

Understanding Drug Addicts

by Jackie Pullinger

Addiction is a fleshly way of dealing with shame or guilt, and overcoming it requires identifying and addressing the root of the problem, seeking forgiveness and healing through prayer and confession, and finding someone you trust to share your struggles with.

Duration: 44:30

Scripture: Genesis 3:7, Exodus 20:5, 2 Samuel 13:12-14, Psalm 102:17, Matthew 5:17, Matthew 11:28, Mark 9:24, John 5:6, James 5:16, Revelation 3:17

Topics: "Deliverance", "Compassion for Addicts", "Healing and Recovery"

Description

Jackie Pullinger emphasizes the need for understanding and compassion towards drug addicts, sharing her experiences with individuals who have faced deep pain and shame. She highlights that addiction is often a response to trauma and that logical reasoning alone cannot help someone overcome their dependency. Pullinger stresses the importance of creating a safe environment for healing, where individuals can admit their struggles and receive support without judgment. She encourages the church to be proactive in providing ongoing care and accountability for those seeking recovery, recognizing that everyone has their own unique journey. Ultimately, she calls for a deeper understanding of the root causes of addiction and the necessity of God's grace in the healing process.

Transcript

Praise God. And I said to him, it's not praise God at all. Yeah, it's really foolish to be in an opium den and to pray for strength not to take opium.

You shouldn't be in there. And he said, I live there. And I realized that he had no home.

He just slept there when he took drugs. He kept his clothes in a laundry. And he had another home.

And I had, I'd done just what James says, don't do. Be fed, be clothed, be warm, go your way, God bless you. I'd left him.

And he had nowhere to go. So I looked around Hong Kong to find where he could stay. But at that time, all the Christian hostels were for people who had pastor's recommendations, two months rent, and a job, not a just converted triad member.

And I couldn't find anywhere that would take him. And who wants a one-week-old fighter in their spare room? If I did know anyone with a spare room, I couldn't find anywhere for him to go. So at that time, I had a floor.

And I offered him my floor. And then the trouble began. Because all his friends began to queue up and they'd say, if Jesus changed him, I'll have Jesus.

If Jesus changed him, he'd change anyone, I'll have him. And we had the beginning of a crowd who ran to touch the hem of his garment. And that's when I began to learn.

Today, we've got just under an hour. And I'm going to try and teach you, if I can, in this hour, a little bit about the understanding of those who are drug dependent or who have compulsive habits. And I'm going to teach you, if I can, how to understand this and how you might start to deal with this, if it's your problem or if it's your friends.

Because certainly, our churches are full of these people. And outside is even fuller. Qin Ming was on drugs for 30 years.

Now, when you think of 30 years, that's 30 years of not working. That's 30 years of habitual cheating, of habitual manipulation. And when you come to Jesus, you're new.

You're qualified to sit in heaven that moment. But the habit and the mind of a lifetime are still there. And Jesus is interested in us having renewed minds.

Now, we don't start with the mind. I never begin with an addict with the mind. I've never told a drug addict not to take drugs.

That's stupid. No logical person takes drugs. No logic will get him off.

I once knew a family where there were six brothers, and four of them were on drugs. And one of them, all the way through his father's funeral, every half an hour he had to go out for injections, and he kept vomiting on the floor, all the way through his father's funeral, which in China lasts for hours. Their house was full of slime.

I never ever saw them anything but cleaning needles or lying on the floor. And the fifth brother, yes, he took drugs. He saw his brothers dying.

He saw his brothers degraded. He saw them doing degrading things, and he lived in filth. You think that would stop him taking drugs? No.

It's not logical to take drugs. Who would put a needle in their arm, or sniff powder up your nose? But today, in your churches you've got girls, and if you were to look up their sleeves, you'd find they'd scratched themselves with glass. They are, amongst us, even here, deliberately causing pain.

Why would you want to vomit up your food when you've eaten it? Why would you do these things that hurt your body? Because you're in deep pain, or shame. And it's important for us to be discerning, and not judgmental, as to understanding why somebody would have this pain, or shame. Let me just give you two different examples.

