or might be thinking now as well, that show this casual approach, and this person being naive, and what really is going to happen, and what this present thinking, this present love, is really going to lead them to.

There's a couple quotes from individuals that show this. One from a 10th grade girl describing some of her experience in that early stage.

There was a group of us, and somebody just happened to have some marijuana. I had never seen it before, but I knew some friends who mentioned trying it, and they never had a problem with it, so I tried it.

You know, it's like that. It wasn't any big deal. It's okay. Others were doing it, and concluded, it's okay. I'll just go ahead with it as well.

[ 10 : 19 ] And then another quote from a 25-year-old man who was further along on this journey, and was trying to stop smoking marijuana. He said, I started smoking pot in 9th grade.

I knew other people who smoked, but I was never invited. I first smoked with a friend at his house. I mean, even some of those phrases, you can see some of those things that were behind his ultimate action.

You know, the fact that he says, I was never invited. There was something, again, that he desired, that he wanted, that was important to him. I didn't even know he smoked until he brought out a bag of pot and some rolling papers.

He rolled a joint, and we smoked it. It was nice. No big deal. But I felt a little older, wiser, and part of a group. Again, all those different words and phrases that, again, are helping us understand something about what's going on within the heart of this individual.

What's moving them in this direction that gives them that disregard for maybe some warnings that, obviously, I would think he would have heard somewhere along the path, but disregarded.

[ 11 : 31 ] And as a result, he was further down the journey. Well, I was seeing some of this warning in the scriptures with the children of Israel.

We talked about a people who were unaware of what was ahead, and not only what was ahead, but the tendency of their own heart, and how it could respond to what was ahead.

But God was not aware. He was very much aware of what was ahead, but also the tendency of their own heart, and the casual approach they would take toward what was ahead.

And so in his love and compassion for his people, he brought to them warnings on this side of things, back here, in love for them.

Exodus 32.12. He said, Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you're going, or there will be a snare among you.

[ 12 : 28 ] And we could put any kind of things in there. He's warning them about the people and the land. But you fill in the blank with whatever else could be an attraction to your own heart.

And God is telling us, Be careful. Don't make a treaty with fill in the blank. Or to be a snare to you.

Deuteronomy 6.3 and 12. Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey. You're seeing something repeated in these verses, that caution.

Be careful. Be careful. Be careful to obey so that it might go well with you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

All the things that were good, that had been accomplished in their lives. He was warning them about, you know, be careful that in these new choices that you take, this new direction that you want to go, where your heart is drawn to, be careful.

[ 13 : 33 ] Don't go that way. It leads you in the direction of disobedience to me, because you'll be forfeiting all these things that you have obtained as a result of following me.

So he's trying to show them and help them understand, this is all the good and the glory that is yours in being my people, and this is all the danger, the folly, the vanity that's ahead if you forsake me.

All that's going on back here before they even enter the land. Deuteronomy 11.16, Be careful, or you'll be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them.

So how is it that they could be enticed? Well, because they desired certain things, and they saw other people, other people that weren't following God, and they had what they wanted.

They had what they, as a people, wanted, but they also had what they wanted, the children miscerate. And in order for them to have it, they were concluding that they needed to do what these other people were doing in order to get it.

[ 14 : 47 ] And so God was warning them about what was ahead. Of course, we know from our time in the scriptures that they disregarded the warnings, and their disregard, both in their, what they loved, and in their minds, their thoughts, the choices that they made, and then ultimately the actions that they took, led them further along their descending journey, and led to, as we know, many tragedies of life for the children of Israel.

They didn't heed the warnings. They didn't take them seriously. Other things became more important to them. So it's no surprise that they made forbidden treaties with other countries, they intermarried with people from different nations, they turned from God and His counsel, and life indeed did become burdensome for them.

They left all that they were enjoying back here in their relationship with God. And you can see that pattern throughout the scriptures, with people who gave in to loves, and pursuing those loves apart from the counsel of God, even if it was something very innocent and good, in and of itself.

