

The Truth About Smoking

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The Truth About Smoking

“A custom loathsome to the eye, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs... Herein is not only a great vanity, but a great contempt of God's good gifts, that the sweetness of man's breath, being a good gift of God, should be willfully corrupted by this stinking smoke.”

King James I of England, 1604

Tobacco is a plant cultivated for its leaves which are smoked, chewed, or sniffed to produce a variety of effects on the body and mind. Its consumption actually originated from religious practices among ancient aboriginals. In their society, the tobacco was looked upon as a sacred plant and burning it brought favor in the eyes of their gods.

It is believed that when Columbus found the new lands, he also discovered that the native Indians smoked this substance. He watched them use what they called “the grand pipe or pipe of peace.” Historically this pipe was considered sacred and its users offered smoke to their gods in the sky above and the earth below.

Indians believed that smoking gave the individual supernatural power and had the effect of “charming” those who smoked the pipe together. It was believed that the smoke intertwined the spirits compelling the partakers to exhibit a brotherly bond of peace. So strong was this belief, that if a member of an enemy tribe entered a house and smoked with the host, he was guaranteed protection and safe conduct upon leaving.



Religious Beginnings

Originally, among the Indians, tobacco was used as a means of worship. Instead of smoking the substance as a means of purifying themselves, or as an offering to their gods, some Indians would burn the tobacco leaves in a fire as incense. Various eastern tribes also burned the tobacco in a small fire. They believed that an offering of smoke from the tobacco plant would ascend to heaven where it was accepted by their god. Other Indian tribes smoked their tobacco pipes as a means of worshiping the sun-god. They would inhale the smoke and blow it back out again in the direction of the sun—their god of fire.

Many of these primitive peoples also believed that illnesses came upon them due to witches that would fly through the air disguised as owls. In order to protect themselves from various diseases, the natives would cut their legs or arms. The subsequent bleeding was thought to be a means of cleansing themselves of bad blood. Once cleansed by this method, they would inhale tobacco smoke which they

believed to be good spirits that would prevent any evil spirits from entering them.

Inhaling smoke eventually became a practice inherent in most rituals conducted by the Indian community. The smoke and its aroma continued for decades to have a major role in their religious rituals and ceremonies. As this form of tobacco use continued, the leaves were eventually rolled inside corn husks and smoked through that medium. This practice of rolling the tobacco eventually became the predecessor to our modern day tobacco wrapped cigars and paper wrapped cigarettes.

From these early religious beginnings, the tobacco industry has grown to become one of the most powerful and richest in the world. Today, over a billion people smoke, and 33 million people find employment in this vast multi-billion dollar industry.

The Growth of the Industry

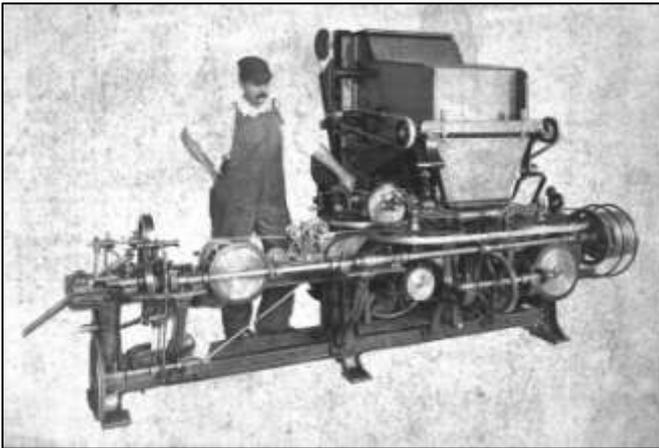
Hundreds of years before the discovery of America, Native Americans used tobacco in the form of cigarettes, snuff, cigars, pipes, and chewing tobacco. After introducing the drug to the Europeans, the Spanish and Portuguese were the first to set up tobacco settlements in the new land. The English established their first tobacco colony at Jamestown in Virginia.