In Genesis 3, we read that when Adam and Eve had sinned, they suddenly realized, in verse 7, that they were naked. They were filled with guilt, shame for what they had done, and so they covered themselves with leaves. To Samuel 13, there's an awful, awful story about a girl who was lusted after by her half-brother.

Her name was Tamar, and he must have her, and so he tricked her into bringing cakes to his sickbed. And then he raped her. And those terrible words in Scripture which says that after he had slept with her, he hated her as much as he had loved her before.

And he wanted to thrust her from him. And she said, no, don't. Don't.

For the shame you would do in sending me away is worse than the shame you have just done to me. My father would not stop me from staying with you. Please keep me.

But he threw her out, and this beautiful girl who had been dressed in colors went around in sack. She covered her shame with sackcloth. So we have two different kinds of people.

One who has been grossly shamed and sinned against, covering herself up. And the others who are guilty themselves of sin cover themselves up. And if we, because we have heard how one person got free from their addiction, approach somebody else and carelessly expect that the same words will work for them, then we are arrogant.

We have to understand that everyone is different, and that the secret things in their lives are not places that they will easily let us come. In fact, they have spent their lives covering up. I went to a church of a relation of mine a few years ago, and there was a wonderful lady who gave out the hymn books.

And she was always sick. She was in her 70s, sweet, sweet lady. But she was very weak.

And I went to pray for her one day, and God showed me something. And I offered it to her. Because you mustn't ever, by the way, when you pray for people, you mustn't say, God's shown me this about you.

You mustn't do that. That's blackmail. You may say, I wonder if this is helpful.

You offer what you think God's shown you. Then they can say yes or no. And I said to her, I wonder whether there was ever anything with your father that made you feel bad.

And she confessed that from the age of seven to around 14, her father had slept with her regularly. And of course, when you're seven, you don't know what's right or wrong. But she felt bad, and her father made her promise never to tell her mother.

And she grew so weak, she couldn't go to school. So she grew up uneducated. And when she was 18, I think, or 19, she became engaged to a curate.

And she thought she would tell the curate what her father had done, and he broke the engagement. And I met her in her 70s. Do you know what she'd done from the age of 19 to 70 something? She had tried bathing six or seven times a day.

She couldn't get clean. She gave up the handbooks. She hoped to serve God.

But she never felt clean. She couldn't tell anyone. There are people like this, that here, in such pain.

And you know, when this has happened to you, you don't know if it was you who did wrong or not. In Hong Kong, when girls get raped, we've heard of ministers that make them confess their sin in luring the man in the first place. Terrible, terrible, terrible.

How awful of us. How awful of us. A woman is so confused at these times.

She has been shamed, and then she has to confess her sin. I prayed with this woman, and she... You must allow time when you do this, by the way. Just slowly.

I mean, if you've had this covered up in your life for 60 something years, I mean, don't expect it to go in half a minute when you pray with someone. Just open the door gently, but they've got to trust you. So in a minute, when we come to pray for people, it won't be appropriate to finish the whole thing in one minute.

It won't. It will be appropriate to find somebody that you trust. And when I say trust, I mean someone you like.

If there's somebody you're a bit afraid of, and they're a bit religious, don't go for them. They'll make your problem worse. They'll put things on you that you already couldn't bear.

So go for somebody that you like. Okay? You don't have to tell your problems to anyone, except somebody you like. And that's a completely free thing.

Okay. So anyway, after praying with her for about an hour, she could begin to let the pain out. But she couldn't forgive her father, of course not.

She needed another week, which was pretty good. Pretty good. And then she forgave him.

Of course, she'd have to do it again. Because you forgive every time it still hurts. Do you understand? That's what 70 times 7 is partly about.

When you say, well, I've done that, I forgave them. Yeah. But if it still hurts a bit, you better do it again.

And every time you do it, more of the anger, or more of the bitterness, because that's how it works. And you get cleaner and more healed. And the wound is soothed with Jesus.

