1. **Introduction and Prayer**
2. **CODEPENDENCY. What is it?** 
   1. **Definition:** Codependency describes unhealthy relationships in which individuals use one another to get their own emotional needs met in a manner that harms each other and the relationship.
   2. Common in recovery - it goes hand in hand with addiction. An "emotionally weak" person needs to be connected to someone "emotionally strong." However, the caregiving "strong" person, is actually weak because of his or her need to be needed. God is given a back seat while individuals use one another to meet their own emotional needs.
   3. In mental health and recovery circles it can be referred to as relationship addiction. Sometimes, when people at REGEN say they are recovering from "fear of man" or "approval of man" they are referring to codependency.
   4. Not easy to detect. It looks like sacrificial love/service. However, when love/service enables another's sin, causes you to sin yourself, or the unhealthy relationship defines your identity, codependent patterns developed.
3. **Signs that you may in a codependent relationship. “You might be a codependent if…”**
   1. **The Savior: If you were up ‘til midnight working on YOUR SPOUSE’S inventory.** You’re constantly trying to solve the other person’s problems. You feel better about yourself when can help the other person’s pain. You’re working harder at someone’s recovery than he/she is. You feel guilty for his/her mistakes.
   2. **The Responder: If, for the 5th year in a row, you take the kids to Chuck-e-Cheese for YOUR birthday.** You’re more aware of the other’s feelings than your own; your actions/words are dictated by how you predict the other person will respond. Do all that you can to maintain peace. You often set aside your desires and hobbies to accommodate the other person’s desires.
   3. **The Enabler: If you’ve found yourself telling a teacher that the dog ate YOUR CHILD’S homework. If this is the “last time” you’re going to say it, for the “fifth time” today.** Sometimes you set aside your values/word/promises to connect with that person or to maintain the relationship. You’re in pain when they are in pain. You are pleased when they are pleased. Sometimes you rescue when you shouldn’t. You keep secrets. Isolate.
   4. **The Incompleter.** **“If U2’s Bono singing, “I Can’t Live, With or Without You,” is on repeat.** You don’t feel whole without the relationship. You try hard to be what the other person wants. Believe that person needs you in order to function. This relationship (or chaos of the relationship) preeminently defines how you see yourself (mother, father, friend, lover, spouse**).** When they fail, you feel like a failure yourself. Firefighter with a squirt gun in a wildfire. Ringmaster in a 5-ring circus without a run sheet. You’ve lost your identity in the chaos.
4. **Effects of Codependency:**
   1. **Fear:** afraid of abandonment or being alone, fear you may become trapped in the relationship
   2. **Sin thrives:** your efforts to save/help the other person enables his/her sin, or pulls you into sinful behavior too, pulls you from your relationship with God.
   3. **Low self-worth:** feel responsible, guilty, like a failure, like you don’t deserve anything better.
   4. **Loss of identity:** so tied to the relationship that you lose your sense of self and the person God created you to be.
5. **Personal Examples**
6. **Spiritual Issues behind Codependency:**
   1. **Idolatry: Allowing a relationship or a person other than God to determine your significance is idolatry.** What God thinks about you and about life is what matters most. Giving yourself away to someone to the point that you are not whole in Christ, is idolizing that relationship.
      1. **You are significant to God.** Made in His image, fearfully/wonderfully, for good works. Bought with the blood of Christ.
      2. **We are to respond first and foremost to our Maker**

*“You shall have no other gods before me.”* (Exodus 20:3)

* 1. **Pride: You are not the Savior.** **Christ changes hearts.** He alone is sufficient to free people of struggles.
     1. **Constant efforts to rescue/excuse/fix** someone in order to protect him from the pain caused by his sin, may be very thing preventing him from recognizing his desperate need for Christ.
     2. **If you are trying to take on a role that only Christ can accomplish, you either don’t believe that Jesus alone is the answer, or you want the adoration due to Christ**. God loves the person you love more than you ever could. His plan for that person is better than any plan you can draw up.
     3. **Your job as (**a friend, lover, parent, child, etc.) **is to** **be faithful** **TO GOD**; to point people to Christ, not participate/enable the deeds of darkness. Allow God to work in their lives. You have no power to make someone else respond to Jesus. And Jesus loses no one.

*“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out… And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”* (Jesus Christ, John 6:37, 39)

1. **Healthy relationships are interdependent, not codependent:** God designed us to live in relationships, we are not to live out our lives (or faith) independent of one another. God created us to be interdependent. Interdependent relationships form when people (who are whole in the love of Christ) actively, selflessly, lovingly use their gifts for the mutual benefit of one another while working against unhealthy behavior.
   1. **Codependent** = reactive: relieve short term pain**: Interdependent =** proactive: suffer together for long-term gain
   2. **Codependent** = selfish: I help you, because I want more of your love/admiration**: Interdependent** = selfless, present opportunities for to love God more; response to me is 2ndary, response to God is preeminent
   3. **Codependent** = dishonest pride: denial and peace-faking (ignore damage of sin, shift-blame)**: Interdependent:** honest humility: speak the truth in love to invite peace with God and with each other on God’s terms.
   4. **Codependent** = people pleasing: enable (or participate in) sin to please the other person**: Interdependent:** God glorifying: repent of sin, to experience intimacy with God and glorify Him.
   5. **Key to health relationships: Finding identity/significance/purpose in Christ.** The more that know who we are in Christ, like who we are in Christ, and live as the person God created us to be, the more we will grow in healthy relationships.  
      *“For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”* (Galatians 1:10)
2. **Next Steps:**
   1. **Admit sin:** Be honest about what you value most in life. Is it God and his love or someone else, a relationship, or the idea of a relationship?Admit your selfishness and seeking value and significance independent of God.
   2. **Confess and repent of sin:** Tell God and someone you trust of your idolatry/pride. Stop focusing on what the other person is doing (or not doing) and start focusing on what you must do to be spiritually and emotionally healthy. Be honest with yourself about your own thoughts and feelings without dismissing them. Ask a friend to help you establish healthy boundaries that will direct both you and the other person in the relationship to Christ.
   3. **Establish healthy interdependent relationships.** Surround yourself with people who continually point you to Christ to have your needs met. Be the same kind of person yourself. Ask them for help/wisdom/prayer when you find yourself struggling with the codependent relationship. Don’t isolate. Find biblical community for support.
   4. **Allow Jesus to be your first love and pursue Him most.** Christ loves you perfectly. Understand your value to the sovereign God of the universe. Embrace who you are in Christ, understand how He designed you, and discover His plan for your life. **Only God’s love can satisfy eternally, and today. Only a person who is whole in Christ, who is filled/driven by His love, will know the depth/freedom in relationships that God intends.***“so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”* (Ephesians 4:14-16)