

A 7-Day Devotional Journey



*A 7-Day Journey Through the Grip of Addiction
into the Grace of God*

"For the broken who still believe.

For the addicted who still pray.

For the sinners who refuse to stop being faithful."



*A cracked clay vessel — shattered, imperfect, worn — with warm golden light
pouring through every fracture. The broken places are not where the light escapes.
They are where it enters.*



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Written for the Faithful Sinners Community

Introduction Letter

Dear Faithful Sinner,

I need to tell you something before you read a single word of this devotional: I wrote this for myself first. I wrote it in the dark, in the hours before dawn, when the shame was loudest and God felt farthest away. I wrote it because I needed to believe what I was writing — that God had not given up, that grace was still available, that showing up broken was still showing up.

I know the road you're on. I know the exhaustion of wanting to stop and not being able to. I know the ritual of promising yourself — and God — that this was the last time, and then watching that promise crumble before the week was out. I know what it feels like to sit in a church pew and wonder if the words being spoken from the pulpit were meant for people like you, or whether you were simply too far gone for them to apply.

They were meant for you. This is meant for you.

I want to be honest with you about what this devotional is not. It is not a 7-day cure. It is not a formula. It is not a program that, if completed perfectly, will lift your addiction like a curtain and leave you standing in sunlight, whole and undamaged. Anyone who promises you that is selling something that doesn't exist. Recovery — real, lasting, hard-won recovery — is a long and non-linear road. Some days it looks like victory. Other days it looks like just surviving until morning.

What this devotional *is* — is an invitation. An invitation to show up honestly before God for seven days. Not to perform. Not to convince Him of your sincerity. He already knows your heart better than you do, and He chose you anyway. The invitation is simply to stop hiding, to open your hands, and to let Him meet you exactly where you are — not where you wish you were, and not where you're afraid He requires you to be.

I also need you to know this: your addiction is not simply a moral failure. It is a spiritual battle, yes — but it is also an emotional wound and a neurological reality. The brain changes under the weight of addiction in ways that are documented, real, and profound. That does not excuse the harm that has been done — to you, or through you — but it does mean that shame and willpower alone will never be enough. You need grace. You need community. You need a God who is bigger than your worst day. I believe you have all three available to you right now.

Each day of this devotional includes a Scripture, a reflection, a prayer, and journal prompts. The journal prompts are not optional — they are where the real work happens. There is a difference between reading about grace and actually writing it down in your own words, in your own handwriting, on your own page. Do the writing. Even when it hurts. Especially when it hurts.

Don't skip days — but if you do, don't quit. Come back. Pick up where you left off. That act of returning, of refusing to let a missed day become a missed week, of showing back up even when you feel like you've already failed — that is faithfulness. That is exactly what this is about.

Find someone to do this with you if you can. A friend, a pastor, a counselor, a sponsor. The road is long and the nights are dark, and we were never meant to walk it alone.

I am proud of you for beginning. Beginning is everything. It is an act of defiance against despair and an act of faith that the story is not over yet. And I believe — with everything in me — that it is not over yet.

With you in the mess, and believing in the grace,

A Fellow Faithful Sinner

How to Use This Devotional

This booklet is designed to be a companion — not a textbook. Here is how to get the most from it:

When to Read

The best time is in the morning, before the noise of the day begins — when your mind is still and your defenses are down. If mornings don't work, read at night before bed, when you can reflect without distraction. Choose a consistent time and protect it. That consistency is itself a spiritual discipline.

Keep a Journal

This booklet includes built-in journal prompts with writing space, but you may want a separate notebook as well. Don't just think through the prompts — write them. The act of writing slows us down enough to actually feel what we're discovering. Your words on a page become a record of God's faithfulness over time.

Don't Skip — But Don't Quit If You Do

Commit to reading every day. But if you miss a day — or three — come back. Close the gap. Pick up where you left off. The only way to truly fail this devotional is to close it permanently. Every return is an act of faithfulness.

Invite a Trusted Person

Consider inviting one trusted person to walk through this with you — a friend, spouse, mentor, pastor, or counselor. You don't have to share everything, but having someone who knows you're doing this, who can check in and pray with you, can make an extraordinary difference.

What Each Day Contains

- **Scripture** — One key verse to anchor the day's theme
- **Reflection** — A substantive reading to sit with and absorb
- **Prayer** — A first-person prayer to speak aloud or silently
- **Journal Prompts** — Five questions to engage honestly and deeply



Day One

"The Chains Have a Name"

Theme: Naming the addiction · Breaking denial

Today's Scripture

"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do."