What I would call heroin, or alcoholism, or bulimia, or anorexia, or any of these compulsive behavior patterns, I'd call them a presenting problem. In other words, that's what you can see on the outside. When Jesus, in Matthew 5, 17, met a paralytic who was lifted through the roof where Jesus was speaking, he said to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven.

Now he could have said, pick up your bed and walk. Why did he say your sins are forgiven? I believe because his paralysis was connected with his sin. Now that's not so in every case.

And we can't assume it. But it was the right words for him. And by the way, when Jesus healed the sick, he hardly ever talked about sin.

Doesn't mean to say it wouldn't be dealt with at some time. But he rarely started with it. John 5, 2, he came to the clinic where the men were waiting for the angel, who every now and again stirred the waters, and whoever got number one ticket could get healed.

And he said to this man, in verse 2, do you want to be made well? Extraordinary question. But of course it's important. You see, many of us have made a friend of our sickness or our problem.

And it's comforting, even though it's life endangering. You know, sometimes people say to me, Jackie, can I pray for you when I'm sick? And really, I don't want to be prayed for, I want to be sick. So I want to go home early because I'm sick.

I don't know, maybe there's nobody else like me here. But Jesus said, do you want to be made well, which is an important question. A lot of people bring addicts to me, and the addict has no intention of changing, but their mother has.

You can't do it. You can't do it for someone else. They don't want to be made well.

There are other things you can do for them. You can pray behind the scenes. And by the way, I always pray that people get brought low quick.

I pray for them to be arrested. I pray for them to be bankrupt. I pray for them to have a disaster quick.

Because if they can hit the bottom quick, it will be better than dying slowly and getting a hardened conscience. I'm really serious about people being saved. Now you needn't pray such awful disasters on them, but you could pray the bottom falls out quick somehow, and they realize, I don't want to live like this anymore.

My addiction is not a friend. It's a deep bitterness. Let me suggest some things that may be presenting problems, just in case you thought it's simply people who take heroin or sniff cocaine.

There are people who are always joking. I'm not saying this is an addiction, but with some people, it's done to cover up excruciating pain. I knew a man once who often came to me for advice.

It was completely useless because he never stopped talking. And he could not stop talking. He was absolutely obsessed with speech.

It was an addiction. There are some people who take comfort in thoughts of suicide. It's your way out.

There are some people, TV. If I can put the box on, I don't have to think. Card playing, I don't have to think about anything I can blot out.

Chocolate. Yes, this is serious. We had a girl who worked with us once and she said, oh, I should die if I don't have a bar of chocolate.

So she used to escape every day. She was a helper to boy chocolate, comfort eating. What we're really talking about is a fleshly way of dealing with shame or guilt.

What can I do to comfort myself or stop me thinking about what is painful? Addictive exercising, anorexia, bulimia, compulsive washing, workaholic, gambling, some kinds of music, cigarettes. Not all of these things in themselves are addictions, but they are often the way that those of us that have got excruciating pain or shame use to stop ourselves thinking about it or to bring comfort. I build things around the shame, the core of my personality.

And there are triggers that set these off. The trigger is some kind of event that happens in your life which is so hard to cope with that it triggers off the comfort eating into something else or the drinking into something else. Now, the problem is everybody is going to have triggers.

Now, you may very well know someone yourself who came to Christ, who came off drugs, who did awfully well. You got them a job and you said everything was wonderful, but he had an awful boss and who was unfair to him, so he went back to drugs. Or the more usual story is his girlfriend let him down and he went back to drugs.

Now, I have to tell you that everybody is going to have these things. Can't go through life without them. These triggers, these points of pressure which are going to happen to everyone.

And if somebody gets off drugs and follows Jesus, but the inner core of their personality has not been dealt with, even though they've not taken drugs for three years and they're prophesying well in church. If they go out and there's a trigger, it will set it off again. Because it's the inner core of the personality that needs to be touched.

Here are some triggers. Bereavement, someone dying. Abuse, injustice, redundancy, divorce, moving house, breakdown of relationship, disappointment, sickness, accident, stress and pressures of work.

