



Addictions & Self Control

Proverbs 19-31

Proverbs 23:29–35; 25:16, 27

- Drunkenness and gluttony affects both your physical and mental health.
- We tend to talk about the evils of drunkenness quite a bit, but we don't talk about overindulgence in relation to food, gluttony.
- Christians have been thinking about these issues for centuries.
- Early church leaders listed the “seven deadly sins.”

Proverbs 23:29–35; 25:16, 27

- In the sixth century, church leader lumped overeating and drunkenness together under because they had the same underlying issue: excessiveness.
- Proverbs teaches that excessiveness can affect your mental and physical health, finances, relationships, and decision making.
- Drinking can spin out of control and lead to alcoholism, which is both a mental disease and a physical addiction.

Proverbs 23:29–35; 25:16, 27

- It can impair your judgment, putting you in dangerous situations.
- Alcoholism can damage your relationships and even lead to financial ruin.
- Many of us have seen that happen, and we grieve with, comfort, and support those whose lives have been destroyed by alcohol.
- The church has support groups and preaches openly about it.

Proverbs 23:29–35; 25:16, 27

- In Proverbs 23, Solomon painted a vivid picture of the effects of excessive drinking, emphasized by the sudden shift in his style of writing (23:29–35). It allows you to see clearly the effects of drunkenness on a person.
- The imagery builds: a riddle (verse 29), its answer (verse 30), instruction (verse 31), the consequences (verse 32), and direct address (verses 33–34).

Proverbs 23:29–35; 25:16, 27

- Then the conclusion (verse 35) is in the drunkard's own words.
- The drunkard experiences mental and emotional pain – woe, sorrow, strife, and complaints – and he hurts himself physically (verse 29).
- He imagines confusing things, doesn't see clearly, and is dulled to pain but not in a good way (verses 33–35).

Proverbs 23:29–35; 25:16, 27

- Solomon said that drinking seems “sparkling” at first, but when you overindulge, it poisons like a viper.
- A blood-alcohol level that is too high will literally poison your body and can even kill you.
- But drunkenness can “bite you” in other ways as well – making bad decisions, embarrassing yourself, saying hurtful things, or doing dangerous things you will regret later.

Proverbs 23:29–35; 25:16, 27

- What we don't talk about as much is that gluttony with food can cause some of the same damage.
- Continued overindulgence of food can cause damage to your stomach and place you at higher vulnerability for serious illness.
- It can lead to diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, and stroke. Like alcohol, food can seem “sparkling” at first, but when you overindulge, it can “bite you.”

Proverbs 23:29–35; 25:16, 27

- The hard thing about food versus alcohol is that you can't give up food completely.
- We all have to eat. Which means we must have self-control (25:27; 28:7).
- Solomon's solution is self-control.
- He didn't say, "Don't ever eat honey"; he said, "Eat just enough" (25:16).

Proverbs 23:29–35; 25:16, 27

- Self-control may feel next to impossible, but Paul said self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23), something the Holy Spirit grows in us as we abide in Him.
- Paul even gave us an alternative to drunkenness – be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).
- Instead of allowing ourselves to lose control to a substance, we should give over control of ourselves to the Spirit.

Proverbs 21:17; 23:19–21; 28:7

- Excess in pursuing your own pleasure will lead to financial ruin.
- Proverbs gives us another reason that overindulgence isn't good for you. Not only can it affect our mental and emotional health, it can also lead to financial ruin.
- It is easy to see with drunkenness – someone who spends a significant portion of his paycheck drinking or even can't keep a job because of drinking.

Proverbs 21:17; 23:19–21; 28:7

- But it can also happen with overindulgence in food or pursuing any kind of personal pleasure (drugs, gambling).
- Any all-consuming addiction can consume us and destroy us.
- Solomon described this situation vividly as well – “slumber will clothe them with rags” (23:21).

