

Lenten Devotional 1

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Meditation Verse: [Daniel 9:3](#)

I then turned my face to my Lord God, asking for an answer with prayer and pleading, and with fasting, mourning clothes, and ashes.

What is it that draws people to use drugs? I have often wondered why some people succumb to substance use disorder and others don't. Dr. Bruce Perry M.D., Ph.D. is an American psychiatrist, currently the Senior Fellow of the Child Trauma Academy in Houston, Texas and an Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago, Illinois describes addiction as a combination of DNA, childhood trauma, and environment. Many factors play into the scenario of who may suffer from the misuse of drugs.

I often imagine the intense need to get high like the situation that Odysseus finds him and his crew in, in the Homeric Legend of the *Odyssey*. Odysseus is tied to the mast and hears the beautiful voices of the sirens calling to him. The voices are beautiful, but they are deadly.

As he sets sail, Odysseus passes Circe's counsel on to his men. They approach the island of the lovely Sirens, and Odysseus, as instructed by Circe, plugs his men's ears with beeswax and has them bind him to the mast of the ship. He alone hears their song flowing forth from the island, promising to reveal the future. ([SparkNotes](#))

The lure of heroine has become an ever-present reality in the state of Ohio. It is a street drug that traces its roots back to the Neolithic era in Europe. According to [Heroine.net](#)

The attraction to drug use mystifies some in the church, while others in the family of God are gripped by addiction much like the sailors who were unable to plug their ears in Homer's *Odyssey*.

As a pastor I have encountered the toxic effects of drug misuse in the lives of my own parishioners and members of the community. Often in the church we characterize drug use as an, "us" versus "them" paradigm." The church is a *sanctuary* from the outside world. It would be shocking to some, even in my own congregation, to reveal that used heroine needles have been found in our restrooms following AA meetings. We as a church must delve into a new understanding that drug use in our church and community is a "we" issue.

Lent is a season where the church puts on sack cloth and ashes. It is a time where we reflect on the passion narrative as we delve into the finiteness of human existence. Part of that understanding is penitence, fasting, and charitable works. During this Lenten Season, begin to formulate a strategy how we can address the Heroine Epidemic in our own backyard. One way is to support the Opiate Crisis Prophetic Witness team.

You can support and get involved in many ways:

1. Attend monthly meetings of the Opiate Prophetic Witness Team
2. Join the Eastern Ohio and Western Reserve Prophetic Witness Team [Facebook page](#)
3. Join a 12-step program, if you live with substance use disorder
4. Join an Al-Anon or Nar-Anon group, if you love someone who lives with substance use disorder
5. Give charitably to the Opiate Crisis Prophetic Witness Team
6. Give charitably to a local half way house. Clothes, toiletries, even cookies are always welcome!
7. Write your local city council or governmental official voicing your concerns about the current opiate crisis and thanking them for their commitment for addressing these issues in our communities.
8. Form a Lenten study group delving into the critically acclaimed book by [Sam Quinones, *Dreamland*](#).
9. Plan on attending the Opiate Prophetic Witness Team's Spring Workshop, "Opiates...What is a Church to do?"

There are many ways in which you can become involved, the important part is that you join the us in proactively saying it is time for the church to rise and say we mourn the loss of life, we have put on sack cloth and ashes and we will pursue sharing the good news that God is love. We will no longer succumb to the call of the *sirens*.

Prayer: God you call us into community, give us strength to weather the storm so that we may sail in the understanding that it is your Holy Spirit that fills our sails and guides us on the seas of hope and healing. Amen

If sharing this devotional or sourcing please give credit, to Rev. John Werner.