While residing in Jamestown, in 1612, John Rolfe introduced South American Tabacum into North America. His experiment became an overwhelming success, and this variety of tobacco soon became the favorite of people around the globe. From that time, the British and American tobacco industry began to grow dramatically.



Not long afterward, the South American Tabacum became the only variety cultivated and smoked. As a result, during the next four hundred years, vast numbers of the English and American people became addicted to the substance. Huge tobacco plantations quickly rose up and flourished in Virginia, Maryland and the Carolinas.

In 1881, James Bonsack invented the first cigarette rolling machine. His invention generated 120,000 cigarettes a day. This massive breakthrough enabled him to assemble what previously took 50 expert rollers 13 hours to produce. With this invention came the birth of the tobacco industry as we know it today. This man and his machine made tobacco much more accessible to the common people. Cigarettes could be purchased in packages, already rolled, and this made it much easier for people to smoke.



James Buchanan Duke then built upon Bonsack's success by creating a corporation as big as the petroleum and steel industries. He did this by entering into a partnership granting Bonsack the ability to sell his rolling machine to anyone for royalties. However, Duke's contract gave him a 25% discount. This edge enabled him to build what eventually amounted to a virtual tobacco empire.

Duke quickly began to utilize mass-production and advertising. His discount enabled him to make cigarettes affordable to all. He undercut his competitors, and finally created the first tobacco trust in the America. His new machine rolled and packaged, cigarettes became the basis for the greatest consumption of tobacco the world had ever seen.

Once controlling a monopoly, Duke forced the tobacco farmers to sell their product to him for several cents less per pound than they were getting previously. In response, the farmers formed associations to fight back using the court system.

After the farmers reached the highest court in the land, the Supreme Court ruled that Duke's corner on the market violated the Sherman Antitrust Act. In 1911, the court forced the family to dissolve the monopoly. That did not stop the industry however. The break up became the catalyst for the birth of new corporations like the American Tobacco Company, R. J. Reynolds, Lorillard, Liggett and the Myers tobacco companies. With the addition of Philip Morris, these companies comprised a 95 percent share of modern America's tobacco market.

Tobacco faced its biggest crises when, in the mid nineteen hundreds, it was proven that tobacco smoke caused lung cancer. This vital discovery caused many to quit the habit but, the industry responded. They created chemical additives to make the product more addictive, developed new low tar cigarettes, and added filters to existing brands.



By the mid-twentieth century, many who suffered from the effects of tobacco filed suits against the major tobacco companies. Finally, in 1965, Congress ordered the following warning be placed on all cigarette packages.

Caution:
The Surgeon General has determined that
cigarette smoking is harmful to your health

Ironically, tobacco companies readily agreed to this, even helping to write the script. The tobacco industry actually benefitted from the labels because they enabled the industry to claim that smokers understood the risks of smoking. Therefore, the corporations were no longer considered liable to pay individual suits.

In 1996, however, the state of Connecticut filed a one billion dollar lawsuit claiming tobacco smoke caused the state 5,000 deaths and cost them 100 million dollars in order to treat illnesses that resulted from smoking each year. Ten other states joined this crusade, but smoking continued to thrive as the industry earned over \$30 billion a year.

The Effect of Smoking on Health

Science as well as experience has proven beyond any doubt that smoking caused addiction, disease, and finally death. The substance in tobacco called nicotine is purported to be more addictive than heroin, causing 350,000 deaths annually in America alone. Even nonsmokers have been alerted to the dangers of passive, secondhand smoking, and as a result, many governmental restrictions have been implemented on smoking in public places.

By far, the greatest danger from smoking appears to be lung cancer. Generally speaking, it is adults between the ages of fifty and seventy, who have smoked much of their

life, who are the most likely to get this disease. This malady develops when normal cells become irritated, and mutate beginning an uncontrolled growth process.

The numbers who do contract this disease from smoking are staggering. For example, 350,000 Americans die of lung cancer each year. Worldwide, 5 million people die each year from this disease, and more women have died each year from lung cancer than any other form of disease.

