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Twelve Steps in the Wrong Direction

A Biblical Critique of Codependency and Alcoholics Anonymous

Those who consume a steady diet of syndicated television talk shows or digest the writings of Christian psychologists such as Frank Minirth,¹ Paul Meier, and Henry Cloud will be surprised to learn that there is neither scientific nor biblical evidence to support the theories of codependency.

Codependency is a hot topic within current psychology. Before the late 20th century the word — and even the concept — was virtually unknown. Now, nearly everyone in one fashion or another seems to be codependent.

A DEFINITION OF CODEPENDENCY

In *The Christian's Guide to Psychological Terms*, Marshall and Mary Asher call codependency, "An irrational, unhealthy relationship where one or both parties are emotionally dependent on each other."² They further note, "The term codependency is a term used in non-technical literature and especially self-help literature."³

by Gary E. Gilley
and M. Kurt Goedelman



Martin and Deidre Bobgan, who for more than 30 years have educated Christians on the dangers of psychological counseling theories, tell us, "The word *codependent* was first used in the late 1970s to describe those people 'whose lives had become unmanageable as a result of living in a committed relationship with an alcoholic.'"⁴

Citing two professionals in the field, the Bobgans wrote, "Originally, it [codependency] was used to describe the person or persons whose lives were affected as a result of their being involved with someone who was chemically dependent."⁵

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