

Painkillers: The Study Guide

Real People

Real Pain

Real Jesus

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Introduction: Study Guide

Dear Reader,

The messages in *Painkillers* were born in my personal prayer time. When the Lord first spoke to me about developing a teaching series on the subject of painkillers, I immediately thought about what most people think: drugs.

For most people, the physical pain we struggle with pales in comparison to the mental and emotional pain we deal with: Divorce. Abusive childhoods. Cheating spouses. Backstabbing friends and toxic family relationships. Jobs lost and kids gone astray, addictions, and loneliness. Then there's the pain of regret. Guilt. Pain over bad decisions and lost opportunities. Everywhere you go, people are in pain.

When you're in pain, getting out of it, or at least numbing it for a while, is all you can think about. But it's important to realize that anytime you're running *away* from something, you are also running *to* something.

This study is meant to be a tool for you to use to better understand the unhealthy ways of handling pain and the best and only healthy way, Jesus Christ.

As you start this journey of delving deeper into God's love for you, I am praying for God to open your heart to receive His message for you.

In Christ's Love,

Rev. Jacky Connell

I. Isolation

Isolation is a Painkiller that begins slowly. We have a culture of isolation today. From withdrawing into the Internet and social media to isolating ourselves using headphones to drown out those around us, we can easily withdraw into physical, emotional, or psychological isolation, even when surrounded by other people. I encourage you to look prayerfully at the unhealthy ways you may isolate yourself.

1. What is the difference between “alone time” and the painkiller of isolation? Read Matthew 14:23 and Luke 6:12 for examples of Jesus going to pray.

2. Isolation becomes unhealthy when you start to withdraw from your social circle. Who is in your social circle? Do you find yourself withdrawing from them? In what ways do you isolate yourself?

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3. Define in your own words these terms: “unmerited pain,” “unbalanced inward persuasion,” and “unbiblical belief.”

4. In the book, the steps to isolation, unmerited pain, unbalanced inward persuasion, and unbiblical belief are discussed. Do you recognize these in your own life?

5. Once you have convinced yourself to withdraw, you find yourself in “self-inflicted solitary confinement”. In Psalm 42, King David talks about being all alone. When you study the entire psalm, what do you see as an answer to depression and anxiety?

6. Satan has a strategy for isolation. How does he specifically do these three things in your life?

- a. How does he try to neutralize your effectiveness?
- b. How does he try to torment your mind?
- c. How does he try to devour your life?

7. In reading Ecclesiastes 4:9–12, how can you find the solution to the Painkiller of Isolation?

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II. Inappropriate Relationships

The second chapter discusses the Painkiller of Inappropriate Relationships, which have been the downfall of many. Inappropriate relationships devastate lives. Not only do they cause the people engaging in the relationship pain, but they lead to devastation within marriages, families, churches, and everyone related to those in the inappropriate relationships. As we study, prayerfully examine the relationships in your life.

1. In chapter 2, several types of inappropriate relationships are listed. In your own words, define an inappropriate relationship.

2. As social beings, we want to be loved and accepted. The story of Joe and Sue is very common. How can you protect yourself from falling into the trap of an inappropriate relationship?

3. Genesis 3, the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, is an example God gives you of how to flee temptation. What are the ways Joseph protected himself?

4. There are consequences to inappropriate relationships. You see these in the story of David and Bathsheba. Read Psalm 51: How does David list the cure for inappropriate relationships?

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III. Independent Spirit

The Painkiller of Independent Spirit, discussed in chapter 3, is more subtle than the first two Painkillers. The independent spirit is rooted in pride. It is a spirit of rebellion, leading us away from the umbrella of protection established by God. The result is that the independent spirit destroys your life, your relationships, your testimony, your family, and potentially your career and even your church. Take off the mask, and ask the Lord to reveal any area where you may have developed an independent spirit.

1. In your own words, define the independent spirit.

2. We can probably name someone who has an independent spirit, but take some time to prayerfully ask God to search your heart and reveal to you any independent spirit in you.

3. In Isaiah 14:12–14, how did the devil initiate the independent spirit?

4. What are the three kinds of people, and how are they defined?

5. In the story of the prodigal son, how does the son show his independent spirit? What happens to humble him?

6. This chapter gives you several results of an independent spirit. Define them in your own words:

- a. Being demoted
- b. Being hungry and alone
- c. Being lonely and wanting

7. Define the difference between determination and an independent spirit.

8. What are the steps the prodigal son takes to return from his independent spirit?

9. How can we return from our independent spirits?

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IV. Idolatry

The Painkiller of Idolatry, discussed in chapter 4, in some ways might be just as damaging in the long run as drug and alcohol addiction. Idolatry isn't limited to bowing down to little wooden statues. Idolatry is opening up your heart to the wrong things. The world today is filled with idols. We have comfort food, television, sports, our careers, shopping, and even our kids. Anything that's keeping you from being everything you can be for God has become your idol. As you study, prayerfully ask the Lord to reveal any idolatry in your life.