Boredom, yes boredom. Peer pressure, aimlessness, stress. And everybody will go through these, all of us will.

So we want to deal with the inner core of a man or a woman or a child and find out how or why that shame or pain or guilt got there. We call that the root of the problem. The core of the problem.

So I'll just suggest some ways that these roots get there. Please forgive me. It's okay if you take notes because I'm going terribly quickly.

So I hope that God will help you to remember what you need to. As we've already said, Tamar received terrible abuse and many people have shame because of hurts, abuse. The most common reason amongst our brothers, the most easily the most common, is that none of our brothers, not one of them has ever, oh sorry, I think one, has ever been told they were loved by their parents.

They were all beaten severely by parents who wanted them to be good students. So they, by the age of five, they all knew they were awful. In Chinese custom, you must not say your child is beautiful in case the spirits steal your child.

So you say you're ugly and you're useless and you're hopeless and you've brought me bad luck. They've all grown up hearing this. So by the age of five, they know it's true.

And when you know something's true, you know it's true. They cannot believe otherwise. So they grow up.

I can spot an addict at four. It's usually set at least by eight. You know the future possible addicts.

It's that early. It's that early. It's very often what's happened to them.

Lack of love, abuse, rejection, or just being left out because the parents are working so hard. Isolation and sadness. And this may result in anger, hatred, panic.

If you meet somebody who's excessively Christian, I don't mean Christian in the proper way, I mean Christian in their language, and you hate it. Because I hate it. Religious language.

Look underneath. They're probably covering up something and trying to be accepted by you. By saying what sounds holy.

We won't allow that kind of language. Try and see what's underneath. Secondly, sin.

Adam and Eve covered up because they knew they had offended God. One of the things that we routinely deal with when we pray addicts off drugs is their sexual history. And we have them confess every single person they've ever slept with or touched by name if possible.

The more you confess clearly, the more you can get free from. Now there's another way of doing it. You can say, Dear Lord, forgive all my sins, and he will.

But you don't get free from them that way. If you are specific about where you have offended God and man and God's way, you can get free from it. That's how to get free from it.

And you can get free preferably by finding the person you like, who's not going to tell anyone else, and telling them, and receiving forgiveness together. Demonic. Another thing that we routinely do when we're praying people off drugs is to find out their demon history.

Have they been involved in martial arts? Where they've almost certainly taken vows to idols or spirits? They have. It's almost impossible to do most martial arts without. And there is a demonic connection.

Those who, when they were babies, were offered to temples. And we find that when they are offered to temples or offered to gods, their photographs are there. And as long as their photographs are there, there's some hold over them.

You may not understand these things, but they exist. Check and see what history there's been in that person or their parents. Spiritual or demonic history.

Have they taken a blood oath with anyone? Have they mixed blood? Has there been an oath? A covenant? Etcetera. Fourthly, accidental. Some people are addicted because they've had an accident and they were given a drug and they just simply went on taking it.

Or the doctor has prescribed something and they've got addicted because the substance created a physical dependency. And after the physical dependency, there's a spiritual dependency. They get used to the drug instead of going to the Lord.

And this creates a soulish dependency until in the end, they're an addict like anyone else. And probably in sin like anyone else. And they need the same blood as anyone else.

And it can be undone. Teenagers, the most common reason is because other people are doing it. That's all.

These days, our teenagers are perfectly sweet. I mean, they're not like the last generation of teenagers that we had. Our last generation of teenagers were extremely streetwise.

They knew how to fight and swear and cheat and all kinds of things. Our current teenagers look like angels before they're Christians. They're just simply empty.

You fill them with good things, they're good. You fill them with bad things, they're bad. They just simply follow the crowd.

And there's a whole generation that do that. We call that peer pressure. And then, there's generational history.

That's what's been passed down. Now, in Exodus 20, it says, if you sin, if you worship other gods, the sins of the fathers will be visited upon the children from the third and the fourth generation. And all the way through Deuteronomy 32 and Deuteronomy 11, it says that what the parents have done wrong will result in terrible things in the children's lifetime.