Proverbs 21:17; 23:19–21; 28:7

- In ancient Jewish culture, the drunkard and the glutton represented the epitome of the lack of discipline.
- The Mishnah (teachings of ancient Jewish rabbis) measures the rebelliousness of a son by his eating and drinking habits.
- That's why “a companion of gluttons disgraces his father” (28:7).

Proverbs 21:17; 23:19–21; 28:7

- Gluttony, in its reckless extravagance and wastefulness, shows a life that is selfishly about your own pleasure instead of providing for your family, contributing to the community, and helping the poor – generally doing good in the world.
- The Bible teaches us to be productive, mature members of society, not selfish children who live only for our own pleasure.

Proverbs 21:17; 23:19–21; 28:7

- In Ephesians 5:18, Paul said drunkenness leads to wastefulness.
- The meaning of the Greek word translated “debauchery” in the ESV means wastefulness.
- It’s not only about drunkenness leading to sexual immorality (though that can happen too), it’s also about the wastefulness of excessive drinking and gluttony.

Proverbs 21:17; 23:19–21; 28:7

- The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) reminds the believer that his resources belong to the Lord and are to be used to honor the Master.
- An excessive habit requires resources that otherwise could be dedicated to advancing the Kingdom of God.
- If we cut back on our extravagances, we could make room for more extraordinary generosity.

Proverbs 20:1; 23:19–20; 31:4–5

- Excessiveness is simply not wise.
- Proverbs tells us that overindulgence simply isn't wise, that it can even lead us astray from wisdom or cause us to forget what is truly wise.
- Gluttony isn't wise because it's about living for ourselves and our own pleasure, not living for God (fearing Him).

Proverbs 20:1; 23:19–20; 31:4–5

- Drunkenness/gluttony is loving yourself; wisdom is fearing the Lord.
- Drunkenness/gluttony is pursuing pleasure for yourself; wisdom is offering yourself as a living sacrifice for God (Romans 12:1).
- Drunkenness/gluttony is indulging your desires; self-control is submitting to what God says is good, which always ends up being better for you in the end.

Proverbs 20:1; 23:19–20; 31:4–5

- When it comes to alcohol, Prestonwood applies the principle of 1 Corinthians 10:23: “‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things build up.”
- In this passage, Paul said he had the freedom to eat food that had been sacrificed to idols, but that he may choose not to eat it for the sake of his witness to others.

