

Lesson 7

WHAT ABOUT NICOTINE AND CAFFEINE?

I. NICOTINE

Christians for centuries have been saying that smoking is bad for one's health and the world has looked upon them as "squares" "alarmists" and "negativists." King James in the sixteenth century said, "Smoking is loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and the blacke, stinking fume. . ." Now, however, there is a sound scientific basis for the belief that smoking is harmful to the health. U.S. Surgeon General C: Everett Koop stated of smoking, "... the chief, single, avoidable cause of death in our society, and the most important health issue of our time." This is true of every society in the world.

Christian parents who have encouraged their children to avoid smoking have been very Biblical, sensible and scientific, even though twenty-five years ago they were thought to be narrow minded. Science, in many ways, is helping substantiate Christian beliefs:

ADVANTAGES TO SMOKING

There is a great deal of pleasure for a person, who already smokes.

There is a certain form of relaxation for a person who is active and nervous.

It may give one some security if the crowd he runs with are smokers.

It gives a self-conscious person something to do with his hands.

It may keep down weight.

DISADVANTAGES TO SMOKING

Harmful to the Body. The AMA and the American Cancer Society, in their recent reports on smoking, have shown conclusively that smoking is detrimental to a person's health.

Lung cancer rarely shows up in non-smokers: The risk of dying in the prime of life (forties and fifties) is more than twice as great for smokers than non-smokers. On the average, a smoker at the age of 25 who smokes a pack or more a day can expect 6 ½ years less of life than men who have never smoked regularly.

Cigarette smokers carry a greater risk for mouth, larynx, tongue, lip, and pancreatic and bladder cancer.

Smoking is also thought to be responsible for the disease of the heart and emphysema which accounts for multi-thousands of premature deaths: Death from heart disease were nearly twice as frequent among cigarette smokers as among non-smokers: Smokers are more affected by ulcers, chronic bronchitis and tuberculosis: In America it is estimated that there are at least 320,000 deaths each year either caused by smoking or are smoking related, and 20% don't know it can cause cancer at all. Other cultures are experiencing millions of more deaths do to smoking.

Other chronic conditions are associated with cigarette smokers which would probably not exist if no one smoked cigarettes, such as coughing, shortness of breath, headache, indigestion, frequent fatigue, insomnia, dizziness, etc., Smokers spend more time in the hospital and away from their jobs than do non-smokers.

While some lung cancer is due to air pollution, cigarette smoking is still the main cause. Both city and country smokers get the disease more often then either city or country non-smokers.

Habit Forming. Nicotine is habit forming and a mild drug. Tobacco is more than a pleasurable habit; it is an addiction. This is why no one gives up the habit easily. Cigarette tobacco contains about 1.5% nicotine and the smoke from an average cigarette may yield 6-8 mg. of the drug. A fatal dose is approximately 60 mg.

Affects Others. When one smokes, he is not just hurting himself but others. Smoking not only causes the eyes of others to water, make it hard to breath, brings on allergies, and makes clothes smell, but now we know smokers cause others who inhale secondary tobacco smoke. Some have claimed they have come down with cancer because of secondary smoke.

Expensive. The average smoker probably, spends hundreds of dollars a year on cigarettes. If both the man and the woman smoke, this makes a big dent on the family budget.

Affects Pregnancy. Smoking in pregnant women increases the risk of miscarriage, lowers birth weight (about 6 oz.), and raises the baby's chances of complications at delivery and the likelihood of health problems during infancy. In a recent study, children at age seven of mothers who smoked during pregnancy were shorter in average stature, tended to have retarded reading ability and rated lower in social adjustment than children of mothers who had not smoked during pregnancy.

Dirty Habit. Cigarette butts on the floor, ashtrays filled, the smell of smoke in the air and in clothes can become quite unbecoming to a person. Besides there is the problem of bad breath, smoker's taste, stained teeth and fingers, and spark burns on clothes and furniture.

Annoying. Often some smokers are quite inconsiderate of others who do not smoke and this becomes very annoying, even at times to the place of disgust. A smoker wants tolerance from the nonsmoker, but the smoker should also be considerate of those who do not smoke.

Starts with Wrong Motives. Almost every person who ever started smoking did so to prove to others that he was grown up or mature. He wanted to look and feel adult. There is really no positive reason for starting to smoke. Someone has said that a man spends the

first 20 years of his life smoking to prove that he is a man, and he spends the next 20 years trying to quit to prove the same thing.

Deceptive Advertisement. The tobacco industry spends millions of dollars each year to brainwash the public that smoking is desirable, healthful, youthful and contributing to or reflecting success.

Time Loss. Industry loses money on smokers. Smokers probably work 30 minutes less a day than non-smokers because smokers need more breaks.

Fires. Careless smokers start more fires than any other reason.

DISADVANTAGES OF CHEWING (Smokeless tobacco)

Constant chewing produces leukoplakia (white, leathery patches inside the mouth). About 5% of diagnosed cases develop into oral cancer.

Chewing lessens one's ability to taste or smell; therefore, the person needs more salt and sugar, which are unhealthy if used in quantities.

Receding gums, wear and tear on tooth enamel, tooth decay, discoloring of teeth and bad breath are all the results of smokeless tobacco, not to mention the uncouth act of spitting.

