

What About Tobacco?

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

“Can a man chew tobacco and go to Heaven?” was a question put to Mr. Moody. His reply, though not elegant and a bit jolting, about covers the situation. “Yes,” answered Mr. Moody, “but he will have to go to hell to spit!”

Years ago Dr. John R. Rice was speaking on the subject of tobacco at a Bible conference. Dr. Rice was warning against the dangers of tobacco use and why it was wrong for Christians to use tobacco. Two of the other speakers, one was Dr. Andrew Telford, wanted to play a trick on him. Dr. Telford personally told me that one morning while brother Rice was absent from his cottage that he, and another speaker at the conference, went out into the surrounding tobacco fields and picked some tobacco. They brought the tobacco back to the cottage of Dr. Rice and stuffed tobacco leaves under his bed covers. When Dr. Rice opened his covers that evening he found a bunch of tobacco leaves staring at him in the face. The very evil he was speaking against was under his bed sheets!

As a pastor in the trenches of normal pastoral life, I have discovered that many people, Christians included, are addicted to cigarettes, nicotine, or tobacco. I have seen Christians struggle with the smoking habit for many years before they finally give up this addictive and dangerous habit. I have also seen Christians delivered from the bondage of nicotine as they genuinely sought the Lord's victory. One man said to me that one day, as a Christian, he threw his pack of cigarettes out of the truck window and never touched them again. He could tell you the exact spot where he threw them out of the window and won the victory over the tobacco that had held him in bondage for many years. Another individual said to me that it was on a specific date in 1970 when he stopped his addictive habit of smoking and since then his physical and spiritual life has changed for the better.

My friend, if you are a Christian who uses tobacco, whether it's cigarettes or other forms of chewing tobacco, I want to graciously point out the error of your ways in this study. I also want to assure

you today that God has provided a way of victory for your life over the controlling habit and power of tobacco or nicotine. As we study God's Word you should become convicted about using tobacco and then surrender your life to the Lord, who is to be your only Master, and no longer suffer from nicotine dependency. God has provided a way of escape for you (1 Cor. 10:13). If you want to escape from this habit you can by God's grace.

Many preachers today fail to speak on a topic such as this out of fear that they might offend certain Christians in their congregations who are addicted to cigarettes. But the pastor's calling is not to cater to the people's sins but to expose sin and allow the Spirit to do His sanctifying work in their lives (2 Tim. 4:2-4). Others avoid preaching on this subject by claiming that smoking is no different than any other sin that a Christian might commit. I must agree. But why would you want to use this argument as a way to never address the tobacco topic? Whether the sin is jealousy, unforgiveness, gluttony, gossip, fornication, adultery, or other works of the flesh, does not matter. All these sins, including the use of tobacco, need to be addressed at times so that the saints can think on their erring ways and reshape their lives by God's grace. Just because many Christians have a weight problem doesn't change the truth about tobacco. In short, sin must be addressed from the pulpit and not sidestepped. Preaching the Word will bring conviction, expose sin, and bring the skeletons out of the closet (John 17:17).

In all my years as a Christian I have never heard a message or study on smoking or the abuse of tobacco. But today I want to present this study about tobacco so the Lord might use it to help those Christians who are struggling with the nicotine/tobacco habit. I am presenting this study from a pastor's heart and not from the perspective of wanting to bash Christian brothers and sisters over the head who might smoke cigarettes or use tobacco. This writer does not know how hard it is to quit tobacco. However, many Christians have told me that it is about the hardest thing in the world to do. We should have compassion on those who smoke, chew, etc. We should help them quit and change their life. We should never be haughty and rude toward those who are weaker (1 Thess. 2:7; Gal. 6:1).

What we need on this matter of tobacco is Biblical instruction that leads to true and lasting conviction instead of manmade conviction. When Biblical conviction arises in the heart then God can begin to work and change the lives of people who suffer from the addiction of nicotine.

Is Tobacco mentioned in the Bible?

I have read those tracts that try to use certain verses in the Bible that point to the use of tobacco or smoking. Of course, they are always *taken out of context* and do not refer to smoking or the use of tobacco. Such verses, as these, have been favorites of antismoking evangelistic preachers:

Psalm 18:8

“There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.”

Proverbs 16:27

“An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips *there is* as a burning fire.”

Genesis 15:17

“And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.”

Perhaps we need to be careful of trying to make fun of smokers from these types of verses in the Bible that have been taken out of context and which have nothing to do with using tobacco or smoking cigarettes. Calling someone a “walking furnace” is not the graceful way (Col. 4:6) of presenting their sin to them nor does it convey the way of victory that they can have over their nicotine habit. I’m afraid there has been too much “funny stuff” going on when it comes to preaching against this sin instead of really trying to help those Christians who are struggling with this sinful addiction. One preacher said, “If God would have wanted us to blow smoke out of our mouth and nostrils he would have given us a chimney to do it.” As preachers we must get to the root of this sinful habit and seek surrender from the smoker or the person who is addicted to tobacco.

