



UNMASKING ADDICTION

Jim Berg, DMin



ONE CHURCH'S JOURNEY

Faith Baptist Church, Taylors, SC



GOALS: POLEMIC RATHER THAN PASTORAL

- Dislodge confidence in the current myth that addiction is a disease
- Reinforce that science rightly interpreted never contradicts the words of God
- Provide basic understanding of the “voluntary slavery” of sin

UNMASKING ADDICTION SCIENTIFICALLY

COMMON DEFINITION

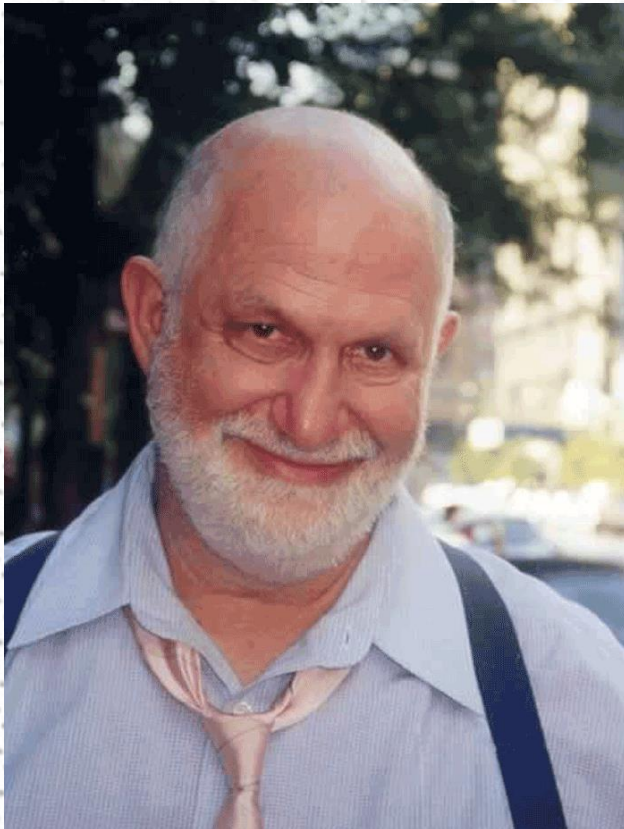
“a treatable, chronic medical *disease* involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual’s life experiences”

The American Society of Addictive Medicine

PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES TO THE MEDICAL/DISEASE MODEL OF ADDICTION

- Seems to explain how addiction *feels*
- Attempts to socially destigmatize addiction
- Points to medical treatment as the solution
- Permits financial/grant benefits for “scientific” research
- Authorizes insurance payments for treatment facilities and practitioners

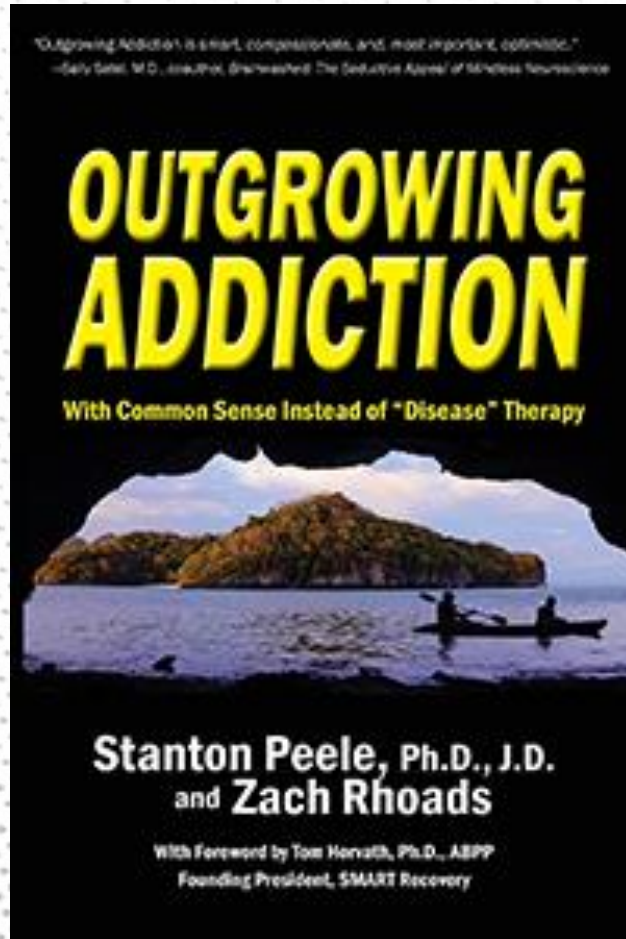
DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



Stanton Peele

- PhD, J.D.
- Addiction expert and investigator for five decades
- *Atlantic* – one of “10 people who are revolutionizing how we study addiction and recovery”
- 12 books; 250 articles

