Relationship Addictions

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“Love addiction is the obsessive search for love, characterized by extreme dependency; partners are bonded together by self-deprivation and over involvement.”

That is the definition of love addiction as expressed by Judith Feeney and Patricia Noller in a journal article they wrote.
Many suffer from the desire to stay in a bad relationship or in many relationships because of fear. They fear that they are not able to be loved by anyone else and this is all they are going to get. They fear being just alone, without someone to constantly rely on or worry about.
More Reasons for Staying in a bad relationship?

financial dependence, living arrangements, children, judgment from others, childhood problems, and possible career problems could be valid reasons
Women who have been neglected or abandoned.

Those abandoned or neglected as children often consistently seek out relationships because they do not want to be alone and they will stand by their partner so they are not like the people who abandoned them. A website devoted to addictions had this to say, “Many of these symptoms are also elements of codependency and intimacy dysfunctions resulting from childhood abandonment, emotional and/or sexual abuse. For this reason treatment and therapy for Love Addiction often includes trauma recovery work.”
What does the Bible say?

- Titus 2:12 discussed how we need to live with higher priorities than those in the world, “Training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age”.

- This scripture shows us that we are not to live by the desires of our flesh or with our past determining our future.
What else the Word has to say?

- James 4:7 says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

- Here God is calling us to be reminded that we are treasures and that one’s past or present issues will not define them. We have already been defined as God’s children and chosen people. The standard has been raised for us whether we believe it or not.
One more verse?

I Corinthians 10:13 reminds us that no addiction is unable to be overcome when we have got God by our side,

“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”
The important things to remember after knowing those verses:

* God does not send a temptation larger than can be overcome

* Every woman is special and unique and deserving of being treated with decency

  * Women are to be respected by men and men are to be loved by women

* When in a relationship because of addiction, obsession, and fear there is a good chance that a woman does not truly love the man she is choosing to stick so close to
How can we tell if someone is suffering from this addiction?

*a women involved in more than one relationship

*overreacting in defense of their actions

*having unrealistic expectations of their relationship(s)
Signs within a relationship that can express a relationship addiction issue:

* being jealous and possessive
* feeling infatuated
* being overly self sacrificing and self depriving
* expressing affection quite early in the relationship
* blaming oneself whenever something goes wrong
* being unable to go through separation
How do you overcome relationship addiction?
• A choice must be made to change
• Changing addictive thought patterns
  • Self Validation
• Applying this to your life and making sure things are balanced
• Understand and set realistic goals for the future
Once you have admitted that you need to make a change in your life and decided that it is necessary to move forward in a different direction you have started the process of healing and alteration. This is a crucial step to move forward!

Making a choice to change

Breaking Love Addiction
Changing addictive thought patterns

This requires thinking more of yourself and recognizing all of the wonderful attributes that are brought to the table by you. When addicted to a relationship you often see your partner in a better light than you should. While on the other hand there is considerably less good thoughts about themselves. This has to be changed, and one must begin to recognize their values and validate themselves as a person worthy of love.
It is true that it is hard to love a person who does not love themselves. Learning to accept, appreciate, and act loving towards yourself is essential for validation. This means letting go of negative thoughts, not letting harmful people make you feel like less than you are, and seeing the treasure that you truly are.

**Self Validation**
The next step is to make sure all of this is being applied to the life of women with relationship addictions and helping to create a balanced life. No more putting so much focus on only one relationship and closing oneself off to the rest of the world. There is importance in creating time for yourself, time for your friends, time for possible significant others, and time for family etc.
It is not wise to go into a relationship expecting more than another person can supply, it is also not wise to expect much less than you deserve. There must be balance and understanding as to what is deserved. It is not healthy to misunderstand or have an unrealistic expectation on future relationships because that will lead to repeats of past mistakes.
How can we prevent this?

By taking advantage of the opportunities we have in ministry!

* Bible Studies
* Youth Group
* Retreats
* Being open about past experiences
“mature love relationships are: (1) needing, (2) giving, (3) romance, and (4) companionship. Mature romantic love helps create an environment that permits mutual growth among the lovers.”
References


