

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

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Introduction

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco contribute greatly to many of the problems in our society. "Ready To Give An Answer" regarding drugs, alcohol and tobacco is needed today as much, maybe more, than at any other time in the history of our nation.

It will be our purpose to discuss drugs, alcohol and tobacco in the following ways:

1. Drugs:
 - a. What are they?
 - b. What is drug abuse?
 - c. Why do people turn to drugs?
 - d. Why Christians must leave drugs alone.
2. Alcohol:
 - a. The Use of Alcohol is a real problem.
 - b. Solomon's description of the effects of alcohol.
 - c. What Alcohol Does or Will Cause People to do.
3. Tobacco:
 - a. The high cost of smoking.
 - b. Some reasons why the Christian must not smoke.

DRUGS

The drug problem has reached momentous proportions. It is estimated that more than 6,000 people a year die from the use of cocaine and opiates such as heroin. Drugs are one of the biggest businesses in the world—a \$500 billion-a-year business, says the U. S. Senate. More than \$95 billion are raked in by cocaine dealers each year.

There are five categories in which abusable drugs can be divided. First, there are barbiturates (sedatives, depressants) that were introduced in 1846. Second, Amphetamines (stimulants) were introduced in 1930. Third, hallucinogens have been defined "as substances which are capable of producing bizarre and even colored interpretations of visual and other external stimuli by action on the brain and all the body senses." Fourth, Marijuana is a drug found in the flowering tops and leaves of the Indian hemp plant. Fifth, narcotics are addictive drugs which provide insensitivity to pain when

properly used, but which in excess will produce stupor, coma and sometimes death.

What is Drug Abuse?

It is a chain smoker unable to quit. It is a lady starting her day with a diet pill for a pickup and ending it with a sedative for sleep. It is a man habitually unwinding with several drinks. It is a twelve-year-old experimenting with glue sniffing. It is a teenager smoking pot. It is the hard-core addict-shooting heroin. Above all, it is a threatened person chemically retreating from stress.

Why Do People Turn To Drugs?

First, some people become addicted to drugs through the course of legitimate medical treatment. Individuals may be given large doses in cases of burns, etc., and their bodies become physically dependent on them.

Second, some peoples' addiction comes as a result of intemperate curiosity. There is nothing wrong with curiosity provided it is tempered with reason, caution and common sense. Curiosity leads to desire, desire leads to experimentation and experimentation may well be that door that leads to addiction.

Third, some start on drugs out of a desire to conform to what their friends or classmates are doing. Everyone likes to be accepted and a part of their group.

Fourth, some use drugs as a means of escape. Doctors sometimes administer drugs in a constructive way to escape pain. It may be an effort to escape reality. It may be an effort to escape boredom. It could be an effort to escape loneliness. Psychiatrists say that people with a strong sense of purpose have no need of escapism offered by drugs.

Fifth, some use drugs as a sign of rebelliousness or non-conformity to "the establishment" and its traditional ideas and standards.

Sixth, some use drugs because of their desire for pleasure. Their friends tell them about their pleasant experience while under the influence of drugs. They try it, hoping for the same "good trip," but theirs may be a "bad trip."

Why Must Christians Leave Drugs Alone?

First, such use of drugs (except those prescribed for medical purposes) is illegal. There are both state and federal laws dealing with narcotics. The Christian is obligated to obey every ordinance of man, whether he likes it or not, so long as it does not conflict with God's law (Romans 13:1-7; Acts 5:29; 1 Peter 2:13-17).

Second, Christians are to "*abstain from all appearance [every form - JM] of evil*" (1 Thessalonians 5:22; Cf. Ephesians 5:11; 1 Peter 2:11). The use of drugs and narcotics is surrounded by too many other evils—crime, immorality, and degradation.

Third, evil companions corrupt good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33). Many addicts get in the "wrong crowd." Some surveys show that 54% started using drugs because some friends of the same age did.

Fourth, the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and one must not abuse it (1 Corinthians 6:19-

20). Drug abuse affects the mind and the body.

Fifth, the Christian does not require drugs for “kicks” and “escapism.” The Christian life should be full and satisfying because of our relationship with Christ (Galatians 2:20). Paul learned to be content in Christ (Philippians 4:11; Cf. 1 Timothy 6:6) – not in drugs.

Sixth, sin enslaves (Romans 6:16). No slave was ever more whipped than the dope addict.

ALCOHOL

Drunkenness and other evil effects of alcohol constitute one of the gravest social problems in America today. Claude Gardner said, “drinking in America is condoned, popularized and advocated. It has been made glamorous, even essential to social mobility. Tippling and ‘social drinking’ have been galvanized into respectability.” Dr. Albert Schweitzer believed that “drink is commercially our greatest waste, socially our greatest criminal, morally and religiously it is our greatest enemy.” Some doctors and psychiatrists consider alcoholism to be our “number one mental health problem.” Some people do not realize that alcohol is itself a drug.

Solomon’s Description of Alcohol

Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder (Proverbs 23:29-32).

All of these symptoms are familiar, but all may not know that Solomon’s description is also scientifically accurate. A medical authority writes:

Under the influence of alcohol our animal tendencies, which are normally under the control and restraint of the highest brain centers—those through which our will, our self-control, our judgment, our reasoning, etc., are exerted—are depressed, and there results a certain freedom from restraint, with consequent failure of judgment, inability to appreciate or to weigh consequences of one’s acts, marked overconfidence in one’s powers, both mental and physical, careless, freer speech, and other evidence of profound intellectual depression.

