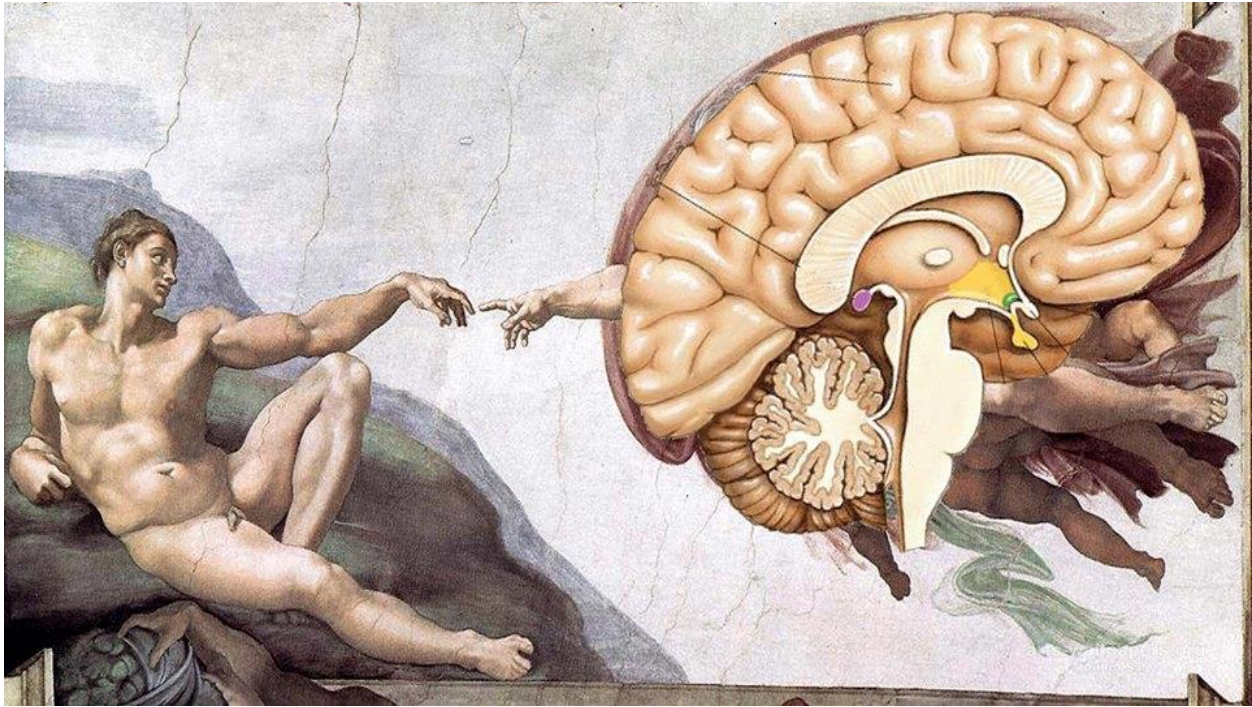


Daily Life with Christ-66. Understanding brain addictions (6)—God does not have a brain-3 (i.e., God has no prefrontal cortex).



Our studies of brain addictions consist of examining five areas: 1) the cognitive unconscious, (2) the conscious, (3) the prefrontal cortex (thinking center), (4) the nucleus accumbens (pleasure center), and (5) the ventral tegmental area--VTA (craving center). (1) and (2) are immaterial, (3)–(5) are material. For an illustration of these three material areas of the brain, see photo on Daily Life with Christ-59.

As I have noted, all brain addictions—whether they are due to substance abuse such as opiates, marijuana, cocaine, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, junk food, sugar, or are due to addictive behavior in pornography, gambling, video gaming—involve physical changes of the brain. Similar changes in brain chemistry in the cocaine’s brain also takes place in what is known as the gambler’s brain (i.e., excessive production of dopamine, numbing of the nucleus accumbens, inhibition of the pre-frontal cortex).

As far as the human prefrontal cortex, the effect is the same in both substance and behavioral addictions—activity in the prefrontal cortex is inhibited. When mental activity in the prefrontal cortex is inhibited, the person no longer rules his life by rationality. The addictive brain is ruled by chemicals such as dopamine produced by the VTA, which creates overwhelming cravings, and which also numbs the nucleus accumbens (the pleasure center), which means it takes more and more to get the same high from substances or behaviors—from drugs or porn. In sum, the frontal cortex has been hijacked, which means that rational control from the prefrontal cortex is effectively taken offline. This is why addicts cannot seem to stop destructive activity regardless of the pernicious consequences. As the person loses rational control, he acts more like an animal that lives by cravings.

The more the rational prefrontal cortex is taken offline, the more sensate the person becomes. This means that the person becomes increasing anti-intellectual. As this progresses, the person is no longer able to obtain pleasure from great and high thoughts of God in the prefrontal cortex. What a disaster for the Christian life of the mind! Instead of loving God with the mind, the individual is always looking for some emotional punch to stimulate the nucleus accumbens. Like a drug addict, they are always looking for some new emotional high—a breakthrough, which hopes to break their bored, addictive, and desensitized nucleus accumbens and prefrontal cortex. The fact that they are frantically looking for some new breakthrough testifies to the longing to be free from an unrecognized brain addiction; they now have a bored brain. They may even crank up the Christian music or speak in tongues or shout loud praises to the Lord in an effort to get another “emotional” high. However, they have virtually lost the ability to enjoy incredible, transcendent delight in the prefrontal cortex in the quiet contemplation of the LORD and His marvelous matchless grace. In fact, due to lack of development of the mental life, they have lost the capacity to find more delight in God than anything experienced by their senses. As Paul put it, their god has become their sense appetites (Philip. 3:19).

As far as the title of this article, most rational human beings understand that God does not have a prefrontal cortex. I can think of only two possible exceptions. First, there are Charismatics such as Finis Dake, who eschews all philosophy and believes that we should follow the Bible only. According this Bible-onlyism, God may very well have a prefrontal cortex since we are in His image and because in the Bible God sometimes forgets. Second, Christians who act as if God forgets or is not aware of their present circumstances—as if He is encumbered by a dysfunctional prefrontal cortex as humans sometimes are.

In sum, brain addictions destroy the ability of the believer to love God with all of his human mind in the prefrontal cortex, the place which God has given him to do his highest and most abstract thinking, leading to the greatest and purest pleasures—both in themselves as affections and by enhancing our nucleus accumbens as physical emotions. God has given us all the ability to find more pleasure in Him as such than any physical stimulation. The addictive brain undermines this priceless blessing.

The believer who suffers from brain addiction is under a triple “curse.” First, he has lost capacity to love God with transcendent delight from his mind alone. Second, the void of transcendent happiness creates a craving in the temporal realm in behavior and/or substance. Third, because of anti-intellectualism, the believer becomes sensate, which opens the door to all kinds of sensual sins. Those who live by the senses will die by the senses in one way or another, either experientially or physically.

The good news is that the brain is very malleable; in fact, it is always changing. This means that a pathological addictive brain can be cured. The life of the mind can be restored to dominance over sense pleasures. The cure is always about Jesus Christ and life in Whole Truth, Total Truth (John 8:31-36).

For Him,

Pastor Don