

# What We Trade Away (2020)



# Week Five: Awakening for Addiction

## Overview

Have you ever made a bad trade? All of us have at some point. Maybe we gave away a car that we wish we would have held on to. Maybe when you were a kid, you traded away a baseball card that would have been worth a lot of money now. But what about trading away things of much greater value? Things such as our integrity, or our commitment, perhaps even a life of adventure for one of apathy? We make these trades all the time, though they may be a little more subtle. Over time, if we don't recenter ourselves – we can lose all of the good things, and only be left with the hollow shell of what we traded it for.

Unfortunately, we live in a culture that is plagued with addiction. Whether the vice be drugs, alcohol, food, shopping, money, status, sex, or any other – followers of Jesus are not immune from the temptation of addiction. And while there are many reasons and factors that play into our addictions, it is clear that living life in slavery to any other master than Jesus robs from us the freedom that Jesus came to bring us. While we often pursue the pleasures of life, and perhaps addictive substances, to avoid pain – Jesus calls us to pursue joy in him. Joy is eternal, while pleasure is momentary. And when it comes to pursuing awakening, we must prioritize that which lasts forever over the things of the world that are passing away.

## Reading and Discussion

1. **Read Galatians 5:1.** What does this verse stir up in you? Encouragement? Hope? Trust?
2. Describe a time in your life in which you truly experienced the freedom of Christ? How would you describe that experience?
3. Many of us, though we long to experience the freedom of Jesus, often return to a "yoke of slavery" through our addictions or unhealthy behaviors. Why do you think that is?
4. Mark Manson writes: *"Everything worthwhile in life is won through surmounting the associated negative experience. Any attempt to escape the negative, to avoid it or quash it or silence it, only backfires. The avoidance of suffering is a form of suffering. The avoidance of struggle is a struggle. The denial of failure is a failure. Hiding what is shameful is itself a form of shame."* We often hide and deny our failures and our shame, but scripture is clear that admitting our weaknesses and confessing our sins leads to the power of God showing up in our lives. Why is it so difficult to admit our failures? Why is it easier for us to hide what is shameful?

5. Kaleb's final point was to encourage us to pursue joy, not pleasure. Joy is eternal, while pleasure is fleeting. Pleasure can never take away our pain, and neither can joy. The difference is that joy can sustain us through our pain. What are some ways in which you can pursue true joy this week? As you discuss pursuing joy, pray for God's freedom the joy of Christ to become abundantly present in the life of your group's members this week.