

Christians And Smoking

'Prepare your minds for action, be sober and set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus our Messiah, as children of obedience, not conforming yourselves according to your former desires as in your ignorance (before accepting Jesus), but just as God Who called you is holy, you yourselves should be holy in all of your behaviour. It is written, "You will be holy for I am holy" (Leviticus 20:26; 1 Peter 1:13 to 16).

'Do you not realise you are a temple of God and God's Holy Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy them for God's temple is holy, which you are (only after accepting Jesus as Saviour) ... Do you not realise your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, which you have from God? You are not your own, you were bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which (in reality) are God's' (1 Corinthians 3:16 & 17; 6:19 & 20).

People who do not know Jesus as their Saviour are ignorant of the fact, smoking is sin. Smoking is sin because it slowly destroys the body, a holy temple of flesh and blood created by God for His purposes and smoking does not glorify God. Smoking is an addiction that causes irrational behaviour in those who are so addicted, if they cannot get a cigarette to smoke they often become impatient, aggressive, they may steal and sometimes become violent. They find it difficult to concentrate so someone who is craving a cigarette could become a very dangerous driver. No, the Bible does not say, "Thou shalt not smoke," but if we study the opening verses above we can see that smoking is a sin against the Holy Spirit because it slowly destroys the 'temple' of God. If you are a Christian and are still smoking, you are living in a state of sin and cannot receive blessings due to you. You need to quit, repent and never smoke again.

A person does not need to smoke for very long to become addicted. Some ingredients in cigarettes are deliberately added to get people addicted as quickly as possible so the cigarette companies can make money. They do not care a jot about the health of the smokers. Smoking seriously reduces the fitness of the smoker and reduces the ability to inhale a lung full of fresh air. Cigarettes, pipes, cigars, snuff (powdered tobacco), chewing tobacco and other tobacco products contain over 4,000 poisonous chemicals and toxins. The Lord did not create our lungs to be able process these inhaled poisons so when people inhale the chemicals, their bodies slowly begin to react as the toxins build up and are stored in various organs throughout the body. Chewing tobacco and snuff can cause cancer in the mouth, throat, oesophagus and around the lips.

The following list of chemicals and other poisonous ingredients are just a few of the over 4,000 added to the tobacco during processing. Various insecticides used to make mothballs and DDT; Arsenic used for rat poison; Sulphuric Acid used in car batteries; Butane gas used in cigarette lighters; Ammonia used in cleaning products; Acetone used for nail polish remover and paint stripper; Hydrogen Cyanide used in gas chambers to kill people; Formaldehyde used for preserving dead bodies and lab specimens; Tar used in road manufacture. Tar is the black, sticky substance people cough up when they give up smoking. It adheres to and coats the lining of the lungs turning the surface of the lungs black. Tar reduces the elasticity of the lungs making breathing more difficult. It takes at least three months for the lungs to clear themselves of tar build up. Carbon monoxide found in car exhaust fumes is also in tobacco. Carbon Monoxide causes swelling of the respiratory tract, less air is inhaled so there is less oxygen circulating around the body. That means there is less oxygen to bind the haemoglobin in the body so less oxygen reaches the muscles, brain, heart and other vital organs. Less oxygen going to the muscles means the muscles are less able to allow the smoker to exercise effectively and it will cause fatigue and sometimes muscle aches as muscle tone diminishes. When the smoker inhales Carbon Monoxide via the cigarette, the smoking itself is as foolish as someone putting their mouth around an exhaust pipe and breathing in the fumes! Why do it? Why smoke at all? Nobody would drink a cocktail of these poisons so why smoke them?

Any pregnant woman who smokes is poisoning her unborn baby. If she loves her baby, she would not smoke. Smoking while pregnant can cause miscarriage, premature births, stillbirths, underweight full term babies and babies can be born addicted and thus endure the same withdrawal symptoms experienced by smokers who quit suddenly. Maternal smoking reduces oxygen and blood flow to the unborn babies that can later cause sudden infant death syndrome, learning difficulties, behavioural problems, rotten teeth, cancer, leukaemia, asthma and other health problems in the children after they are born.