They established and allowed inordinate desires to rule, and they pursued those in ways that were contrary to God's counsel.

Other spots in the scriptures, of course, the book of Proverbs is another place that we can turn to to see those examples of warnings given to the naive.

[ 16 : 33 ] And we don't have time to turn to each one of these scripture passages, but in chapter 1, verses 10 through 19, we see warnings about joining with those who promise quick prosperity.

Come on, join with us. Jump in with us here. And we'll go this way, and we promise you that what's ahead are great things. Chapter 2, warnings about pursuing sexual pleasure, contrary to God's design.

And chapter 5, a number of spots in those early chapters in Proverbs that are warning the naive young man to be careful. Watch out! Don't give in with what you see out there.

Chapter 6, warning about pursuing a life of ease. The dangers of that. Chapter 23, verse 13, warning about gluttony. Chapter 20 and 23, warning about effects of uncontrolled drinking of alcohol.

Another quote, I can't remember where this quote came from. In order to get to addiction, we must cross lines of folly and sin. Oh yeah, it came from Brad Hambrick's lesson material that he has for working with those caught in addiction.

[ 17 : 46 ] He describes this as crossing the lines of folly and sin. Even if your potentially addictive behavior is morally and legally permissible.

Like I say, it could be something in and of itself that's okay to do. In order for it to become a controlling presence in your life, it must cross over the line of wisdom into folly.

And that's what we're seeing in the book of Proverbs that the writer is warning his readers about. This is the way of wisdom. And the way of wisdom is calling out, follow me, follow me, follow me.

And follow me, and this is what, well, you'll receive in life. And in contrast to that is the way of folly. If you don't listen to me, wisdom, calling to you, but instead you follow the way of folly, this is what's going to happen.

You can expect this. And he's giving this counsel to those individuals who haven't been down the path before. But he has, and he understands what's ahead.

[ 18 : 52 ] He's learned to value what is truly good, the way of wisdom, God's counsel. And probably has experienced the difficulties that come when one does not follow the way of wisdom.

And now he's speaking to those who haven't walked along the journey yet, but are back here making those choices, identifying those things to love, and helping them understand, you haven't gone down this path before, so let me help you, and I'm coming alongside you, to help you understand what indeed does lie ahead.

What one plus one equals, in the way of either blessing or tragedy of life. And of course, the wise man will hear and increase in learning and enjoy the benefits of following the way of wisdom.

And so that's what he's endeavoring to do with his readers. He's showing the way of wisdom and the way of folly in hope that the readers will be wise and follow the way of wisdom and avoid that descent in the folly's pit of destruction.

Now, the warnings, whether they're the warnings from the book of Proverbs or other warnings that we can give today, the warnings can tell us about the dangers of specific items and specific activities and specific activities that a person could become addicted to.

[ 20 : 16 ] But just as important, and maybe even more so, more important, is that they tell us about how our hearts, our inner man is inclined to the way of folly.

So if there's anything you're going to learn from, say, these warnings, the book of Proverbs, it's important to learn some of the things that are out there that you could be drawn to, but even greater than that, is the tendency, the inclination of your own heart to go in that direction.

If you don't have that understanding and accept the reality that this is the condition of my heart before salvation, and to some degree even after salvation, then we just set ourselves up to go further down this descent and this journey, this downward spiral toward addictions and enslavement to something else.

So we can give thanks that God is helping us understand something of this inclination of our hearts. And so we want to live in the reality that this is what's true of me.

I don't want to be naive and thinking that, that won't ever happen to me. You know? How could that person ever do that? And sometimes we think of that when we see someone who's further along in this journey and experiencing some of the tragedies of life in areas that we wouldn't go in.

[ 21 : 44 ] But we would go in a different area. But when we see this person, we think, how could they ever do that? Well, we know how they could do that. You know, I know that.

I'm familiar with that. So I'm not back here thinking, oh, you know, I would never do that. I might not do that in that area, but there's probably another area that I would do it in.

And so I'm not going to be naive in thinking that I don't have that same tendency of heart and set myself up to continue down this journey toward addictions.