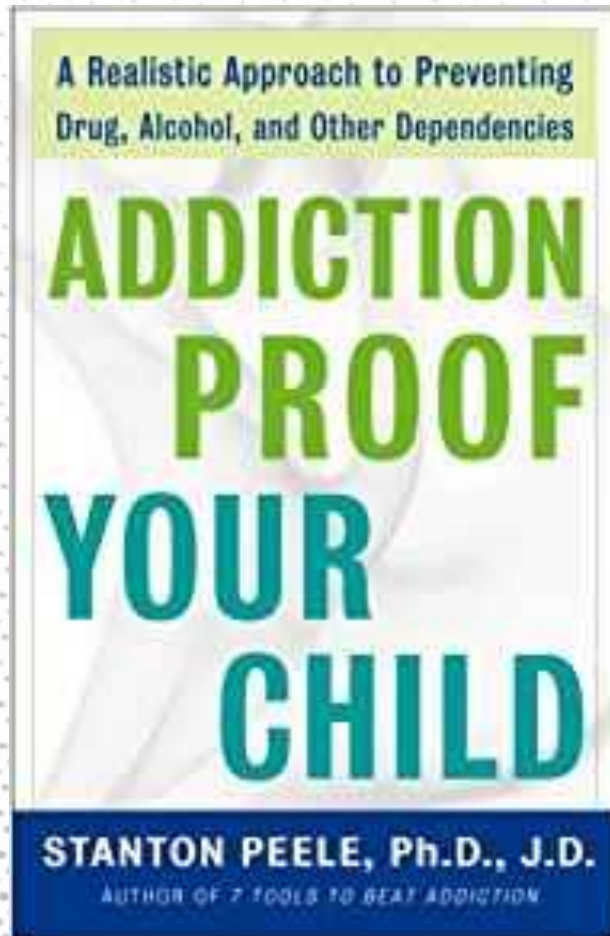
DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



“What determines whether or not drug use escalates into addiction, and the prognosis once it has, is less to do with the power of the drug and more to do with the social, personal and economic circumstances of the user” (OA, 43).

“People don’t become addicted to opiates as a rule because they have other purposes in their lives with which using the drug interferes” (OA, 40)

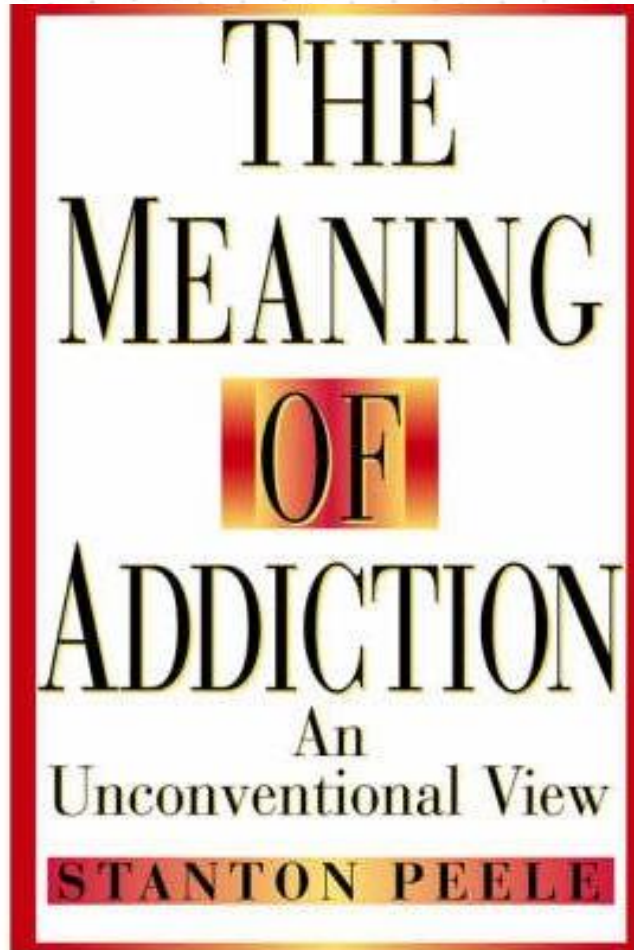
DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



“Recovery is not a result of magically leaving something behind. It is about embracing life and expanding your horizons. There is no better way to fight addiction” (*OA*, 57)

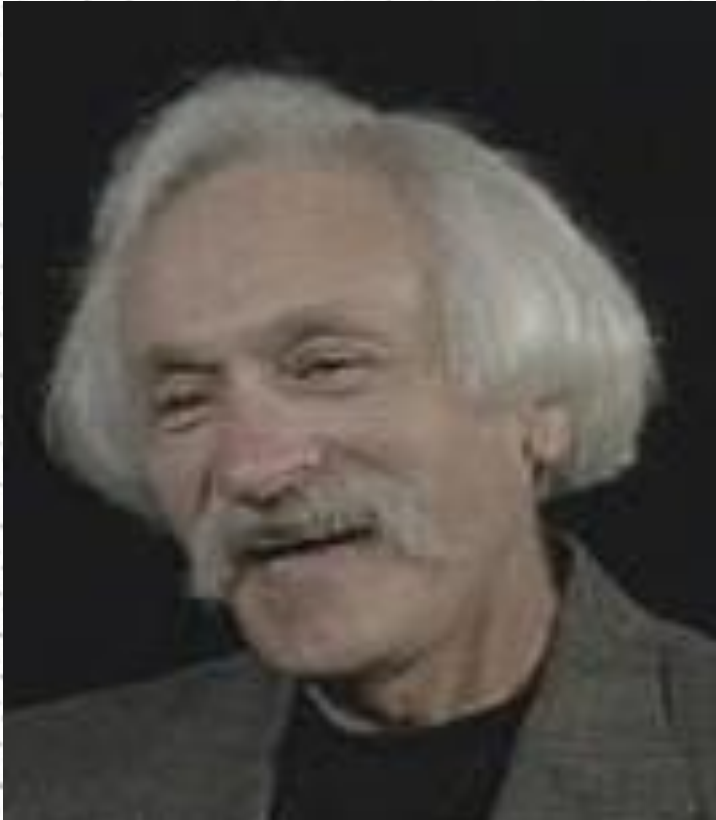
“The way out of addiction is to develop a range of skills and engage fully in life” (*A-PYC*), 12.

DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



“Extensive research shows that addiction cannot be resolved biologically—*lived human experience* and its *interpretation* are central to the incidence, course, treatment, and remission of addiction. . . . The idea . . . that new genetic or neurochemical discoveries will eliminate this irrefutable truth is the greatest of all myths about addiction” (MA, 1).

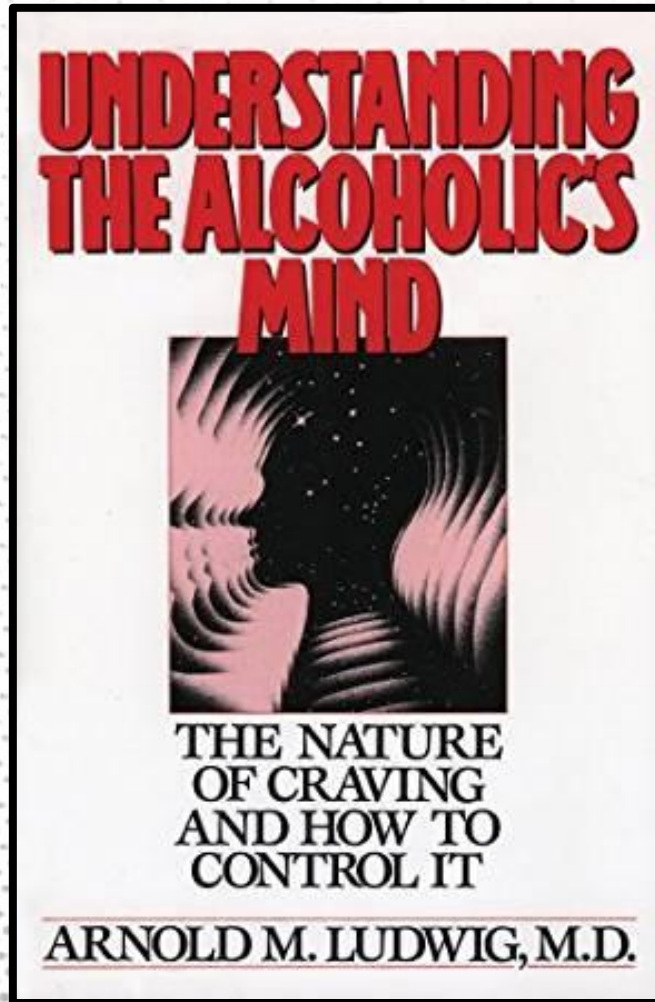
DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



Arnold M. Ludwig

- M.D.
- Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, Brown University School of Medicine
- Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Psychiatry, University of Kentucky Medical School
- Former Professor and Chair of the Dept. of Psychiatry, University of Kentucky, College of Medicine

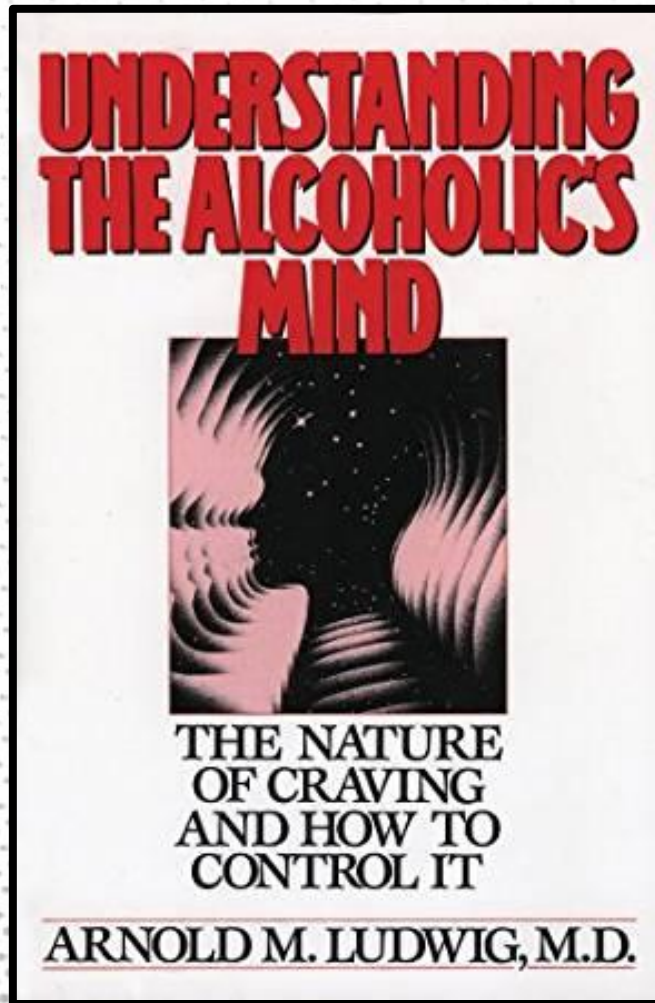
DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



“The nature of the urge or compulsion [to drink] depends on the predominant way each individual *thinks*” (92).

