

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN SMOKE?

The Bible does not say "thou shalt not smoke". That is sufficient excuse for some Christians to smoke!

Mark Driscoll, pastor of Mars Hill church in Seattle says that forbidding a cultural activity like smoking cigarettes and calling it sin is going too far!

Some facts (from Contemporary issues by Robert Bakss)

1. 30 people will die while we study this, from tobacco related disease.
2. Smoking has relatively recent origins.
 - 1613 - John Rolfe - Virginia tobacco from Jamestown to England
 - Sir Water Raleigh - Island of Tobago (W Indies) - latter half of 1600's
 - The practice of smoking tobacco came from the native American Indians and the Caribbean
 - Indians of Tobago - a part of their heathen religious rites!
3. 1624 King James I, banned it, " a precious stink..... loathsome to the eyes, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs and resembling the bottomless pit" A good description!!
4. Smoking won't send you to hell, it will just make you smell like you've been there!
5. 19 different kinds of poisons in cigarettes- the nicotine from one packet if injected into a person's veins would kill them instantly!
6. God made tobacco plants! Yes! - there are useful chemical products made from tobacco which include those that kill insects and fungi.

Should a Christian smoke?

The answer is NO! and here are some reasons why:-

1. It will defile your body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit - ICor 6:19,20; ICor 3:16,17; Gal 6:7,8 - Read the warnings on the packets!
2. It will mean that we will not be good stewards with God's money (remember it comes from and belongs to God) - Luke 16:10,11
3. Our testimony will be damaged. It is interesting to note that one of the ways that the world defines a Christian is someone who does not smoke!
 - It is worldly, a lust of the flesh - IJohn 2:15-17

It is addictive

When you see all of the warnings on the cigarette packets you might wonder why they are still sold. The reason is because of the tax dollars which the government receive. I spoke to one of our local members of parliament about this one day and asked him when the government was going to ban the sale of tobacco products seeing that advertising of those products was banned. He replied that they couldn't do that. As I pointed out to him, they could but that they wouldn't because of the tax revenue! - to which there was no answer!

I read a book written by Francis Wheen, "How Mumbo Jumbo Conquered the World. A short history of modern delusions" which cited a story concerning Al Gore which highlighted the doublemindedness of the world and it's attitude to smoking. At a meeting in the Chicago convention hall Al Gore told the story of his last moments with his sister (Nancy) who died from a smoking related cancer. just before she died he told her that he loved her. He finished his story this way; "Tomorrow morning, another thirteen-year-old will start smoking. I love her, too. Three thousand young people in America will start smoking tomorrow. One thousand of them will die a death not unlike my sister's, and that is why , until I draw my last breath, I will pour my heart and soul into the cause of protecting our children from the danger of smoking.".....

" In 1988, four years *after* his sister's death, Gore had spoken to an audience of tobacco farmers while on the stump in North Carolina. 'Throughout most of my life, I raised tobacco' he boasted, 'I want you to know that with my own hands, all of my life, I've put it in the plant beds and transferred it. I've hoed it. I've dug in it. I've sprayed it. I've chopped it. I've shredded it, spiked it, put it in the barn and stripped it and sold it' No mention there of his heart-and-soul struggle against the evil weed. "

1992 " During that year's election campaign, both Bill Clinton and Al Gore accepted financial contributions from the tobacco lobby. How could he reconcile all that with his supposedly sacred duty to Nancy's memory, and to all those thirteen-year-old girls whom he loved dearly and wished to save?" Pp 196,197

Now back to our question; ***Should a Christian smoke?*** Answer; ***NO, IT IS A SIN!***