Smoking or tobacco use is not mentioned as a sin in the Bible. This is why some Christians will try and justify their smoking habits and never seek to give up their smoking ways. But there are very clear principles in the Bible that condemn the actions of smoking and use of nicotine or tobacco. Just because the Bible does not specifically condemn a certain action does not mean God is pleased with the action. For instance, the Bible does not specifically tell us that we cannot walk into an adult bookstore filled with pornography but there are plenty of Scriptural principles that forbid such actions (Galatians 5:19; Matt. 5:28; 1 Cor. 6:18). The Bible does not directly come out and say that it's wrong to watch soap operas and other raunchy things on television but there are clear principles that condemn viewing inappropriate material (Ps. 101:3; Job 31:1). The Bible does not specifically say we cannot listen to rock music, which glorifies sex, drugs and alcohol. But once again there are Scriptural and moral principles that are found in the Bible that would lead us to the same conclusions that these types of actions are Biblically wrong (Philippians 4:8; Leviticus 10:10-11). The Bible does not specifically tell us that we cannot run a pin through our nose or eyelid but there are verses and Biblical principles taught in the Scripture that would forbid such actions (Jeremiah 10:2; Matthew 6:7; 1 John 2:15-17). As we study this subject about tobacco we want to address those verses and Biblical principles that would condemn the use of tobacco or nicotine as a habit or way of life. It's my prayer that the Word of God would do a tremendous work in the hearts of Christians who have been oppressed by this sinful habit (Heb. 4:12). After all, it's the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and the ministry of the Spirit of God (2 Cor. 3:18) that will change the hearts, lives, and even the health of God's people.

Should the Christian Use Tobacco?

As we consider the Scriptural evidence why a Christian should stop using tobacco we will see exactly why smoking and other tobacco use is a sinful habit that needs to be addressed in the Christian life. So for sake of clarity let's look at some Biblical reasons why a Christian should stop using tobacco.

There are seven Biblical reasons why a Christian should not use tobacco.

1. Because using tobacco is a fleshly habit.

It can be concluded that smoking is a sinful habit of the flesh. As stated above, the fact that something is not mentioned in the Bible does not mean that it is not a sin or a fleshly practice. You will remember that when Paul was talking about the “works of the flesh,” or those sins that are generated from the old nature, he does not give an exhaustive list (“and such like”) – Galatians 5:21. Smoking is a “such like sin” or fleshly sin that controls the body and must be forsaken in the Christian life just like lasciviousness, envy, drunkenness, hatred, and many other sins mentioned in this list. Smoking is generated from the old nature or from the sin factory that is still operating inside of us. We know that using tobacco is fleshly because smoking or nicotine creates a dependency that overtakes the lives of people and controls them. *The works of the flesh are seen to be sins that enslave or master the lives of people and bring them under bondage.* This is why people commit other sinful acts such as adultery, fornication and outbursts of anger. These actions tell the story that people have in some measure given into the flesh and are under its control instead of God’s control. If you are a smoking Christian or tobacco user you must consider how the flesh wants to control your life through this drug. Yes, face the facts. Smoking and tobacco use is a drug that needs to be forsaken in the Christian life. Many today want to say no to drugs. Well, in doing this they need to say no to using tobacco. The tobacco addiction is fleshly in that it controls people and enslaves them to a life of willful dependency on a drug that harms their bodies.

2. Because using tobacco is a worldly practice.

This point actually flows out of the first point since the flesh is part of the world system. 1 John 2:15-16 says, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” The world is a wicked system that is headed up by its maker who is the devil. It is a cultural system of thoughts, practices, places, values, philosophies, music, money, trends, styles, and influences that run contrary to God and His will for our lives (see 2:17b – the world is in contrast to the will of God). The

world system is always opposed and contrasted to God's perfect will for our lives. The flesh, as it controls our body, can never be of the Lord. The flesh and fleshly sins are considered to be worldly in nature and philosophy. So when we are consistently under the fleshly control and addiction of tobacco we possess the traits of a worldly Christian. This is because we are a believer who is being controlled by the flesh, which is part of the world system (1 John 2:16). When we follow the world system it becomes a ploy to keep us away from God's will for our lives. In addition, when we love worldly things and become addicted to them we no longer possess true love for the Father ("If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him") – 1 John 2:15. The world system not only keeps us from doing God's will for our lives but also loving the Father as we should love Him. The world competes for the loyalty and love of Christians. The believer cannot love the system and the Father at the same time (Matt. 6:24). The believer cannot do the Father's will while engaging in worldly activity. When we participate in worldly activity we set ourselves up as God's enemy (James 4:4). Following a cultural system that controls us and keeps us from practicing God's will and loving Him, as we should, results in Christians opposing God and setting themselves up as His enemy.

I once was talking to a Christian who was blowing cigarette smoke in my face. Trying not to gag and cough on his second hand smoke, I asked him if he loved the Lord Jesus Christ, as he should. The man affirmed that he loved the Lord and yet his actions while smoking that cigarette spoke differently. I can't say he was in love with the Lord when he was using his body as a place for addiction and slavery to another substance other than God. We may love the Lord Jesus but when we allow worldly cravings to rule and run our lives we cannot love God the Father at the same time we are fulfilling those fleshly cravings. Let's not fool ourselves. 1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

There are many "things that are in the world" that seek to run our lives but the root cause behind all the cultural things in this world that lead us astray is the powerful trio of evil called "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). This tells us that the world consists of evil fleshly cravings that control our lives and pride, which puffs up in our hearts and controls our thinking and

actions. The world is actually a system that seeks to control our actions and thinking through wrong cravings and desires. One of the chief components of the world system is called the “flesh” (1 John 2:16) as this Bible text says. The flesh is that element in man, which is working against him. The sin factory is still trying to produce sinful habits in our lives. Cigarettes and tobacco are worldly fleshly sins, among many others, which seek to dominate or control us, keep us from loving God supremely, and following His will for our lives. Cigarettes and nicotine are addictive habits that the old nature uses to control the believer. Tobacco controls the Christian and brings them under bondage as we are going to see in a few moments. Therefore, this cultural practice of the world is fleshly and sinful – “the lust of the flesh.” The use of tobacco becomes a fleshly practice of the world that keeps God’s people under bondage. This is because anything that becomes habit forming is fleshly in nature.