Another tragic effect of smoking is bronchitis and emphysema. Lung tissue must remain flexible and delicate in order for the organ to pass vital oxygen to the bloodstream. By smoking, each time the lungs expand and fill with smoke, residue is left imbedded in the lung tissue.



Over time, with continued tobacco use, these pockets can become more and more congested, causing the lungs to lose their elasticity. No longer able to contract, the lungs become like a stretched out rubber band that won't snap back. They can take in the air, but cannot force it out again.

Another harmful effect occurs because smoking allows a quick delivery of nicotine into the blood stream. The nicotine in cigarette smoke sets off a rush of adrenaline, providing a seemingly pleasant shot of energy. However,

while smokers enjoy the lift, their heart is suffering. Adrenaline speeds up the pulse and causes the arteries to close down. As a result blood pressure rises, putting extra strain on the heart. Further, carbon monoxide inhaled through smoking robs the body of much needed oxygen.

Still worse, the chemicals in tobacco smoke accelerate the development of atherosclerosis, a disease of large and medium-sized arteries. The tobacco chemicals damage the arteries. They hasten the breakdown, or oxidation, of certain fats, lipids, or any cholesterol for that matter. This process increases blood clotting as well as the presence of inflammatory substances in the blood.

All of these effects have a toxic result on the lining of the blood vessels. The arteries become inflamed, and the damage to the inner lining of the arteries makes it easier for cholesterol and other fats to attach themselves to the vessels. As a result, fatty deposits called plaque buildup and cause the arteries to harden. To compound the problem, cigarettes also lower the levels of HDL, (good cholesterol) which helps to clear artery-clogging LDL (bad cholesterol) from the blood.



When enough plaque builds up on the artery wall, chunks can literally break away from the lining and clog the

artery. When plaque starts to clog the arteries that feed the heart, a condition known as coronary heart disease develops. The heart becomes starved for oxygen. This causes severe chest pain. And when an artery becomes completely clogged, part of the heart will actually shut down. Doctors call this a myocardial infarction—a heart attack!

How Nicotine Affects the Body?

Ironically, nicotine can act as both a stimulant and depressant in the user's body. After stimulation by the drug, there is a phase that depresses the muscles in the airways. This first phase can seem euphoric due to the relaxation it appears to cause.

However, generally the drug has an opposite reaction, increasing a person's heart rate ten to twenty beats per minute. It can also increase the individual's blood pressure by five to ten mm HG. Tobacco has proven to also increase bowel activity, salivation and bronchial secretions. It stimulates the nervous system to such a degree that it can cause tremors in an inexperienced user, and even convulsions in those who take high enough doses.

Nicotine can also cause others symptoms such as sweating, nausea, and diarrhea in some users. It tends to elevate the level of blood sugar, thus increasing insulin production. The drug also works to enhance platelet aggregation in the red blood cells, which as stated earlier, can lead to unwanted blood clotting.

Nicotine also temporarily acts to stimulate memory and alertness in those who use it. For this reason, it also has a very strong psychologically addictive effect on its users. The individuals who use tobacco frequently come to depend on this substance to help them accomplish the various tasks in which they need high levels of performance. In addition nicotine tends to act as an appetite suppressant in most people. Consequently, the fear of weight gain can also influence some to continue smoking so that they do not gain any extra pounds.

Finally, because of the nicotine found in tobacco, it is considered to be a highly addictive substance. In fact, nicotine is regarded as a very powerful mood and behavior altering drug. Tobacco is reckoned to have an addictive potential comparable to alcohol, cocaine, and even the powerful drug morphine.

Other Harmful Ingredients

Tobacco contains many other ingredients that are also harmful to the body. Smoke inhaled and emitted from tobacco contains a substance called tar which contains over 4,000 chemicals. All of these are unhealthy—and some can be deadly causing lung and heart diseases! Sixty of these chemicals are known to cause cancer!

