

Seven Threats of Our Time

23-1224p - 6-America - Addicted and Soft, Dependent and Lost, Scott Reynolds

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6-America - Addicted and Soft, Dependent and Lost

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SR

We have been bringing to you sessions of a webinar series entitled, *Seven Threats of Our Time*, by Dr. Del Tackett, author of *The Truth Project* and *The Engagement Project*. Today, we will cover the sixth session of the Seven Threats, called, *America: Addicted & Soft, Dependent & Lost*.

Del Continues with America Addicted

And so [tonight], we're going to look at Assessing America from these four characteristics. You could add more, I'm sure,

but we're going to look at:

- *Addiction* in America,
- The *Softness*
- The *Dependencies*
- And the *Lostness*

of our culture. So, Let's begin first with a notion of

Addiction

Here is a definition of addiction and I want you to look at it carefully.

Addiction is

*The compulsion to repetitively involve oneself with a **substance** or **activity** that is overall unhealthy.*

It is a compulsion, sometimes it is a compulsion so strong when we come to alcohol addiction that in order to detox from an alcohol addiction one really needs to, should [detox] with medical care. It's an extremely difficult one, that doesn't mean that some people [can't] get through that one their

own, it doesn't mean that God [can't] heal them, but in the normal pathway these are addictions that are difficult to overcome.

The compulsion to repetitively involve oneself with a substance or, did you notice an **activity**. We're going to look at both of these briefly. And the substances and activities are overall unhealthy.

Well, let me begin with what could well be, if you're talking about a substance addiction, this may be the biggest. We'll look at another one that is very close to the second now, marijuana. But the first one is the chilling number that **one in 16 americans** are considered to have an

Alcohol use disorder.

We used to call it alcoholism, the current use is "alcohol use disorder". This is a disorder in which it is extremely difficult for someone to stop drinking alcohol.

One in 16, but what I want to do is to help you understand, as my guess is almost all of you will understand, and that is, if you take a typical family, and I'm going to put my family up here in terms of what we might call the immediate extended family, our children and their families. There are 30 people here [in my family] and so we can actually match the statistic ([to my family. So, that means, two members could suffer this disorder. And, in fact, there are two.]) This alcohol addiction of one in 16, where you have people who are suffering from that alcohol use disorder, that we all who are close to this understand, that that does not simply affect that person. But to various degrees it affects a lot of people. And often the greatest effect is for those [other] members of the family. Some of those effects can extend to horrible abuse both verbal and physical and so forth. To some extent it might be appropriate for us to talk about, this addiction that we see within our culture is one that could possibly be affecting our entire culture.

These are the impacts we see on families, If one in 16 people in our culture suffers from alcohol use disorder then it is possible that virtually everyone in our culture is suffering the ramifications of that from the extreme end of physical abuse, [to] verbal abuse [on] the other end of the spectrum.

Ok, so here's Some other substances

and this is the shocking thing to me, I didn't realize it was this high.

- 22% of males [1 in 5] in our culture use illegal drugs. 17% of females do [1 in 6]

In terms of the percentage of use of illegal drugs:

- 9% - marijuana
- 7% - opioids
- 7% - meth
- 3% - heroin
- 9% - prescription stimulants

We have a whole lot of substance abuse. There are a lot of other statistics, I just decided not to put all of them in here. This is sufficient for us to recognize and understand that increasingly our culture is turning to substances for whatever reason that drives them to so. We'll talk some more

about that in just a minute in terms of what happens **when we lose the larger story and become insignificant in this world** and lose the notion of who we are, Who God is. And so, the circumstances around us can be more devastating when you do not have that larger worldview perspective. And the more those circumstances become large and huge in our mind the more we will have a tendency to want to try and escape from those.

There are a whole lot of other substance abuses that don't even show up here. In some areas of our culture these are things that you buy, [like] sniffing glue and even gasoline fumes and all kinds of things.

It's an increasing problem. The percentage continues to go on higher and higher.

Alright, so

- 10% of all adults have a drug use disorder at some time in their life. That's an astounding number.

I have a heart for college students and these percentages are troubling to me.

- 35% of college students overall use illegal drugs
- 33% are using marijuana
- 13% are using cocaine
- 13% are using hallucinogens
- 10% ecstasy

And then the list goes down from there to heroin and all kind of other things. It is an extremely troubling thing to see what is happening on the college campus in terms of our students.