Proverbs 20:1; 23:19–20; 31:4–5

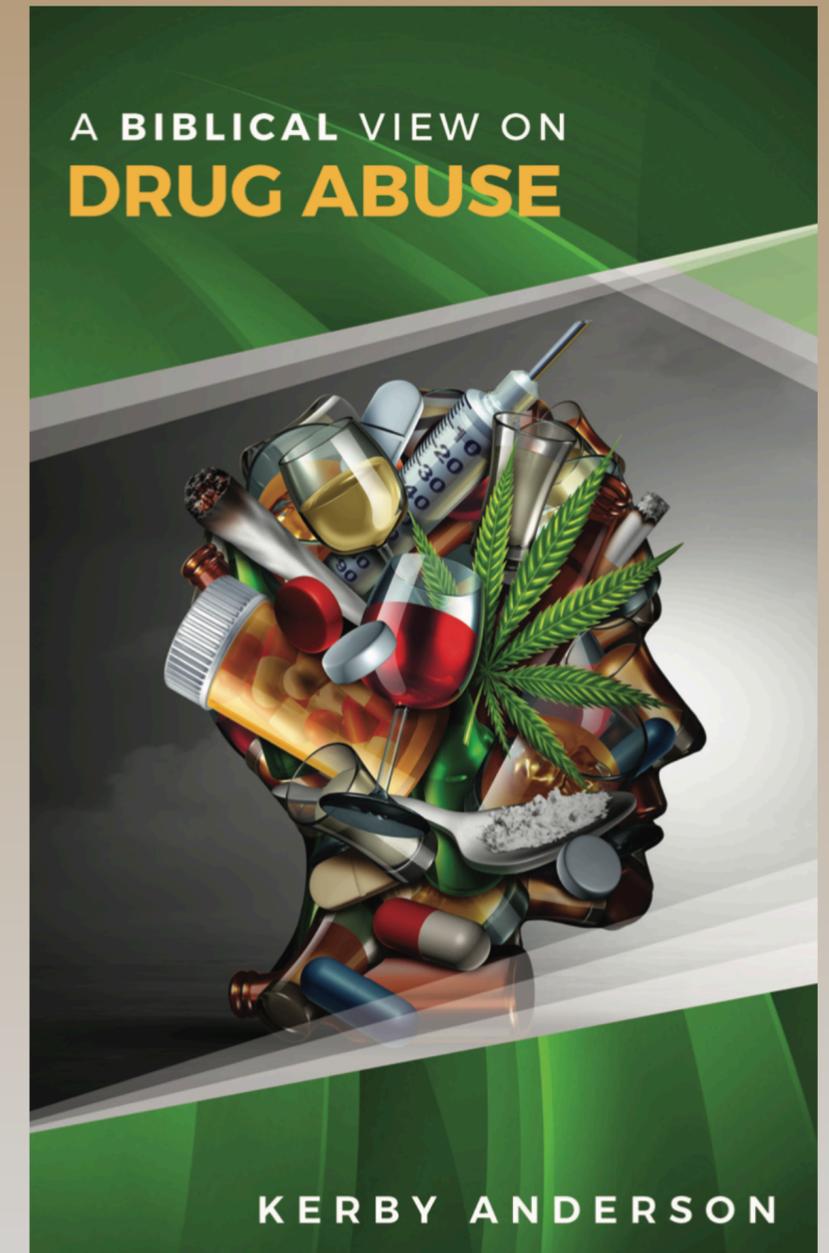
- We may have the “right” and “freedom” to drink alcohol (only in moderation, never to excess), but wisdom says it is better for ourselves (both our minds and bodies), our witness, and the gospel to abstain.
- We should be asking ourselves, “Is it helpful to do it? Does it build up others?” This is the heart of someone who is others-minded and gospel-focused.

Proverbs 20:1; 23:19–20; 31:4–5

- When you work hard to eat better and get in shape, yes, you are denying yourself some temporary pleasures, but your body will be healthier and you will be happier in the end than if you had indulged in gluttony.
- Likewise, when we choose to deny ourselves and follow Jesus, our lives will be more abundant and happier than they ever would have been if we had overindulged in our own desires (Matthew 16:24; John 10:10).