Additives are often used to make cigarettes that provide high levels of 'free' nicotine which acts to increase the addictive kick. Ammonium compounds are sometimes used that also fulfill this role by raising the alkalinity of smoke.

Some additives are used to enhance the taste of tobacco smoke, thus making the product more desirable to consumers. Although seemingly innocuous, the addition of flavorings making the product “attractive” and “palatable” is in itself cause for concern. Sweeteners and chocolate make tobacco more agreeable to children and first time users. Eugenol and menthol are also used which numbs the throat so the user cannot feel the smoke's irritating effects. These two additives disguise the smoke and give the user of false sense of taking a breath of cool air.

There are also additives such as cocoa that may be used to dilate the airways allowing the smoke an easier and deeper passage into the lungs exposing the body to more nicotine and higher levels of tar. When additives are used, the smoke from burning tobacco becomes a very complex mixture of organic and inorganic compounds.

As shocking as it may sound, some of the chemicals found in cigarette smoke include cyanide, benzene, formaldehyde, methanol (wood alcohol), acetylene (the fuel used in welding torches), ammonia, nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide. Even worse, some of these additives are toxic. They are addictive on their own or in combination. Often, new products of combustion are formed when burned—and these too can be toxic. In addition, the sole purpose of some of these toxic chemicals is to mask the smell and visibility of side-stream or second hand smoke, making it harder for non-smokers to protect themselves.

The Cost of Smoking

Besides the fact that smoking can cost the tobacco user and others their life, it also adds a tremendous financial burden to the consumer as well as the entire country. The economic costs of smoking are estimated to be well over \$3000 per smoker every single year. Annually, Americans collectively spend a total of \$326 billion, including nearly \$170 billion in direct health-care costs and more than \$156 billion in lost productivity due to premature death and exposure to secondhand smoke. However, adverse affects to various individuals is beyond estimation. Entire families are often affected.. Since 1964, smoking-related illnesses have claimed 20 million lives in the U.S., 2.5 million of which belonged to nonsmokers who developed



diseases merely from secondhand-smoke exposure (<https://wallethub.com/edu/the-financial-cost-of-smoking-by-state/9520/>, retr. 6/23/2016).

Because of rising health costs, and the oversized proportion of insurance claims attributed to smokers, some employers are refusing to hire applicants who smoke, sometimes firing employees who refuse to quit. Employers are realizing that the majority of health costs are spent on a small minority of workers. Union Pacific Corp., an Omaha-based transportation company, stopped hiring smokers in seven states. In many cases employers are asking workers to report their smoking habits voluntarily or adding disclaimers such as "nonsmokers only" to job postings. Others are requiring workers to take breathalyzer tests that can catch traces of carbon monoxide in their lungs or submit to urine tests to detect nicotine. Some companies are trying to offset their costs by charging smokers higher health insurance premiums and forcing others into employee wellness programs that include smoking-cessation plans.

The productivity cost of smoking (including time spent on breaks, clinical visits, sick days, and hospital stay) exceeds \$167 billion per year in the United States. Smoking related deaths cost the nation \$92 billion annually, and an estimated 438,000 people die prematurely every year from tobacco use. The accumulated cost is staggering.

Is Smoking a Sin?

Few people would deny that smoking is an expensive habit, unhealthy, and an addiction. But—is smoking a sin? Biblically, sin is defined as the transgression of the law (1 Jn. 3:4). Based on this definition, some have wondered, “How can smoking, a custom never mentioned specifically in the Bible, be a transgression of the law?”

There are two prominent reasons that smoking tobacco—or any other harmful substance—is a sin. First, smoking attacks one’s body—the residence of God’s Holy

Spirit. Secondly, smoking is an addiction, and this is a form of idolatry.

Paul stated that Christians are to glorify God in their body. It is clear from what has been documented thus far that smoking certainly does not glorify God. It actually causes appalling physical damage to the body, and it costs our nation billions of dollars in health care.

