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## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG TRAFFIC**

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In my life I have known two bootleggers. One was my boss when I was driving a truck on a construction job. He was an ex-con who had done time for manslaughter. He killed a black man for accidentally kicking a nail keg he was sitting on. He was a leader of the Ku Klux Klan in an area of our state known for its racism. On the job where we worked, he sold his wares while he carried out his work duties. The other bootlegger was a living related kidney donor for his brother who had chronic kidney failure. I interviewed all of the donors in this program because we wanted to know if they were really giving informed consent to the donation. One of the areas into which I inquired was their work. When I asked him where he had worked during the past two years he told me he had not worked. He had been in prison. When I asked him what for, he said he had gotten caught for "making likker." As I questioned him further he told me he had been making moonshine for over 15 years. He had gone to prison twice for two years at a time, but came out and went back to his professional activities as a distiller. I asked him if it bothered him when he went to prison. He told me that it was just part of the profession. If he could run his still for two months he could make enough money to carry his family over while he was in prison. It was interesting that he gave his kidney to his brother, went home and went back to work. Three months later he was back in prison. He was caught making moonshine again.

On one of the sports shows the other night it was reported that Nate Newton, an ex-Dallas Cowboy who has been noted for his drug abuse, had been caught with 200 pounds of marijuana. As soon as he was out on bail he was caught again with another 200 pounds of the same stuff. The commentators did not know what to make of such stupidity. I know! It is the problem of drug addiction. Proponents of legalizing drugs tell us that marijuana is not addicting. It is addicting primarily because it leads to the use of other drugs that are really addicting. If marijuana produces a mental state that is pleasant, then drugs that produce a more pleasant state are going to be tried. Pushers and other users are evangelical in their efforts to get others onto more addictive drugs. The real truth is that marijuana is, however, addictive, but not as much so as cocaine, heroin, and "speed" (methamphetamine).

At the beginning of my psychiatric career I was assigned a drug and alcohol ward to run. It had 38 female drug addicts and alcoholics who were legally committed for treatment. Since I did not know anything about drug addiction or alcoholism, I read all I could and talked to others about treatment procedures. I then carried them out. My patients had to stay for 28 days and were then released. At the end of the year I followed up with my patients and found that only one of them had

benefited from my efforts. I later found out that the one who seemed to have gained from her hospitalization actually had not. When she got out she was invited to a chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous that had just come into existence, and her experience there had changed her. My experience with the all of these ladies left such a sour taste in my mouth that I refused to treat alcoholics and drug addicts until after I became a Christian 20 years later.

The reason for my attitudinal change was the understanding that alcoholism and drug addiction are spiritual diseases and only have a spiritual cure. I learned this when I was asked to speak to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division on the dangers of drug use. The organizers of the conference had asked young men from Teen Challenge to come and speak at the same conference. When I heard their testimony it made me realize that God can cure heroin addiction. It is the most addictive of all drugs with the exception of dilaudid. One of the speakers testified that he had been free of heroin for 7 years. I was amazed. As a result I went to visit Teen Challenge's center in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of New York City. When I got there I found the staff in a prayer meeting that lasted for two hours. I was told about their program by Don Wilkerson who then assigned a staff member to show me around. In a dormitory a young man was laying in a bed with an attendant beside him. I was told I could talk to him so I asked him how long he had been a drug addict and how he had come to Teen Challenge. He said that he had come to the end of his rope and wanted to commit suicide, but decided to give Teen Challenge a chance to help him. I asked him how he was feeling. He said he felt OK. I asked, "Are you coming off heroin cold turkey?"

He said, "NO, it's warm turkey. My brother here is praying for me and I don't feel anything." I was overwhelmed with emotion. I thought, "It is no wonder that they have a 75% recovery rate."