SMOKING FROM A BIBLICAL STANDPOINT

Smoking is a doubtful thing or questionable practice because nothing is said for or against it in Scripture. The right or wrong of this issue must be solved on biblical principles.

As many disadvantages as there are to smoking, it must be said that smoking in itself is not sinful although it may become sinful when it becomes harmful to the body, when our conscience is convicted that it is wrong, when it becomes a stumbling block to others or affects one's testimony to the non-Christian. Because of the scientific evidence, smoking and chewing are *doubly doubtful*.

A man may smoke and be a Christian. Salvation does not depend on a set of taboos or rules but upon saving faith in the person of Christ as Savior from sin and Lord of the life. The sinner is never told to give up anything to become a Christian, but is told to receive Jesus Christ, who is life eternal, and to begin, by God's grace, to live a life by faith that would please the Lord Jesus Christ. ***For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him (John 3:36). For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast (Eph. 2:8-9). For, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom. 10:13).***

A Christian may smoke without this affecting his personal relationship to the Lord Jesus, providing his conscience has not convicted him that it is wrong. Whether a person does or does not smoke does not make him any more spiritual before God. Spirituality is based on growth in the word of God and one's personal relationship to Jesus Christ by means of the Holy Spirit ***But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18).***

Often a new convert or an untaught Christian does not see the implications of smoking to his personal testimony before men. However, if his conscience is convicted that it is wrong, then it will affect his relationship with Christ.

A Christian who smokes should be allowed to fellowship with a local assembly of believers. One's fellowship in an assembly depends upon his personal relationship with Christ and his conformity to the biblical standards of holiness, not any man-made standards.

SMOKING FROM A TESTIMONY AND PRACTICAL STANDPOINT

Slavery. Smoking is a mild form of addiction. A Christian who smokes becomes a slave to a weed, which controls his life. The Christian is not to be brought under the control of anything or anyone except Christ. ***Everything is permissible for me—but I will not be mastered by anything (1 Cor. 6:12).*** This is the principle of self-control. While a Christian has liberty to smoke, this liberty should never cause him to become a slave to any fleshly appetite. A Christian is not to be "hooked" on any habit. A Christian who smokes must face up to this exhortation realistically, not before men but before God. The average smoker is "hooked" on nicotine just like the dope addict is "hooked" on cocaine, but only to a lesser degree.

Stumbling Block. A Christian has liberty to smoke, but this liberty, if misused could become a stumbling block to a weaker Christian brother. If a Christian's smoking causes our brother to stumble, then it is sin. ***So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—even as I try to please everybody in every way (1 Cor. 10:31-32). Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak (1 Cor. 8:9). Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean (Rom. 14:13-14).*** If there is anything in a Christian's life that would keep another person from finding the Savior, the believer should willingly give it up. This would be the principle of supreme sacrifice.

Lifespan. Since the medical world has proven conclusively to all that smoking is harmful to the body, it becomes a very serious matter for the Christian. A Christian who smokes is cutting down his efficiency, endangering his health and shortening his life. The Christian is to use all the years God gives him to be a faithful witness. It is possible that a Christian smoker could cut six precious years off his life, which he could have used for Christian service.

Expensive. Smoking is an expensive habit, and the money spent on cigarettes or cigars could be spent on evangelism or discipleship. All of our money is the Lord's and we are to use it wisely.

Example to Children in the Home. The Christian who smokes is going to have a difficult time explaining to his children why they should not smoke. We lead children by example, not by philosophical jargon or rationalization.

Pride. Often a mature Christian who smokes realizes that smoking does not affect his relationship with Christ, and yet out of spite and pride and a desire to exercise his liberty in Christ, he does not want to bow down to some Christians who he thinks are legalistic. We know "pride goes before destruction." God hates pride far more than smoking, for smoking is a questionable practice but pride is a breaking of the moral law.

Holy Place. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with our body (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Over-eating, sexual perversions, evil thoughts, indulgences all take a toll on the Christians body, which God has ordained to be holy.

CONCLUSIONS

In light of all the facts about tobacco, it now has become evident that smoking is doubly doubtful. Christians need to ask themselves if they can honestly smoke or chew tobacco to the glory of God in light of all the scientific facts about tobacco. While it is a matter of conscience, can the Christian use tobacco for the glory of God? ***So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).***

CAFFEINE

ADVANTAGES

It makes us feel good. It gives

It is a sociable, friendly habit

It gives a physiological and psychological lift with no real harm to others

It is a stimulant. It may produce rapid and clear flow of thought, reduce drowsiness and fatigue temporarily. With caffeine, one may sense a capability for greater sustained intellectual effort, experience keener memory and muscular coordination is enhanced.

DISADVANTAGES

It is a drug. Coffee contains 100-150 mg. of caffeine and Coca-cola 35-55 mg. Even cocoa contains caffeine.

Depression. Excessive amounts of caffeine can cause depression.

Sickness. Excessive amounts of caffeine can produce loose bowels, pancreatic problems, heart disease, and kidney ailments and other health problems. Caffeine may affect the fetus of a pregnant mother.

Dependence. Caffeine may produce a physiological and psychological dependence whereby a person needs the drug to function properly.

CONCLUSION

The Christian is not to be brought under the power nor mastered by anything except the Holy Spirit. ***Everything is permissible for me—but I will not be mastered by anything (1 Cor. 6:12).***