The serpent and adder (viper) simile is also remarkably accurate from the scientific standpoint. The serpent (Cobra of India, coral snake, cottonmouth moccasin) bite their victims—that is, they insert the fangs and macerate or chew the tissue as the venom is being injected. Hence the expression “biteth like a serpent.” The venom of this class of snakes is predominately a poison of the nerve tissue, and is, therefore scientifically classed as a neurotoxin. The viper class (rattlesnakes) does not bite, but strike and drive their fangs like the sting of a wasp, inject the venom and withdraw in a fraction of a second. The venom is a poison of the blood and blood vessels, it is therefore classed as a hematoxin. The serpents bite and the adders sting. Alcohol does both. The venom of the serpent is a neurotoxin and that of the adder is hematoxin. Alcohol is both. At the last the drunkard

is a mental or nervous wreck. Alcohol as a neurotoxin has ruined her nerves. Alcohol as a hematotoxin wrecks his whole body. Some medical authorities class sixty diseases as directly or indirectly traceable to alcohol.

What Alcohol Does or Will cause People To Do

First, alcohol corrupts courts and government, bringing national destruction and shame.

Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 5:22-24).

Second, alcohol inflames lust, deadens judgment and enslaves the will.

Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again (Proverbs 23:33-35).

Third, alcohol makes men forget God.

Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands (Isaiah 5:11-12).

Fourth, the curse of God is on every man, every business, and every government that gives or sells liquor.

Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory (Habakkuk 2:15-16).

Fifth, the Bible clearly reveals some of the terrible things individuals will do while under the influence of alcohol. Noah, the first picture of drinking became drunken, lay naked in the tent before his family, and later cursed one of his sons (Genesis 9:20-25). Lot was drunk when he committed incest with his daughters (Genesis 19:30-36). Nabal, a rich but churlish man who opposed David,

died at the end of a drunken spree (1 Samuel 25:36-38). Amon, when his heart was merry with wine, murdered his brother Absalom (2 Samuel 13:28-29). Elah, king of Israel, was slain by Zimri, his captain “as he was...drinking himself drunk” (1 Kings 13:8-9). While Benhadad, king of Syria, was drinking himself drunk a few Israelites put his army to flight (1 Kings 20:13-20). Ahasuerus, king of Media and Persia, when his heart was merry with wine, commanded his wife to display her beauty before drunken men (Esther 1:10-11).

Sixth, alcohol leads to poverty and rags. “Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags” (Proverbs 23:20-21).

Seventh, drunkenness will keep people out of heaven.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

Eighth, the Lord will forgive drunkards that gave up alcohol.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, not effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you;’ but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

TOBACCO

Over 400,000 Americans die every year from smoking-related diseases. Former U. S. Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop, said he believes that tobacco products are “just as addictive as heroin and cocaine.” It is loosely estimated that, due to smoking, the cost in health care expenses, and lost productivity is over \$52 billion.

Some Reasons Why The Christian Must Not Smoke

First, smoking hurts your influence, especially with non-smokers. Most Christians believe that smoking hurts one’s influence because they don’t want their preacher to smoke. One teenager said to his mother: “How can the teacher tell me I ought not to smoke when he has a package of cigarettes in his shirt pocket?” Another individual, in whose home a Christian was conducting a Bible study, said: “It was hard for me to listen to him as he blew smoke in my face.”

Second, you are filling the temple of the Holy Spirit with poison. Webster defines nicotine as “a very poisonous voltaic weakly basic liquid alkaloid...that constitutes the chief active principle of tobacco.”

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 (1 Corinthians 6-19-20).

Third, you are depriving yourself, your family and your God of money that could be used for good purposes. If an individual smokes two packs a day his tobacco cost each month will be approximately sixty-five dollars. Is this being a good steward of your money?

Fourth, you are shortening your life, in fact some would say one is slowly committing suicide. All of us have likely heard people excuse themselves from a group to go out and smoke by saying, "I'm dying for a smoke." The evidence from medical search groups is in and their conclusion is essentially the same. People are dying for a smoke.

Warning after warning is given that smoking can be harmful to your health. Many diseases are caused by smoking. Some surveys show there is one-fourth less lung cancer among non-smokers.

Fifth, many Christians have doubts about what they are doing. "I know I should quit" or "do you think it is a sin to smoke?" indicates doubt. The man that doubts what he is doing sins by doing it.

Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:22-23).

Sixth, smoking will enslave you. "*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey*" (Romans 6:16). The nicotine in tobacco becomes something that tobacco users crave. But the smoker willingly follows his taskmaster. First, he will patiently endure endless unpleasantness for his taskmaster—hacking, shattering morning cough, smokers' headaches, cigarette-induced mouth and stomach complaints. Second, he will tolerate burned holes in his clothing, furniture, rugs and tablecloths. Third, he will fork over more money for insurance policies. Fourth, he will willingly put up with the characteristic odor of a smoker. Fifth, he will knowingly risk offending those who don't smoke.

CONCLUSION

Smoking will have dangerous consequences. Nicotine has no beneficial effects in alleviating nervous tension. Smoking is largely a matter of the mind. Without smoking your influence will be greater; your body will truly be a temple of the Holy Spirit; you will have more money; you will live longer, and you will be the kind of person God wants you to be.

Works Cited

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