

LIFE LINE

A PASTOR'S **RESOURCE** FOR FAMILIES IN **CRISIS**

VOLUME 2



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FAMILY
MINISTRIES

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Introduction

by Chad Flowers

Every one of us has been personally touched by (or knows someone touched by) addiction, divorce, depression, grief, confusion, or other signs of living as broken people in a fallen world. We also know that God equips members of His church to help each other overcome such hurts. Since you are reading the introduction to this book, you have likely answered God's call to minister to the needs of hurting people by reminding them "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3, NKJV).

Too many times we struggle to help families in crisis. We know God has the power to work in any situation we face, but it can be a challenge to persuasively convey that message to those in the heat of crisis. Because of their pain, families are looking for answers and hope.

The Family Ministries Council began producing digital *LifeLine* quick-reference guides several years ago to assist pastors and ministers dealing with families in crisis in the local church. This book is a collection of ten such *LifeLine* guides. Each of the ten lessons helps you understand the topic and assess its effect on the individual or family; deliver helpful suggestions without assuming too much control or exerting too little influence; and recognize the limits of ministry and discern when to make constructive referrals to others who have more training.

The *LifeLine* writers are a diverse group of leaders, many professionally credentialed and recognized for their expertise on the subjects about which they have written. Many of them are UPCI-licensed ministers, and they understand the pressure on our ministers today to provide as much care as possible to our congregations.

As you begin to use *LifeLine*, you will note that each quick-reference guide is structured in the same way. In the guide for each topic, you will find the following five sections:

A. Scenarios and Assessment

1. Case Studies. Each guide begins with two or three short stories about people struggling with the issue at hand. This allows the reader to determine the contexts in which the guide will provide relevant helpful information for working with families in crisis.
2. Definitions and Key Thoughts. This section provides a clear definition of the issue. Facts and data are provided to ensure the best understanding of the particular crisis and how it harms those who may suffer with it.
3. Assessment. This section consists of suggested questions to ask family members in order to gain a more thorough understanding of how the issue affects them. There may be a red-flag section included to help you determine whether referral to a physician or mental health professional is needed.

B. Critique and Counsel

1. Biblical Insight. Relevant passages of Scripture are provided to assist you in building a biblical framework for ministering in critical situations. You may choose to assign these verses as homework for study or memorization for spiritual direction. You may also want to use them during your meetings with hurting families.
2. Wise Counsel. This section will provide you with insight about framing your efforts in ministering to hurting families in the most effective way possible.

C. Application and Prayer

1. Application. This section provides practical steps that families or individuals can take toward healing and drawing closer to God.
2. Focused Prayer. Recognizing the risk of being offensive, sometimes we do not know what to say when praying over those who are hurting. So each guide provides an example of how to begin praying for specific recovery and healing.

Introduction



3. Recommended Resources. The resources at the end of each guide will not be exhaustive, but will provide references for deeper personal study. You may wish to offer selected resources to the families you are working with.
4. Taking It to the Church. This last section will contain lessons that can be taught to your church congregation or discussed in small groups. This material will help the body of Christ understand what each crisis entails and what the church can do to help.

This collection of *LifeLine* guides will help you plan and deliver the best care you can give from beginning to end. We recommend that you read through the material, highlighting what is most useful to you for either individual or group formats. I believe *LifeLine* will be a long-term, equipping resource for pastors and ministers seeking to effectively help the people God sends to our churches in the twenty-first century.

Addiction



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Use of this material does not qualify the user as a mental health professional and should be communicated as such. It is important to refer individuals for professional help if the need arises beyond the scope of this quick-reference guide.

1 *Scenarios and Assessment*

Scenarios/Case Studies

A. Scenario #1

Ken is high on methamphetamine and has been awake for five days. Late one evening Ken begins cooking methamphetamine inside his home when it suddenly explodes, and the home bursts into flames. Ken and his son Daniel are severely burned in their efforts to escape the burning home.

B. Scenario #2

Jill is attempting to make a purchase at the store with her debit card. Her card is rejected. She attempts to use her credit cards; however, they too are rejected. She opens her banking app on the phone to find that all the money in her and her husband's mutual bank account has been withdrawn. Jill also checks her credit cards and finds they are all maxed. Later that evening Jill confronts her husband, Robert, about this, and he confesses that he has maxed out all their credit cards and spent all their money seeing escorts.