Ok, so let me talk about Marijuana

for just a minute, because that is becoming increasingly the drug of use in our culture. *[SR: And keep in mind as we go through it the Modus Operandi of God. The God made His creatures to be fruitful and He is glorified by their fruitfulness. And conversely, keep in mind that a lack of fruitfulness or a diminished fruitfulness takes away from the glory of God.]*

The National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA) has increasingly stated more and more firmly that

- **Marijuana damages its users** especially in the long run.
And I know that that is contrary to what sometimes we will hear, especially as the marijuana industry gets larger and larger. But the medical studies are clear and you can't deny them. There is damage associated with marijuana.

And I just put these three down here because I wanted you recognize and understand what is happening to us as a culture as a result of this flood of marijuana use in our culture.

The first one is

- **Increased infertility.**

And I would not be surprised if many of you have already seen this, witnessed this,

experienced this. There is an increase in the infertility within our culture. Next time when we talk about the **attack upon the biblical family**, we'll talk some more about what is happening in that area [of infertility], what [are the] ramifications. But one of the effects of marijuana is to decrease the fertility of both the male and the female.

[And] these next two, I want you to take note of this, especially in light of several of the threats that we looked at in terms of number one, **The loss of the noble male**.

- **Marijuana Deceases the testosterone in males**

Now, my guess is that there are certain segments of our culture that would jump up and cheer at that because the male, of course, has become one of the hated things in our culture. But there is a decrease in the testosterone in males, which is in conjunction with the

- **Increase in testosterone in females**

So, marijuana is going to reverse this fundamental aspect of God's design from a biblical worldview perspective where God created man in His image, male and female He made them. And He made them with certain responsibilities and roles. He made them with certain drives and so forth.

And marijuana is, you can see right now, is impacting that in all three areas.

Studies increasing show that

- **marijuana lowers the dopamine in human beings.**

This has been understood for a long time. People have mentioned that marijuana tends to **reduce the motivation people have**. And scientifically studies show that is the result of marijuana lowering the dopamine within individuals. [Marijuana] decreases motivation to work, motivation to build relationships, all kinds of things are damaged as a result of that.

In general, the **deaths associated with overdose of drugs** should be a sobering number for us in terms of

- The number of deaths since [year] 2000: 932,000 - nearly a million people.
- [And] in 2020, that's the last year I could find statistics for opioid use: 68,630 people died from opioid overdose.

You probably know as well as I do that those are skyrocketing. Especially in terms of fentanyl of the people who have died.

Ok, this next one Sweets, really hits home.

But it's representative and associated with a culture that has all kinds of **eating disorders** on both sides, too little or too much.

- We have eating disorders in which people **starve themselves to death**, lack of proper nutrition, bulimia and all those kinds of things that end up destroying people's lives.
- We also have, on the other end, an **unconstrained desire for those foods** which are really not nutritious for us.

Still in this addictive side we'll spend a lot of our time here and recall to you that *Addiction* is not just simply to **substances**, but

Addiction can occur with an *activity*.

And if you've never dealt with someone who is addicted to

- **Video games**

then you may not understand that someone who is addicted to video games can be almost just as debilitating as someone who's addicted to certain drugs. But these kinds of addictions are rampant within our culture.

- **Social Media**

The people who are compelled repetitively to involve themselves in activities that, in the end, are not healthy for them.

We've heard a lot about the things that are happening online:

- Entertainment/pornography

This statistic is almost crushing that teenagers spend on average

- **9 hours a day** in front of a screen, some sort of entertainment or activity
Nine hours a day
- Adults are a little less at **6 hours a day**

And yet the reality is that in our culture we have become addicted to our screens. And the problem with this is, and there are a lot of problems associated with this. One of those problems is, to mention briefly, is the destruction of an ability for people to engage socially with other people, eyeball-to-eyeball. To build a deep relationship with other people.

But from **the perspective that we're looking at here today**, when you look at nine hours a day, six hours a day, the

- **Loss of fruitfulness**

in a person's life is tremendous. You cannot lose nine hours a day or six hours a day and not have that impact the fruitfulness of your life. We're seeing that as well, we're going to talk a little bit about that in terms of dependencies today. But, almost everywhere you go you will see signs that they're trying to hire people, this is the first time since 2019 and before the history has always been that there are more unemployed than there are jobs. That is totally turned on its head now and there are more jobs than there are people looking for work. And it's **not** because we've had this huge amount of jobs being created. We've had a lot of jobs, a lot of businesses that shut down as a result of the COVID scare. But it's because people are just not working.