So the world with its permeating culture is that which steals a person’s complete love and loyalty away from the Lord. Allow me to reiterate. When a Christian loves the world the “love of the Father is not in him” (vs. 15) meaning that God’s love is not the controlling factor and influence in his life as it should be. As a young student of Scripture, during my Bible training days, Dr. John Miles was critiquing my message on this particular passage – 1 John 2:15-17. I was standing up there preaching away and He was listening intently. After I was finished he made the comment that I need to always remember that the world tries to steal our loyalty away from God in one way or another. This is very true. The Bible says that loving the world’s cultural system (“the things that are in the world”), whatever these specific things might be (smoking, swearing, gambling, anger, adultery, gossip), takes us away from doing what we need to be doing – “the will of God” (vs.17). When the world’s set of values controls our lives we become worldly, in some measure and to some degree, within our day-to-day living and practice. As a result, the controlling elements in the world rob us of loving God supremely and doing His will.

The Bible tells us that we should not conform to the practices of the culture that take us away from God’s control over our life, God’s love, and God’s will. Romans 12:2 says: “And be not conformed (molded) to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,

that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Smoking cigarettes or using tobacco is a worldly habit that molds us to a system that is against God. That may sound old-fashioned but it is God-fashioned! When Christians addict themselves to tobacco they allow their flesh to interfere with their walk, love, and commitment to the Lord. 1 Peter 1:14 also says: “As obedient children, not fashioning (molding) yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.” When a Christian uses tobacco they conform themselves to the world culture or system that seeks to keep them in fleshly bondage. This bondage results in the Christian straying from God’s perfect will and loving God as they should. The organized cultural system of the world with its set of attitudes, ideas, thoughts, works, values, people, activities, music, money, trends, styles, influences, habits, places, philosophies, and purposes takes us away from loving God supremely and following God’s will completely. Worldliness is anything within a given cultural setting that will keep us from loving God, as we ought to love him. It is anything within the present culture that keeps us from doing the will of God, which is clearly revealed and outlines in Scripture.

While on music tour I stayed in the homes of Christians who smoked. In my younger days I was surprised that Christians actually smoked! I guess I have learned the lesson that there are many Christians who smoke and who need to forsake this worldly habit that is controlling their lives. It should be the desire of other believers to lead them to the place of freedom from this bondage (Gal. 6:1).

3. Because using tobacco brings Christians under bondage.

We have been alluding to this in the previous points. Cigarettes and the use of tobacco is a worldly, fleshly, and sinful habit because it controls Christians instead of allowing God to control their lives. Worldly sins are those things that control a person’s life and bring them under certain bondage. The Bible teaches that whenever we allow something to enslave or control our bodies we have violated a clear principle of Scripture. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:12, “All things are lawful unto me (law of liberty), but all things are not expedient (principle of expediency): all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (principle of authority).” There are several questions that pertain to this section of Scripture.

What is lawful?

Paul was picking up on a popular phrase in Corinth, based on a false view of Christian freedom (“all things are lawful”). In the way the false teachers were using this statement the conclusion was made that a person has license to commit sexual sins. All things are lawful. How utterly false this is! Paul is going to put some limitations on this statement. Not everything is permissible for a Christian to do. We have not been set free so that we can enter into a new kind of bondage! The same is true about Christians who think that using tobacco or smoking addictive cigarettes is a lawful practice. As we are going to see, when something brings us under bondage it is no longer lawful. It is sin!

When Paul says, “All things are lawful for me,” he does mean all things in an absolute sense. This is what the false teachers were saying and if this were true then it would be permissible for Paul to walk into a nudist colony or take crack cocaine for God’s glory! This is absurd. Paul was simply picking up on this abused saying and was referring to those matters that did not override God’s clear commands for separation or holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-19; Exod. 20:1-17; 1 Thess. 4:3). All things are lawful. Paul meant that there are natural God given physical desires that were legitimate to fulfill within the will of God and they are for every believer to enjoy. God implanted within the bodies of people certain functions and drives which in themselves are proper and good. Included in these “things” would be the natural craving for food, the need of drink, and sexual attraction and fulfillment. These are the things in Paul’s mind (vs. 13). However, the real problem that Paul was dealing with was a misplaced emphasis on these natural cravings that led people to sin. It was said that satisfying your cravings with any person of the opposite sex was permissible just like you sought to fulfill your desires to eat food. However, just because we have certain normal desires, given by God at Creation, does not mean that we must give in to them and always satisfy them. Sex outside of marriage is destructive, while sex in marriage can be creative and beautiful.

What are the limits?

In answering the argument of those who abused these natural cravings, Paul says that not all of these desires are “expedient” or **suitable** (vs. 12) meaning that they cannot occur at any time, in any place, and under all circumstances as the false teachers in Corinth were suggesting. For instance, the matters of gluttony, drunkenness, and premarital and extramarital sexual relations are all violations of God’s will. Paul’s main point is that sex outside of marriage is a horrible sin. You can’t fulfill your natural physical drives or desires outside the marriage bond like you would in eating a hamburger. Furthermore, **slavery** to any cravings is to be avoided (“not be brought under the power of any” – desire or drive). Many today are enslaved by food and sex. These are the twin gods of America. People are addicted to sex today because they think they can satisfy their cravings at any time or phase of their living. This is the lie of evolution and humanism. Lastly, physical cravings for things like food and sexual fulfillment are only **temporary** cravings that have no eternal value. In 1 Corinthians 6:13 Paul explains that meat is made for the stomach (“belly”) and the stomach for meat meaning that God has created food so that it would satisfy the needs of the physical stomach and in return give health and strength to the human body. However, all these natural cravings and desires are only *temporary* for some day God is going to destroy both the belly and the meats that we eat (the whole process of eating) through death. That biological process of eating food has no important place in the eternal state. In the resurrection there will be no emphasis on food or sexual pleasures (Matt. 22:30).