C. Scenario #3

Diane leaves work and picks up her children from school. She brings them home and

immediately begins preparing dinner. Diane, her husband Dave, and the children all eat a meal together. Diane cleans up after the meal and then helps her children with their homework. Diane puts her children to bed around 9 PM and begins cleaning the house. Around 1 AM Diane begins to cry saying, "will I ever be good enough?"

Definitions and Key Thoughts

A. Facts and Statistics

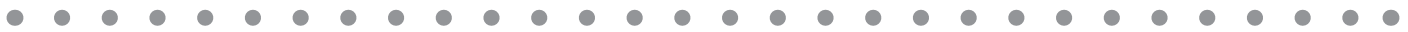
1. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 21.5 million Americans aged twelve or older met the criteria for a clinical substance use disorder in 2013.
2. According to Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), nearly 4.6 million ER visits in the United States were related to drugs in 2009.
3. According to Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) in 2008, despite the fact that Americans make up only 4 percent of the global population, they manage to use two-thirds of all illegal drugs used worldwide.

- 4. According to the National Council on Sexual Addiction Compulsivity, 6 percent to 8 percent of all Americans can be classified as addicted to sex.
- 5. According to PBS Frontline, players with gambling addictions account for about 5 percent of gamblers but 25 percent of total casino profits.
- B. Addiction can be defined as “a fatal, progressive, relapsing behavior pattern resulting from an attachment disorder (or disease) that alters brain functioning on a neurological level ultimately resulting in the destruction of the quality and quantity of an addict’s life.”
- C. Types of Addiction
 - 1. Substance Use – These addictions require the use of substances to release chemicals in the brain, which create an altered, euphoric state in the mind. All substances affect the body and brain differently and release different neurotransmitters. Nevertheless, all drugs and alcohol release dopamine, the neurotransmitter associated with pleasure, enjoyment, excitement, bliss, and momentary happiness. Dopamine creates the tremendous high that addicts enjoy, makes drugs and alcohol extremely addictive, and rewires the brain by altering it on both a physical and neurological level.
 - 2. Behavioral – Behavioral addictions are similar to substance use addictions with the exception they do not require the use of a substance to achieve their payoff. The behavioral addict abuses behaviors due to how those activities control the release of neurotransmitters in the brain, thus creating a euphoric sensation. The behavioral addict notices the connection between the behavior and the euphoria and begins to abuse that behavior to their own satisfaction. Just as in substance use addiction, the behavioral addiction has taken the place of the drug and also begins to rewire the brain and change the inner workings of the mind. Examples of behavioral addictions are pornography and sexual addiction, hoarding, eating disorders and food addictions, shopping addiction, kleptomania, internet use and

- gaming, social media, and gambling addiction.
- 3. Process – In process addictions there is something in the thought process promoted by and involved in the addictive behavior that serves some form of psychological need for the process addict. The addict receives real benefits from the belief promoted in the thought process. However, the behavior that is necessary to convince the addict to affirm the belief is normally destructive to the addict and those around them. Examples of process addictions are workaholism, codependency, anxiety, anger, thrill seeking, chronic stress, and narcissism.

Assessment (Interview)

- A. Symptoms of Addiction (Adapted from *Addictions and Recovery Counseling* by Clinton and Scalise, 2013, p. 29–30)
 - 1. The following symptoms may be observed when meeting with a counselee during a session. Some of these symptoms are physical while others are mental. Be sure to observe body language to recognize symptoms.
 - a. Eyes – bloodshot, watery, dilated pupils
 - b. Nose – runny, red, and irritated nasal cavities
 - c. Odor – offensive odor coming from the body and/or mouth
 - d. Needle tracks – skin boil and sores; injection points in the arms, legs, or feet
 - e. Unusual emotional extremes
 - f. Unusual attitudes – overactive or constantly sleepy or lethargic
 - g. Extreme appetites
 - h. Extreme fear or paranoia
 - i. Physically ill appearance – The addict may appear to have deterioration in skin tone, color, stance, and weight. The addict may appear as if they have not properly cared for their body’s cleanliness and appearance.
 - j. Mentally ill presentation – The addict may present themselves in a state of emotional extremes, loss of interest in former goals or dreams, unresponsive to emotional triggers, and increased irresponsible behavior.