— Romans 7:15 (NIV)

REFLECTION

There is something deeply, almost desperately comforting about the fact that the Apostle Paul wrote those words. Not a struggling teenager. Not someone whose life fell apart before it ever really began. Paul — the man who wrote much of the New Testament, who planted churches, who prayed and fasted and preached with fire — sat down and confessed something that sounds exactly like an addict's inner monologue. *I know what I should do. I want to do what I should do. And I keep doing what I hate anyway.*

That verse from Romans 7 is not a footnote in Paul's biography. It is one of the most raw, unguarded moments in all of scripture. And it is here, on Day One, because if we are going to go anywhere in these seven days, we have to begin by telling the truth. Not a cleaned-up version of the truth. The actual truth — named, spoken, acknowledged, and placed before God without decoration.

The first wall that addiction builds is denial. Not always dramatic denial — most of us know, somewhere deep down, that something is wrong. But there is a quieter, more insidious form of denial that doesn't say "I don't have a problem." It says, "My problem isn't that bad." It says, "I can stop when I want to." It says, "I'll deal with it after this." Denial is not stupidity. It is a survival mechanism — a way the mind protects itself from a pain it doesn't yet know how to face. But it is also a cage, and every day you spend in denial is another day the chains tighten.

The first act of faith in recovery — the first genuinely courageous thing you can do — is to name it. Not to describe it. Not to rationalize it. To name it. Say the word. Write it down. Let it exist in the light instead of feeding it in the dark.

Jesus told a parable in Luke 15 about a young man who wasted everything he had — money, dignity, relationships — and ended up in a foreign country, eating alongside pigs, wishing he could have what the pigs were eating. And then scripture says something beautiful: *"When he came to his senses."* That moment — the waking up, the looking around and realizing the truth of where he was — that was not the end of his story. It was the beginning of his way home. Coming to your senses is not defeat. It is the starting line.

Here is what you need to know about God and your addiction: He is not surprised. He is not shocked. He is not reconsidering His investment in you. He knew your name before you were born, and He knew this struggle would be part of your story, and He chose you anyway. The addiction itself — whatever form it takes — is almost always a misplaced search for something real. Comfort. Belonging. Relief. Escape from pain too heavy to carry. These are not shameful desires. They are human desires. The problem is not that we want relief — it is that we've been reaching for a counterfeit that never delivers what it promises.

Today, the invitation is simply this: name it. The chains have a name. Say it.

*"Coming to your senses is not defeat.
It is the starting line."*

Prayer

God, today I name it. I stop pretending, stop minimizing, stop hiding behind vague confessions and half-truths. You already know — You've always known — and still You are here. So I say it plainly: this is what I'm struggling with. This is what has me. I don't fully understand it. I can't fully explain it. But I am done pretending it isn't real. Thank You for not walking away in these moments. Thank You that honesty before You is never the wrong move. Help me to begin — truly begin — here, today, in this moment. Amen.

✦ Journal Prompts — Day One ✦

- 1. Write the name of your addiction at the top of the page. Beneath it, write what it has promised you. What has it actually delivered?**
- 2. Where in your life do you feel the most out of control? What feelings come up just before you reach for your addiction?**
- 3. Have you ever tried to hide your struggle from God? What would it feel like to stop hiding?**
- 4. Read Romans 7:15–20. Which verse feels most like your own story? Write it out and respond to it in your own words.**
- 5. Who is one person in your life who already knows the truth about your struggle? What would it look like to fully let them in?**

Day Two

"The Idol in the House"

Theme: Addiction as idolatry · What we worship

Today's Scripture

"You shall have no other gods before me."

— Exodus 20:3 (NIV)

"Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces."

— Ezekiel 14:3 (NIV)

REFLECTION

When most of us hear the word "idol," we picture something ancient — a golden calf, a carved stone figure, a pagan altar in a desert somewhere. It feels safely distant, comfortably irrelevant to our modern lives. And that distance is exactly what the enemy counts on.

Because the truth is that idolatry has never been primarily about statues. It has always been about the orientation of the heart — what we run to, what we depend on, what we secretly believe will save us. The prophet Ezekiel delivered one of the most penetrating diagnostic statements in all of scripture when God told him that the people had "set up idols in their hearts." The idol didn't live in the temple. It lived inside them. And if we are being honest, the same is often true of us.