It's there in scripture, sorry. It is. If the fathers sin and do not love the Lord, the children get mental sickness, miscarriage, danger on journeys, awful things, rape, engage to marry one but she's stolen.

These you can read in scripture. They are the result of parental sin or disobedience. And sometimes there are spiritual things that are passed down.

You will note very often that a gambling father may have a son who's a heroin addict. There's an addiction that's passed down, but it may not be the same addiction. Sometimes it skips a generation.

This does not mean to say if there's been an addict or a workaholic in the family that everybody is going to get it. But it does mean that if there's any hurt or sin in the child's life, it can attach itself to it almost like a spirit. Not all addiction is a spirit of addiction.

I know I've been to meetings where people say, cast out the spirit of tobacco or whatever. No. With some people, that's it.

But not everyone. Not everyone. So casting out spirits of addiction, you know, you just might get the right one if you do it every time.

But you know, 59 times out of 60, you'll be wrong. So don't use what worked last time. Listen.

Listen to how the Holy Spirit teaches you. And by the way, tomorrow we're going to do a seminar on how to get gifts of the Spirit. Anyone who's not spoken in tongues, you will tomorrow if you'd like to.

And how to get gifts of the Spirit. And we'll teach you how to get words of knowledge. Because when you're praying for people, you need words of knowledge.

That is, you need insight from God into the problems of a person's heart. And it's to help them, not spy on them. And you always offer it with humility.

So towards a solution, which we're going to pray about with each other in a minute. Firstly, I admit, or the person that you want to help needs to admit, I've got a problem I can't solve alone. No good mother admitting the son has a problem.

That will not do. Towards a solution, I must admit, I have a problem I cannot solve alone. I am poor, pitiful, blind, and naked.

Revelation 3. And you may be a Christian. Secondly, a willingness to share this with someone. Someone you like.

Therefore, James 5.16, confess your sins to each other and pray for one another so you may be healed. Thirdly, a decision to turn to God. To ask for healing and deliverance through Jesus.

He said, Psalm 102.17, He will respond to the prayer of the destitute. He will not despise their plea. He will.

You have to call upon him yourself. That's towards a solution. I'll just say those again.

One, admit you got a problem. Two, find someone to share it with. Three, call on God.

You must do all those three, towards the solution. Here's how to work the solution out. They need a safe place to break the cycle of dependency.

It's no good having them at a Sunday night meeting, calling them forwards, praying for them, and then say, see you next Sunday. That's not fair. That's not fair.

That's not fair. And if they take drugs again, which they almost certainly will, they won't want to come back. And you know, it's much worse if they failed the church.

Because then they've got nowhere, no hope. Failed. You know, I'm always meeting people who failed Christian drug centers.

Well, I think I would too in some of them. Really, I don't even understand their booklets. They're all addressed at the mind.

It's not where to start. Let God renew the mind. But you start somewhere else.

You start spirit to spirit, not talk to talk. Dry up your talk. Give up your good advice.

They do not want it and do not need it. Just one word would do. Do you want to be made well? That was the one word for that man.

It's not the one word for everyone. Your sins are forgiven. That was the word for that man.

I don't know what's the word for your man, but you better ask God and don't talk too much until you get it. Because you turn them off. They don't need Christians getting at them.

They've already got a problem. They need people who will accept them anyway. Now, it doesn't mean to say you love their habit.

It doesn't mean to say you love their sin. You say, I'm available to you if you want to change. I'm here.

I'll love you anyway. Don't ask me to take part in what you're doing. I don't want any part of it, but I'm for you.

And so is God. Keep an open door somewhere. I need, secondly, in working out a solution, people who are committed to seeing me through.

When I go to other countries, people are always giving me their addicts and they say, pray for them. You'll probably do that to me in a minute. Well, I cannot do in two minutes what the church is supposed to be doing day in, day out throughout the year.

So please don't ask me to. I'm going to ask you to behave like the church. Would you be willing to do a four hour duty for someone? Well, you'll need six a day, by the way.