- please others. Victims may also display passive-aggressive behavior.
- e. Victims may present intense fear of emotional abandonment and may irrationally cling to destructive relationships due to this intense fear.
- f. Victims may tell people what they believe they want to hear rather than the truth in order to feel acceptance and respect.
- g. Victims may feel they are worthless and that being treated with shame and disrespect is normal and should be accepted.
- h. Victims may report strong feelings of anxiety, fear, and helplessness when faced with being alone.
- i. Victims may seem concerned about fixing the problems of other people before concentrating on their own needs.
- j. Victims may take on a parental role in relationships.
- k. Victims may report feeling less worthy or more worthy than those who have a more normal life.

2 Critique and Counsel

Biblical Insight

- A. “Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them!” (Isaiah 5:11, NKJV).
 - 1. This verse specifically focuses on alcoholic addiction. The tragedy of addictions such as alcoholism is that they dominate the addict every hour of the day.
 - 2. The more the addict gives in to such temptations, the more he/she rejects the lasting comfort and relief that only God can provide.
- B. “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body” (1 Corinthians 6:18, NKJV).
 - 1. Regarding most issues we face in our humanity, we are either commanded to take a stand and fight, or the Bible gives instructions for how to stand and fight. However, sexual sin is not something we are to stand and fight against. We are clearly commanded to run away from these types of sins.
- C. “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers,

nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9–11, NKJV).

- 1. Addictions start out subtly; occasional experiences become obsessions that take over an addict’s life. Most addicts require necessary interventions, and part of the intervention must be the purposeful establishment of a relationship with God.
- 2. These verses list many of the types of sinful and addictive behaviors that destroy lives. The things listed are powerful enemies of our walk with God. Yet, God offers hope—we can be “washed...sanctified...justified.” There is no human need that addictive substances or behaviors can meet better than God can. He paid the price that we may be set free.
- 3. Individuals must make a daily decision to reject temptation, become accountable to other believers, and replace addictive substances or behaviors with healthier and godly choices.

Wise Counsel

- A. The first goal is ensuring everyone's safety: the individual suffering from the addiction as well as all close family members, especially children, and friends whom the individual is with most often. Work to take steps to protect others if you discover there is a danger.
- B. Try to communicate with responsible adults close to the individual, particularly family members, to educate them about setting boundaries with the addict, such as not allowing the individual to drive under the influence.
- C. If there are reports of abuse, encourage the family members to leave the home, and report the domestic violence to the proper authorities.
- D. With any type of abuse, encourage the family members to seek counseling.
- E. Special Note
 1. Ministers are encouraged to counsel in a nonforceful way.
 2. The goals should be to reinforce God's Word, promote hope, and normalize feelings while guiding toward a healthy mind-set.

3 Application and Prayer

Application

Care for Addicts (Adapted from *Addictions and Recovery Counseling* by Clinton and Scalise, 2013, pp. 16–18)

- A. Stage 1 – Recognizing and Admitting
 1. During this stage, addicts confess their powerlessness over their addiction and how they have made their lives unmanageable.
 2. Addicts must overcome the power of the secret.
 3. During this time, addicts confess their sins and receive forgiveness and healing from God.
- B. Stage 2 – Cleaning Out the Infection
 1. This portion of the recovery process involves addicts purging the poison from their souls. These are the very poisonous thoughts and feelings that caused addicts to use substances and behaviors to fix their problems in the first place.
 2. During this time, ministers may hear disturbing things; however, they must not shame individuals who are purging themselves of the infection that was making them "sick."
- C. Stage 3 – Renewing the Mind
 1. Individuals must begin the process of renewing their minds (Romans 12:2). The addiction has caused significant damage to their cognitive and mental processes. These processes must be renewed by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.
 2. God's truth is designed to break the power of denial by allowing the addict to believe in God's truth and His purposes for their life.
- D. Stage 4 – Exercising the Will
 1. Through confession, repentance, obedience, accountability, cleaning out the soul, and renewing the mind, the willpower of addicts will be restored from the damage of addiction.
 2. During this final stage, addicts will become accountable for their lives and embrace the change God's Spirit is leading them toward.
 3. It is helpful during this process for individuals to get accountability partners or sponsors to support them during this time.

Prayer

"Lord, Your Word teaches us how much You love us. Your Word also expresses how You feel about anything that takes Your place in our hearts. We come to you for _____ and the things that hold him/her from fully surrendering to You. We bind every wicked spiritual stronghold in this individual's life and ask that You fill the individual with Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen."