Ok, so let's look at this second [characteristic in assessing America], the

Softness [of America]

And I don't mean to spend a lot of time on this, I don't mean to not do enough justice to it..., but

This is the character of a people that we're assessing here. I think of,... for example, the pioneer mother who buries her child by the side of the trail and then, having grieved, she climbs up into the covered wagon and presses on. We wouldn't put this in a category of having a hard heart. We would put this in the category of people who are strong. People had an internal compass and vision and understanding and a worldview that allowed them to see the world as it's not about them. But now we're in a situation where people become debilitated if things don't go their way. They even may require counseling if someone fails to use a personal pronoun and so forth.

I think of a couple who labored from sunup to sundown clearing their land to build a farm, removing rocks and plowing ground. The very necessities of life taking much of their day and yet they still had time to worship, they had time to help their neighbors, to visit with their neighbors. They were people who worked hard. They were people who had a vision and worked for that vision. They weren't afraid of hard work and now, of course, we demand more and more benefits in our work, days off, or we'd rather sit home and take unemployment.

I think of people who have given their life for this nation, willing to die. Now people who are not willing to say something on their facebook page because they may lose followers.

So we are increasingly in a culture that has become soft. We're at a point where the slightest bump in the road might put us in a psychological tailspin. Suicide is a complex issue, but part of this is associated with building a people that are so soft that any kind of an obstacle, any kind of a word that is spoken to them wrongly and so forth can put someone into a deep depression, can even bring [them] to suicide. I'm not making light of that, I'm just saying that we increasingly have a culture that is not able to stand up against the realities of a world that is not always what you want.

We used to say, remember, some of you will recall the old phrase: "Sticks & stones can break my bones, but words will never harm me." Well, now words will harm us for sure. And you say the wrong word and you can say the wrong word and be fired, you can be cancelled or purged. Say the wrong word and you can send someone into a psychological tailspin.

So, the bottom line to this is that we increasingly find a culture that has so many blessings, has so much, we are people who are pampered, who are coddled, we're overindulged, overweight, weak willed and easy pickings. We're ripe for the enemy.

Ok, let's talk briefly about the notion of

Dependency.

We can become dependent as we said earlier on substances. We can become dependent upon activities that grab ahold of us so much we become compulsive in that activity and in our actions. And increasingly we can't stop it or we find that at the end of the day we've wasted hours upon hours in video games or in going through Facebook pages and social media and all of those things. Or we [are] wasting our life because of substance abuse and all of those dependencies. We've already talked about those So, let's talk about these three other dependencies, the first two...

The dependency upon the state.

- The Nanny State

This, of course, is the natural flow of a fallen world. That the state will increasingly consolidate power at the top and that will increasingly will sell itself to be the "savior" state. And people will increasingly abdicate their role and their responsibility to be a fruitful creature before God and will increasingly feed at the trough of the state. Over half of Americans receive dependency payments or some sort of vouchers and so forth from the state. This in the end will destroy us. This in the end, as it has in every nation state in the past, where people increasingly become dependent upon the state to the point where the state can no longer continue to print money, can no longer continue to tax the rest of the culture, and people will eventually just stop working. And so, that kind of dependency puts the nation at risk, puts people at risk and families at risk.

So, the next one here, I want to be careful here, but the reality here is that is easy for us to begin to depend upon the church.

- The Nanny Church

That our spiritual growth, our spiritual activities, the sum total of my Christian life is basically run underneath the auspices of a physical building and the cleric. This is not to be negative towards the cleric, pastors, and so forth. What it's to show or mirror is that we have a tendency to abdicate our own personal responsibility for our own personal growth, for our study of the word, for our diligence in prayer, for our good works. The Lord says that the world, "will see your good works and glorify God," as a result of what we do. We have a tendency to not engage with the neighbors that are providentially around us, but we instead find ourselves under a church that we have made into a nanny church where we are simply happy to go sing songs, have some nice music, hear a good sermon and then check that box. And I mean that not from a critical standpoint, but again, to call us, as the scripture calls us, that we are priests. We are a kingdom of priests. And that we should be acting as priests in our family and in the neighborhoods in which we find ourselves.