The point seems to be this. We should not merely live for food and physical desires of any kind (sexual fulfillment) because they are only of temporary value. They are *transitory*. We should not allow food or sexual fulfillment to rule our bodies and be the only things that we long for in this life. Don’t live as if the greatest thing in life is to gratify your appetites. Instead, we are to remember that our Christian body is owned by the Lord and is to be used today for His holy purposes (“but for the Lord” – vs. 13b). Therefore, we must keep our cravings in check and go back to the owner’s manual of God’s Word and obey what the Bible says about sex, marriage, and love. But we are also reminded that God is for the body (“the Lord for the body”).

This means that God has planned a redemptive program for the body (vs. 20) that will culminate in a resurrection of the human body someday (vs. 14). God is for the body! Therefore, we should treat our bodies with respect.

Our physical bodies are precious to God (Ps. 116:15). He looks upon them as His own possession and because of this He is going to raise our human bodies in the future to demonstrate that we are His forever. Because God has a redemptive program for our bodies both now and in the future we must treat the body with sanctity and only use it for holy purposes. God owns our bodies and will prove this by raising us up from the grave some day. God's future plan for our bodies should send a message that He is very interested in our bodies and prove to us once and for all that we cannot do anything that we please with our bodies.

What are the results?

The results of fulfilling the hunger cravings of food are much different than fulfilling the cravings for sexual appetite outside marriage. Paul answers the argument that says fulfilling natural desires of eating ("meats for the belly, and the belly for meats" – vs. 13) are one and the same thing as using your body in acts of fornication or premarital sex. There were those who were teaching that satisfying your desire when eating different foods was the same as satisfying your sex drive. Sex is no different from eating: the stomach was made for food, and the body was made for sex. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats" was a popular proverb to celebrate the idea that sex is purely biological, like eating. To counter and answer this argument Paul adds in 1 Corinthians 6:13, "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." There is the answer. You cannot just do anything with your body that you please. We must use our bodies for the Lord and His holy purposes. Christian liberty has its limits! God has His limits! Those false teachers who taught that fulfilling your sex drive was the same as eating a bowl of soup were very wrong. The results when fulfilling these sexual desires were very different. Sex outside of the marriage bond has drastic results (vss. 15-18). When a Christian sins sexually it actually unites Christ with a prostitute since the Christian is linked to Christ in a spiritual way (15-17) and causes us to sin against our own body by using our body as

the instrument of sin which defiles God's temple (vs. 18). Every sin that a man does is outside the body was another slogan used by the Corinthians to justify their immorality (vv. 12, 13). Paul pointed out that the opposite is really true: sexual sin is done against the body, not outside of it. Meat may be for the belly but fornication or any kind of sexual relations outside marriage are not for the body! Let the record stand. All sex outside of marriage is a violation of God-given desires and is sin. We lose God's greatest blessing when we commit this sin.

What is the application to our present study?

Now you may ask what all of this has to do with the use of tobacco? I think the passage can apply to the sin of tobacco use or any other sin that rules our lives. The application is this. We cannot use our body in any way that we please or choose. This is what Paul is saying. God has His limits! Let's put tobacco use into perspective.

A Christian must ask several questions if he uses tobacco:

1. Is using tobacco beneficial?

The word "expedient" (1 Cor. 6:12) means suitable or advantageous to the Christian way of life (see 1 Cor. 10:23). Sex outside of marriage is not a suitable way to satisfy natural desires. In a similar way becoming addicted to cigarettes is not a suitable way to fulfill any God-given desires. Why? In the first place, God does not give us any natural desire to smoke? Second, is it never lawful to fulfill any desire that brings us into an addiction or slave relationship. Therefore, nicotine addiction is not a beneficial practice to the Christian way of life. Our craving to smoke and fulfill this inward desire is not of God. It is from the flesh or old nature. As Christians, we must ask ourselves, "Will this practice enslave me? If this is true the activity cannot be profitable for my spiritual life. This brings me to my next question.

2. Will using tobacco overpower and dominate my life?

There is another principle that we need to remember and govern our lives by as believers. It is the principle of authority. When Paul says "but I will not be brought under the power of any" he is speaking of