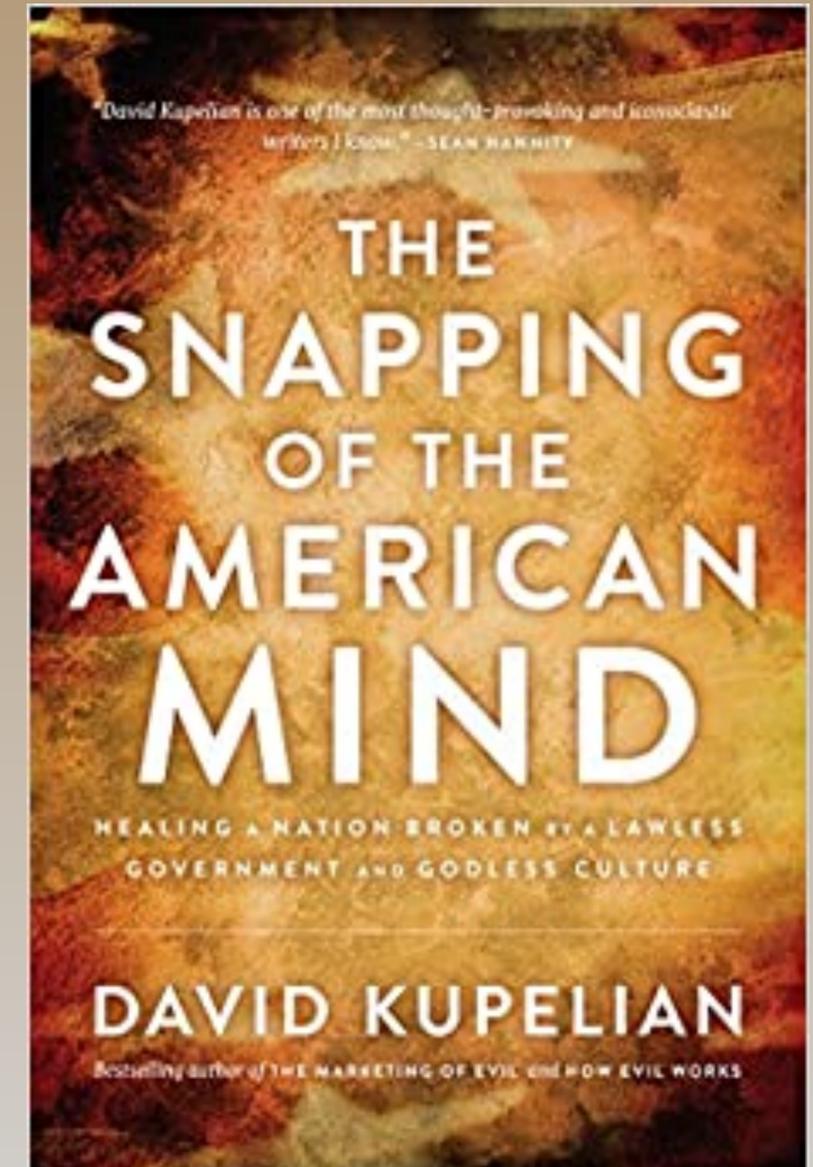
Drug Abuse

- Drug abuse is a major issue in America today.
- Almost daily we have news reports about binge drinking, the opioid epidemic, and the latest designer drugs on the market.
- These principles apply to other types of addictions as well.