The great danger in this first stage is when the individual disregards this truth about its inner man or is indifferent to it. Again, he therefore establishes himself more firmly on the downward spiral and then moves to this next stage that we call friendship.

It's at this stage that the individual still thinks he's in control and everything is fine. But there's a stronger relationship that's developing with the substance or the activity.

[ 22 : 54 ] Let me just come a little closer to that now. The substance or the activity, whatever it is, is beginning to be used to accomplish a desired purpose.

They begin to see that, okay, there's something here in this substance or activity that really does give me something of what I desire and what I want.

And so there's a step closer to it, a stronger friendship and relationship with it. He's still living with the belief that he's in control and the substance is his servant.

It's his tool. It's something that he's using to make certain things happen. We've heard of eating disorders before.

Maybe it's purging that makes it possible just to lose the weight, to get the look that others admire. It gives that person the control. Everything else in life is out of control.

[ 24 : 02 ] But here's an area I can control. And so he or she pursues that practice. Our individual, whether it be alcohol or something else, using it to give the relief at the end of the day of a day of stressful work or just more time on the internet playing games just as an escape.

You know, I've just got to get away from things for a while. And using that as a means of escaping problems of life. So they're beginning to see that these are things that can be used to escape what they want to get away from.

It seems to be meeting and fulfilling some desires and some expectations. Maybe an acceptance with a group as we read in one of the earlier quotes.

Relief from stresses, freedom from emotional pain or maybe some physical pain. Pleasure that it brings.

Excitement maybe. Escape from responsibilities, problems, or failures that they've experienced. Here's another quote from a senior in high school.

[ 25 : 19 ] The first few times I tried cocaine, I felt like I was much more aware of everything. When I would go outside, trees seemed to be a new shade of green.

The sun would be more intense. The more intense awareness made me feel indestructible. I felt on top of the world and nothing made me feel like that before.

Again, you're beginning to see some things that are so important to the individual and he wants to continue to experience that feeling and has found something that will provide that and he's using it on a more regular basis to bring that about in his life.

Of course, all of this is being found apart from depending on God. And the conclusion, how could there be anything wrong without what I'm doing?

Look at what it's doing for me right now. And so, I argue against that conclusion. You have to help them begin to understand even as the writer of Proverbs was, well, you're not at the end of the journey yet.

[ 26 : 31 ] You're not seeing what's at the end of the journey. Even greater than that, it's still a substitute for God and have done apart from him and in place of him and his wise counsel is sin.

Apart from faith, it's impossible to please God. He that comes to God must believe that he exists and he's the reporter of those who earnestly seek him. So as God was working with the children of Israel, helping them understand, listen, there's a lot of things ahead of you that you're going to be tempted to go after and pursuing them apart from me or as substitutes of me.

Don't go that way. And so we need to be careful that we are not seeking substitutes for that which God is meant to be in our lives at whatever stage we're at.

And it's at this stage that if we're not careful, we could give in to that kind of thinking. And so it's so important for us to have this interaction with each other when we're making simple statements that, well, that doesn't sound right.

And, oh, I'm sure they didn't mean that. But if we come alongside each other and help each other develop a greater awareness, help me understand what you meant by what, when you said this.

[ 27 : 59 ] And then I can help that person explore a little bit more of maybe what they're unaware of, what they're saying, what's coming out of their heart, from the overflow of their heart, out of their mouth and statements that they're not recognizing the early stages of this enslavement.

And so I can come along, we can come alongside each other and help each other see things that we might be missing. Well, at this stage, there's other changes that might be happening and beginning to be revealed.

The person is thinking about the substance more and what it does for him. Boy, last time I had this problem and did this for me. How could I get this?

And what's the best time that I could participate in this and do this? And what has to happen? So they're thinking about it more. Spending more time in pursuit of the substance or the activity and with others who value the same.

More money is being invested. Money not necessarily set aside or available for the purchase of the substance or the investment in the activity.