the authority of any substance or thing in this world that controls our lives. The word “power” (exousiazo) means “to exercise authority over” or “bring under the power of.” When something controls our body, or brings us under its rule other than God, then we have violated this important guiding principle for Christian living. The Christian is not to allow any craving, substance, or practice to enslave or rule their bodies. This is wrong. Let me say that the use of tobacco rules the lives of Christians. Nicotine is addictive. The modern makers of tobacco have tried to create a product that has even greater addictive power today to trap Christians in a habit that dishonors God. Tobacco enslaves God’s people and brings them under bondage to a substance, which rules their bodies instead of the Lord. In the next verse Paul illustrates how nothing is to enslave our lives but the Lord Himself (vs. 13). We will talk about this in a moment. But let us understand that when something controls our body it is a sin. When we willfully give our body to the domination of another substance and begin to be ruled by it we step over the boundary line of our freedom. In fact, when another substance controls our body other than the Lord then we lose our freedom and revert back to the place of bondage. Romans 6:16-17 says, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” Let’s not fool ourselves. Tobacco makes slaves. Yielding our body to an addictive substance that controls or enslaves our life steals our loyalty from God. This is because we are only to give our bodies to God and allow Him to control our bodies in everything that we do. Paul recognized that by God’s power He needed to put to death the drives in his body that would lead him to slavery and sin. 1 Corinthians 9:27, “But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” Paul wanted to keep his body in subjection so that he would not be disapproved by God, at the Judgment Seat of Christ for Christians, and lose reward when he stands before the Lord. Paul wanted the prize or reward that comes from faithful living. The many Christians who use tobacco have only excuses rather than logical and Biblical reasons for its use.

Here is a testimony of one Christian delivered from the smoking habit:

"I was a cigarette smoker, very much addicted to the narcotic content of tobacco. Deep down inside, I knew that this habit was harmful and was not right with God or man, yet I would often defend it. Secretly, I yearned to be as the Apostle Paul who said, 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (1Cor. 6:12). I begin to pray earnestly about this matter. Then one day the Lord Jesus revealed to me through the Bible, that all Christians have been freely given the power to overcome any weakness. I thought about that at length because it just didn't seem to be true for me. I hadn't felt that power when I had tried to quit. Then I came to the conclusion that I simply needed to believe and act. I then stepped out in faith and quit (not just tried to quit). I began very soon to feel a surge of victory that I had never felt in any of the earlier attempts to quit. I discovered that I was really in charge of my body, and that now I was a conqueror in Him who loved me! Those feelings of joy have only increased since that time. I had simply appropriated the faith of God when I prayed and said, 'Father, in Jesus' name I will never smoke again;' and I haven't. I can now say with Paul, '... I will not be brought under the power of any.'"

3. Will using tobacco have any eternal dividends?

Paul said that God would destroy both meat and the stomach at the time of death (1 Cor. 6:13). This means that satisfying physical desires will have no eternal value attached to them. This is why living like an animal, going about and satisfying your sex drive outside of marriage, will have no eternal value. Living for sex is transitory. This was said to the believers so they would not place a wrong emphasis on living to only fulfill their earthly desires. Living for their own desires and forgetting God's plan for their lives has no eternal value or reward. In a similar way, smoking and fulfilling your own bodily cravings and habits of addiction will have no eternal value. Your cigarettes will not only go up in smoke in this life but also the next life! However, God is not finished with your body. He is going to raise it someday (1 Cor. 6:14) since it is part of His redemptive plan. But you can be sure that you won't be smoking cigarettes in the resurrection day or throughout eternity. The Lord will claim our body in the

resurrection day as His own since it belongs to him. We are the Lord's (Rom. 14:8).

4. Will using tobacco support the truth that God owns our body?

"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body" (1 Cor. 6:13). Our bodies as Christians are "for the Lord." They are not for cigarettes. This means that God is to master or control our bodies at all times, not other addictive substances. It also means that our bodies are to be used for His glory. They are to uphold His holy reputation and be used for His holy purposes. God has saved us and He now owns us. In our next point we are going to see that we "are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23). God own us lock, stock, and barrel. God has redemptive rights over our body! We have no rights! Our bodies are not our own to do with as we please. Since we are to live "for the Lord" and our bodies are the Lord's we must use them for His holy purposes and please our Master in everything that we do. Furthermore, we must not allow anything else to become our Master. Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

"Living for Jesus, a life that is true,
Striving to please Him in all that I do;
Yielding allegiance, glad hearted and free,
This is the pathway of blessing for me.

O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee,
For Thou, in Thy atonement, didst give Thyself for me.
I own no other Master, my heart shall be Thy throne.
My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone."

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon." In short, you cannot serve God and smoke cigarettes at the same time. It is an oxymoron to say that you can effectively serve God while you are addicted to a substance other than the Holy Spirit. Nor can you love God, as you should, when you smoke your pack of cigarettes throughout the day. Why? Because tobacco robs a Christian of complete loyalty to the Master

and keeps them from His control over their body. Two masters cannot control your life at the same time and when we give in to one master (tobacco) over the other Master (Jesus) we are expressing love for tobacco over Jesus who is to be our first love and loyalty. So tobacco addiction leads to a conflict between two masters. It leads to misplaced loyalty and love. Dear friend, it is an act of disloyalty when we give ourselves over to another master (tobacco) instead of Christ. We break our master relationship with Christ when we allow other things to master our lives. The body is for the Lord – not for tobacco or addictive cigarettes. What is your master today? Who is your master? The point is this. God should be our master – not sex or cigarettes!! *Other things that hurt our bodies and take control of our bodies such as nicotine, drugs, sex, money, music, food (gluttony) do not honor God's holiness or allow God to have control of His own holy temple.*