1. Before we began to identify the idols in our lives, it is important that we define what an idol is. In your own words, define idolatry.

2. Matthew 6:24 is a very often quoted scripture. Take a moment to ask God to search your heart and reveal any other master you may be trying to serve.

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3. “What you do in moderation your children will do liberally. If you drink a little, your kids will indulge in alcohol, especially when they go through pain. After all, that’s what Mom and Dad do. They have a bad day, and they sip some wine or beer or smoke a little dope, and it’s all better. If we engage in inappropriate relationships a little, they’ll believe that sex outside marriage and straying outside the family unit is the way people do things. They will be unable to sustain a happy, healthy marriage and family, because you taught them the world’s way.”

The above paragraph speaks loudly to parents and grandparents, but it also speaks to us as Christians and the example we show to the world. In what way does this speak to you? Are you setting up strongholds for the people in your circle of influence? Are there strongholds that the generations before you set up in your life? How can you tear those down?

4. In this chapter, the term “spiritual vacancy” is used. How does this present in your life? What caused your spiritual vacancy?

5. The Lord warns strongly against idolatry. Why do you think it so important that it is the first commandment?

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V. Intoxication

The Painkiller of Intoxication is very common. When you use intoxicating substances in an unregulated, abusive way, it becomes substance abuse. This may or may not be a painkiller you have used, but you probably know someone who has run to the Painkiller of Intoxication. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you as we discuss what the Word says about intoxication.

1. The Bible refers to Intoxication as “sorcery.” In your own words, define it.

2. Proverbs 23:29–32 discusses the effects of intoxication. Chapter 5 lists four stings of intoxication. Define the following in your own words:

- a. The sting of conscience
- b. The sting of self-worth
- c. The sting of disappointment
- d. The sting of failure

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3. The chapter talks about how intoxication affects our sight and our hearts.
What ways have you seen this in your life?

4. If you have a stronghold of intoxication in your life, or know someone
who does, how can you tear it down?

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VI. Intellectual Sabotage

The Painkiller of Intellectual Sabotage may or may not be a painkiller you have used, but you probably know someone who has run to this painkiller. Chapter 6 calls intellectual sabotage the “sneakiest of all the Painkillers.”

When we’re in pain, there’s a tendency to want to get smarter than the people who hurt us. We try to outsmart them and outsmart God and fix ourselves all by ourselves. We begin to believe we don’t need other people, and we don’t need God. Pray God will help you recognize this painkiller.

1. How would you define Intellectual Sabotage?

2. What is the difference between intelligence and the Painkiller Intellectual Sabotage?

3. Intellectual Sabotage is the oldest trick in Satan's playbook. How has he used it in your life?

4. In Luke 18:9–14, the parable of the two men that went to pray, what does Jesus teach us about our attitude when we come before the Lord?

5. Do you see any of the Pharisee in yourself?

6. How can we protect ourselves from the Painkiller of Intellectual Sabotage?

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VII. Insecurity

The Painkiller of Insecurity is one most of us have run to at some time in our lives. Instead of acting as a painkiller, insecurity acts as another source of pain in your life. Not only does it cause you pain and heartache and damage your interpersonal relationships, but insecurity also makes it impossible for God to fulfill His purpose in your life. Pray for God to guide you in studying chapter 7.

1. In your own words, define insecurity.

2. Philippians 1:6 talks about “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” How can this scripture help you fight the Painkiller of Insecurity?

3. In the chapter, there are three Biblical examples of insecurity: Moses, Sarah, and the Thief on the Cross. How do you relate to each of them?

4. The chapter explains the path of insecurity: You experience pain. Your pain causes you to become insecure. The devil turns your insecurities into fear. The demonic fear makes it impossible to have faith. When our faith is interrupted, it manifests in unbelief in ourselves and in our God. We are now easily defeated, helpless, and hopeless. Why is recognizing this path important?

5. The provision for insecurity is illustrated beautifully in 2 Corinthians 12:9:

And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Define in your own words the Lord's threefold provision for our security:

a. God's Grace:

b. God's Strength:

c. God's Power:

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Conclusion: Study Guide

Thank you for joining me in this journey. I pray that it has touched your life in a powerful and meaningful way. I know that there is no “magic cure” for your pain. Healing deep emotional pain just isn’t that simple or easy. When we run from something, we run to something, and God created us to run to Him.

Jesus tells us:

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

(John 16:33)

He promises us peace! God knows your pain and understands better than anyone how to help you overcome it. It may be that God will work a miracle and take your pain completely away when you submit to Him, or He may choose to use your pain to shape and mold you into the person He created you to be. The point is He loves you and wants you to choose Him as your Pain Taker!

If you have questions about asking the Lord in your heart, please contact us at www.jcimpact.org.