

~ CODEPENDENCY ~

Harry L. Morgan, Ph.D.

The most common addiction in America is some form of *codependency* or "people addiction". We are a people addicted to people, to our spouse, our children, our friends, our church, or our government. Why is this? God has made man inherently dependent upon Him. When man rebels against his constitutional dependence upon Deity he seeks a substitute ~ someone or something to be his god. Our nation's bold and brash declaration of independence from God has created a void, a vacuum, which cannot be filled. America's addictions and abuses, such as alcoholism, sexual addiction, sexual abuse, eating disorders, physical abuse, emotional and moral abuse are "serious affects" of our rebellion.

The first recorded evidence of codependency in human history is found in Genesis 11:1-9. In open rebellion to God's command to "fill the earth" (9:1) man sought independence from God by uniting themselves in dependence upon one another (11:3,4). God judged man's codependency at Babel (11:5-9) and He continues to do so today for "vain is the help of man" (Psa. 6:11; 108:12).

A. Codependency, primarily and ultimately, is idolatry.

Codependents seek for someone else to provide for them the security or significance that only God can provide. God alone, not even our spouse, is capable of providing for us life's basic needs. God has made us to be dependent upon Him. Failure to depend upon Him makes us vulnerable to be codependent upon someone else.

B. Codependency is an unhealthy relationship to mood-altering person that has damaging consequences.

Codependents give up their own feelings, needs, and wants. Like all addictions, codependency has at its core a shame-based person. Such people feel worthless and believe they do not have a right to depend on another person to get their needs met. Instead, they react to or live according to another person's feelings, needs, and wants. Co-dependency can occur on a one-to-one basis or with a group of people to which one pledges and gives up their own identity.

C. Codependents manifest the following characteristic:

1. Difficulty in identifying and expressing feelings and desires.
2. Difficulty in forming or maintaining close relationships. By avoiding closeness with another person, they avoid the trauma of their stored pain.
3. Perfectionism - unrealistic expectations of self and others. The drive for perfection is always rooted in damaged integrity.
4. Rigid or "stuck" attitudes and behavior.
5. Difficulty in making changes.
6. Feeling overly responsible for other people.
7. Difficulty in making decisions.
8. Enmeshed boundaries- they don't know individual limits within the codependent relationship.
9. General feelings of being flawed and powerless over one's life.

D. Codependents can be fostered in any form of dysfunctional family. They therefore grow up in family systems that actualize the various dysfunctional rules:

1. Unclear communication
2. Denial
3. Conformity
4. Repressed feelings
5. Lack of dependability

*For more information on this important subject
or for personal help in overcoming codependency contact:*

Biblical Counseling Center
Harry L. Morgan, Ph.D.

435 10th Avenue West
Palmetto, FL 34221
941-729-6600