

**Hebrews 4:16**

THEREFORE LET US
DRAW NEAR WITH
CONFIDENCE TO
THE THRONE OF
GRACE...

For I, the Lord,
do not change.

Malachi 3:6

Proverbs 15:1

A gentle answer
turns away anger,
but a harsh word
stirs up wrath.

GROWING IN HIM COUNSELING

**On God rests my
salvation and my
glory; my mighty
rock, my refuge is
God. Trust in Him
at all times, O
people; pour out
your heart before
him; God is a
refuge for us.**

-Psalm 62: 7-8

Co-Dependency

Co-dependency is “excessive reliance on others or the encouragement for them to rely on us, so as to receive emotional satisfaction and security.” (Miller) It stems from low self-worth and insecurities. It is an unhealthy relationship in which strong feelings are mistaken for true love. It is driven from a state of fear and results in unhealthy choices and attachments. People struggling with co-dependency also struggle with a fear of rejection, abandonment and being alone. They then turn to unhealthy attachments which feel like love; but end up being control. “The fear and distorted sense of self cause feelings of desperation, a crushing sense of failure, which demands that action be taken to relieve the emotional burden.” (Jennings) Often the action taken is through desperate attempts for acceptance, validation, and approval. Because these attempts are drawn from external sources, they don’t last long and the cycle continues. The co-dependent person misreads situations and assumes events to be personal attacks against their character, “proving” they have failed; thus, they continue to seek additional validation and approval. They will frequently make decisions based on what others might think of them or how someone else will react rather than what is truly best. They are your stereo-typical “people pleaser” looking to make everyone else happy in hopes they will be better liked.

“Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling Women” by Patricia Miller

“Codependency” by Timothy R. Jennings, M.D.

What Causes Dependency on Others

There are many causes of dependency, but it mostly comes from a deep desire to please others and feeling inadequate or unworthy of their attention. When we struggle with inadequacy or low self-worth, we look for external sources to confirm our value. Sometimes we use our gifts to demonstrate our worth and putting our identity in working hard, playing sports, being a “good” wife/husband/mother/father/etc. Unfortunately, we will consistently fall short and need repeated validation.

Our worth is not in what we do, or how many things we accomplish; but it is in our identity in Christ. Jesus tells us that we are worthy because HE is worthy. When we look to God for value, we see who He created us to be and we can use His gifts to honor Him and others. This allows us to depend on the only one who can do anything for us, Jesus Christ.

We need to recognize our dependency on others and put our trust in God instead. This does not mean we cannot rely on others for help. We are designed to be in community with fellow believers and build each other up. The difference is who we trust more, God or someone else...

Steps to Breaking the Cycle

1. **Go to Jesus:** Prayer works! Turn your thoughts, concerns, hopes and dreams to the Lord. Pour your heart out to Him and let him know where you are and what you think. He already knows but wants to hear from you. Get into the habit of praying often, when things are going well and when they aren't. Romans 5:5 says "and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
2. **Choose to love truth above all things-especially feelings:** Our feelings will lie to us! Look to facts and scripture to determine reality rather than how you "feel" about it. Focus on healing from past wounds instead of avoiding them. We can't "stuff" our emotions; we need to process them and truly heal.
3. **Recognize that feelings can lie:** How we "feel" about a situation does not necessarily mean it is an accurate representation of reality. We often avoid or ignore situations because they are hard which only makes it worse. Recognize the feeling is difficult, but with Jesus you *can* overcome.
4. **Apply the truth:** When you are in a tough space and beginning to feel rejected, insecure or abandoned, ask yourself "what is the truth? Am I doing what is unhealthy, wrong, unreasonable, or am I doing what is right, healthy, and reasonable?" Do not change your behavior simply because someone else is not responding the way you would like. If you are doing the right thing, look to step 5.
5. **Set the other person free to respond in any way they choose:** You are not responsible for how other people respond/react to you. You are only responsible for your actions/words/thoughts. Allow the other person to respond and don't take it personally. As long as you are responding kindly and in love, stay focused.
6. **Differentiate imagination from reality:** Go back to the facts, do not allow yourself to imagine outcomes that don't exist. If you are unsure, ask but do not assume you know why other people act in a certain way. You can not read their mind, so don't make assumptions based on your imagination.
7. **Define what is actually yours to choose, govern, or control:** You can only control yourself. Let go of everything else. Pray for others, but do not try to control their behavior, thoughts or feelings.
8. **Recognize that your partners response informs you about them:** Be encouraged by their love and support and communicate about how their reaction affects you.

Steps taken from "Codependency: What it is-And How to Break Free" by Timothy R Jennings, M.D.

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