Later on I became interested in what kind of families heroin addicts had been reared in. To find out I went out to Lexington, KY to the federal narcotics hospital and did a research project investigating the nurturing environment of these chronic addicts. I again saw how God heals drug addicts. I did a structured interview on these individuals in which I asked all of them the same questions. One of the men I was interviewing was a big black guy who had been on heroin for five years. As had all of the people we interviewed he started out on marijuana, but soon started using heroin. He had come from a very dysfunctional home without a father or male role model. He spent most of his childhood on the streets. He finally was committed to Lexington for possessing and selling heroin. He was a big time user as well as a pusher. When I came to the end of the interview I had one question about whether they had ever had a religious experience and two questions about the future. These were, "Do you have hope for the future and where will you go when you get out?"

When I asked the religion question he said, "No!" When I asked the first question about the future he said, "Doc, I've got to have hope!"

I said, "That's not the question. Do you have hope?"

Again he said, "Doc, I've got to have hope!"

"Come on man, answer the question. Do you have hope?"

His reply was to take my hand and put it to his cheek. The tears flowed as he said, "Doc, there ain't no hope. Tell me that there's hope, Doc." Even though I had promised not to mention religion, I had no choice but to tell him that Jesus was his hope.

His reply was, "Don't give me any of that religious stuff, Doc. I won't buy it."

My last question was where are you going when you get out? "There ain't no place to go, Doc. I can't go back to the streets, all they want to do is sell me drugs. I can't go home because they think I'm a dope fiend. I've OD'd four times before. The next time I'm going to do it right!" He did two months later.

The next day I was interviewing a young woman who was a heavy heroin addict. She prostituted herself to earn money to buy heroin for herself, her boyfriend and her pimp. She too had been arrested because of her chronic drug use. She was obviously an intelligent young woman who also had come from a very dysfunctional home with an alcoholic father. When I got to the part of the interview where I asked have you ever had a religious experience she said, "Yes!" I was shocked. No one had told me that in all the interviews that I had done. I asked her when it happened. She said, "Last night."

"In this place?", I asked.

"No," she said. "I'll tell you about it. We have this secretary on our unit who is a preacher's wife. She likes to take us out to religious meetings. We go just to get out. Last week she asked if we would like to go to another and we all said yes. She could only take 11 of us so we had to have an election to see who would go. I got elected. When the time came we all got into the bus and started out toward town. We drove to the Coliseum, and I saw that it said on the marquee, 'David Wilkerson Crusade Here This Week.' I had never heard of him, but we were there and had to go.

When we got inside we sang some religious songs and then this man got up to preach. He started asking questions that had been on my mind. The only difference was that he kept answering them out of his Bible. I got scared. I was so scared that I felt I had to get out of there. I couldn't though, so I sat and waited. Finally, he came to the end and said "All of those who want to accept Christ as Savior come to the front. I thought. Now is my chance. I got up and started to the end of the row. When I got there I tried to turn right and go out, but I couldn't. I had to turn left. I didn't walk, I ran to the front. I was crying, but you

know what, Doc? The other ten girls were there too. We were all crying and we all accepted Jesus as our Lord."

I asked, "Do you have hope?"

"You bet I do, I have Jesus. He's the hope of the world."

"Where will you go when you get out?"

"I don't know, but God has a place for me and it won't be back to where I came from." He did. He took her first to a Teen Challenge center and then to one of their rehabilitation facilities.

Sadly, the world does not understand spiritual disease and spiritual cures. They may pay grudging lip service to God's power, but they continue to try to control heroin addiction with methadone maintenance programs or with drugs that block the effects of narcotics. They use twelve step programs without the power of the Holy Spirit. A higher power helps, but Jesus is the only satisfactory answer. Alcoholism and drug addiction are moral problems. They, like crime, can only be cured by spiritual intervention. Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship has shown us the truth about crime, Teen Challenge has shown us the truth about drug addiction, AA has shown us the truth about alcoholism. Why can't government and medicine recognize the reality of spiritual disease and treatment?

I want to ask one last question. What about those who traffic in drugs? Some of you may not like my solution to the problem, but here it is anyway. Usually we give them a few years in prison and let them out to resume their careers. They serve their time and go back to selling drugs. How about starting to give mandatory life sentences to the major traffickers or even the death penalty to those who really play it big? They do in some countries. Big time drug dealers do not hesitate to murder to achieve their goals. Maybe a few executions would give them pause.