

How God Delivered Me From the Demon of Pharmakeia

I started **smoking marijuana** when I was 15 years old—and it didn't take long for this gateway drug to open the door to many other immoral behaviors.

Smoking weed opened the door to under-aged drinking. We had fake IDs and a good friend at the local liquor store that got us anything we wanted any time we wanted. Smoking weed opened the door to frequent LSD use. Watching my friends take a few “bad trips” failed to scare me enough to stop dropping. Smoking weed opened the door to using ecstasy, which caused my best friend to go into violent convulsions at a party. Of course, that didn't stop me from trying it again and again.

Smoking weed opened the door to a short-term cocaine addiction. One drug dealer I knew ended up with a bullet in his head picking up his supply and another landed in the hospital with an overdose that almost killed him. Smoking weed opened the door to smoking crack with petty criminals in Key West that would end up on *America's Most Wanted*. Smoking weed opened the door to snorting and shooting heroin in a studio apartment in New York's Hell's Kitchen for a solid week until I was on the brink of addiction.

Yes, smoking weed opened the door to all that and more. It is only by **God's grace** that I survived—and did not end up struggling with lifelong addictions. It's only by God's grace and prayer and a determined will that I was set free from the **demon of pharmakeia**. To this day, one of my best “smoking buddies” from high school is addicted to heroin. I've seen what happens when she doesn't get her fix—and I've seen what she's willing to do to get another bump. And it all started with smoking a little weed in the high school parking lot.

So when some say marijuana is harmless, that it's not a gateway drug ... Well, my experience begs to differ. And when I read polls from the likes of Quinnipiac University that reveal a majority of American voters support the legalization of marijuana, it brings me to my knees in **intercession** for today's youth. Colorado and Washington have already approved recreational use of marijuana, making them the first states in the country to allow weed possession, which is still illegal under federal law.

"With the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes legal in about 20 states, and Washington and Colorado voting this November to legalize the drug for recreational use, American voters seem to have a more favorable opinion about this once-dreaded drug," says Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute.

Once-dreaded drug? We should still dread it. Whether you roll it in a joint, smoke it in a blunt, put it in a bong, a ceramic pipe or a crunched up soda can, bake it into brownies or mix it into tea, we should dread the ripple effect **legalizing marijuana** will have on our nation. Or better yet, we should take authority over the spirits that are working to usher this harmful drug into mainstream American culture.

We have authority in the name of Jesus. Yet we have not been faithful in enforcing the rule of God in this nation. We allowed **prayer** to be taken out of public schools. We allowed **abortion** to be legalized. We allowed **same-sex marriage** to become "normal." And now we are allowing the legalization of marijuana. God help us! We need to rise up in the name of Jesus with the Word of God in our mouths and bind the assignment over the next generation of youth. Otherwise, when it comes to the dumbing down of America, we ain't seen nothing yet.

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