4 Recommended Resources

- A. Anonymous. *Alcoholics anonymous* (4th ed.). (2001). New York, NY: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc.
- B. Baker, J., & Warren, R. (2016). *NIV, Celebrate recovery study bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- C. Brick, J., & Erickson, C. K. (2013). *Drugs, the brain, and behavior: The pharmacology of drug use disorders*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- D. Carnes, P., & Carnes, P. (2001). *Out of the shadows: Understanding sexual addiction*. Center City, MN: Hazelden Information & Edu.
- E. Carnes, P. (2012). *A gentle path through the twelve steps: The classic guide for all people in the process of recovery*. Center City, MN: Hazelden.
- F. Clinton, T. E. (2013). *The quick-reference guide to addictions and recovery counseling: 40 topics, spiritual insights, and easy-to-use action steps*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- G. Erickson, C. K. (2007). *The science of addiction: From neurobiology to treatment*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.
- H. Jongsma, A. E., & Kok, J. R. (1998). *The pastoral counseling treatment planner*. (1st ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.
- I. Laaser, M. R., & Laaser, M. R. (2009). *Healing the wounds of sexual addiction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- J. Narcotics Anonymous. (2008). *Narcotics anonymous*. (6th ed.). Chatsworth, CA: Narcotics Anonymous World Services.
- K. Perkinson, R. R. (2014). *Addiction Treatment Planner*. (5th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- L. Saa, F. (Ed.). (2009). *Sex addicts anonymous*. (3rd ed.). Houston, TX: Sex Addicts Anonymous.
- M. Wexler, A., Wexler, S., Jacobson, S., & Hunter, R. (2014). *All bets are off: Losers, liars, and recovery from gambling addiction*. Las Vegas, NV: Central Recovery Press.

Support Groups

- A. Alcoholics Anonymous – Website: <http://www.aa.org>
- B. Narcotics Anonymous – Website: <https://www.na.org>
- C. Celebrate Recovery – Website: <http://www.celebraterecovery.com>
- D. Sex Addicts Anonymous – Website: <https://saa-recovery.org>
- E. Co-Dependents Anonymous – Website: <http://coda.org>
- F. Al-Anon Family Groups – Website: <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>
- G. Gamblers Anonymous – Website: <http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga>

5 Taking It to the Church

“The Snare of Addiction”

Lesson Text

II Kings 17:16–17 (NKJV)

So they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and

sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.

Forsaking God

When the Israelites forsook God, they willingly turned their backs on Him and walked in a manner that was contrary to God’s desires for them. God was not only the Creator of their nation, but the Creator

of their very lives; He made them with a purpose and plan. When the Israelites forsook God on this occasion, as they had many times in the past, they were saying to God, “We don’t want your purpose and plan. We want to do it our way.” Refusing to follow God’s will is choosing to handle things our way.

All addictions involve a moral choice that affects our spiritual lives. In an addiction, addicts become dependent upon a substance or activity to fill some void in their lives. The addiction can become the “missing piece” of life’s puzzle. It promises to make us feel better, be better, do better, or accept ourselves. Ultimately, an addiction allows something else we think we can control to fill our lives rather than allowing God, who we cannot control, to fill our lives. When we open ourselves to addiction, that choice is voluntary, just as forsaking God is a voluntary choice. God will deal with us based on our choices. If we choose addiction, we choose the harmful side effects that accompany its immediate benefits by which we are often tempted.

The Israelites Made Idols

In II Kings 17:16–17, the Israelites crafted for themselves two golden calves and an Asherah pole. They crafted these idols for two reasons: (1) these idols visibly represented what was already in their hearts, minds, and spirits; (2) since they created these idols, they believed they could control them. The idols they constructed were the visible and tangible manifestations of the iniquity already present in the people’s hearts. The Lord is unlike idols. He was never created; therefore, nobody has power over Him.

In our present-day Western culture, it is nearly impossible for us to think that golden calves and a pole could be gods. Though times have changed, we have not. In these times, we have different gods—drugs or alcohol, sex, entertainment, gambling, and many other addictive behaviors. The process of idol worship has never changed. It’s called addiction.

