

Still Smoking? By Dan S. Shipley

As a former smoker, I know how easy it is to ignore messages from the news media and the pulpit that discourage smoking. It is difficult for most of us to be objective in considering that which condemns what we want to practice. As someone as well noted, "Affection is a briber of the judgment; and it is hard for a man to admit a reason against the thing he loves, or to confess the force of an argument against an interest." Convincing Christians to give up tobacco wouldn't be nearly so hard if they could first be convinced to face the issue objectively and with an open mind. And yet, of all people, the Christian should recognize the difficulty of dealing with prejudiced and closed minds. As a follower of Christ, he knows that personal preferences must be subordinated in seeking to please the Lord. The smoking Christian owes it to himself and to the Lord to consider the evidence relative to smoking.

When he does, he will certainly consider such facts as those recently released by the Surgeon General's office in *The Health Consequences Of Smoking*. In the forward section of that report, Dr. E.N. Brandt, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Health, writes: "Cigarette smoking is the major single cause of cancer mortality in the U.S. Tobacco's contribution to all cancer deaths is estimated to be 30 percent and cigarette smokers have total cancer death rates two times greater than do nonsmokers. Heavy smokers have a three to four times greater excess risk of cancer mortality...There is no single action an individual can take to reduce the risk of cancer more effectively than quitting smoking..." According to statistics released from the Public Health Service research, lung cancer, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and coronary heart disease are the principal causes of death attributable to cigarette smoking, but they are not the only ones. They have concluded that the rate of early death from all causes ranges from 40 to 120 percent higher for smokers than nonsmokers, depending upon the amount smoked daily. It is not without good reason that the word "Warning" appears on the cigarette package. Those who are told to glorify God in the body (1 Cor 6:20), should seriously consider the health hazards of smoking.

Equally important for the smoking Christian to consider is the possibility of enslavement to tobacco. To be brought under the power of a habit is to violate the principle of 1 Cor 6:12. For the smoker who wants to know, "What about the glutton, the cokeaholic, the coffeeholic?" The same principle applies equally to them! With Paul, every Christian must resolve, "...I will not be brought under the power of any." Rather, "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage..." (1 Cor 9:27).

Finally, the Christian smoker must consider the possibility that smoking may hurt his influence. Shouldn't every Christian be "an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life..." (1 Tim 4:12)? Justified or not, many are offended by the smell, the pollution, and being forced to inhale second-hand smoke. Honestly now----everything considered, wouldn't it be better if Christians didn't smoke?

Men By A. Hugh Clark

One of the greatest needs is men! Men who are bigger than trifles; men with the breadth of intellect and depth of character; men who will not stoop to cheat or be unfair; men who will not stand imperiously on their rights, but who in magnanimity of soul cast away personal advantage for the good of many; men who will not lie, and defame, and steal to increase their own personal fame or fortune; men who would rather stand with the right in the end than to have their own way; men who love the truth and are willing to die for it rather than to compromise with falsehood; men who act upon principle in all their dealings with their fellow men rather than personal feelings whether of bias or prejudice; men with clean hearts and pure motives; men who feel neither envy nor jealousy when one of superior endowments and greater ability surpasses what they have been able to achieve; men who are not too big to be satisfied to fill the place in the world for which they were created and fitted by the benign creator who made every man for a definite place in His infinite universe of time and space and sense.

Selling Jesus for a Quarter

Several years ago, a preacher accepted an invitation to work a congregation several states distant. Some weeks after he arrived, he had an occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area of the city. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change. As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, 'You'd better give the quarter back, it would be wrong to keep it.' Then he thought, 'Oh, forget it, it's only a quarter, who would worry about this little amount? Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a 'gift from God' and keep quiet.'

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, and then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, 'Here, you gave me too much change.' The driver, with a smile, replied, 'Aren't you the new preacher in town?' 'Yes' he replied. 'Well, I have been thinking a lot lately about going somewhere to worship. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I'll see you at church on Sunday.'

When the preacher stepped off of the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, held on, and said, 'Oh Father, I almost sold your Son for a quarter.'

Our lives are the only Bible some people will ever read. This is an illustration of how much people watch us as Christians, and will put us to the test. Always be on guard against casual treatment of temptation -- and remember -- You wear the name of Christ when you call yourself a 'Christian.'

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

A Moments Wisdom

Faith keeps the man who keeps the faith.

It is not a question of who is right, but what is right.

Faults are thick where love is thin.

A smooth sea never made a successful sailor.
You will never get ahead of the person you are trying to get even with.
Kindness is the oil that takes the friction out of life.