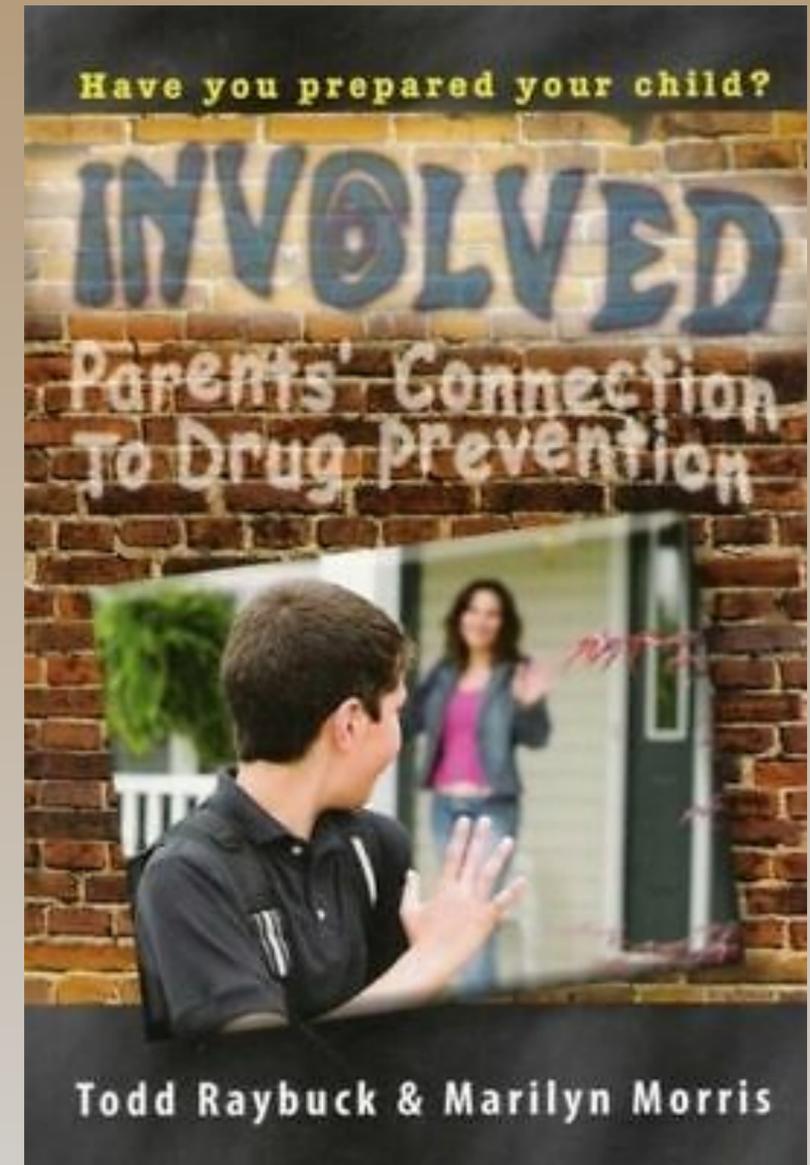
Addiction

- The estimates are that over 80 million Americans are intoxicated in one way or another with illegal drugs or alcohol.
- Even of greater concern is that 40 million of them have driven under the influence.
- If you add those using opioids, etc., the number increases to 130 million.



Teen Drug Abuse

- Parents are in denial.
- 5% of parents believe their teen has used inhalants to get high. 20% have done this.
- 21% of parents believe their teens have a friend who uses marijuana. But 51% of teens have at least one friend who uses marijuana.



Biblical Analysis

- Ephesians 5:18 admonishes Christians not to be drunk with wine.
- In Scripture drunkenness is called a sin (Deuteronomy 21:20-21, Amos 6:1, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-20).
- The Bible also warns of the dangers of drinking alcohol in Proverbs 20:1, Isaiah 5:11, Habakkuk 2:15-16.

Biblical Analysis

- Drugs were an integral part of many ancient near East societies.
- The pagan cultures surrounding the nation of Israel used drugs as part of their religious ceremonies.
- Both the Old Testament and New Testament condemn sorcery and witchcraft. The word translated “sorcery” comes from the Greek word from which we get the English words “pharmacy” and “pharmaceutical.”

Biblical Analysis

- Drugs were used to enter into the spiritual world by inducing an altered state of consciousness that allowed demons to take over the mind of the user.
- In that day, drug use was tied to sorcery.
- In our day, many use drugs merely for so-called “recreational” purposes, but we cannot discount the occult connection.