Addiction functions as a false god in every meaningful sense of the word. It makes promises of salvation — from pain, from boredom, from loneliness, from the grinding weight of being alive. It offers what feels like peace, what feels like relief, what feels like belonging. It demands sacrifice — first small ones (a little time, a little money, a little honesty), then enormous ones (relationships, careers, health, dignity). And like every

false god in history, it never delivers what it promises. It takes everything and gives back nothing that lasts.

The question that unlocks something profound is this: *What is the addiction giving you that you are afraid God won't?* Not what it is giving you in reality — but what you believe it gives you. What is the felt promise? Is it numbness when the pain is too loud? Is it excitement when life feels dull and meaningless? Is it a sense of control when everything else feels chaotic? Is it pleasure when your soul is starved for beauty? These are not trivial questions. They are diagnostic. And your honest answer tells you something important about what is really going on beneath the surface of the addiction.

The command in Exodus 20 — "You shall have no other gods before me" — is not an expression of divine jealousy in the petty sense. It is an expression of divine love. God is not competing for territory in your heart. He is telling you, plainly and urgently, that the other things you have placed there cannot carry what you are asking them to carry. They are not built for it. They will collapse under the weight, and you will collapse with them.

The radical invitation of this day is not condemnation — it is a trade. God is not asking you to give up your addiction and receive nothing in return. He is offering Himself as the thing your addiction has always been a counterfeit of. Real peace. Real comfort. Real belonging. Real rescue. The kind that doesn't wear off in the morning. The kind that doesn't cost you your dignity. The kind that, as Jesus told the woman at the well, means you will never thirst again.

The idol has been in the house long enough. Today, we examine it together — not with shame, but with clear-eyed honesty and the hope that something better has been waiting all along.

*"God is not asking you to give up your addiction
and receive nothing in return."*

Prayer

Father, I confess that I have placed something before You — not in a temple, not with ceremony, but in the quiet habits of my heart. I have run to it for what only You can give. I have trusted it more than I have trusted You. Forgive me. Today I lay it down — not because I feel strong enough to, but because I believe You are better than it is, and I want to believe that more than I currently do. Increase my desire for You, God. Make You more real to me than the thing I've been running to. Replace the hollow with something that holds. Amen.

✦ Journal Prompts — Day Two ✦

- 1. In what ways has your addiction functioned as a "savior" in your life — something you ran to for rescue or relief?**
- 2. What does your addiction give you that you're secretly afraid God won't provide — comfort, escape, pleasure, numbness? Be completely honest.**
- 3. Write a letter to your addiction as if it were a person. What has it cost you? What would you say to it today?**
- 4. What do you spend more time thinking about — your addiction or God? Be honest. What does that reveal about the orientation of your heart?**
- 5. What would it mean in practical, concrete terms to "put God first" in the area of your addiction today — not in theory, but in the next 24 hours?**

Day Three

"The Grace That Doesn't Quit"

Theme: God's relentless pursuit · Unconditional love in the mess

Today's Scripture

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

— Romans 5:8 (NIV)

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

— Lamentations 3:22-23 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Grace is the most scandalous word in the Christian vocabulary. We have domesticated it — turned it into a hymn, printed it on coffee mugs, cross-stitched it onto pillows — and in doing so, we have largely defanged it. Because real grace, biblical grace, the grace that Paul is describing in Romans 5, is not a gentle sentiment. It is an earthquake.

Read that verse again, slowly: *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Not after we cleaned up. Not when we showed sufficient remorse. Not when we achieved a certain number of sober days. While we were still in it. While our hands were still dirty. While we were still choosing what we knew was destroying us. That is when God made His move.

In John 8, we find one of the most startling scenes in the Gospels. A woman caught in adultery is dragged before Jesus by religious leaders who want to use her as a theological trap. She is guilty — they make sure to say that. And Jesus does something extraordinary: He doesn't dispute her guilt, and He doesn't condemn her either. He simply looks at the men who want to stone her and asks which one of them has never sinned. One by one,

they leave. And then Jesus, alone with her, says words that should stop us cold: *"Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin."*

Notice the order. He offers absolution before instruction. He removes condemnation before issuing direction. Because Jesus understood something that our addiction-and-shame cycles never grasp: condemnation never produces transformation. It only produces more hiding. Grace is what opens the door that shame has been slamming shut.

And yet — how many of us have been operating on the theology of "I'll come back to God when I'm better"? How many of us have been treating our relationship with God like a dinner party we're not yet cleaned-up enough to attend? This misunderstands grace entirely. God is not a dinner party. He is a father who runs down the road to meet a son who is still "a great way off" — still stinking, still in rags, still rehearsing an apology. He sees him coming and he runs. That is the character of the God who is dealing with your addiction.