For example, there are over 600 additives to most cigarettes, 43 of which are attributed to cancer. When they are burned, scientists have documented that there are over 4,000 chemical byproducts released. Of these 400 are toxic. Darlene Marlow echoes the view of hundreds of others researchers when she wrote:

Cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, including 43 known cancer-causing (carcinogenic) compounds and 400 other toxins. These include nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide, as well as formaldehyde, ammonia, hydrogen cyanide, arsenic, and DDT (<http://www.quitsmokingsupport.com/whatsinit.htm>, retr. 10/30/2012).

Hundreds of clinical studies have confirmed the relationship between prolonged tobacco smoking and the incidence of lung cancer, respiratory disorders, and other debilitating diseases. The U.S. government has recognized this fact, and has required a caution label on cigarette packages for this reason.

The destructive power of tobacco use on the human body is vital to understanding this question—is smoking a sin? To answer this question, consider that the Apostle Paul emphasized one's body as being a type of the temple of God. Writing to the Corinthians, he asked:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will

destroy him. For the temple of God is holy (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Paul actually says that defiling one's body—the temple of God—will result in death at the hand of God. Since the Apostle Paul elsewhere stated that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), by making this comparison, smoking is clearly shown to be a sin. James also stated:

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin (James 4:17).

It is clear that smoking not only does harm to the user, but to those around them. It even affects the entire country economically. This makes it incontrovertibly clear. It would be “good” to quit smoking. Therefore, knowing this, if the smoker continues to consume the drug, it is a sin.

Different levels of Sin

While many may be willing to admit that smoking is a sin, some will say, if it is a sin, it is a relatively small, insignificant, one. Many question the severity of this habit. Is smoking only a minor sin?

There are sins that directly break the Ten Commandments such as murder, adultery, not remembering to keep the Sabbath holy, and stealing. Many believe that smoking does not fall in this category. They believe that smoking can be viewed as the equivalent of eating an occasional candy bar. However, when examined in detail it becomes obvious that smoking is far worse than most think. The fact that smoking is an addiction raises it to a place that is both dangerous physically and spiritually.

Smoking is an addiction, and as such, it takes a prominent role in an individual's life. The addict literally becomes a slave to the habit. In this context, Matthew 6:24 records the words of Jesus, stating that man cannot serve two

masters. Because of the addictive qualities, smokers become a servant to tobacco. This actually lifts smoking to the pinnacle of commandment breaking. It causes individuals who smoke to have a master—a god before the true God. This is no less than—idolatry!

This is why the most important function of the cigarette is the most dangerous to one's spiritual potential. Cigarettes are designed to be a delivery system for the dangerous and addictive chemical—nicotine.

As stated earlier, tobacco companies put chemicals such as ammonia in cigarettes which causes the brain to absorb even more nicotine than it normally would from smoking the untreated tobacco. Other additives are also used to make cigarettes provide higher levels of free nicotine, thereby actually increasing the addictive kick with each and every puff.

For this reason, the smoke from cigarettes becomes a lethal cocktail. Each puff contains chemicals that are also used in paint stripper, toilet cleaner, lighter fuel, mothballs, rocket fuel, gas chambers, and many other toxic materials.

Whether the nicotine is natural or chemically enhanced, smoking always becomes an addiction of the flesh, and Christians are told to control the unlawful, fleshly, demands that the body makes upon us. Paul stated:

For if you live according to the flesh you will die;
but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of
the body, you will live (Romans 8:13).

In his letters to the Corinthians, Paul related an analogy regarding the Greek games and the Christian's pursuit of the Kingdom of God. The apostle stated the following truth:

Everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate
in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable

crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (1 Corinthians 9:25-27).

Paul believed, and taught the Church of God, that if he did not bring his own body under control, he would be in danger of losing his salvation! Clearly an addict has not brought his own body under control and according to Paul's writings, if that person continues to neglect overcoming such sins, they put themselves at risk for being disqualified from the Kingdom of God.