[ 29 : 05 ] less refusal saying no to using the substance. Oh, it's okay. Nothing happened last time, so this is what happened. Certainly it'll be okay just another time.

A stronger rationalization like that or a defense or justification for its use. So we begin to see this stronger bond developing with the substance and activity.

A greater dedication to it. They're moving down this downward journey, this spiral in their lives. Now, at this point I want to take a break in our stages and just turn to some scriptures.

Turn with me to 1 John 2. Because again, we can give so much thanks to God for his love and care and concern for his people that he provides us the instruction as he gave to the children.

reviters who gives to his people today as well as he worked through John in 1 John 2. And with providing these warnings, verses 15 through 17, he says, Do not love the world or anything in the world.

[ 30 : 16 ] If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of the eyes, the boasting of what he has and does comes not from the Father but from the world.

The world and his desires pass away. But the man who does the will of God lives forever. So here we have God writing through John. And John is writing to individuals who have already begun some of this shift of allegiance in their heart from God to something in the world and pursuing that apart from God.

And so some warning is needed for these people. So God through John is calling them back and warning them of the emptiness of life ahead for those who pursue loving the world.

This is what's ahead. The word John uses here for love is that of attachment or intimate fellowship or loyal devotion to.

It's the love that God calls a person to in their greatest command. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. Another quote from a commentary.

[ 31 : 29 ] John does not advise the Christian to abandon this world or to live in seclusion. John stresses not that a Christian separates himself from the world, although there will be times that that will be necessary, certainly as we're say recovering or learning to live new life in Christ apart from those addictions.

Rather he says that the believer should keep himself from a love for the world and focusing on the inner desires, affections of the heart. We can point all these things out there that might be dangerous, but they'll be dangerous because our hearts are inclined to go that direction after them in substitution for God.

So if John's directing their attention to the issues of the heart and what a person loves, he's warning them of the possibility that exists for them to take out a love for the world and a love that's characteristic of the world, a love that sets other things up in the place of God.

Don't be like them. Don't love the world and the way they carry on their daily lives where they carry on with no thought or intent to love God and the counsel and the wisdom of God.

Don't love that kind of life. He's telling them that the pursuit of things in that way is not from God. It leads to emptiness, but the one that loves God, loves God, enjoys eternal life.

[ 33 : 04 ] Again, showing up, showing this contrast and helping them understand. You know, some of you are moving in this direction. I want you to understand, don't love the world. Don't go that direction.

It will lead to emptiness and harm and tragedies. But the one who loves me and pursues me, holiness, my counsel and obedience to my word, there's eternal life there for that person.

There's good things that are there. Now, James gives us some additional similar warnings in James 4, verses 4 through 10, if you want to turn over to there.

And James says to them, starting with verse 4, and I don't go through all those verses, but he says, You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?

Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?

[ 34 : 12 ] So don't you just pick out some phrases here in those verses that might give us some additional understanding of what James is saying here? He says, You adulterous people. The idea here is that among them were those who, although professing to be Christians, were living unfaithfully in their relationship with God.



They weren't living out their covenant commitment to God and what they were pursuing, their affections, and then their actions, they were pursuing the world, whether it be specific items that were available that the enemy was using as influences that could be allurements to their heart or the way of thinking that exists in the world because people of the world still have to formulate patterns and ways of approaching life.

When they reject the counsel of God and his wisdom, they still got to come up with some world view that will give them direction for daily decisions. And John is, James is helping them understand, don't love that world system that has been set up.

Don't go that direction. He talks about friendship with the world. He uses the world to describe an intense, deep affection the individual has cultivated in his heart for the world.

So again, that stage of friendship. He's really cultivated some great love. The affections were there, now they've taken the step where they're cultivating those a little bit more.

[ 35 : 48 ] It's not like they've heard the warning and the danger and they've set up precautions and taken steps so that it doesn't grab hold anymore. No, they're thinking more about it and how it really has enabled them to acquire what really is important to them.

They're thinking more about it and maybe taking steps to establish that relationship a little bit more so that it can guarantee a little bit more of what they want.

