

“Evil people desire evil; their neighbors get no mercy from them.” Proverbs 21:10 NLT

lectio // Proverbs 21:2-13

Is evil addictive? I know power is extremely addictive, but what about evil? Doing something wrong, hurtful, secretive and conniving, not just because it might look necessary or convenient, but purely because it is enjoyable - does that change our brains, thoughts and habits like an addiction? I'm asking because of the word "desire" in this verse. Evil people want it, they scheme and dream for it. And, just like an addiction, they always end being more controlled than controlling. Evil OWNS people if it's not dealt with directly. Who offers a twelve step program for evildoers? Who has evil addicts meetings? Worse than all that, what happens when an evil addict is YOUR neighbor? Holy moly, that's gotta be worse than the loud, pot smokin, party house that never sleeps at night! I'm no expert on evil, but I see evil preying on innocence and naive neighbors all the time. The drug runners cruising the neighborhood, the petty thieves on bikes and skateboards scoping out cars for quick-cash catalytic converters, tools or electronics left in plain sight. Yeah, they could just need help or a job or Jesus, but there's a certain look in their eyes that tells me they enjoy their schemes. Before Christ, I was one of those as a young teen just looking for opportunity to steal or cause problems just for the thrill of it. I was also a liar, just lying to avoid the truth. These felt like addictions when the Holy Spirit said "stop it" and I had a hard time obeying. It took awhile to yield to God's own rehab program for me. What do you do if your neighbor is an evil addict? You ask God to save them and do it quickly!

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Dad,

Sometimes my own past haunts me. It feels like that "me" existed so long ago. And the evil I did and remembering why I did it is the most embarrassing part. It is so far in my past that people who know me now have a hard time believing it's true. I am so thankful for your mercy and forgiveness. I am also thankful for the consequences and disciplines you gave me to break the addiction of evil from those years. I don't know how I can be an agent of mercy for others, but I pray for protection from evil addicts in my own neighborhood who can't sleep until they've hatched some plan to steal, kill or destroy others.

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root