

## **Characteristics of Codependency**

- 1) Lack of objectivity - When we lack objectivity, our judgment is based almost exclusively on our emotions and situations. In it's extreme, a person who lacks objectivity is consumed by their own needs, pain, and situations; so much so that he or she can't "see the forest through the trees".
- 2) Warped sense of responsibility - We feel like a savior or a Judas; one who rescues or one who betrays, one who helps or one who fails to help. Both are driven by the same goal; the need for a sense of worth and the need to be loved and accepted. The savior feels that they are accomplishing that goal - the Judas fears that they can't.
- 3) Controlled/controlling - We desperately try to find our security and value in pleasing people. Guilt and comparison are our primary motivators. Eventually, we can tire of this performance game and retreat into resentment and anger. Or perhaps we seek to control others using the same techniques that have been used on us. We may use praise, anger, and withdrawal to get people to do what we want them to do.
- 4) Hurt and anger - Hurt is the result of not being loved, respected, or valued. Anger is a response to a source of hurt. It's okay to feel angry. It's a God-given emotion, but what we do with our anger is something else. Anger expressed inward can result in depression. Anger expressed outward can result in physical or verbal abuse.
- 5) Guilt - Feeling guilty is a constant companion. We feel guilty for what we've done and for what we haven't done. Guilt motivates us to perform, to measure up. But we're motivated because we think we "have to", and not because we "want to". If unresolved, feelings of guilt can eventually turn into feelings of worthlessness and shame.
- 6) Loneliness - We spend our lives giving, helping, and serving others. Our attempts to please others by serving them are designed to win their affection. Although we desperately want intimacy in our relationships, we may be mistrustful of it and so having locked others out, we inadvertently lock ourselves in. From the outside we may appear to be the most social people in the world, but inside we can be very lonely.

## **Recovery & healing from codependency**

A person who is behaving in a codependent way needs a new, Biblical identity based on the truth of God's Word. The Scriptures state often and clearly that a believer has tremendous worth and value. Passages such as Romans 8:1,17,37; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 2:9-10 and many others describe our new identities in Christ.