Lamentations 3 was written in the middle of catastrophic national failure — Jerusalem had fallen, the temple was rubble, and the writer was sitting in the ruins. And from that wreckage, he writes: *"His mercies are new every morning."* Every morning is a reset. Not because the previous day didn't happen, but because God's capacity for compassion is not diminished by our failures. It does not run out. It does not thin. It is, the writer says, new. Fresh. Available this morning — even after last night.

Shame is the enemy of grace, and shame is addiction's most powerful tool. Shame says, "You've done this too many times for grace to still apply." Shame says, "God might love other people through their mess, but you've made yours too complicated." Don't believe it. Shame has never once helped anyone break free from addiction. What shame does is drive you further in, further underground, further from the light and the community and the grace that could actually change things. Grace is the only force that has ever produced the kind of transformation shame promises but cannot deliver.

You are loved right now. In this. By Him.

*"God is not a dinner party you have to clean up for.
He is a Father who runs down the road to meet you."*

Prayer

God, I receive this. I receive it because I need it, not because I've earned it. I have been living under the weight of shame, and it has only pushed me further from You. Today I choose to believe — help me to actually believe — that Your love is not contingent on my performance. That Your mercies are new this morning, even after last night. Lift the shame from me, Lord. Not so that I can continue in what is hurting me, but so that I am actually free enough to change. Meet me here, in the middle of this, just as You met that woman in John 8. I need Your grace today. Amen.

✦ Journal Prompts — Day Three ✦

- 1. Do you truly believe God still loves you in the middle of your addiction? Not what you're supposed to say — what do you actually feel?**
- 2. Describe a moment when you felt most ashamed of your addiction. Now imagine Jesus standing in that moment with you. What does He say?**
- 3. How has shame been driving your behavior? Has shame ever actually helped you break free, or has it driven you deeper into the addiction?**
- 4. Write out Romans 5:8 and personalize it — insert your own name and your specific struggle. Then read it aloud as a declaration over yourself.**
- 5. What would change in your day-to-day life if you truly believed you were loved by God right now, exactly as you are — not as you hope to be?**

Day Four

"The Wilderness Between"

Theme: The hard middle · When recovery feels like it's not working

Today's Scripture

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

— Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)

REFLECTION

There is a season in recovery that nobody tells you about clearly enough — not in the brochures, not in the testimonies, not even in some of the most well-meaning books on the subject. It is the season after you've decided to change but before the change feels real. The season when you've put down the substance or the behavior or the habit, but you haven't yet found the fullness of what was promised. You are no longer in Egypt, but you are not yet in the Promised Land. You are in the wilderness, and the wilderness is hard.

Israel's wilderness was not supposed to take forty years. The journey could have been made in weeks. But the wilderness is also where God does some of His most profound work — not in spite of the disorientation, but through it. The wilderness strips away what was never truly yours, confronts you with who you actually are when the comforts are removed, and creates in you a dependency on God that prosperity never could.

Recovery is not linear. This is perhaps the most important practical truth you can hold onto in the hard middle. There are relapses. There are false starts. There are days when you make it twenty-three hours and then don't make it the last one. There are seasons when you can't tell whether you're getting better or just getting better at hiding. These days do not mean your story is over or that God has given up or that you are uniquely

broken beyond repair. They mean you are in the wilderness, and the wilderness is part of the road, not a detour from it.

In 1 Kings 19, we find the prophet Elijah at one of his lowest moments — so depleted, so discouraged, so burned out that he sat down under a juniper tree and asked God to let him die. This is not a minor moment of sadness. This is a man at the end of himself. And what does God do? He does not rebuke him. He does not give him a three-point sermon on perseverance. He sends an angel with food and water, and He says: *"Get up and eat, for the journey is too great for you."* The journey is too great. God acknowledges it. And then He provides for it.

What you are carrying is genuinely heavy. The road ahead is genuinely long. God knows that. His provision in the wilderness — the food, the water, the gentle voice — is not condescension. It is care. It is Him saying: I see how hard this is, and I am not leaving, and here is what you need for today.

The invitation from Isaiah 43 is simultaneously one of the most challenging and most beautiful in all of scripture: *"Do you not perceive it?"* Sometimes the new thing God is doing is so quiet, so slow, so unlike what we expected, that we walk right past it because we are looking for something more dramatic. The stream in the wasteland is not Niagara Falls. It is a small stream. But it is water, and it is real, and it is enough to keep walking.

