



WEEK 4 / DEVOTION

Read Luke 15:11-32

The prodigal son in Jesus' parable had a father. We can surmise that he had a living mother also. When the son left home, was it on good terms or bad terms?

As you fast, pray, listen, and respond today, try to imagine what the parents of the prodigal son felt like as their child walked out the front door. Did they think they would ever see him again? Did his mom wonder if they would ever simply gather around a dinner table again as a family? Did the mom and dad blame each other for causing the son to leave? Or maybe, was there finally peace in the house after weeks of fussing and fighting?

How long did it take for the parents to start worrying about their child? Had they started to worry before he left, or only after he really left and it was obvious he was not coming home soon? Was their lost child a passing thought during the day, or did their worry consume them all day long? How did they feel as they thought about their son squandering everything they had ever given him? He had so much potential, so many resources...and yet he seemed to be ignoring all common sense and wasting it all.

We have parents and grandparents living all around us today who have watched their children "leave home" because of their addiction to opioids. The very children they would give their lives for have walked out of the door and appear to be squandering their lives away.

Ask God to show you how we can be in ministry to these hurting souls. How would God have us get to know them and walk with them through their valley of shadows? Listen for God's answer...EXPECT God to answer!

It is not enough for us to open the church doors and wait for the parents of the prodigal sons and daughters to come in. We must leave our sanctuaries and find them!



Recovery and All That Is Involved: Part 1 - Detoxification

Recovery from opioid addiction involves multiple steps. The first step is detoxification. Detoxification is the process of getting the opioids out of one's body. This can take 30, 60, or even more days. It is an extremely painful process where bones and muscles ache, one cannot sleep, there is nausea, extreme diarrhea, muscle cramps, runny nose, high blood pressure, fever, and anxiety. While all of this is going on day in and day out, there is that little voice in their head saying, "You know what will fix this...just another dose of heroin or oxycodone." As one can imagine, it would be very hard to just stop using by oneself in the same neighborhood where one knows where and how to get more opioids.

The experience of detoxification is so painful, addicted persons who have experienced detoxification, but later continue to use opioids, are terrified of experiencing the detoxification process again. Addicted persons call this being "dope sick." Many addicted persons say they would do anything to avoid being "dope sick." This is where many addicted persons get into real legal trouble.

There are some opioid drugs that help a detoxing person avoid being "dope sick." Methadone and suboxone are both opioids but do not cause the high that heroin or oxycodone do. Prescribed by physicians, methadone and suboxone help the addicted person come off stronger opioids and begin long-term recovery without fully experiencing detoxification. The positive to this is that persons can begin to live a normal life. The negative is that the person is still addicted to an opioid and has not truly gotten all of the opioids out of their body.

Being "dope sick" is horrible for an adult. An infant who is born dependent on opioids goes through the exact same detoxification process.

WEEK 4 / EDUCATION