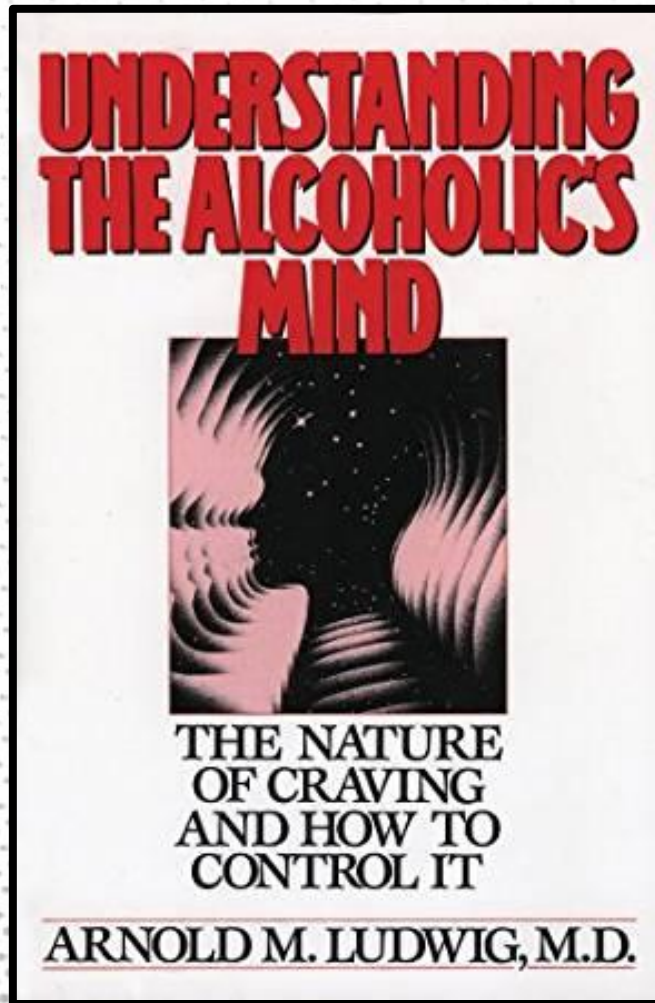
“The first thing [alcoholics] must do is recognize just how clever, persistent, and seductive their *minds* can be at providing them with justification to drink” (94).

DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



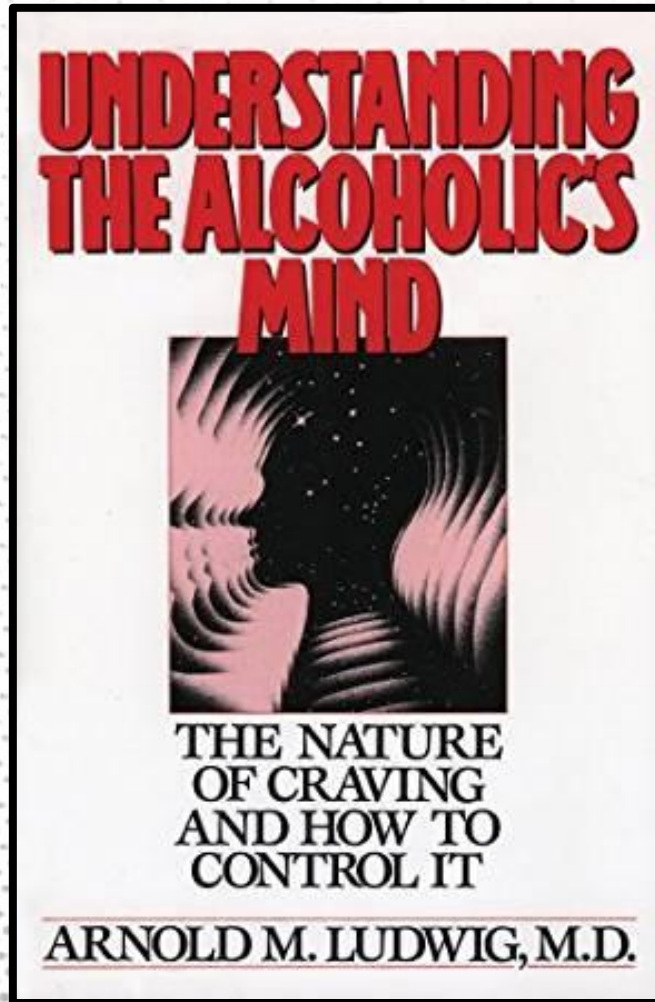
“Typical of the thought processes. . . are tendencies to feel sorry for themselves, to blame others for whatever goes wrong, to nurse grievances, to be preoccupied with petty concerns, to dwell on the past, to keep imagining the worst, to feel alienated from others, to shirk responsibilities, to overreact to frustrations, to act impulsively, and to become obsessed with immediate pleasures” (19).

DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



“These [mental] scripts all share one feature in common. They reflect a basic discontent or unhappiness with the way things are imagined to be, have been or will be. It is difficult enough for recovering alcoholics to stay dry, but when they constantly believe that something is wrong or amiss in their lives, then they continue to remain susceptible to the instant, easy solutions that alcohol has to offer” (32).

DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



“All of the techniques expressed [in this book] . . . represent the building blocks for a successful recovery. But what eventually cements them together is the *commitment* to an emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually *fulfilling life*. This is the hallmark of true sobriety.... With this orientation to life, intoxication is unnecessary” (133-134).

DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



Bruce Alexander

- Psychologist, researcher, and author
- Professor Emeritus at Simon Fraser University, Canada
- Famous for “Rat Park” experiments in 1970’s
- Avowed atheist and socialist

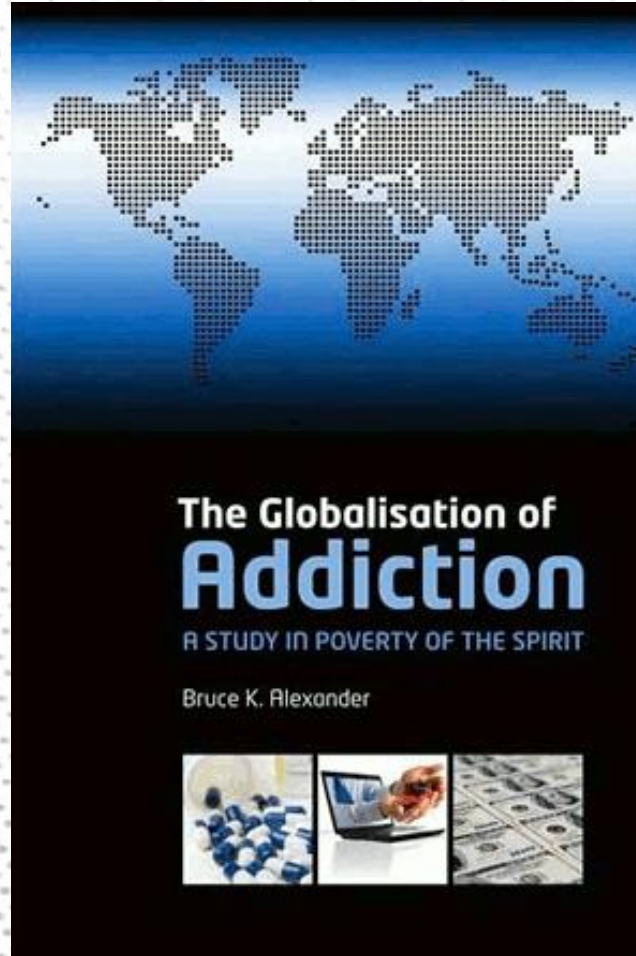
DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION





RAT PARK

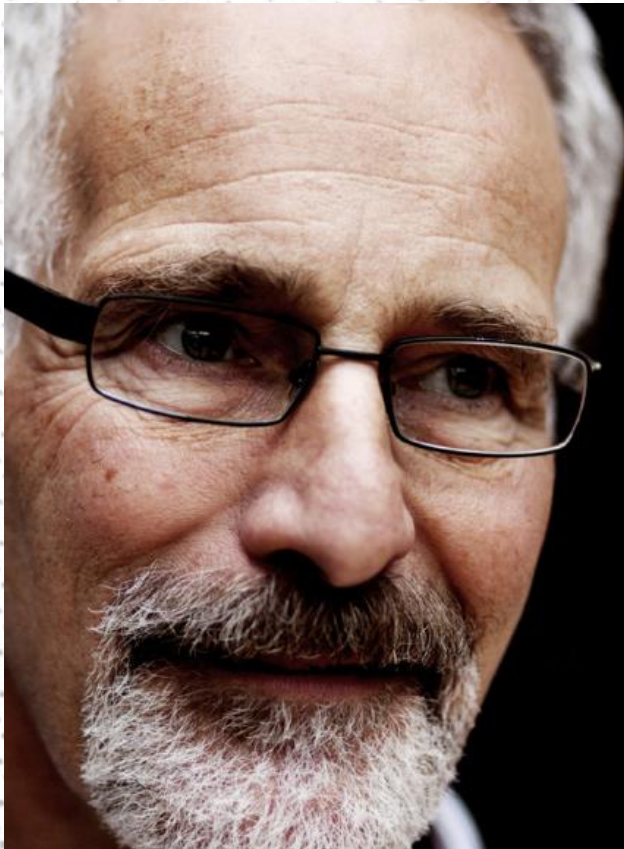
DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



“Today’s rising tide of addiction to drug use and a thousand other habits is the consequence of people, rich and poor alike, being torn from the close ties of family, culture, and traditional spirituality that constituted the normal fabric of pre-modern times” (GA, 3).