Smoking affects the smoker but it also affects non-smokers adversely and children are the most numerous victims. Exposure to toxic smoke emitted by cigarettes and other tobacco products harms and kills many people every year. Passive smoking, secondary smoking, environmental tobacco smoking and smoke drift are all the same thing – exhaled smoke or the smoke emitted by the tobacco products as they burn. It is deadly for young children to be exposed to passive smoking. They suffer the same illnesses as smokers do

but worse because they are smaller than adults. Passive smoke causes many symptoms such as difficulty breathing, bronchitis, pneumonia, slower lung growth and decreased lung capacity in small children, increased future risk of lung cancer and heart disease, wheezing, tightness in the chest, asthma, ear infections, sore and watery eyes, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, and a deadly build up of phlegm in the sinuses, throat and lungs. The phlegm that builds up in the child's respiratory tract can be fatal as the child slowly suffocates. Opening a window, using ventilation, a fan or air conditioning does not protect people from toxic passive smoke. Non-smokers have a right to breathe clean air so we can legally ask a smoker to stop smoking around us, but because smokers are addicted and thus completely self-centred, they would probably react aggressively. Most smokers do not care about their children, neighbours or the people around them as we have seen by the way smokers always whinge about new laws that ban smoking in restaurants and other places. If those laws were not introduced, smokers would continue to smoke in those places because they are utterly selfish and do not care about the harm they are doing to themselves and people close to them. If they cared about the toxic fumes they emit, they would not smoke at all. The French word for smoker is 'fumer' which is a very accurate description. The Hebrew word for smoker is 'ashan', another accurate description.

Some harmful effects of smoking begin from the first cigarette. Other harmful effects take years to reveal themselves. The immediate effects that can take just days or weeks to occur are the odour on the hair and bad breath as the arsenic comes out through the hair follicles and can be smelled on the breath. There is less oxygen to the brain and lungs, blood pressure and heart rate increase, the skin becomes dull and the smoker is inclined to more frequent coughs, colds and headaches. What the new smoker did not realise was within ten seconds of the very first puff, 50% of their brain's dopamine pathway would be saturated with nicotine. More long term effects are the tar stains of the skin, especially on the fingers. Teeth become stained and begin rotting. Gum disease sets in and sometimes their teeth fall out. Skin becomes dry, discoloured, wrinkled and prone to diseases like ulcers. In fact the entire body becomes prone to mouth ulcers, skin ulcers, stomach ulcers, duodenal ulcers and ulcerated intestines. Illnesses like heart disease, strokes, blood clots, cancers, blindness, ear infections, asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, leukaemia, emphysema, infertility and impotence are all common among smokers. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable deaths in our society.

Electronic cigarettes are no less harmful – they just do harm in other ways. E-cigarettes are battery operated devices that produce a vapour similar to normal cigarettes. The difference is the smoker can choose a range of flavours, which is quite silly when we realise there are no taste buds in the lungs. Although e-cigarettes do not contain tar, they do contain carcinogens like nicotine, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, metallic nanoparticles and of course, the smoker still inhales toxic smoke. The e-cigarette industry want smokers to be slaves to smoking forever because that is how their money is made so they continue to lie to smokers, convincing them e-cigarettes are harmless.

Naturally occurring nicotine is not actually added to tobacco, it is a poisonous alkaloid found in the tobacco plant. It is the tobacco plant's natural protection against insects – a natural insecticide. However, synthetic nicotine is added to tobacco. It is highly addictive and is added to tobacco to keep the smoker addicted as it is absorbed into the bloodstream. Nicotine is not only addictive, it causes the heart rate to increase with every cigarette so the smoker's heart has to work much harder than normal. Nicotine constricts the blood vessels and reduces blood flow causing heart and lung health issues and high blood pressure. When nicotine enters the bloodstream, it immediately stimulates the adrenal gland releasing adrenaline, increasing the heart rate, blood pressure and respiration. Nicotine increases the chances of the neurotransmitter, dopamine affecting the brain. The long term brain changes caused by nicotine causes the intense addiction that becomes worse with time. Addicts will compulsively seek tobacco even when faced with serious health complications or social issues. Acetaldehyde, another poisonous compound added to tobacco, enhances the effect nicotine has on the brain. Acetaldehyde and nicotine together results in highly addicted people suffering withdrawal symptoms like sleep disturbances, irritability, impatience, food cravings, inability to concentrate and depression that can last for several days. After about a month following quitting smoking, the blood pressure will begin to normalise. It is not nicotine that causes cancer, cancer is caused by many of the other chemicals that are added to tobacco.

The toxic synthetic nicotine grown as a farm crop has been blamed for killing millions of honeybees. It is as lethal as strychnine and three times as deadly as arsenic. Once inside the brain, nicotine is similar to acetylcholine, another neurotransmitter, in the way it controls and effects the over two hundred chemicals in the brain, but mainly dopamine. Dopamine is the neuro-chemical that keeps us alive by using sensation. It stops us from starving by making us feel hungry, then full when we have eaten enough. If we do not eat for several days, the dopamine makes us crave food. It stops us becoming dehydrated by making us feel thirsty. It helps us succeed by giving us a sense of satisfaction when we achieve. Nicotine makes the addict crave more nicotine. However, not all smokers will crave nicotine and some are able to quit smoking with ease.

