

Break Strongholds (Addiction) Jennifer Smith

We were created to be passionate worshippers, but *what* we worship makes all the difference. I lived as a prodigal for many years—worshipping the wrong things, craving experiences that satisfied only temporarily.

Trying to find joy, peace and satisfaction, I turned to the world for instant fixes. I tried to find my identity, power and pleasure in new-age philosophies, relationships, drugs, material possessions, self-indulgence and entitlement. Disappointment led to anger when things didn't go my way. Meth became like my "god"—it gave me pleasure, it allowed me to be extra-productive, and it comforted me in hard times.

FEAR I was always an over-achiever who felt accepted based on performance. I knew very little of the Bible and didn't understand grace, so I struggled for years to clean myself up, and make myself acceptable to God. I faced many hardships and difficulties—some due to lifestyle choices, but others seemed random. The worst was the unexpected death of my beloved father. I feared I would never get clean. I feared God was disappointed in me. I feared I would never be happy. I didn't understand He had accepted me because I believed what Jesus did on the cross. When I began to reap destruction, I knew Jesus was my only answer.

FAITH Hard times were like a rototiller to my heart, plowing up hard soil and preparing good soil. Good soil planted with God's grace finally produced a harvest. I made one change: I began listening to godly teachers and reading my Bible. When I studied my Bible, I realized the Holy Spirit had pursued me all along. Such love! God said I could not serve another God: I belonged to Him. Spiritually, I was a new creation and more than a conqueror through Christ. Gradually the lies I believed about myself and my life were replaced with truth. I fell in love with Jesus and I started walking by faith, not by feelings. I became a doer of His Word, not just a hearer. In the midst of this spiritual battle, I stood firm in the finished work of the cross, and put on the whole armor of God. When I enjoyed a satisfying relationship with my heavenly Father, I found healing and wholeness.

FREEDOM When I really believed that I was a new creation in Christ and a beloved child of the Father, and received His unconditional love, my healing came. When the Holy Spirit comes upon us, we are given new desires. The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead also lives inside of believers—so drugs are no match for our God! We can have true joy and peace as the new fruit grows from new life. He gave me a desire for righteousness, revealed truth in His Word, gave me His Spirit and transformed me from the inside out. In God's process, grace flipped my thinking; I realized He was more concerned about the inner transformation than outward behavior. Our good, our bad, even our sin—God uses all of it for the good when we love Him. I can't imagine loving God this much if not for what I'd been through. His grace saves us, empowers us and sets us free to be what He created us to be.

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

RESOURCES His Word is all you need for life and godliness. I created a Bible-based coaching program based solely on Scripture called *The Way Out—40 Day Spiritual Healing Journey* (a devotional workbook, videos, audio, group and one-on-one coaching). This intensive program is available on-line. In addition I recommend a couple of books: *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave* by Edward Welch and *Freedom From Addiction* by Neil Anderson and Mike and Julia Quarles.

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