

 The bible teaches us that the “**acts of the sinful nature are obvious**” (Galatians 5:19) and that those who are in the world apart from God “**think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation**” (1 Peter 4:4) – that “**dissipation**” being the self-destructive acts which permeate life without a real relationship with God.

This is a scriptural look at smoking in specific yet directly applicable to the use of any tobacco product.

Smoking Is A Form Of Impurity

Ephesians 5:1-7

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater —has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.[a] 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with them.

“**Impurity**” is the Greek word “*Akatharsia*” best rendered in English as “*uncleanness*” and has two primary applications in the scriptures, “*unclean*” in a physical sense (e.g. defiled) and “*unclean*” in a moral sense (implying lustful impurity, luxurious and immoral living). The “moral” “*Akatharsia*” also can imply an impure motive.

The use of “*Akatharsia*” to denote a “physical” uncleanness in the scriptures of the Septuagint (an ancient Hebrew to Greek translation of the “Old Testament”) has a broad sense from describing a woman’s menstruation to touching something dead or filthy (dung). The implication being defilement and/or desecration morally due to coming in contact with an “unclean” physical thing. Someone unclean in this way was not permitted to be with the assembly in worship nor were they able to dwell with God’s people for a time. To rectify the

“unclean” state of said individual there were varying purification rites necessary which would make the unclean person “clean.” In the New Testament, this use is metaphorical as in Matthew 23:37 where Jesus teaches that the Pharisee’s are full of “**dead men’s bones and all manner of ‘uncleanliness’**” and also mentioned in Ephesians 5:3, the implication being both senses of “Akatharsia” as the scripture reads “**But among you there must not even be a hint of...any kind of impurity...**”.

Cigarette smoke is a toxic cocktail of over 7,000 chemicals including 250 poisonous and 70 carcinogenic compounds.⁽¹⁾

Familiar Chemicals in Cigarettes(2)

CHEMICAL	ALSO FOUND IN
carbon monoxide	car exhaust
nicotine	bug sprays
tar	material to make roads
arsenic	rat poison
ammonia	cleaning products
hydrogen cyanide	gas chamber poison
cyanide	deadly poison
acetone	nail polish remover
butane	cigarette lighter fluid
DDT	insecticides
formaldehyde	to preserve dead bodies
sulfuric acid	car batteries

cadmium	used to recharge batteries
freon	damages earth's ozone layer
geranic acid	a fragrance
methoprene	a pesticide
maltitol	a sweetener not permitted to be used in foods in the U.S.

Romans 6:19-23

19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in[b] Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word impurity here again being a translation of the word “Akatharsia.” This would make sense, as this passage emphasizes “**control of righteousness**” versus “**slavery to impurity**.” “**Slavery**” is a very appropriate way to identify nicotine – a substance which studies have proven is more addictive than cocaine or heroine. The scripture teaches that these unholy things have no benefit to “**reap**.” Specifically, there are no benefits to smoking as it results in death in a most literal sense. When we sin, we earn the wages of sin – death. Studies show that with every cigarette, 11 minutes of life are lost on average, or one could say, 11 minutes of death are “earned.”(3)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 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; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Smoking destroys the body. Second hand smoke destroys the body.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_effects_of_tobacco)

The Holy Spirit dwells inside every true, repentant, baptized disciple of Jesus Christ's body.

Doing that which is self-destructive is not honorable to your body and is an affront (sin) against the Holy Spirit.

We force the Holy Spirit to smoke when we smoke ourselves as he lives in us.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Smoking (and general tobacco use) puts many harmful contaminants into the body, not just nicotine but also 250 known poisons along with 70 known carcinogens. There is an overwhelming amount of research, data, and hard facts about smoking's impact on physical and mental health (see "[Facts About Smoking And Mental Health](#)").

Smoking is not a "holy" activity and shows a disregard for the presence of God and the Holy Spirit (who is not a smoker) in our lives.

