

ALCOHOL AND DRUG DEPENDENCE NINE – DESIGNER DRUGS Copyright 2024, Paul F Spite

(This is based on belief in God. If that offends you, stop reading now)

In this presentation, we will look at designer drugs, those with effects to be determined. A normal Friday night, on the corner of 138th and Brook Ave in the Bronx. Deals were being made and buyers leaving with little packages of fake heroin. Sales of a new drug named “Tango and Cash” were brisk, since the drug was on sale. It offered the same effect as heroin at a much lower cost. Things only got bad a few hours later, when OD victims began arriving in emergency rooms. By the end of the weekend, 3 were dead and 130 were hospitalized in three states. But the dealers in Tango and Cash got their money up front. (To be continued)

General Description of Drugs in this Class:

Designer drugs are synthetic versions (analogs) of any controlled substance. They are created with molecular structures that differ slightly from a listed illegal drug. They are intended to have the same effects, with no legal consequences from law-enforcement (yet). Many are made in clandestine laboratories, often by amateurs. So they tend to be more dangerous than the drug they replace. One popular analog of methamphetamine is MDMA, also called Ecstasy.

Some marketers of designer drugs, especially hallucinogens, began calling them “research chemicals.” Widespread discussion of consumptive use and sources for these in public forums, drew the attention of media and authorities. Now some still ban new drugs as they appear, but many have enacted sweeping bans with rules for chemical structure, based on existing drugs. These make analogs illegal before they are created.

Common Street Names: Fentanyl, synthetic heroin or “China White, 50-2,000 times as powerful as heroin. Good luck with that. Meperidine, also known as synthetic heroin, new heroin, MTPT or MPPP. If cooked too quickly, MPPP becomes MPTP, a really fun drug discussed later. Amphetamines and Methamphetamines, the best known is Ecstasy, with others having names like XTC, Adam, Essence, MDM, STC, PMA, 5-DMA, TMA, DOM, DOB, Eve, Ice, BATV, California Glass and Crystals. Ice or meth looks like rock salt or rock candy and can be smoked or injected. It can also be sold and drank or eaten by other addicts, when carried into incarceration in urine or in scabs. Narcotic derivatives, Tryptamine-based substances including “Foxy,” Phenethylamine-based substances like "bromo-mescaline," MDMA, DOB and DOM, PCP analogues, including TCP and PCE, Piperazine- based substances and designer steroids. This list is old and many more now exist.

How Designer Drugs Affect Users:

Designer drugs are intended to affect users the same way as more expensive or more illegal drugs of every type. Sometimes they do. Sometimes they just kill or cripple users.

For example, consider the Fentanyls, a group of designer analogs, hundreds or thousands of times stronger than narcotics. Some effects besides pleasure include; a high that only lasts 1-2 hours, a difference between an active and a lethal dose measured in a few crystals and interference with breathing lasting a few hours longer than the high. It can cause chest muscles to “freeze,” especially when a second dose follows the first fading dose.

Legitimate Medical Uses:

New drugs are often designed to replace more expensive ones, especially as patents preventing duplication expire for widely-used, but expensive prescription drugs.

Reasons Behind Designer Drug Use:

Reasons people purchase and use designer drugs? They're cheaper than drugs for which they substitute. No extra cost is added to import them from other countries. Consumer exoticism says, "Never tried that one before." It's something to do to make time pass or an escape from a life and situations that would otherwise be intolerable. Once addiction sets in, we are married to the drug till death or the agony of withdrawal does us part.

Consequences for Abuse of Designer Drugs

Physical Health

Designer drugs carry all the dangers as their authentic counterparts. The toxic levels of some chemicals used are considered too hazardous to put into landfills, so we dump them in our bodies instead. They are often compounded by amateurs with no idea what will happen to users, till they get a few willing lab rats. For users, if something goes wrong, the worst things to fear are irreversible brain damage or sudden death.

Mental Health

Anyone willing to use their bodies to test new drugs for amateur chemists has to have a major problem with self-worth. The practice among some youth, called 'pharming,' is stupidity at a whole new level. This is do-it-yourself designer drugs. Randomly mix a bunch of stolen prescription drugs together and take them to see what they'll do to your body or your mind.

Probability of Addiction / Dependence

These are just as addictive as the drugs they imitate and replace.

Social or Societal Consequences

Family members have little interest in caring for, or paying others indefinitely to care for, brain dead or paralyzed loved ones who took incredibly foolish risks.

Legal Consequences

Most were originally created to mimic known drugs, but not be illegal. It is easier to make a near copy here, than smuggle the real thing into the country. But since 1986, all designer drugs have been outlawed under sweeping legislation. Now they too carry prison terms.

The Trap Associated With Designer Drug Use:

It's a seductive idea, buying cheaper designer drugs with the same effect as the drug to which you are addicted. There is the problem that a small mistake in manufacturing will change them from drugs to poison and the skill of chemists involved ranges from expert to complete novice. They've no idea what they've created till it's been tested on a consumer group, like you.

But those are manufacturing concerns. For problems with users, ask victims who are still alive. They're the real experts. But at least manufacturers and dealers got their money up front.