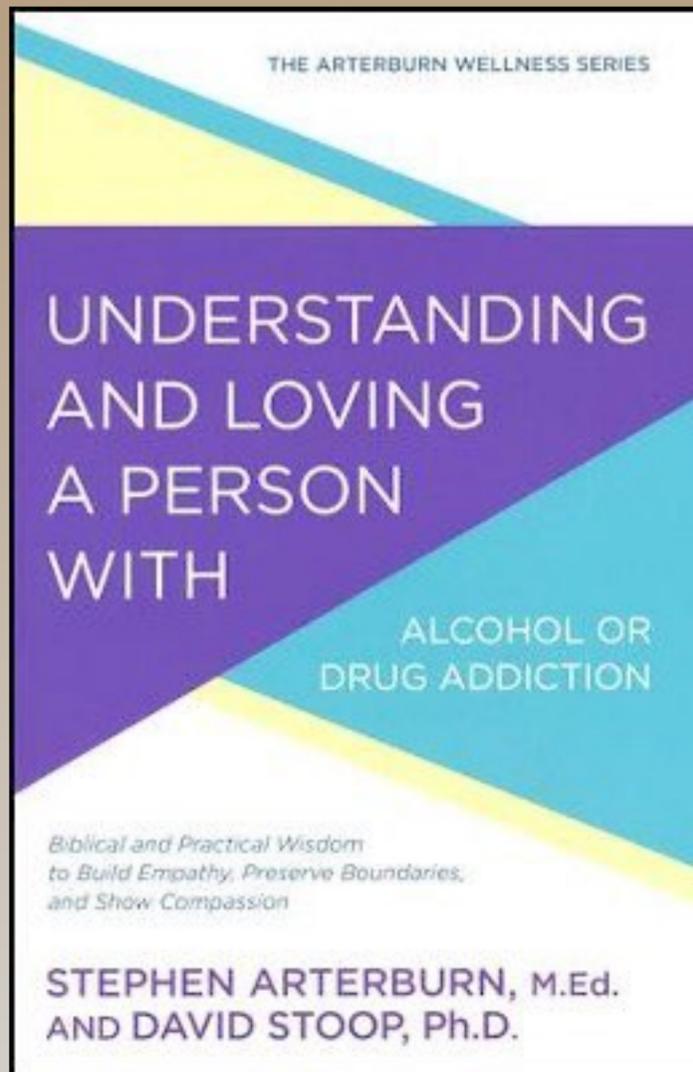
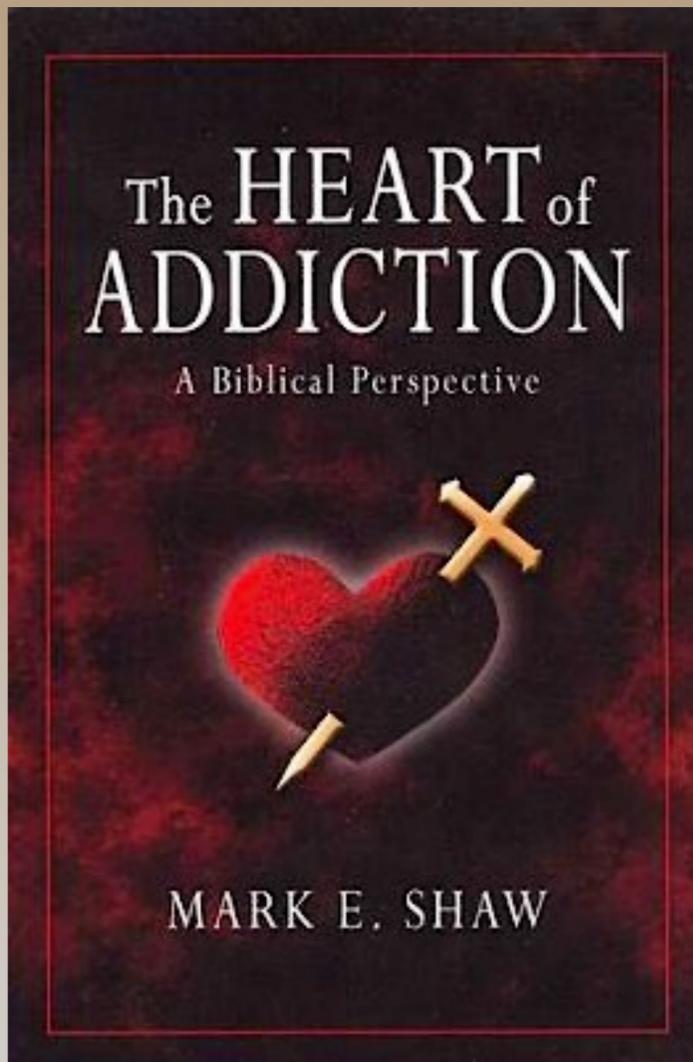
Biblical Analysis

- Galatians 5:19-21 says:
- “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Biblical Analysis

- The word witchcraft here is also translated “sorcery” and refers to the use of drugs.
- The Apostle Paul calls witchcraft that was associated with drug use a sin.
- Using drugs, whether to “get a high” or to tap into the occult, is one of the acts of a sinful nature where users demonstrate their depraved and carnal nature.

Resources





 **LIFE RECOVERY**