Look around your wilderness today. Where is the water? What small mercy have you been too discouraged to notice? The road continues. You are still on it. That matters more than where you fell.

*"The wilderness is not a detour from the road.
It is part of the road — and God is present there too."*

Prayer

Lord, I am tired. I won't dress it up — I am in the hard middle, and the end is not visible from where I am standing. I don't always feel You here. But I know the feeling of Your absence is not the same as the fact of it. Like Elijah under the tree, I need food for the journey. Sustain me today. Give me one day's worth of strength, because that is all I am asking for — just today. Open my eyes to the streams You've placed in this wasteland. Help me to perceive the new thing You are doing, even when it is quiet, even when it is slow. I trust You with the outcome. Help me to keep walking. Amen.

✦ Journal Prompts — Day Four ✦

- 1. Where are you in your recovery journey right now — at the beginning, somewhere in the wilderness, or glimpsing the other side? Describe what it feels like from where you stand.**
- 2. Have you experienced a relapse or setback? Write about it without self-condemnation. What can you honestly learn from it?**
- 3. What does "a new thing" (Isaiah 43:19) look like for your life? Describe the version of yourself on the other side of this addiction in as much detail as you can.**
- 4. What has God provided for you in the "wilderness" that you might be taking for granted or not noticing? What small mercies have been present?**
- 5. Who or what has been a source of strength during the hardest days of your struggle? How can you lean on that more intentionally this week?**

Day Five

"The Body Is Not the Enemy"

Theme: Spiritual and physical wholeness · Caring for the body God gave you

Today's Scripture

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."

— 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

REFLECTION

There is a lie that circulates quietly in certain Christian spaces about the body — that it is the problem, the enemy, the source of all sin, the thing to be subdued and distrusted and ultimately left behind. This lie has ancient roots and modern consequences, and it does tremendous harm to people in recovery who are already at war with their own bodies over the biology of addiction.

Let's be very clear about something: addiction is not only a spiritual problem. It is a neurological one. The research on this is extensive and unambiguous. Substances and compulsive behaviors — whether alcohol, opioids, pornography, gambling, sugar, or screens — trigger the brain's reward pathways and, over time, physically alter the brain's chemistry, architecture, and function. The dopamine system changes. The prefrontal cortex — the part of the brain responsible for impulse control and long-term decision making — is literally compromised. This is not an excuse. But it is a fact, and it matters enormously for how we understand ourselves and extend grace to ourselves in the struggle.

When Paul writes to the Corinthians that the body is a temple, he is not issuing a verdict of condemnation over people who have misused their bodies. He is making a declaration of sacred worth. He is saying: this physical form you inhabit is not disposable, not

irrelevant, not something God has no interest in. The Holy Spirit chose to take up residence there. That means your body matters. Your sleep matters. What you eat matters. Whether you move and breathe fresh air and sit in sunlight — these things matter, not because God is a cosmic fitness instructor, but because you are a whole person and wholeness requires the body to be part of the healing.

The young Daniel, stationed in a foreign court surrounded by the king's rich food and wine, made a quiet, courageous decision. He chose a simpler diet — not as a performance of holiness, but as an act of fidelity to who he was and whose he was. He stewarded his body with intention in an environment designed to assimilate him into something else. His resolve about his body was, in the deepest sense, a spiritual act. Caring for the body is not separate from faithfulness. It is an expression of it.

If your body has been the battleground of your addiction, it has taken real damage. The nervous system is stressed. Sleep is disrupted. Nutritional deficiencies accumulate. The endocrine system is altered. These are real wounds and they deserve real care — not self-punishment, not another form of control, but genuine, patient, compassionate tending. Recovery that addresses only the spiritual dimension and ignores the physical is incomplete. You cannot pray your way out of a neurological deficit any more than you can pray a broken bone into setting itself. You need physical healing too.

This is not a call to legalism or perfectionism about your body. It is a call to begin — gently, consistently — to treat your body as something worth recovering. To see the choice to sleep enough, to eat nourishing food, to walk outside, to put down the phone before bed, not as burdensome obligations but as small acts of love toward a body that has been through war and deserves to be treated with care.

The body is not the enemy. The body is a temple. And temples are worth restoring.