He calls this “dislocation.”

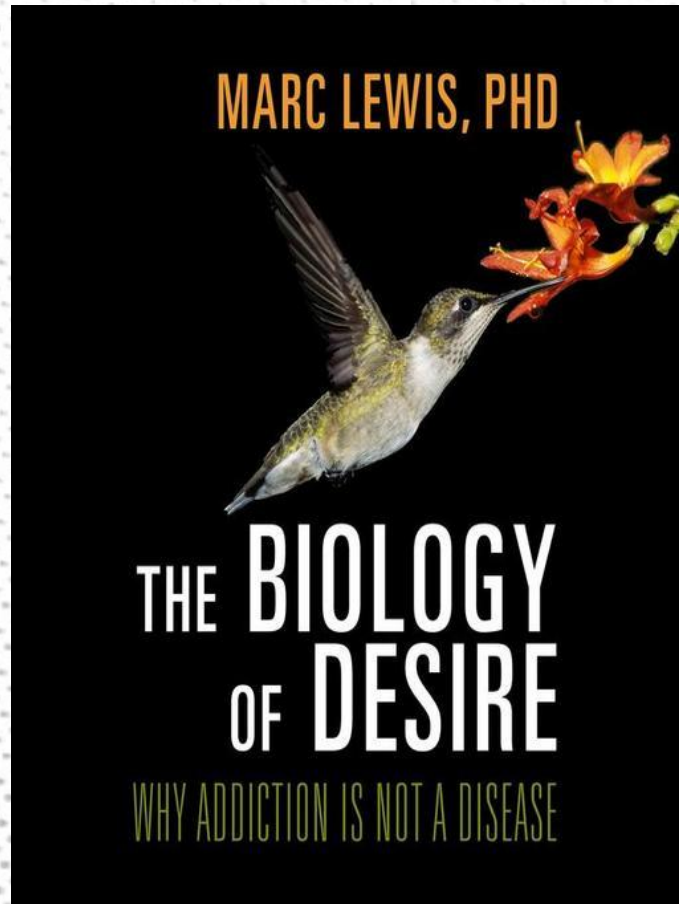
DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



Marc Lewis

- PhD; Professor Radboud University in the Netherlands
- Developmental psychologist and neuroscientist
- Author, contributing author, speaker, and blogger on addiction-related topics

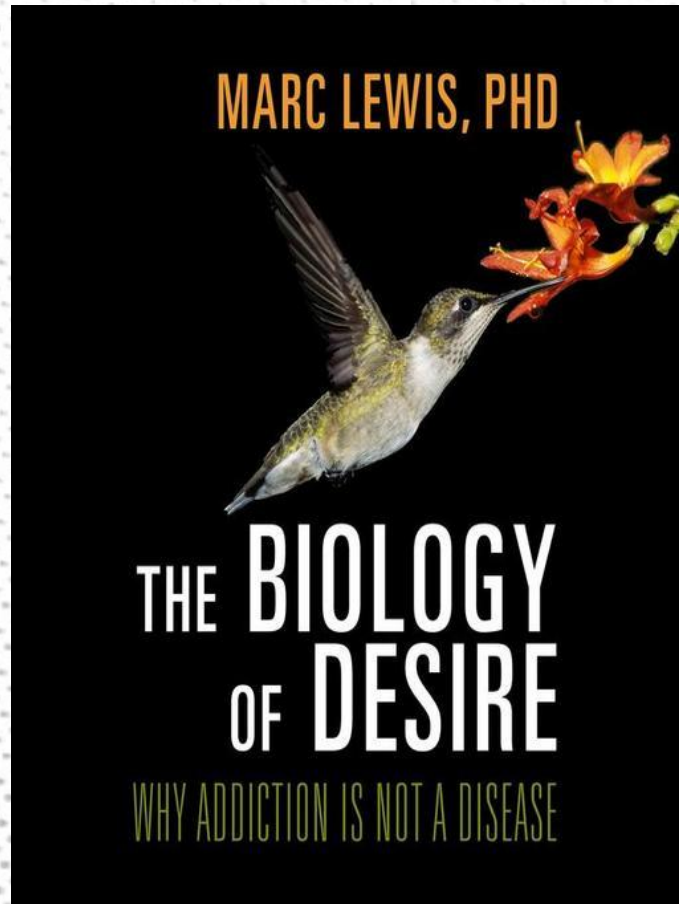
DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



“Calling addiction a disease is not only inaccurate; it’s often harmful” *BD*, 9).

“Brain disease may be used as a metaphor for how addiction *seems*, but it’s not a sensible explanation for how addiction *works*” (*BD*, 26).

DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



“Addiction results . . . from the **motivated repetition** of the same thoughts and behaviors until they become habitual” (*BD*, x).

“Medical researchers are correct that the brain changes with addiction. But the way it changes has to do with learning and development—not disease” (*BD*, xi).