The Bible also supports the truth that "the Lord is for the body" (1 Cor. 6:13) which means He has a redemptive plan for this body, both today and in the coming resurrection day. This gives Him the right to own and rule our body. Because of this the Christian must have no part with sexual immorality of any kind since the Lord's body is not meant for sexual license but for the Lord. In fact, the believer is linked with Jesus Christ in a spiritual union. 1 Cor. 6:15 says, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid." Since we have a spiritual union with Christ the believer cannot commit sexual sin without misrepresenting the Lord Jesus Christ and robbing the Lord of what is rightfully His – our body. When he lies with a prostitute he actually takes Christ into the bedroom with him!! Would Christ lie with a prostitute? God forbid! Never! Perish the thought. All would agree. But the same is true when a Christian smokes cigarettes. You can't smoke cigarettes without misrepresenting Christ. You can't use tobacco without involving Christ smoking cigarettes since we possess a spiritual union with Him. Would Jesus Christ smoke cigarettes? Would Jesus allow cigarettes to control His body? Would Jesus cough and carry on while smoking a pack of cigarettes a day? God forbid! The very thought of Jesus smoking is sacrilegious. But what do believers do when they light up their cigarette? They misrepresent Jesus as being a smoker and rob the Lord of what is rightfully His – our body. They also forget

that each believer is spiritually tied to another Master (Jesus) who wants no other master to take control of their lives. The only way to avoid such an unholy union between Christ and the world system is to “Flee fornication” (vs. 18) or we might also make the parallel statement of application, “Flee using tobacco.” The use of this substance misrepresents Christ, sends embarrassment to His holy name, and robs Christ of His rightful mastery over our lives.

4. Because using tobacco desecrates our body.

The use of tobacco is a sinful practice because the believer’s body is God’s temple. Therefore, the body should not be used as a garbage dump for poison substances or a pollution center for tobacco use. We should have respect for our bodies since God dwells within them. Nor should our bodies become mastered by a poisonous substance since God alone is to be our master. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 concludes by asking the question, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” The New Testament teaches that our body and life is a sacred temple, sanctuary or shrine where God dwells through the person of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19; 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22). This means that our bodies should be used for God’s holy purposes (sanctification - 1 Thess. 4:4) and given to God (ownership – 1 Cor. 6:19-20) instead of allowing other things to control and take ownership of our bodies.

In summary, God’s indwelling Presence in our body (His holy temple) speaks of several things. First, the temple analogy points to the truth that our bodies are actually a holy shrine or temple where God’s character of holiness is to be upheld (“your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you”). **A temple is a holy place that represents God’s abode.** God dwells inside of you! Think of this the next time you light up a cigarette! Dear friend, we can’t “walk in the light” of God’s holiness when we light up cigarettes and are brought under the control of this fleshly habit (1 John 1:7). Since the Holy Spirit lives within us to manifest God’s holy presence we must remember that our bodies should be used for holy purposes. The Holy Spirit represents a holy God. Therefore, every believer should know the importance of possessing “his vessel in sanctification and

honour” (1 Thess. 4:4) since God lives within him. Our vessel should be used for God’s holy purposes. We are to be “holy in all manner of conversation” or living (1 Pet. 1:15). However, God’s holiness is not vindicated or upheld by our lives when we allow a fleshly habit to control us and keep us in bondage. God lives within us in the person of the Holy Spirit and we should live a life that is holy and in harmony with His indwelling life and personal presence and not engage in those practices which would take away from His holy character.

Second, the temple analogy means that God should possess and control our body at all times (“which ye have of God, and ye are not your own” – vs. 19 and “ye are bought with a price” – vs. 20). Since God owns our bodies we cannot do with our bodies as we please. God has *redemptive rights* over our bodies and we should allow Him to master our lives – not other substances. **A temple is a place where God is given His rightful place of ownership.** Since our body is God’s personal dwelling place or house, it only makes common sense that God is to have complete control over His possession or temple. Other things that hurt our bodies and take control of our bodies such as nicotine, drugs, sex, money, food, anger, jealousy, rock music, TV, and sports do not honor God’s holiness or allow God to have control of His own holy temple. When these types of things control our body God’s holiness is no longer honored and God is no longer set apart or given His rightful place of ownership. When we are controlled by something else our bodies cannot be holy or separated (“set apart”) unto God as His own personal temple where He alone resides and has preeminence or control. The point is this. God owns us – not sex or cigarettes!! The Spirit controlled life (Eph. 5:18) is not the smoking life.

Third, the temple analogy also speaks of honoring God’s holy presence in all that we do with our body (“therefore glorify God in your body”). **A temple is a holy or sacred place where God is honored or glorified.** This means we want to use our body in a way that upholds the reputation of God’s holiness. In short, we can only honor God when we do those things that represent His holy and righteous character. Being brought under the addiction of a fleshly sin hardly passes as glorifying God with our body! Does tobacco smoke coming out of your nostrils glorify God? How can we glorify God while smoking cigarettes? Let’s be honest. We can’t. When we are ruled by

a fleshly practice that controls our bodies God's glory is lost. When we use tobacco and become addicted to another substance we no longer glorify God in our bodies. Can you honestly say that you can smoke cigarettes to the glory of God? Is God's name or reputation of holiness upheld while you smoke and are brought under the bondage of a harmful substance designed to rob Christ of His control over your body? 1 Cor. 10:31 says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." May we honestly evaluate our lives today and be able to say, "In my life Lord, be glorified today."

5. Because using tobacco is not becoming to the Christian life.

George Craft, of Raleigh, Miss., won the national long-range tobacco spitting title for a straight eleventh time. Craft's 11th victory, however, was dulled a bit by the fact that he achieved a distance of only 21 feet 3 inches – good enough to win, but nowhere near his official record of 24 feet, 10-3/4 inches made in an earlier championship competition.

