**Addictions, Sicknesses & Diseases**

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 The other day, I was viewing a news cast and heard President Trump declare that millions of Americans are suffering from a terrible “opioid” epidemic in our country. I cannot remember how many people were dying every day from their abuse to various “opiate” type of drugs, but the numbers were startling, to say the least.

 Drug addiction is rampant throughout society. I’ve heard that heroin and fentanyl are ascending rapidly as “the drugs of choice” and many are stealing prescription drugs from others medicine cabinets and/or buying them off the street at extremely cheap prices. Our young people are getting hooked like never before! All of this is terrible for the future of our country and makes one wonder if Aldous Huxley had a point in his famous fiction novel called, Brave New World. In that book, the masses were addicted to a drug called SOMA that the populace used daily to “muddle” through life. That “brave new world” is not a world we want to live in!

 The reason for this article is not simply to warn us about keeping up our guard against drug abuse – that is something we should do daily for ourselves and our children. What really caught my attention was to hear those I consider “wise” among the media make statements like, “Science has conclusively confirmed that most people are prone to addiction (like some genetic deficiency) and therefore, ***we need to quit judging people*** (I’m assuming as bad) for these addictions are now scientifically considered as nothing more than a disease or a sickness.”

 It’s becoming commonplace to assert blame for practically every addiction as merely a disease, illness or sickness! Drug abuse – disease! Drunkenness – disease! Gambling – disease! Sexual addictions – disease! “Disease” has become the mantra of the elite to rend many sinful actions, practices or conditions as unfortunate choices from the innocent. Many now pull out the “victim card” called addiction to excuse themselves for their sinful choices. “Hey, don’t you judge me! It’s been determined a disease, so it’s not my fault”, the world collectively screams!

 My heart genuinely hurts for all who suffer bitter consequences due to the various addictions they have succumbed to, but… their addictions are NOT diseases and they are NOT illnesses! I readily admit that their addiction is real and may be really difficult to overcome, but an addiction is merely one’s lack of control for some appetite which urns to be quenched in the flesh! Most addictions abuse our “impulse” control insisted by God to satisfy a fleshly appetite for a certain person, place or thing! Quite often, addictions bring a variety of diseases or illnesses to the body, but that addiction started when the mind “caved in” to an impulse which led one down some sin laden path, yielding bad consequences. Paul said to the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 6:12**, ***“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”*** Paul was determined that no “thing” would own him! He must control his impulses, overcoming every temptation to sin against God in the flesh. He went on to say in **1 Corinthians 6:20**, ***“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are Gods.”***

 We will not be judged as a sinner if we are afflicted with diseases like cancer or illnesses like pneumonia. But, we will be judged as a sinner if we succumb to various temptations to take illicit drugs, liquor, impure sex, gambling and other works of the flesh, **Galatians 5:19-21**. There is a difference between addiction and disease. The church of our Lord, Jesus Christ, needs to study to insure that these distinctions are not blurred, irrespective of today’s terminology or thinking. We must make righteous judgments and one such judgment is not to justify addiction! Those who suffer with an addiction really need some help! They also need to realize they are responsible for their sinful choices! They should seek and then, find the help available to them in this blessed country and start “to process their lack of control” and overcome their addictions. Our country has a lot of resources available to help overcome addiction – and you can IF you want to overcome them bad enough! Please, if you’re suffering with addiction, recognize what it’s doing to your life, the lives of those around you AND your relationship with God. Seek God and then, seek help! Our God is for us, not against us!