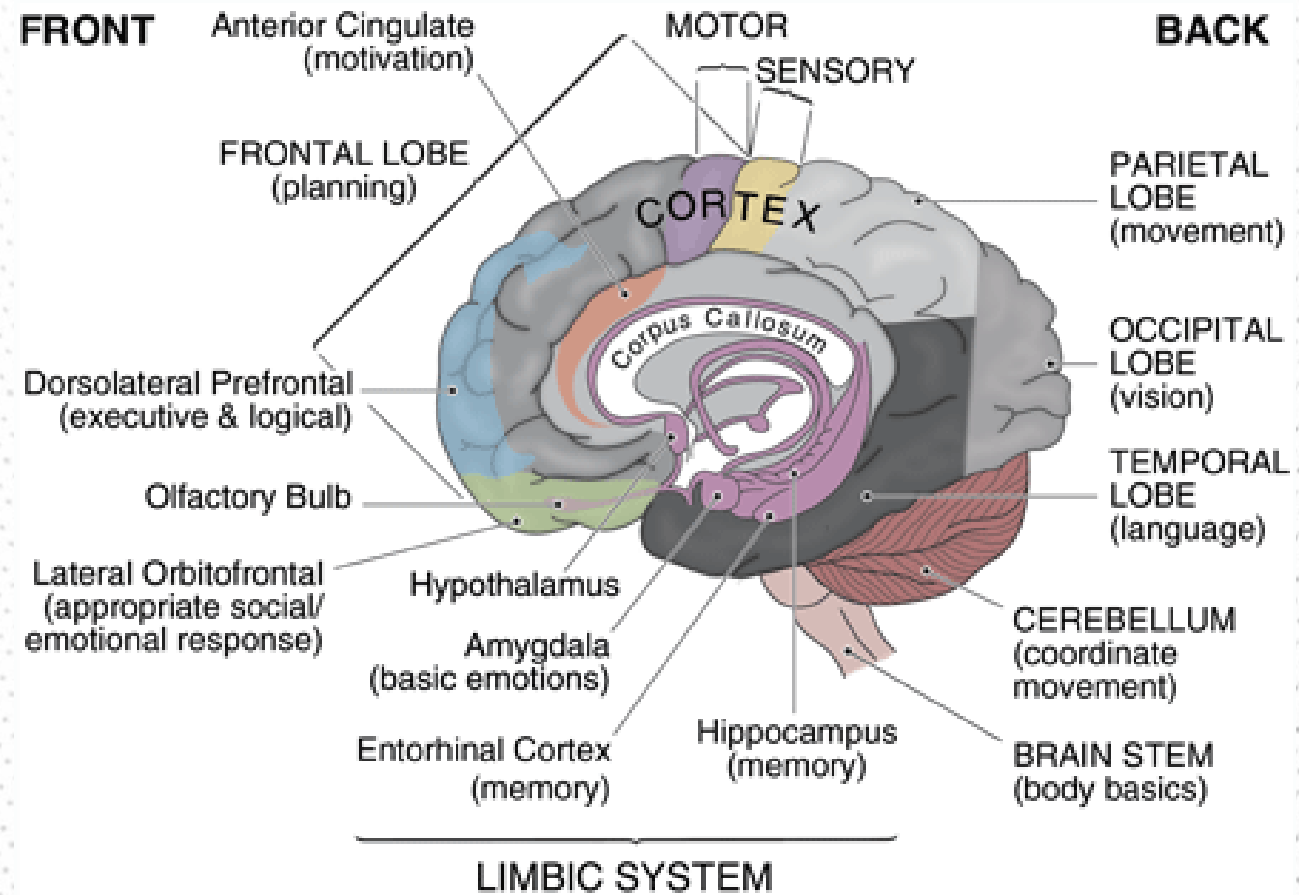
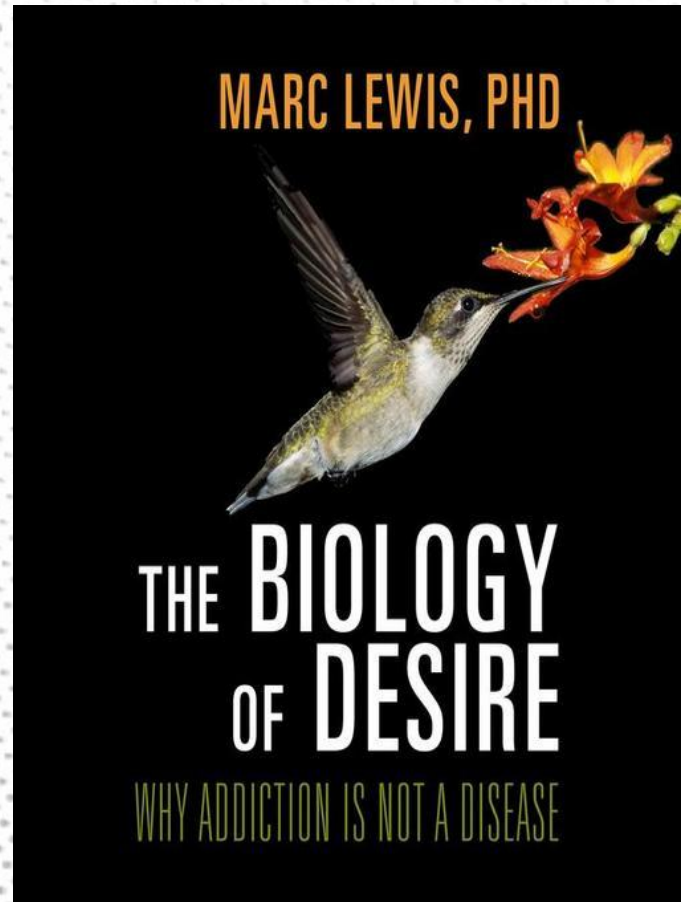
DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION

“People have referred to addiction as a habit throughout recent history. That’s just what it is. It’s a nasty, often relentless habit. A serious habit. An expensive habit. But what makes it so enduring, so relentless, so difficult to change? What makes it different from what we might call more benign habits? Three things. First, it is a habit of thinking and feeling—a mental habit—not just a behavioral habit....Second, the feeling part of addiction always includes the feeling of desire, which is of course the theme of this book.

DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION

“And third, it’s a habit that becomes compulsive.... Perhaps all habits, once formed, are compulsive to some degree. The brain is certainly built to make any action, repeated enough times, into a compulsion. But the emotional heart of addiction—in a word *desire*—makes compulsion inevitable, because unslaked desire is the springboard to repetition, and repetition is the key to compulsion.... To understand addiction, we need to see it as the outcome of a normally functioning brain, not a diseased brain. Still, we must acknowledge that it’s an extreme outcome, and that’s what has to be explained” (BD, 33).

DISSENTING SECULAR VOICES ON ADDICTION



DISADVANTAGES OF THE DISEASE MODEL

- Not universally accepted in the research world
- Removes hope
- Successes cannot explain successes medically
- Ignores man's real problem—man's attempts to make life work without God

SCIENTIFIC TAKE-AWAYS INTERPRETED BIBLICALLY

- Addictions most often arise when problem-solving fails.
- God made the body to serve the heart. Choices of the heart are reinforced by the body—chemically/neurologically. The body (brain) once “trained” by a misguided heart, has to be “untrained” and “retrained” by a renewed heart—one whose commitments, desires, and beliefs are molded by God through His Word and His Spirit.
- Believers never have to be afraid of science rightly interpreted. True science will never contradict the Bible.

UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION THEOLOGICALLY

UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION THEOLOGICALLY

- A. Man is a created but fallen image-bearer of God.
- B. Man can flourish as His Creator intended only when the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to make him like the Son of God.
- C. Addiction is a “dependency disorder”—man turning to himself to make life work and turning away from God.

ADDRESSING ADDICTION BIBLICALLY

James 1:1-20

Lesson 1—Behind every fall is the pull of our desires (*lusts*).

Ask yourself and those you counsel, “Under what circumstances am I most likely to....”

1. Become *angry*?
2. Become *fearful*?
3. *Despair* and want to give up?

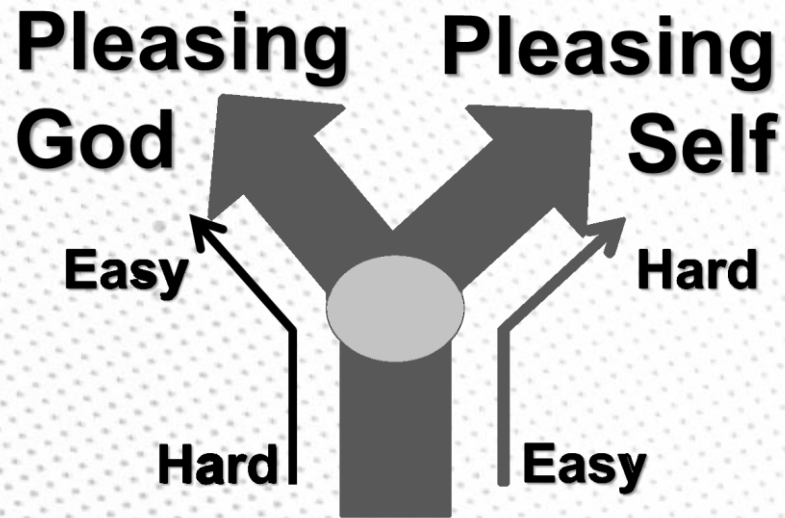
These emotional responses to circumstances reveal our priorities and desires.

Lesson 2—Behind every fall is belief in a *lie*.

Ask yourself and those you counsel, “What lies am I believing...

1. About *God*?
2. About *myself*?
3. About *the way God’s world works*?

Lesson 3—Behind every fall is a *choice* to obey God or obey our own lusts (Romans 6).



“Just two choices on the shelf—pleasing God or pleasing self.”

Ken Collier

Lesson 4—Repeated sin always leads to the *death/loss* of something.

1. Choices become increasingly limited.
2. Consequences become increasingly deadly.

Conclusion — Themes of the Conference

- God's "recovery program" is sanctification.
- God's "support group" is the local church.



UNMASKING ADDICTION

Jim Berg, DMin