

## THE CHRISTIAN AND SMOKING

*1Cor 6:19 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?*

*1Cor 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

According to the Apostle Paul, our bodies are not our own; they belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. The price the Lord paid is his own blood. Since our bodies are borrowed from the Lord, we need to seek his counsel in all things regarding the Christian body. Our topic today is smoking. Fortunately, although it took several decades, even the secular world understands the dangers of smoking. Cigarette packets by law display the warning “Smoking kills”. Someone has said that smoking is slow suicide. Paul declared the body to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (I Cor 3:17). There is a tragic incident recorded in the Old Testament which underscores this truth. The sons of Aaron, the high priest, were drunk and offered “strange incense” or smoke which the Lord had not commanded. They were instantly killed for defiling the temple of God.

*Lev 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.*

To smoke cigarettes, weed and other habit-forming intoxicants is no different than what Nadab and Abihu did. God had commanded Moses earlier to make a unique, holy perfume for the temple incense. No other incense was to be offered because this incense represented the Holy Ghost. “And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people” (Exodus 30: 37&38). Young people in particular must understand the underlying message: the Devil wants to perversely duplicate the commands of God and make you offer corrupt incense. Do not smoke – it will lead to your death, as the sons of Aaron discovered too late. Be filled with the Holy Ghost in Jesus name! “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

According to *The American Cancer Society*<sup>1</sup>, tobacco smoke contains at least 70 chemicals known to cause cancer, heart and lung disease, among others. Ten of the chemicals, among others, are:

- **Hydrogen cyanide** (causes harm to the brain by interfering in the body's oxygen supply, among others)
- **Formaldehyde** (causes irritation of the skin, eyes, nose, and throat),
- **Lead** (causes anemia, weakness, kidney and brain damage)
- **Arsenic** (causes nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle weakness and cramping, skin rashes)
- **Ammonia** (in high concentrations causes burning of the eyes, nose, throat and respiratory tract and can result in blindness, lung damage or death)
- **Radioactive elements**, such as polonium-210 (skin burns, cancer and cardiovascular disease)
- **Benzene** (causes harmful effects on the bone marrow and can cause a decrease in red blood cells, leading to anemia)
- **Carbon monoxide** (displaces oxygen in the blood and deprives the heart, brain and other vital organs of oxygen)
- **Tobacco-specific nitrosamines** (strong carcinogens that may produce cancer in diverse organs and tissues including lung, brain, liver, kidney, bladder, stomach, esophagus, and nasal sinus) and
- **Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons** (reduced lung function, exacerbation of asthma, and increased rates of obstructive lung diseases and cardiovascular diseases).

No wonder someone once said, “Every time you light up a cigarette, you are saying that your life isn't worth living”. No one in his or right mind will expose themselves to cyanide, arsenic or radiation. Notice that many of these ingredients damage the skin. No wonder one study<sup>2</sup> published in the *Journal of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery* that compared the skin of identical twins concluded that “Smoking reduces the collagen formation, results in collagen degradation and reduces the skin circulation ... Additionally, nicotine reduces the skin thickness. All of these reduce skin elasticity and (cause) premature aging”. Collagen is the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/carcinogens-found-in-tobacco-products.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/31/health/smoking-aging-identical-twins/index.html>

most abundant protein in the body and is a major component of bone, skin, muscles, tendons and cartilage. In other words, smoking interferes with the functioning of all these tissues and materials in the body. Now contrast the above with what Jesus came to give us.

***John 10:10*** *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

The Greek word abundantly is *perissos* and means “exceeding some number or measure or rank or need”. The Lord Jesus wishes to add several years of blessings to our lives, but we will need to obey the Apostle Paul’s command to the Romans for this to happen: “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:13&14). Tobacco is addictive, but “... greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (I John 4:4). The Christian has only one Master – Jesus Christ! Sin must not have dominion over us for then we shall have many Masters. “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (I Cor 6:12). Jesus set us free from the power of Satan and every sin when he died and rose up the third day. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

Why do some young people in particular allow themselves to be pressured into smoking although smoking has no benefits at all? A major factor is peer-pressure. They want to belong and feel accepted. There is a fear of rejection and bullying. Young Christian, look to Daniel and his three friends! They refused to defile themselves with the king’s food which was offered to idols. Rather than lose weight and look sickly, they looked just as healthy, if not healthier, than those who partook of the king’s food. In other words, fearing God more than your friends will release the blessings of God in your life.

***Ecc 7:17*** *Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?*

***Prov 10:27*** *The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.*

In conclusion, honor the Lord who has chosen our bodies as his sanctuary. Do not offer up “strange fire”. Smoking kills slowly, kills others who inhale the smoke, is expensive and addictive. Jesus set us free to serve him by offering up the incense of prayer and praise.