*"Caring for the body is not separate from faithfulness.
It is an expression of it."*

Prayer

Father, I return to You the body You gave me. I acknowledge that I have not always treated it as a temple — sometimes through the addiction, sometimes through the shame and self-punishment that followed. Today I offer it back to You, not as something shameful to be fixed, but as something sacred to be restored. Guide me toward the practical, physical habits that will support my healing. Help me to be gentle with my body even when I feel angry at it. Teach me that honoring You with my body is an act of worship, not performance. Thank You for creating me whole — spirit, soul, and body. Help me to live like it. Amen.

✦ Journal Prompts — Day Five ✦

- 1. How has your addiction affected your body? List the physical ways it has taken a toll. What do you grieve about what it has cost you physically?**
- 2. Do you find it easy or hard to believe that your body is "a temple"? What experiences, messages, or beliefs have made that hard to receive?**
- 3. What is one practical, physical habit — sleep, nutrition, movement, rest, time outside — you could begin this week as an act of worship rather than obligation?**
- 4. How have you treated your body during this season of struggle? Write a letter of apology and restoration to your own body. What would you say?**
- 5. What would it look like to fight for your physical health as a spiritual act — not as self-punishment, not as performance, but as love for what God has entrusted to you?**

Day Six

"The Power of the Circle"

Theme: Community, accountability · Not doing this alone

Today's Scripture

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up."

— Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Addiction thrives in secrecy the way mold thrives in the dark. It needs the hidden corner, the locked door, the carefully maintained double life. It needs you to be alone with it, because the moment another person truly knows — truly sees — its power begins to diminish. This is not a metaphor. It is a documented, reproducible reality that one of the most consistent predictors of sustained recovery is the presence of supportive human relationships.

And yet — for most of us — letting another person fully in is the single most terrifying thing we can imagine doing. The fear is so specific and so deep: *If they really knew, they would leave.* If they saw all of it — the extent of it, the number of times you've tried and failed, the things you've done in the grip of it — they would be gone. This fear is so powerful that millions of people choose to fight their addiction entirely alone, in silence, with nothing but willpower and prayer, rather than risk the devastating confirmation of their deepest fear: that they are not lovable in this state.

But look at the early church described in Acts 2. These people were not living in a tidy, sanitized small group. They were sharing meals and money and life with each other in ways that were radical and countercultural. They "devoted themselves to one another" is not a small phrase. They were building something together that none of them could have

built alone — a community of people who belonged to each other and to God, and who showed up for each other in ways that the surrounding culture simply did not do.

In Luke 5, there is a story of a paralyzed man who could not get to Jesus on his own. The crowd was too thick. His body wouldn't cooperate. He had no access to the healing he needed. And then — four friends. Four people who looked at the situation and refused to accept it. They carried him to the roof. They dug through the tiles. They lowered him down, right in front of Jesus. And Jesus, when He saw what they did, was moved. Scripture says He saw *their* faith. Not just the man's faith — the faith of the circle.

Sometimes we get to Jesus because someone else carried us there. And sometimes — in the best seasons — we get to be the ones doing the carrying. But you cannot experience either of those things if you are fighting alone in the dark.

This is why communities like Celebrate Recovery exist. Why twelve-step groups have transformed millions of lives. Why Christian counselors are not a sign of insufficient faith but an act of courageous wisdom. Why accountability partnerships — messy, imperfect, sometimes awkward — change outcomes in ways that solitary willpower simply cannot. The circle is not a luxury. It is a lifeline.

The question for today is not whether community matters. It is why you have been avoiding it. What is the fear that has kept you fighting alone? Because that fear — whatever it is — is worth naming and bringing to God too. Because being fully known and still fully loved is not only possible. It is exactly what God designed the church to be.

You were not made to do this alone. You were never meant to. The circle is waiting.

*"Sometimes we get to Jesus because
someone else carried us there."*

Prayer

God, I confess that I have been fighting alone — partly out of pride, partly out of fear, partly because I couldn't imagine being fully known and not being abandoned. Give me courage today. Courage to reach out, to name the fear, to take one step toward letting someone in. Bring the right person across my path — not someone who will judge me, but someone who will carry me when I can't carry myself. Help me to be that person for someone else too, in time. I don't want to build walls anymore. Tear them down, Lord, gently if possible but down regardless. I want to be known. I want to be helped. I am asking for both today. Amen.