The church is God's design, the institution... [video froze and come back at 58:20, He created and He's given us, (the church), jobs to do, placed us where He wants us to be, to be fruitful and glorify Him.]

Ok, enough said there, don't go away from here thinking that I am bashing the church, I'm actually not bashing the church as much as I am bashing us...

This last one [on dependency], there is a tendency for us to produce adult children in our culture.

- The Nanny Family

This is what we talked about earlier, the loss of the noble male and the loss of the virtuous female, where as we reject the notion of absolute truth as we reject the larger story of God, the meta-narrative of God of who we truly are, Who He is, His design and all of that. Then what happens is both the noble male and the virtuous female are no longer desired in a culture and so the engine for truth and wisdom and righteousness are gone from both the male and the female and what is left then is grace and compassion, but it is a grace and compassion that is unbridled by wisdom and truth and righteousness. And it becomes a malevolent compassion.

And so that can happen in a family where we can coddle children. We believe we are being compassionate to them and yet we're not willing, as a result of wisdom and truth and righteousness, we're not willing to build restraints within them, to build within them the notion of self-control and the notion associated with crafting your life according to the design of God and the truth of God. And so, oftentimes what happens in that case is coddled children become coddled adults and so that is what we have.

Ok, this last one is most important,

Lost

Here's where we lose sight of the larger story, it shrinks us into our own little story. We lose our identity, our source of absolute truth and we become rootless, tossed to and fro by things that go viral, by headlines, by tweets, by YouTube videos and so forth and we lose any true transcendent source of significance. We find ourselves in a desperate search and hunger for significance. Solomon sought for it in all kinds of ways, [through] knowledge, through pleasure and drink, through slaves that catered to his every whim, he denied himself nothing, amusement, comfort and gratification.

All of it was meaningless And the same is true for us.

Tyrants in many times in the past would come in the middle of the night and take someone away and they would never be heard of [again]. It was effective to control people. Why? Because to make someone totally insignificant is probably the worse thing that can happen to people. So, we have this desperate search that is going on in our culture today because we've lost the larger story of God. We think significance comes from the things around us. We seek them in the same way Solomon did. We seek pleasure. We seek significance in being strong, pretty, and controlling, and powerful. We seek it by gathering all kinds of material goods around us and yet each of us, no doubt, have recognized that in the end all of that is meaningless. It does not provide any significance for us. We have a culture that is desperately seeking to be significant. That's why we have all kinds of weird things people think they're significant because they do weird things. People, unfortunately, I have to say it, but some people think they are significant by killing other people. The bigger splash they can make in that, then the more significance they think they are getting for themselves. And so, this is a plague in our culture, But this is huge in what is happening to our culture, what is happening to people who no longer find significance in their Creator. No longer find significance in Christ and are desperate to find significance in people around them. And that is why it is so devastating when people say a bad thing to them or they don't get their way or people deny their "divine proclamation from their heart". It is devastating to them.

So, Dear Remnant

Galatians 6:9 (ESV)

...let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

Romans 15:4 (ESV)

*For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might **have hope**.*

And so, we are going to be a people. Yes, we have become a remnant in the land, but we are a

people of hope. And as a remnant [and] we are going to see this next time, that I think there are a lot of things we can take great hope in, even [with] what is happening in our culture around us.

Let me close with us in prayer.

Father,

There are a lot of issues that we've looked at tonight that we've brushed over, and yet the reality is that just one person who is consumed by an addiction can wreak havoc upon a marriage, upon children, upon families and friends. And so, Father, we don't want to just skip over that and treat it lightly, we do not. We understand there is a great deal of weeping and groaning in a culture, just to think of people who find themselves feeling insignificant in a world that doesn't seem to really care about them. Grasping at anything they can to show themselves significance. And the loneliness and depression that comes by not being able to control the world. Father, all of this is around us. And we pray Father that You would give us ears to hear, eyes to see, that You would fill us with the love and compassion that is bridled by truth and wisdom and righteousness. That we might walk appropriately in this world. And that Father, we might not lose hope, we might not be like those who wring their hands in fear and trembling, whose knees knock, whose hearts are melting, but that we would be a people, Father, who understand the reality of who we are and whose we are. And so I pray that that might be true for all your people, encourage them, strengthen them, be their Rock. And Lord, that we might glorify you in all that we do. In Jesus name, Amen

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