Of course, such a practice as this is rather morbid and ridiculous. But one must ask if such a habit as tobacco use is becoming to the Christian life. The answer is simple. Smoking is an unbecoming habit for the Christian life which is to exemplify holiness. Can God be pleased when Christians are brought under the bondage of tobacco and nicotine? Can God be pleased when a fleshly worldly habit rules the lives of His people? Titus 2:3 talks about "behaviour as becometh holiness." I don't want to be sacrilegious when saying this but it is worth reflecting upon today. Would Jesus smoke cigarettes, blow deadly smoke on other people, chew tobacco, spit, and allow His body to be controlled by a substance such as nicotine? Surely He would not because this kind of activity is not becoming to the Christian way of life. My friend, Jesus would not smoke cigarettes if He were here today and every Christian who is smoking these weeds knows that He would not smoke.

Ephesians 5:3-4, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks." "Filthiness" (Greek - "aischrotes") speaks of those things that are obscene and shameful

for Christians to engage in whatever they might be - sex acts, speech sins or smoking. Webster defines the word "obscene" like this: "offensive to morality or decency; indecent." 1 Timothy 4:12 says, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Using tobacco is not becoming to the Christian way of holy living. It does not set a godly "example" of walking in the control of the Spirit (Gal. 5:25) or manifesting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23 – "temperance" or self control). The control of the spirit is the way of victory in the Christian life. Ephesians 5:18 says, "And be not drunk (intoxicated) with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The same could be said about nicotine or tobacco – "Be not intoxicated or controlled by tobacco."

A Christian cannot be under the Spirit's control when they are under alcohol's control. Likewise, a Christian cannot be under nicotine's control and the Spirit's control at the same time. The two are incompatible. Tobacco addiction is simply unbecoming to the Christian way of life. The Christian is to walk in the Spirit's power and provision instead of nicotine's addiction. His fix is to be on the Spirit's ministry and life and not on a substance that is designed to keep him under bondage and fill an empty void in his life. One man told me that smoking and social drinking helps calm his nerves and gives him an outlet in life. But we must remember that this is the Spirit's ministry. The Holy Spirit is to fill us (not tobacco smoke) and provide us with all the daily assistance we need for godly living (Gal. 5:22-23).

6. Because using tobacco violates many Biblical principles.

Here are some important test questions that we need to ask ourselves, as a Christian, before we continue to engage in any practice. The questions represent some valid Biblical principles that never change. Please note that some of these principles were previously dealt with. Will using tobacco cause me to feed my fleshly desires (Titus 2:12; 1 John 2:16; Galatians 6:7-8; 1 Corinthians 3:1)? Will tobacco use bring me into conformity with the world (Rom. 12:2)? Will using tobacco bring me under bondage (1 Cor. 6:12)? Will tobacco use become a weight in my life (Hebrews 12:1)? Will the use of tobacco defile my body? (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)? Will using

tobacco bring glory to God (1 Cor. 10:31)? Can I really smoke upholding God's character of holiness and bring glory or praise to His name? Would Jesus use tobacco (John 8:29)? It is a worldly habit or vice that is not becoming to Christ or the Christian who names the name of Christ wherever he goes.

Other questions we might ask are these. Will using tobacco be something that I can give God thanks for (I Timothy 4:1-5)? Will using tobacco bring shame to me at Christ's return (I John 2:28)? Would I want to be found smoking cigarettes when Jesus returns? Will using tobacco draw me closer to the Lord or further away from Him (James 4:8)? Will using tobacco cause another Christian to stumble who has stopped smoking (Rom. 14:15-20; 1 Cor. 8:13)? Will using tobacco hurt my testimony (Ephesians 5:8; 1 Timothy 4:12; Matthew 5:14-16)? Will using tobacco cause my witnessing to be out of place (I Peter 3:15)? Will using tobacco cause me to feel uneasy and create doubts in my mind about doing it (Romans 14:21-23)? These are all valid questions, which if answered honestly, will bring a Christian to the place where they must stop their smoking habit or addiction.

7. Because using tobacco lacks good stewardship.

Sometime ago, a tobacco company sent packages of cigarettes to some high school boys with this explanation, "We are sending you a package of our finest cigarettes. We hope you will use them to your satisfaction and want more." One of the boys used the cigarettes, and wrote back, "I received the package of cigarettes and used them in a quart of water, which I sprayed on our bug-infested rose bushes. Every bug died! The cigarettes are surely good poison. I want more next spring if any bugs survive!"

Here are some facts on tobacco. The primary ingredient in tobacco is a poison.

1. Nicotine is one of the most deadly poisons available.
2. It's toxicity is comparable to that of cyanide.
3. The only reason why it is not more deadly is that is diluted on tobacco products and that much of it is excreted in the urine.
4. Nicotine has been a traditional ingredient in animal repellants and insecticides, until costs became prohibitive.

There are three important ingredients found in cigarette smoke.

1. Nicotine
2. Carbon monoxide - the same stuff that can kill people as emissions from automobiles.
3. Cancer causing carcinogens.
4. The fact is that every time a person ingests tobacco products he/she is taking poison into their system.