✦ Journal Prompts — Day Six ✦

- 1. Have you been fighting your addiction alone? What has that cost you? What has kept you from letting others in?**
- 2. Who in your life could you trust enough to share your full story with? What is one specific step you could take this week to open that door?**
- 3. Have you ever experienced the power of being truly known and still truly loved? Describe that moment or relationship. How did it change you?**
- 4. Is there a recovery community, counselor, or accountability partner you've been avoiding? Name the fear that is standing between you and them.**
- 5. Write out a prayer asking God to bring one specific person into your life who will walk this road with you. Be specific about what kind of support you need from them.**

Day Seven

"The Sinner Who Kept Showing Up"

Theme: Identity, perseverance · The long game of faith

Today's Scripture

"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

— **Philippians 1:6 (NIV)**

REFLECTION

You have made it to Day Seven. Whatever that journey looked like — whether you read straight through, whether you skipped a day and came back, whether you cried through half of it or felt numb through the other half — you are here. That matters. Do not let anyone minimize what it cost you to show up for these seven days, including yourself.

Today we talk about identity. Because before we talk about the long road ahead, we have to settle something fundamental: *who are you?* Not who has the addiction made you. Not who has the shame labeled you. Not the name your worst day gave you. Who does God say you are?

There is a stunning scene in John 21 that takes place after the resurrection. Peter — the disciple who had denied knowing Jesus three times, publicly, in the most critical moment — is fishing on the lake when Jesus appears on the shore. He didn't have to come back for Peter. The resurrection was accomplished. The mission would continue. Peter had failed catastrophically, and Jesus could have simply moved on. Instead, He cooks Peter breakfast on the beach, and then, three times — one for each denial — He asks the same question: *"Do you love me?"* And three times He restores him. Three times He recommissions him. *Feed my lambs. Take care of my sheep. Follow me.*

Jesus did not send Peter into a season of probation before restoration. He did not make him prove himself over time before being trusted again. He restored him fully, immediately, personally — and then handed him back his calling. This is what restoration looks like in the hands of God. Not a slow accumulation of merit. A complete and radical reinstatement of the person God always saw underneath the failure.

This is who you are: not your addiction. Not your relapse count. Not the worst thing you've done in the grip of it, and not the best version of yourself you've ever imagined. You are a beloved child of God — imperfect, still in process, still showing up — and that identity is not contingent on your performance. It is fixed. It is given. It is yours because He said so, and He does not take it back.

The concept of being a "faithful sinner" is not a contradiction. Faithfulness does not mean perfection. It never has. It means returning. It means that no matter how many times you fall, you get back up and orient yourself toward God again. The saints of scripture — every single one — were people who fell and returned, failed and came back, doubted and chose to believe again. Their faithfulness was not measured in unblemished records. It was measured in the pattern of their returning.

Paul's promise to the Philippians is breathtaking in its scope: *He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.* Note who is doing the work. Note who is responsible for the completion. Not you — not your white-knuckled determination, not your perfect attendance at recovery meetings, not the flawlessness of your performance. God began it. God will complete it. Your job is to cooperate. Your job is to keep showing up. Your job is to be the person who comes back.

The long game of faith is not won in seven days. It is won in the thousands of small decisions to return — to God, to community, to honesty, to your own body, to the truth of who you actually are. You will fall again. The question is not whether but whether you will get up again. And I believe you will. I believe it because you are here, finishing a devotional that asked hard things of you. I believe it because God doesn't start things He doesn't intend to finish. And I believe it because the very fact that you still pray — even in the mess, even in the shame, even in the relapse — is evidence that faith is alive in you.

Go, then. Not as someone who has arrived. As someone who has been loved into going. Go as a faithful sinner — which is the most human, the most honest, and perhaps the most beautiful thing any of us can be.

*"Faithfulness is not measured in unblemished records.
It is measured in the pattern of your returning."*

Prayer

God, I receive the identity You have given me. I am not my worst day. I am not what the addiction calls me. I am not too far gone, too often fallen, too complicated for grace. You call me Yours — chosen, beloved, redeemed, in progress. I receive that today. Not because I feel it fully yet, but because I choose to believe what You say over what my shame says. Finish what You started in me, Lord. I will keep showing up. I will keep returning. I will keep being a faithful sinner — broken, honest, and turning my face toward You. Thank You that this is enough. Thank You that You are enough. Amen.