The Rest of the Story:

In 1982, a chemist compounding Demerol, took a shortcut that backfired. It's never been proven he knew about his mistake, but his customers found out. They shot up and short-circuited

central nervous systems. Thinking they were shooting “China White,” they self-administered a form of Parkinson’s disease. The new drug was called MTPT and some of its costumers swore by it. The rest have been called living statues since they used, some found paralyzed with needles still stuck in their arms. Those don’t swear by it or do anything at all, except exist. But, at least the dealers of MTPT got paid in advance.

Amazingly for creators of designer drugs, there seems to be no shortage of users volunteering to be test tubes for their experiments.

A Practical Application:

No matter how old we get, when crossing a street, something tells us “Look both ways.” That was drilled into us when small. We could not only visualize the danger, but inevitably, someone we knew had been hit and we knew how dangerous it could be not to look. We tell kids to look hard at dangers with drugs, but it’s hard to visualize dangers with designer drugs. We don’t know yet how bad new ones can hurt us, until victims have been hospitalized or buried.



With designer drugs, you can’t know about the creator, till his product is in and you are in for the ride of your life or the last one. It’s bad, discovering the line you just ran was 80% pure and you just overdosed. If the maker got impatient and turned up the heat, making MPTP? Only the paralyzed users care, unable now to voice a complaint.

New drugs lend themselves to having compounds like PCP mixed in. That cheap white powder claimed to be heroin, can actually be any white powder. It’s like opening a Cracker Jack box, to discover the prize you just put inside. Maybe it’s more like Pandora’s Box. The collateral damages just get bigger and the casualty list longer and longer. But chemists and dealers are getting richer and richer, so no one cares. Just victims, their children and others who loved them.

Designer drugs are like the old ‘game’ of Russian roulette. Contestants spin a revolver with one chamber loaded, then place the gun against their head and pull the trigger. The ‘game’ continues until someone becomes the ultimate loser and loses their mind. There has to be something seriously wrong in our lives, to take such risks.

A Historical Application:

We meet the woman at the well in the scriptures, the same time Jesus meets her. Her life was pretty well ruined by then. If she could’ve afforded an escape from reality, she’d probably used designer drugs. Few would’ve blamed her. But Jesus traveled to Samaria, just to meet her.

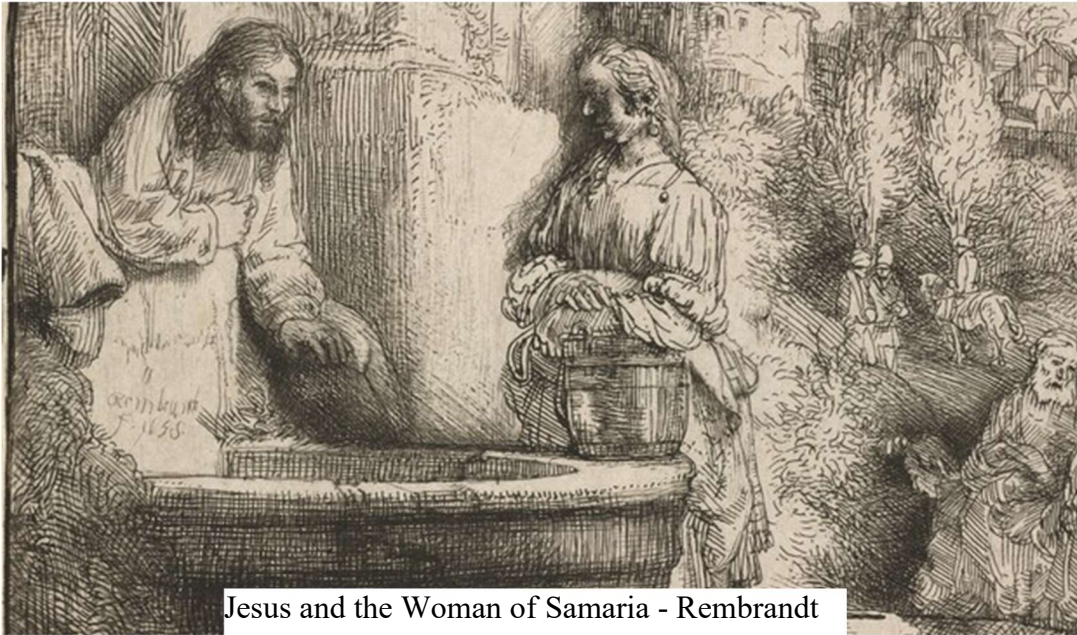
It wasn’t an easy meeting for either. Just to speak to her, Jesus had to violate Jewish taboos regarding Samaritans and men speaking with unmarried women. She had no interest in hanging around with a righteous and holy teacher. She came to the well at midday to avoid other women and gossip. She had already had five husbands and was currently shacking up with a man who wouldn’t marry her. What she needed was water, not someone else who might condemn her.

Instead of judgement, she received a chance at a new life. First Jesus let her know he knew all about her past. Because until we admit we have a problem, God Himself cannot help us. Then he offered her living water, an offer she took him up on. When we leave her, she had been commissioned by God as a preacher to Samaria. The disgraced woman had become a messenger of God’s hope for a sinful land.

Trying Out a Better Way:

Was the woman at the well effective in her new life? When Phillip arrived years later, there was a in Samaria church ready for a pastor. She had found a different source of life, another

identity and reality in which to live. She found a new and better world, without either using drugs or taking foolish risks with alternate products manufactured by fools.
You can too.



Jesus and the Woman of Samaria - Rembrandt