There is no reverence for God in smoking. Many claim to smoke because it "calms their nerves" or "helps with anxiety." This is not what the current studies demonstrate:

"Smokers often report that cigarettes help relieve feelings of stress. However, the stress levels of adult smokers are slightly higher than those of nonsmokers, adolescent smokers report increasing levels of stress as they develop regular patterns of smoking, and smoking cessation leads to reduced stress. Far from acting as an aid for mood control, nicotine dependency seems to exacerbate stress. This is confirmed in the daily mood patterns described by smokers, with normal moods during smoking and worsening moods between cigarettes. Thus, the apparent relaxant effect of smoking only reflects the reversal of the tension and irritability that develop during nicotine depletion. Dependent smokers need nicotine to remain feeling normal." [3] (From the study - "[Does Cigarette Smoking Cause Stress?](#)")

"Recent studies have shown a positive relationship between psychological distress and salivary cotinine levels in smoking and nonsmoking adults, indicating that both firsthand and secondhand smoke exposure may lead to higher levels of mental stress" [4]

In the scriptures, anxiety and worry [what words the bible uses for “stress”] are managed by reverence before God, thankful and heartfelt prayer, and seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness. He is to comfort us, not a cigarette.

“When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul.” – Psalm 94:19

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” – Philippians 4:6

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” – 1 Peter 5:7

“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:31-33

Anxiety and/or worry are the practical forms of atheism and smoking is an idol – something other than God – turned to when we face such things as fears, anxiety, stress, and/or worry.

1 Corinthians 6:12

12 “Everything is permissible for me”—but not everything is beneficial.

“Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything.

We are not to be mastered by anything, especially something proven to be so detrimental to the temple of the Holy Spirit, our bodies.

1 Corinthians 3:16

16 Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

If we destroy the temple, we are liable ourselves to destruction from God himself!

This is a salvation issue.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

22 Avoid every kind of evil.

In our lives as disciples, we are to avoid every kind of evil. It is evil to destroy the temple of the Holy Spirit (the physical body of a baptized disciple) by placing into it 70 carcinogens and

250 poisons. It is evil to subject others and their children to this same danger. It is evil to be enslaved by something and seek comfort from it more than we do God. It is evil to use what finances God has given us from something proven to be so destructive to ourselves and to those around us. Avoid every kind of evil.

Colossians 4:5

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

We are to be wise in the way we act towards outsiders and make the most of every opportunity. It is unwise to use tobacco products, the data is overwhelming. When we have an opportunity, we should make the most of it, not endanger others with a wicked habit. Our example is to impact people and demonstrate what it is to be reverent and holy. 1 Timothy 3:7 teaches us that we are called to have a good reputation with outsiders so we will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. 423,000 people a year die smoking related deaths.

There are health warnings and anti-smoking ads everywhere. It is understood that smoking kills and second-hand smoke kills people, how can partaking in it demonstrate any sort of "good reputation" with those who are not disciples? Why would you do something to yourself and call it "good" when you'd be appalled at seeing a 5 year-old child doing the same? The impact smoking has on our evangelism and ability to live out Jesus' purposes is crystallized by 1 Timothy 4:16: ***"Watch your life and doctrine closely, persevere in them because if you do you will save both yourself and your hearers."***

With such a hypocritical sin in our lives, we'll be unable to save ourselves much less those we reach out to.

Smoking is a complete waste of money. It is literally money burned with its only effect is to destroy the temple of the Holy Spirit and perpetuate our godless reliance on a chemical idol.

1 Corinthians 10:13

13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

God will provide a way out! He can and will provide freedom from the chemical addiction and the sin that so easily entangles.

Footnotes

<http://quitsmoking.about.com/od/chemicalsinsmoke/p/arsenicprofile.htm>

http://healthliteracy.worlded.org/docs/tobacco/Unit4/1whats_in.html

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Hamer M, Stamatakis E, Batty GD (August 2010). "Objectively assessed secondhand smoke exposure and mental health in adults: cross-sectional and prospective evidence from the Scottish Health Survey". *Arch. Gen. Psychiatry* 67 (8): 850–5. doi:10.1001/archgenpsychiatry.2010.76. PMID 20529994.