

# Codependency

Teach:

**Codependency** is *a compulsion to control and rescue people by fixing their problems in order to feel needed, valued, worthwhile and safe.*

1. *“An unhealthy need to be needed”*
2. *“Assuming responsibility for someone else’s problems”*
3. *“Relationship Addiction”*

## Origins of Codependency

4. Develops in a relationship with a dysfunctional person in which the person’s needs for love and acceptance have been blocked.
5. It is shame based. (“I must perform to be worthwhile. If I meet the needs of others by fixing their problems they’ll love and accept me. Then I’ll be more worthwhile.”)
6. It is fear motivated. (If I don’t rescue others and help them, they’ll reject me.)
7. It Results From Hurt and Anger
  - a. Hurt is the result of not being loved and valued. It comes from feeling abandoned, used and condemned.
  - b. Anger is our reaction toward the source of hurt.
  - c. The pain and anger in the codependent is deep and black, often overwhelming. The codependent is often unwilling to face it.

## Codependency in Practice (Attachments)

### Read over the Cycle Diagram

1. Three phases of codependency
2. All phases are efforts to find self worth
3. Results are always negative

### Read Dysfunctional/Functional

Teach:

## **A Biblical Perspective**

### **B. Biblical Examples**

1. Luke 10:38-42 (Martha codependent)
2. I Samuel 25:3-23 (Abigail)
3. Matthew 16:20-23

## **Healing for Codependency**

-The foundation is our identity **in Christ**.

- a. God accepts us and has made us acceptable.
- b. We don't have to rescue and fix people to be loved and accepted, that is God's job.

-**Identify** codependent feelings and behavior objectively.

- c. What is normal and what isn't?
- d. It is difficult to break through denial and confront codependent feelings and behavior alone. (Counseling, support group, or a mature friend is often needed.)
- e. Be willing to be emotionally honest with myself and with others.

### **4. Detach**

- a. What do I need (time, space, objectivity) so that I can reflect on this situation?
- b. Detachment requires time, objectivity, and distance (emotionally, physically or both).
- c. Sometimes we can detach quickly and decide. Many times, though, we need to remove ourselves from the offending person or situation to be more objective.
  - i Do whatever you need to do so that you can **feel and think**.
  - ii The goal is to respond in Christ rather than to react codependently.

- d. Detachment is not the same as withdrawal in which the purpose is to block pain and avoid reality, and it doesn't mean divorce.
- e. It may be necessary to grieve the loss of former role as caretaker.

**Ask yourself these questions:**

- How do I feel about what happened?*
- How would a healthy person feel?*
- Is he (she) controlling me? Neglecting me? Condemning me?*
- Why do I feel guilty? Alone? Afraid? Driven?*
- Am I rescuing? Acting as Savior? Judas?*

**Tell yourself the truth**

- I'm not responsible for making him (her) happy.*
- I'm not responsible for fixing the problem.*
- I can respond calmly.*
- I can say no.*
- I can say yes.*
- I can make my own decisions.*
- I feel angry...lonely...guilty...driven...afraid.*
- I am loved, forgiven and accepted by God in Christ.*

**Forgiveness**

- Forgiving others breaks the lie that I'm defective.
- Forgiving yourself may be necessary.
- There may be a proper time and place to confront the perpetrator.

Suggest Resources: From Bondage to Bonding

## **Bibliography**

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## Attachment A



## Relationship Questionnaire

**Yes**   **Mid**   **No**

- |     |     |     |  |
|-----|-----|-----|--|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 1. Do you meet your partner's needs at the expense of your own?                                |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 2. Have you ever struck or been struck by your spouse or partner?                              |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 3. Are you afraid to express to your spouse or partner when your feelings are hurt?            |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 4. Does your spouse or partner tell you how to dress?  |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 5. Do you smile or laugh even though you're angry?   |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 6. Do you have difficulty saying "no" and sticking to it?                                      |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 7. Is it difficult to express your true feelings to your spouse or partner?                    |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 8. Do you feel anxious and uncomfortable when alone?   |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 9. Do you feel rejected or jealous when your spouse or partner is spending time with friends?  |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 10. Do you feel shame when your spouse or partner makes a mistake?                             |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 11. Do you give into sex when you don't want to?   |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 12. Do you withhold sex to get even?   |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 13. Do you feel that your spouse or partner's opinion is worth more than your own?             |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 14. Do you depend on your spouse or partner to make most of the decisions in the relationship? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 15. Do you feel very upset when your spouse or partner does not follow your plan?              |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 16. Are you afraid to let your spouse or partner really know what you are feeling inside?      |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 17. Do you keep silent in order to avoid upsetting others?                                     |

Yes   Mid   No

- |     |     |     |   |
|-----|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 18. Do you feel as though you "give and give" and get nothing in return?  |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 19. Do you freeze up when in conflict with your spouse or partner?  |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 20. Are you generally dissatisfied with your friendships?   |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 21. Do you often say, "it's not that bad" or "it could be worse"?   |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 22. Do you often feel trapped in your relationship?   |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 23. Do you generally try to control your emotions?  |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 24. Do you lose control of your emotions during conflict?   |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 25. Do you feel that your relationship would fall apart without your constant effort to maintain it?  |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 26. Do you often feel used and unappreciated by your spouse or partner?   |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 27. Do you daydream of what it would be like to find someone who really loved you and appreciated you since you have so much to give in a relationship? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 28. Do you sometimes feel so hopeless that life doesn't feel worth living?  |

Total number of YES answers \_\_\_\_\_ Multiply times 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of MID answers \_\_\_\_\_

Total of YES and MID answers \_\_\_\_\_

# RESPONSIBILITY CHECKLIST

## When I Feel Responsible FOR Others:

I Fix... Protect, Rescue, Don't Listen, Carry Their  
Feelings, Control

I Feel... Tired, Anxious, Fearful, Liable

I Am Concerned With... The Solution, Answers,  
Circumstances, Being Right, Performance, Details

I Am a Manipulator.

I expect the other person to live up to my expectations.

## When I Feel Responsible TO Others:

I Show Empathy... Encourage, Share, Confront,  
Level, Am Sensitive, Listen

I Feel... Relaxed, Free, Aware, High Self-Esteem

I Am Concerned With... Relating Person To Person,  
Feelings, The Person

I am a helper-guide.

I expect the other person to be responsible for himself  
and his own actions.

I believe that if I just share myself, the other person  
has enough to make it.

I can trust and let go.



## **DYSFUNCTIONAL**

When I feel responsible **for** others

I feel

- Tired
- Anxious
- Fearful
- Liable

I

- Fix
- Protect
- Rescue
- Control
- Carry their feelings
- Don't Listen

I am concerned with

- The solution
- Answers
- Circumstances
- Being right
- Details
- Performance

I am a manipulator.

I expect the person to live up to my expectations.

## **FUNCTIONAL**

When I feel responsible **to** others

I feel

- Relaxed
- Free
- Aware
- Confident in my identity in Christ

I

- Show empathy
- Encourage
- Share
- Confront
- Level
- Am sensitive
- Listen

I am concerned with

- Relating person to person
- Feelings
- The person

I am a helper/guide.

I expect the person to be responsible for himself and his actions.

**I can trust and let go!**