People who are addicted often deny smoking is harmful, they deny passive smoking can harm their children and are generally indifferent to the harm they are causing themselves and others because the neuro-chemical messages are changed by the nicotine. Addicts cannot remember life before smoking and dread the thought of having to go without their regular 'fix' even though they are often aware of their downward spiral of self-destruction. The addiction to smoking can become a mental illness, making quitting almost impossible without God's intervention.

Once a person stops smoking, their brain will recover. It takes about three days for the brain to become nicotine free but the damage to health can take longer to heal. In three weeks the fear of not having nicotine diminishes. It is important not to miss a meal because the blood sugar could fall making recovery from smoking harder. Nicotine allowed addicts to skip meals with ease but without nicotine new quitters need regular, small meals with plenty of water to help flush the toxins out of the body. Smokers convince themselves, smoking relieves stress. In fact the opposite is true. Smoking intensifies stress. Addicts' stress can sometimes be caused by having to go without a cigarette for a while so they believe smoking will relieve the stress when in fact all a cigarette is doing is satisfying the craving.

Addiction to tobacco products often requires several attempts to quit. Some people never quit. There was a woman who has since died, who had her oesophagus removed due to cancer and she needed to breathe through a tube in her throat but she used the tube to continue smoking. She only stopped smoking when she died of cancer. Some people need a lot of help to quit smoking and scientists are constantly trying to invent ways to make quitting easier. The nicotine replacement therapy industry gets their products from the same tobacco growers. They convince smokers, instead of quitting, they can wean the addicts off smoking slowly, dragging out the cessation for months and making a huge amount of money in the process. Very few people actually stop smoking by using nicotine based medications. They just continue to use the various products, sometimes indefinitely. All smokers are only three days away from beginning their natural withdrawal process if they go 'cold turkey' and the tobacco companies know that so they tell smokers about all the ways they can continue swallowing, chewing, inhaling their products or wearing patches – and keep people addicted without actually smoking cigarettes. They convince vulnerable smokers their poisonous products are 'medicine'. Swapping to e-cigarettes or 'quitting aides' is actually a drug dependency swap. Some people continue to smoke while using so-called 'quit therapies', giving them a stronger and more intense 'high'.

Cold turkey quitters are still the most successful. Many cold turkey quitters who were very fearful of the withdrawal symptoms so delayed quitting, are surprised when their withdrawal symptoms were so mild they had no real problem. People can quit cold turkey if they want to. What smokers really need is a good dose of self-control, will power and determination to overcome their addiction. People need to take responsibility for their own actions and not expect anyone else to do that for them. They may need to pray and ask God to help them. Once a smoker gives up they must never again take another puff. Some people think just taking one puff will not hurt but that one puff can lead a former addict back onto the path of destruction. We all know the saying, 'once an addict – always an addict'. Former addicts need to always keep that in mind.

Introducing our, 'Gradual Method to Quit Smoking'. This method costs nothing, is very successful, is not as dramatic as cold turkey and has no withdrawal symptoms but it does take time, patience and discipline. You will need to exercise self-control and rigorous time management if you want to succeed using this method. To start, take notice of the time you have your first cigarette each morning. If your first cigarette for the day is about 7am for example, start by delaying that first cigarette for 30 minutes so the first smoke would be at 7:30am. Once you have got used to having that first cigarette at 7:30am, keep doing that for a week. Do not have a cigarette before 7:30am. On the second week, have your first cigarette at 8am and keep that up for a week. On the third week have your first cigarette at 8:30am delaying that first cigarette by a further thirty minutes and do not have a cigarette before 8:30am. If you want a cigarette before then, have a large glass of water instead. Do whatever you need to do to take your mind off smoking ... go for a walk, play with your children, read the Bible, spend time in prayer – do something but do not have a cigarette earlier than that time. On the fourth week have the first smoke at 9am then the fifth week at 9:30am, then 10am and so on. If you keep delaying your first cigarette of the day by thirty to sixty minutes gradually week by week, after a few months your first cigarette of the day would be late in the afternoon. That is the time to quit forever. You would no longer be addicted. If you fail one day and have a cigarette earlier, stay at that time for a week and continue your gradual delays but do not give up. 'Be strong and behave yourselves like men ... quit yourselves like men and fight' (1 Samuel 4:9).

Amen and God bless you.

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