So they're cultivating this and this is what happens when we don't see the danger but focus more on what we really want and what it can promise even though it is contrary to what God says we should go after the way we should go after it.

They're cultivating it and nurturing it because it's become that important to them. Developing that strong relationship with the principles of the world, again that close personal relationship is forming or accepting it and bringing close to themselves the ideas, the ambitions, the laws, again are characteristic of those who are not followers of Jesus Christ.

That's really not characteristic of who we are in Jesus Christ and who, what a follower of Jesus Christ really loves intensely and pursues in substitution to God and replacement of God and his wise counsel.

[ 37 : 19 ] It's just not something that should be there and that we are cultivating. Another quote from another commentary, it consists in setting our hearts on those things and conforming to them and making them the object of our pursuit with the same spirit with which they're sought by those who make no pretensions to religion or in following God and Jesus Christ.

You know, we put ourselves alongside that. You know, we're looking like that in the way that we think and what we're pursuing and what my ambitions of life are.

He talks about being at enmity with God, to be arrayed against God, to take a position of opposition against God, hostility against God.

I mean, that's not how we're viewing ourselves. We're not viewing ourselves to this extreme. We like to soften it a little bit more.

And think, well, I'm not. You know, you're describing me like I'm some terrible person. Well, if you're aligning with yourself with those who are in hostility against God and taking on some of those characteristics of them and things that they're thinking and loving and saying and doing, you have to understand that this is what's happening.

[ 38 : 47 ] You're putting yourself in opposition to God. And of course, for the person who does that to the place where they're habitually doing that over and over again, they have to question somewhere along the line whether they were never in the family of God in the first place.

Well, then he says, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Anyone could be anyone who is in the church or out of them, as was the case in this situation here.

He talks about who chooses. It implies purpose, intention, or design. It's not something that they just kind of slipped into. They fell into accidentally.

And that's what we're not, we're trying to convey this idea these are voluntary choices that have been made. Even though, we'll say, innocently back here.

They're not. They're, and we're staying away from what could be expressed further along on this back from this journey of the blame shifting that took place, that you might hear from somebody who's down here.

[ 39 : 59 ] No, it's, there's purpose and intention in these choices. It supposes that a heart is set on it, and that there's a deliberate purpose to seek the friendship of the world.

So the individual has seen something in life that's attracted to him. It fits what he desires in his heart. He sees how other people have pursued it and acquired it, and now he sees the necessary actions that he needs to take in order to acquire it as well.

And then he tells the people, don't you, or do you think, the scripture says without reason, that the spirit caused to live in us envies intensely. And there's a portion of scripture from my reading that many have struggled with what this was referring to.

But as I understand it, it's a warning that comes from God in the scriptures about the spirit within us, not the Holy Spirit, that envies intensely.

There's a reason God in the scriptures warns us about the envious spirit that exists with each person. And what God says or warns about is not without reason.

[ 41 : 17 ] helping these people understand it. Don't you think that there's a reason that God warns us about the spirit within us that envies intensely. And there isn't within us that spirit.

And Asaph learned that, and I better finish up with what he experienced in Psalm 73, 1 through 3. He says, Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.

But as for me, my feet had almost slipped. I had nearly lost my foothold, for I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

You see, everything that's taken place in Asaph's life, there was something he desired. He saw that others had it, others who were arrogant, contrary to God, the prosperity of the wicked is but that was there.

And he almost slipped as a result of this spirit within him that was intensely envying. And so, thankfully, he recognized this, and I have to stop here and we'll finish up with these other things that are here.

[ 42 : 23 ] But that's what we're recognizing here. We're recognizing the grace and goodness of God who's provided us with the instruction in his word that we need to know our own heart and to take the necessary steps to guard against moving down this descent and this journey toward addiction.

So by his grace and all that he provides, may we be wise people and listen and love him with all our heart, soul, might, and strength. Well, let's encourage each other to do that.

Our time is gone. We're dismissed. Thank you.