When individuals give into a certain addictive substance or behavior and commit themselves to dependency upon it, the heart, mind, and spirit become falsely satisfied. Whether that is a bottle of

whiskey, line of cocaine, pornographic video, escort, or gambling at the casino, there is some desire deep within our heart, mind, and spirit that is satisfied by the addiction. The addictive behaviors gain power as they are reinforced through tolerance and withdrawal. It is through this process that addiction strips addicts of their willpower, and their lives finally fall into unmanageability. Addicts are often ignorant of their destructive behaviors because their fantasies become a living reality, just as the golden calves and Asherah pole did for the Israelites. The great pity of addicts is they often discover their ruined state only after they have hit rock bottom. Sadly, some never realize their state as the addiction takes everything from them, even their lives.

The Israelites Worshiped Idols

Scripture records that after the Israelites created the idols, they worshiped them. In connection with the idols, the Israelites began to practice divination and know omens. Divination is a pagan practice that deals with “divining the fates,” an almost magical or mystical process by which a person can know hidden things such as the future or a person’s secrets. It was through this practice that the Israelites may have felt that the idols gave them control over all areas of life: time, people, and perhaps even God. When they worshiped the idols, they began to pour their love, devotion, affection, energy, and quite literally everything towards those idols. When the Israelites worshiped the idols, they elevated them to a place of prominence and priority in their lives, a place that was designed for God. The result was those idols consumed everything they possessed.

Addiction is very similar to idol worship. Addiction may begin in mere experimentation; however, in the end it becomes a form of dependency. It gains control over us as we rely upon it for what it provides. Before this form of dependency begins to seriously affect our lifestyle in a negative way, it presents the illusion of control and pride. Addicts fall prey to believing they have discovered a way to feel better, be better, or do better than others. They become haughty through their existential discovery, and their reliance upon it increases. Addicts are often unaware of the growing tolerance and need for more of the abused substance

until it is too late. Since the substance or behavior has made them feel better, be better, or do better in the past, they continue to rely upon it all the more while the spiral of dependency cycles downward.

The Israelites Served Baal

The Israelites fashioned the idols to obtain their secret desires. The idol was the method by which those desires were reached, and Baal was the object to which the idols pointed. There was something powerful that Baal provided the Israelites that was so enrapturing it could draw an entire people away from God. The Hebrew word rendered “served” in English is *abad*. It literally means “to be in bondage to” or “enslaved.” Perhaps it was the control that Baal subjected over them that they enjoyed so much. To be controlled eliminates free will and choice. Then the large existential and material decisions one must make are eliminated and replaced by satisfying the idol. Before the idols and Baal, perhaps the Israelites viewed their lives as too complex, so they wanted a change. But life became simplistic as all of Israel was completely consumed by the idols.

Forsaking God was a voluntary choice; however, serving Baal resulted in their enslavement. Choosing to use drugs to feel better, be better, do better, or be accepted are voluntary reasons for addictive behavior that often end in dependency and enslavement. When addicts go for lapses of time trying to break from addictions on their own, they suffer biological and mental withdrawals, which often result in them quickly returning to their addiction. The addiction becomes the priority; the addict is the slave, and the addiction is the master. The addict’s willpower and motivation for freedom are gone. Addicts continue in this cycle until finally their lives deteriorate and break down, and often they lose everything.

The Israelites Sacrificed Their Children

As the Israelite’s idol worship continued, so did their tolerance. Previous sacrifices of worship had to be exceeded. The great power and control the Israelites received due to divination demanded more of them. They had lost their morality and identity, but now they would also lose their future. As a result of the Baal worship, they sacrificed the next generation. They had fallen far from the image of God and God’s purposes in making the Israelites a special people. They were unrecognizable as they sacrificed their children.

Similarly, this same truth could not be any more applicable to the addict. As the addiction begins to consume the addict, the addict begins to consume the things around her. The addict consumes the kindness of her friends and family, abuses her community, neglects her children, betrays herself, and forsakes God. Addicts sacrifice their identities of husband or wife, mother or father, brother or sister, and son or daughter for the sake of being slaves to man-made idols, the objects of their addiction. Sadly, it is so often the children who are sacrificed through the neglect and abuse of the addict. In the end addicts often find themselves empty as they have sacrificed everything of value in the consuming fires of their addiction.

Closing

When addicts have nothing left to give, their addiction consumes them or leaves them broken. It is in that state of brokenness that so many are found by amazing grace. Only God can fill the life of an addict by bringing identity, meaning, purpose, and hope again. Finally, only God can fill the hole in the addict’s heart. God is the missing piece of our souls; He is eager to satisfy us and fill us forever.

(Loosely adapted from *Addictions and Recovery Counseling* by Clinton and Scalise, 2013, pp. 14–15)