Now, if you're going to take somebody into your home to take them off drugs, let me tell you, you must have a minimum of three, preferably four people, not one. You need one to be sitting with the addict. Okay? Then you need one to answer the front door or the telephone.

Can't be the same person because otherwise they have to leave him. Got that? And it's not safe to leave him because he loves Jesus this minute. But if you walk to answer the front door, he might not love Jesus a minute later.

They do very strange things, you know. Of course they love Jesus, but you know, their feet don't. And you know, we have people drinking harpic in the loo and all kinds of strange things.

They jump out of windows, all kinds of things. They're all right if you're with them. We pray in tongues nonstop, they pray in tongues nonstop, and then they sleep.

And all our people come off drugs with no pain or almost no pain. You need a third person to be asleep. The third person is asleep so that the third person can take over from person number one.

And you need somebody to cook so that all the people that are doing the other things don't have to do that too. So that's four people. And then you're going to need refills, right? For those who are praying with the one that you're praying off.

If you do this for 10 days, they'll all be completely clear physically. By the way, while you're doing this, lots of baths, lots of massages, lots of worship, lots of praying in tongues, no walks around the block, no telephones to my girlfriend. None of that.

You're supposed to have cleared all that before you start. No telephones, no visits, no aspirins. We would say no cigarettes, but that'll be up to you.

Next, address the root cause of the addiction. And you probably won't start to do this before 10 days. Through care, prayer, and ministry.

Our brothers here all say that it's the miracle of God delivering them, coupled with the care of brothers and sisters that touches them the most. And they can never say which is more important. Five minutes prayer in church will not do.

It's the ongoing care of the brothers and sisters. They need ongoing aftercare. Don't abandon them after 10 days.

And they need, lastly, accountability. A willingness to check back with someone and say, I'm in trouble again. And if they say they're in trouble again, you must say, congratulations.

It's so good of you to tell the truth. You're forgiven. Now you're seated with Jesus again.

Now let's see what caused you to need to do that again. Don't blame anybody for taking drugs again. How many of you have not sinned after you've known Jesus? Yours are just hidden.

Don't expect him to change any quicker than you are. And I tell you, once you begin to live with addicts coming off drugs, you realize you're part of the same program. You realize you can't tell them to do anything you haven't done yourself.

That means you don't talk much. Really. We're all the same.

Other people can see in us. What's wrong better than we can. We're very good at spotting other people's problems.

So if you ever get involved with helping people with problems of this kind, you'll find that the person that is most being helped is oneself. And you call out to the Lord again and say, oh, woe is me. I am no different.

I am no different. And that's why you'll be filled with forgiveness and love and hope and mercy. You ought to be, if that's what you receive yourself.

And you will. If you keep saying, oh, woe is me. I am no different.

I am pitiful, blind and wretched. Lord, I need you. I'd rather be addicted to you than my paper on the train or my orange juice for breakfast or my half an hour in the toilet by myself or whatever way it is you find you can get through your day.

It's not necessarily Christian. No, I'm Christian either. It's just the ways that we get used to behaving.

That's why you'll find whenever you go on a ministry trip, especially to a foreign country, and you have to live closely with other Christians, everything goes wrong. People come to Hong Kong, they say we're having spiritual warfare. I say, no, no, you're not having spiritual warfare at all.

You're simply living with other Christians. You know, I mean, it's not spiritual warfare. You see, the things that you normally do to keep your life straight are not Christian.

I have my paper. I have half an hour with the Lord by myself. In our country, nobody can have half an hour with the Lord by themselves.

There's nowhere to go by yourself. Do you see what I mean? So we get used to ways of coping. They're not un-Christian.

They're not Christian. And when you're not with those ways, all your weaknesses come out, but they were there all the time. They were there all the time.

Stand. Dear Lord, in your mercy, we ask you to visit us. Some of us are so good at seeing other people's weaknesses.

We can see how other people use other things to cover up problems in their own lives. But Lord, we ask, first of all, that you reveal to us ways in us that we've got used to coping with daily life. They're not necessarily you.

Lord, we would be, truly.

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