Dear friend, can God be pleased when a Christian fails to take care of his body by knowingly introducing a poisonous cancer causing substance into his body? The surgeon general puts bold labels on all tobacco products telling the sad story that tobacco use causes cancer. The Bible tells us that God has entrusted our bodies to us and that we should take care of them. This principle was established way back in Genesis (Gen. 1:29). God provided the necessary things to sustain healthy life and provide energy for mankind as he cared for the garden. Whenever we upset the basic provision of God for our bodies, by introducing poison into our system, we override God's plan for stewardship and replenishing the human body. Furthermore, since our bodies are God's temple (1 Cor. 6:19-20) we should honor the sacredness of God's dwelling place by treating them with dignity and respect even from a health perspective. 1 Cor. 3:16, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Stewardship of the human body should lead us to stop using tobacco in all of its forms. Tobacco was not designed to meet bodily needs. It has no capacity for nourishment in the body. To put it bluntly, tobacco is poison. It becomes a lack of stewardship when Christians abuse their bodies by introducing the destructive nature of tobacco into their system. As a steward of our body we must not knowingly and purposely allow other substances to take control of our bodies, which will eventually become a destructive force in our bodies (1 Cor. 9:27). Furthermore, as a steward we should show respect to our bodies since they are the dwelling place of God. Why don't Christians smoke inside churches? It's because they have respect for the building. But we must remember that our body is the real dwelling place of God. Therefore, we should demonstrate respect for God's sacred dwelling place by not purposely polluting it with tobacco poison.

A small boy was taken to the barbershop for a haircut. The room was filled with cigar smoke. The lad pinched his nose and exclaimed, "Who's been smoking in here!" The barber sheepishly confessed, "I have, son." The tyke responded, "Don't you know it isn't good for you?" "I know," the barber replied. "I've tried to quit a thousand times, but I just can't." The boy thought for a moment and then commented, "I understand, sir. I've tried to stop sucking my thumb, but I can't either!"

Using tobacco not only lacks good stewardship of the body but also stewardship of our God-given funds. A man once told me that he spent \$1200.00 dollars a year on cigarettes. What kind of stewardship is this? No Christian can warrant the spending of money on tobacco, which is designed to run your life and ruin your body. Why not spend that money on God's people or give more to God's house. We are to consecrate our money to the Lord and invest in wise things instead of unsanctified living (Luke 15:13). Lastly, why would you want your children and other loved ones to breath in second hand smoke which is also destructive? Respect for our own body and love and commitment to our spouse, family, and friends should provide us with enough wisdom to stop using tobacco (Eph. 5:28). We are to love those whom God has given to us and possess a caring attitude toward them by helping and protecting them. We are to cherish them. Blowing a second-hand smoke in their face that poisons their system certainly is not demonstrating caring or loving actions.

In the old days an evangelist was riding on a plane filled with people, cigarette smoke and defiled air. The evangelist knew he would have to take a bath, and send his clothes to the cleaners. He felt like he had been charcoal-broiled. Suddenly he turned to a woman and said, "Would you like to chew my gum for awhile?" The lady was insulted. "What in the world do you mean?" she snapped. The evangelist calmly replied, "I've been smoking your secondhand smoke ever since we left the city. I thought you might want my secondhand gum."

2 Corinthians 7:1 says, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." This would mean that the Christian should cleanse themselves from their fleshly smoking

addiction and reach the goal of living a holy life. Dear Christian friend, can you really kick the habit and have victory over the addictive substance of tobacco? **Yes!** The secret of victory is found in what some have called **“The Roman’s Road to Freedom.”** We must learn to follow the know, reckon, yield, obey and serve pattern of Romans chapter six ("know" & "knowing" - vs. 6 & 9; "reckon" - vs. 11; "yield" - vs.13; "obey" - vs. 16 and "serve" - vss. 19-22). First, we must know what Christ has done for us in providing victory. Jesus put to death the person (“old man” – Rom. 6:6) we used to be under the slavery and power of sin. Second, we must count this to be true by believing that we are now victors in Christ. Third, we must yield our bodies to God for power and help knowing that the old defeated person we used to be has been put to death in Christ’s death on the cross and now we are raised to share Christ’s victorious resurrection power (Rom. 6:4 – “newness of life” and “live with him” – Rom. 6:8). Fourth, we must simply obey and do what God wants us to do by His operation of victorious grace in our lives (Rom. 6:16-22). We can now become “servants of righteousness” (vs. 18) and produce “fruit unto holiness” (vs. 22). What liberty and freedom this is! You no longer must be a slave to tobacco but a slave to God who enjoys the freedom from sin and bondage that God offers through Jesus Christ. You can be free from tobacco!

Two years after receiving Christ, Jean Zeiler was still shackled by her habit of chain-smoking. Repeated attempts to stop had failed miserably. Finally she decided, as she said, "to lay my cigarettes at the foot of the cross." In a church service she told the people she was surrendering her all to Christ. For three months Jean felt no serious craving to smoke. But then one beautiful July morning the test came. As she entered the kitchen, there on the table was a package of her husband's cigarettes. Instantly the most powerful craving consumed her. Jean recalls, "I stumbled toward the table. I knew I was going to smoke. I ached with the craving and began to whimper like a child. Then suddenly I went to the floor on my knees and began praying, “O dear God, I can't take it. Do something!” Lady, her big black Labrador retriever, had come to her side, sensing that something was wrong. By now Jean was crying her heart out, hugging Lady. Then followed an unusual stillness. As Jean got to her feet, everything seemed the same. The cigarettes were still on the table. Then it hit her--the

craving was gone! "Oh, thank you, Lord!" she exclaimed. That victory has lasted nearly 28 years.

Dear friend, God may give victory by removing a desire once and for all. Or He may lead you through a long, hard-fought process. But if we surrender our weak will to Him, He who broke sin's power on the cross can break the chains of any sinful habit. May it be true in your life today? You must deny yourself of this worldly addiction (Luke 9:23) and yield to God for victory. The victory will be yours. You are a victor over tobacco – not a victim! Believe it and claim your victory today.