

How God Set Me Free From Painkiller Addiction

On a sunny day in 2008 I woke up with my first migraine headache—and I had it (in one form or another) every day for the next 1,000 days. Three years of acute pain, medical tests and medications. Three years of panic, fear and tears. Worst of all, my three-year battle with migraines brought me face-to-face with narcotic painkiller addiction.

Apparently I'm not alone: Current statistics report that an estimated 50 million Americans suffer from some form of chronic pain. Between 2004 and 2009 prescriptions for opioid pain relievers went from about 45 million to approximately 180 million, more than a fourfold increase.

That's a whole lot of folks in pain and taking painkillers. Let me share with you a bit about my story and how God brought healing and redemption to me.

There's an adage about addiction, which says, "One is too many, and a thousand is neverenough." That phrase perfectly describes what it's like to be dependent on painkillers.

During my battle with migraines and painkiller addiction I found myself between a rock and a hard place: I desired to stop taking the narcotics, but I was in massive amounts of pain.

Let's be honest here and admit there's a "payoff" for taking a pain pill—a euphoric high, which is the reason why narcotics are so addictive. Long-term narcotic use is like a runaway train: Once it has gained speed, it becomes difficult to stop.

I prayed about my Vicodin use constantly. Each night as I crawled into bed I would begin a long discourse with God. *O Lord, I'm so sorry. Forgive me. Help me!* One night as I was

beginning my “pain med conversation” with God, I clearly heard the Holy Spirit say, *Can we talk about anything else tonight?* That gave me a much-needed laugh!

It was in the midst of this ludicrous pain-med cycle that God spoke clearly and distinctly, *Stop taking the Vicodin completely*. He confirmed His word through my pastor and leadership team at my church. They had been aware of my migraine illness, as well as my pain medication use.

I came across this quote by Rick Joyner shortly before I began my journey to go pain-med free: “Until we make the decision that we will not go back, regardless of how painful it gets, we will not go forward with the force of faith that it will take to fulfill our destiny.”

I taped that quote on my refrigerator and read it about 100 times a day. I also held tightly to this Scripture found in Jonah 2:8, “Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs” (NIV).

I hated the thought of “forfeiting” the very grace I needed to fight addiction and receive physical healing from God. I was ready to lay my idol down, once and for all.

Armed with God’s clear directive, the support of my family and closest friends—and that anointed quote—I went off all pain meds cold turkey. (I don’t necessarily recommend the “cold turkey” method. If you are dealing with prescription painkiller addiction seek your doctor’s advice).

During those first few days and weeks I battled extreme migraine pain, fear, insomnia and anxiety. I was shaky, nauseous, achy and sicker than a dog. I endured each day the best I could, and I clung to God. I knew this was His direction for my life, so I obeyed. I provided the “willingness” and the Holy Spirit provided the supernatural strength.

It's hard to explain, but while on one hand it was agony to resist the temptation to medicate myself with narcotic painkillers, on the other hand I was able to somehow endure, resist and conquer because of the courage and grace God supplied me. It was difficult—but not impossible.

During this time the Lord spoke 1 John 3:21-22 to me: "Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him."

This Scripture provided a breakthrough for me! The key was, "if our hearts do not condemn us." It had been impossible for me to stand in faith for my healing because my heart condemned me over my Vicodin abuse. I had lost my "confidence before God." Once I began to walk in the revealed will of God for my life, my confidence returned and I waited in a holy expectation for my healing.

Although my healing was not instant, it did come. Over the course of months I recovered from my illness! In my case, I believe my healing was dependent upon my obedience—but not because God was "holding out on me" Goodness no! God doesn't heal us because we are good. He heals us because *He* is good. And yet, I had a block to that healing flow because of my dependency on my precious painkillers—instead of on God's promise of healing.

Once I no longer had the option of taking matters into my own hands and euphorically medicating myself, I became wide open to the supernatural power of God. And He came! He came and healed me, and He'll do the same for you!

✖ *This article has been adapted by permission from A Season of Breakthrough: Four Strategies to Living a Life of Sustained Freedom by Paula Friedrichsen, author and speaker, .*

PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF 03/04/2013

This week thank God for the amazing grace He gives when you face what appears to be an impossible struggle. Thank Him for giving you courage, strength and endurance to face and defeat any obstacle, addiction, illness or lack in Jesus Name. Ask Him to continue to fill you with His Holy Spirit and produce the fruit of self-control while helping you recall appropriate scriptures to use in any battle you face. Continue to pray for revival in our churches and nation, for more workers to reap the harvest of souls, and for the peace of Jerusalem. Gal. 5:1, 22, 23; John 8:36