

Alcohol & Drug Abuse

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

One Hero's Struggle . . .

He was an all-American hero. Some say he was the greatest baseball player who ever lived.¹ Mickey Mantle seemed to have it all—fame, fortune, and millions of fans. The day of his graduation from high school in 1950, he signed with the world-renowned New York Yankees, a decision that began his road to stardom. The statistics support his superstar status: 536 career home runs, three Most Valuable Player awards, a career batting average of .298, seven World Championships, and baseball's Triple Crown, meaning he led the entire major league in the three categories of highest batting average, most home runs, and most runs batted in.

However, Mickey also lived an extravagant, alcoholic lifestyle filled with various types of abuse. When he was diagnosed with liver cancer, it was evident that the years of drinking had intensified the damage. Despite his successful treatment for alcoholism, the assault to his body was too severe, and death came swiftly. During the final inning of his life, Mickey stood before the microphones at a press conference, gestured toward himself, wanting the world to know that he was no role model, and said, "Don't be like me."²

What could take the greatest switch-hitter in the game of baseball from adoration down to addiction? Why do millions of people each year take that same painful path? The Bible gives this explanation,

*"There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death."
(Proverbs 16:25)*

Q: "If I am a habitual, compulsive drinker and drug user, can I really change and permanently stop?"

All habits, compulsions, and addictions are highly resistant and are therefore very difficult to change, yet not impossibly so. Repeating actions actually alters the brain, making it more difficult to change a pattern of choices. New patterns of behavior, however, can be learned. If you are a true believer, you have His Word to change your way of thinking, His church with specialized community groups to support your life change, and His Spirit to empower you from within to follow through to stop drinking.

*"It is God who works in you, both to will
and to work for his good pleasure."
(Philippians 2:13)*

Q: "How do I evaluate whether I should drink or not? I'm a new Christian and want to do what pleases God."

While the Bible does not prohibit the consumption of all alcohol, it does speak to the dangers of wine, beer, and strong alcoholic drinks. "*Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler*" (Proverbs 20:1). But for many people, the most persuasive argument for abstinence is "the stumbling argument": the concern that someone might stumble because of your questionable example.

Since people tend to be followers, if you drink alcohol—or do drugs—those who follow your example could stumble, and their lives could be harmed because of following in your footsteps.

*"It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do
anything that causes your brother to stumble."
(Romans 14:21)*

Deliverance from Dependency³

1. Admit you are powerless over your dependency. (2 Corinthians 1:9)
2. Realize that the God who made you has the power to restore you. (Psalm 71:20–21)
3. Yield your will to the will of the Lord. (Matthew 16:24–25)
4. Face reality—face your true self. (Psalm 139:23–24)
5. Admit your struggle with sin, both to God and to someone else. (1 John 1:8)
6. Humbly accept God's help to change your patterns of the past. (1 Peter 5:6–7)
7. Confess your defects and daily failings. (Psalm 51:10–12)
8. Ask forgiveness of those offended. (Matthew 5:23–24)
9. Make restitution where you have wronged others. (Ezekiel 33:15–16)
10. Keep a clean slate when you realize you have been wrong. (Titus 2:11–12)
11. Pray and know God's path for your life. (Psalm 25:4–5)
12. Reach out to others with your hand and your heart. (Galatians 6:2)

Ten Spiritual Tips for Recovery⁴

1. The time to begin your recovery is today. (Hebrews 3:15)
2. Realize that recovery is a lifelong process, not a onetime event. (Philippians 3:12)
3. Pray daily for victory! It is through prayer that God protects you. (Matthew 26:41)
4. Read your Bible every day in order to get strength from God. (Psalm 119:28)
5. Meditate on Scripture to fight against falling into sin. (Psalm 119:11)
6. Attend church every week to worship God and to grow with others. (Hebrews 10:24–25)
7. Share your struggles with caring loved ones. (James 5:16)
8. Have confidence in God! Prioritize growing in your relationship with Him. (Matthew 6:33)
9. Depend on Christ's strength to stay drug free. (Philippians 4:13)
10. Know that permanent change is possible. (Luke 1:37)

*"I can do all things through him
who strengthens me."
(Philippians 4:13)*

Set Beneficial Boundaries . . . with the One Addicted

- Give up all expectations of the addict. (Psalm 62:5)
- Learn to detach from the addict's problem, and take control of your life. (Psalm 25:15)
- Shift your focus from the addict's behavior to your responses. (Lamentations 3:40)
- Stop acts that are enabling (making excuses, protecting). (Psalm 50:21)
- Let the addict know the effects of the addiction on you and on others. (Ephesians 4:25)
- Pray for and expect God to bring consequences into the addict's life. (Proverbs 5:21–23)

Key Verse to Memorize

*“I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand;
it is I who say to you, ‘Fear not,
I am the one who helps you.’”
(Isaiah 41:13)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

1 Corinthians chapter 10

*“Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life.”
(Proverbs 4:23)*

Seven Don'ts for Deliverance⁵

1. Don't fight addiction on your own. Participate in a legitimate drug recovery program. (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10)
2. Don't be blind about your ability to lie to yourself and to others! (Jeremiah 17:9)
3. Don't socialize with those who encourage your habit. (1 Corinthians 15:33)
4. Don't worry about the future. Walk with God one day at a time. (Matthew 6:34)
5. Don't give up if you relapse. It is never too late for you to get back on track. (1 John 1:9)
6. Don't become prideful as you succeed in the recovery process. (Proverbs 16:18)
7. Don't be surprised at temptation! (1 Corinthians 10:13)

*“Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.”
(Proverbs 15:32)*

Related Topics . . .

- Codependency:
Moving from Bondage to Balance
- Depression:
Walking from Darkness into the Dawn
- Temptation:
Promise of Pleasure—Lured by a Lie
- Victimization:
Victory Over the Victim Mentality
- Wife Abuse:
Assault on a Woman's Worth

HOPE FOR THE HEART's *Biblical Counseling Library Quick Reference* provides immediate, concise, biblical truths for today's problems.

For more comprehensive help, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys . . .*

Alcohol & Drug Abuse:
Breaking Free and Staying Free.

If you would like more information,
call 1-800-488-HOPE (4673) or visit
www.hopefortheheart.org.

For prayer encouragement and biblical counsel
call 1-866-570-HOPE (4673).

1. Information on Mickey Mantle is from Merlyn Mantle, et al., with Mickey Herskowitz, *A Hero All His Life: A Memoir by the Mantle Family* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996); Ed Cheek, *Mickey Mantle: His Final Inning* (Garland, TX: ATS, n.d.).

2. Mantle, et al., *Hero All His Life*, 34.

3. For this section see Robert S. McGee, Pat Springle, and Susan Joiner, *Rapha's Twelve-Step Program for Overcoming Chemical Dependency: with Support Materials from The Search for Significance*, 2nd ed. (Houston, TX: Rapha, 1990); Stephen Van Cleave, Walter Byrd, and Kathy Revell, *Counseling for Substance Abuse and Addiction*, edited by Gary R. Collins, Resources for Christian Counseling, vol. 12 (Dallas: Word, 1987), 103–10.

4. For this section see Cleave, Byrd, and Revell, *Counseling for Substance Abuse and Addiction*, 116–17.

5. For this section see Van Cleave, Byrd, and Revell, *Counseling for Substance Abuse and Addiction*, 116–17.



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P.O. Box 7, Dallas, TX 75221

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