

The Healing of Lives Ravaged by Addiction with Jessica Stovall

The illegal drug use statistics have always been sobering but never more than now.

During the lockdown and pandemic of yes, COVID-19, and also job losses, businesses closing and church and social networks unavailable, many fighting addiction have suffered enormously. There has been a rise in overdose deaths and in suicides during this period.

The flow of drugs over an irresponsibly open southern border remains so concerning.

Here are some statistics about fentanyl alone, one of the leading culprits in drug deaths today, from the National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics (NCDAS): .

“Fentanyl is a factor in more than half of overdose deaths.”

“Less than ounces of fentanyl causes certain death.”

“Statistics indicate 42,700 fentanyl overdose deaths in 2020.”

“Fentanyl is 50 to 300 times more potent than morphine.”

“From 2013 to 2015, DEA agents confiscated 239 kilograms or million lethal doses of fentanyl.”

This drug is flowing illegally into the U.S., along with so many others.

And just two more statistics: There are “70,000 drug overdose deaths per year” and “53 million or 19.4% of people 12 and over have used illegal drugs or misused prescription drugs within the last year.”

I have sat with more than a few addicts and heard them say, “I was 8 when I first used.” “I was 9 when I started.” “I began with my mom or dad or a sibling.” It’s devastating to think of children so young being so empty that drugs are appealing. Or that a relative would introduce them to it.

It wrecks your heart to hear these tragic stories.

But all is not lost. Jesus loves the addict and searches for him or her to bring them back to safety and freedom. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, also has His eye on this group among the “least of these” to heal them completely.

My friend, Jessica Stovall, knows this well. She knew about Jesus, even as a child; that is she had the head knowledge about God but she did not KNOW Him as her friend, her Lord, her Savior. Once she did know Him and began to soak in His Word, her life totally changed.

Jessica had gotten caught up in addiction as a teenager and in all the devastation that this lifestyle brings. But she finally sought a better way and found recovery, beginning with going to 12-step fellowships. Later, she found Jesus fully. And now she is bringing Him to others with small groups in her home and through the beginnings of a jail ministry. Her very large church is also catching the flame and is going to rebuild a recovery ministry there.

Jesus cares about all these broken people trapped in drug usage, going through jail, prison and deep shame. He’s inviting us to care too.

I have written a book to be used by pastors, counselors, small group leaders, jail volunteers, etc., called *Jesus and the Addict: Twelve Bible Studies for People Getting Free from Drugs* and is a guide for speaking to and ministering with people in recovery. Many small groups have been formed using this book as a starting place.

Freedom in Christ by Neil Anderson is also an excellent book for helping recovering people grow in faith.

To hear more from Jessica Stovall about the heartaches and losses of addiction and about her hopes for the increase of ministries that bridge the gap between 12-step fellowships and Jesus Christ, listen to this episode (80) of *Rooted by the Stream*. {eoa}

Dr. Pam Morrison is a pastor who has both led churches and also ministered in the inner city and elsewhere with recovering addicts as a pastoral counselor and as part of a healing rooms ministry. She has seen much physical and inner healing. Pam loves ministering overseas and has had a special relationship with people in Cuba for many years. She is the author of *Jesus and the Addict: Twelve Bible Studies for People Getting Free from Drugs*, available in English and Spanish. Her website is www.pamorrison.com. Her podcast with Charisma Podcast Network is called *Rooted by the Stream*. You can email her at pam@pamorrison.com.

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