✦ Journal Prompts — Day Seven ✦

- 1. How have you defined yourself by your addiction? Write out three labels you've given yourself because of it. Now cross them out and write what God calls you instead.**
- 2. Reflect on these 7 days. What has shifted — even slightly — in the way you see yourself, your addiction, or God? What surprised you?**
- 3. What does "freedom" look like for you — not just the absence of addiction, but the full life you'd be living: what you'd be doing, who you'd be with, how you'd feel?**
- 4. Write a letter to yourself one year from now — to the version of you who has continued to show up, continued to fight, continued to be a faithful sinner. What do you want to tell them?**
- 5. What is one commitment you will make — starting today — to keep returning to God no matter how many times you fall? Write it as a covenant to yourself and to Him.**

◆ A Closing Benediction ◆

May you go from this place knowing that the God who spoke galaxies into existence also knows your name — your full name, not the cleaned-up version, not the one you use in polite company, but the true one, the one that holds all the complexity and contradiction and longing and failure and still-flickering faith of who you actually are. He knows it. He loves it. He chose it.

May the grace you have encountered in these pages not stay on the page. May it follow you into the next craving, the next dark hour, the next 3am when the silence is loud and the habit is calling. May you hear, beneath that call, a deeper and older voice — the one that said to the woman caught in her worst moment: "Neither do I condemn you." The one that said to the man in the wilderness, at the end of himself: "Get up and eat, for the journey is too great for you." The one that said to the son coming home in rags: "We had to celebrate."

May shame lose its grip on you, slowly, the way ice gives way to spring — not all at once, but steadily, until one morning you wake up and realize the cold has been replaced by something warmer and more permanent. May that warmth be the love of God, made real to you through His Word, through His people, through the hard and holy work of recovery.

May you find your circle — the ones who will carry you to Jesus when you can't get there yourself, and the ones you will carry in turn. May you discover that being fully known and fully loved is not a fantasy but a possibility, and that it begins with the terrifying and glorious decision to let someone in.

May your body be restored — gently, patiently, one good choice at a time. May you come to see it not as the enemy but as the sacred dwelling place it was created to be. May you offer it back to God as an act of worship, and may that offering be received.

May you hold fast to this truth: He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion. The work is not finished. You are not finished. The story is not over. And when you fall — and you may fall

— may you remember that the measure of faithfulness is not how few times you fall but how many times you rise. May you be a person of many risings.

And when the day comes — whether soon or long from now — when you stand on the other side of this, when freedom is not a hope but a lived reality, may you turn around and reach back for someone still in the middle of it. May your story become someone else's map.

**"Go, Faithful Sinner.
You are not alone.
You are not too far gone.
You are loved."**

✦ AMEN ✦

Resources & Next Steps

You don't have to figure out what comes next alone. The following resources have helped many people in similar struggles — across many types of addiction, many backgrounds, and many stages of the road. Use them without shame. Asking for help is not weakness. It is wisdom.

Recovery Programs & Communities

Celebrate Recovery

A Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurts, habits, or hang-ups. Grounded in scripture and deeply community-oriented. Thousands of local chapters meet weekly in churches across the country. **celebraterecovery.com**

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) & Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

Longstanding, peer-led 12-step programs with proven track records for substance addiction recovery. Meetings are available in nearly every community, including online. Both are free and open to anyone. **aa.org • na.org**

SAMHSA National Helpline

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration offers a free, confidential helpline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week — for individuals and families facing mental health or substance use disorders. Call or text: **1-800-662-4357**

Digital & Scripture Resources

YouVersion Bible App

Search for addiction and recovery reading plans within the free YouVersion Bible App. Plans such as "Freed: Breaking the Bonds of Addiction," "Life After Addiction," and others provide daily scripture engagement to support ongoing recovery. Available on all mobile platforms.

Recommended Reading

***The Freedom Fight* — Heath Lambert**

A biblically grounded, practically oriented guide to breaking free from sexual addiction and pornography, rooted in the sufficiency of scripture and the gospel of grace.

***Redeeming Your Time* — Jordan Raynor**

For those wrestling with screen addiction, digital compulsion, and the tyranny of busyness — a theologically rich and practically helpful framework for reclaiming your time as a spiritual act.

***Clean* — Mark Hart**

A straightforward, honest, and encouraging resource for those in the early stages of confronting addiction — written with humor, compassion, and deep faith in the power of grace to transform.

Professional Support

Seek a Licensed Christian Counselor

Therapy is not a substitute for faith — it is a companion to it. A licensed Christian counselor can help you explore the emotional and psychological roots of your addiction in a context that honors your faith. To find a counselor near you, visit the American Association of Christian Counselors directory at **aacc.net**, or ask your pastor for a referral.

"The righteous fall seven times and rise again."

— **Proverbs 24:16 (NIV)**

KEEP RISING. · KEEP RETURNING. · KEEP BEING A FAITHFUL SINNER.