When addicted to a substance, a person becomes a slave to the addiction. For this reason, God tells us that, uncontrolled, the pulls of our body can lead us to lose out on the hope of eternal life. This can occur when we let those pulls rule over us. For this reason, Paul stated that he would not allow himself to be controlled, even by that which is lawful. He wrote:

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (1 Corinthians 6:12).

We are to bring ourselves under the power of Almighty God. Our covenant at baptism is to be subject to Him and not to any other thing. For this reason, Satan the devil uses the tobacco industry to bring people into bondage to him. The Apostle Paul continued to explain this principle when he wrote:

Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you

should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness? (Romans 6:11-16).

Paul made it abundantly clear that we are to be under God's influence in our heart and that must be reflected in our life. That is the true definition of grace. We are not to continue to practice sin, and we are sinning when we allow something other than God to rule over us. Therefore, when we are addicted to nicotine, we are not subject to the Almighty, but rather to the lusts of the body. The tobacco controls us, not God. This is no less than breaking the first commandment that we have no other gods before the true God.

Addictive smoking is bondage. It is what the ancient exodus pictured. We are to leave our bondage behind. We are to be subject to God, letting Him lead us to freedom. When we are addicted, however, the body craves the spiritually wrong substance. This constant craving for what is unlawful is also coveting that breaks both the tenth and first commandments.

This is why smoking, which to the human mind may not seem to be a terrible sin, is very serious from God's perspective. Smoking breaks several of the commandments, but primarily the first and tenth which forbid having any god before YHWH, and coveting substances that exert control over us. In this context reason Paul also wrote:

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

Smoking looms larger than life in this context. It is no less than idolatry that can lead to spiritual as well as physical death.

Does Cutting Back or Smoking Light Brands Help?

Some believe they can make their smoking habit safer by smoking fewer cigarettes or using low-tar tobacco products. They believe that smoking less frequently or switching to a “light” brand makes smoking safer, but this is not always true.

When people switch to a lower tar and nicotine brand, they often smoke more to get the same dose as before. A low-tar cigarette can be just as harmful as a high-tar cigarette when a person inhales deeper, puffs more frequently, or smokes more often. Even if smokers who cut back do not compensate for the lower dose of tar and nicotine, the health benefits are very small when compared to the benefits of quitting for good.

The spiritual correlation of cutting back or using low tar products would be like saying too much sin is not good, but sin in moderation is okay. It’s as if we say, “a lot of sin can do me harm, but I can handle small amounts.” In this context we see that smoking less or using “light” brands is not the answer. Cutting back or switching to a brand with less tar is not the answer as the Apostle Paul reminds us:

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap (Galatians 6:7).

If we smoke, we will reap many negative effects in our lives. We discolor our teeth and hands. We injure our

health. We cost ourselves and others vast amounts of money over a lifetime and more importantly, we will mock God and His Law. For this reason Paul admonishes us:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1-2).

Our bodies belong to God. Therefore, having been purchased by Christ's blood, we should present our body to Him as an offering. We have no right to damage His property. We must realize this vital truth. We have no right to knowingly and willingly sin! It is as if we are blowing smoke in the face of God. Instead we should strive to bring our bodies within His perfect will. God's desire is that we not smoke, and if we already do, then when we find this out, we must quit!

Reasons to Quit

Consider that when a smoker decides to quit, God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the angels in heaven rejoice (Luke 15:10). The act of quitting this unhealthy and sinful habit will change our lives and all those around us for the better. This brings joy to the spirit realm and will also greatly please those we love and who love us.

If these reasons are not enough to quit, consider prolonging your life so that you have more time to spend with loved ones. Quitting gives a person more time to work on their Christian growth, improving their character, and building their relationship with God. More importantly, quitting this habit pleases God, and this is a

vital step in striving to secure ourselves a place in His soon coming Kingdom.

How Can You Quit?

There is no single proven way that works for everyone. A smoking cessation program may be helpful, but one thing is certain, **YOU MUST DESIRE TO QUIT!** Without the desire to stop this habit you will not succeed. However, if you desire to quit, **YOU CAN SUCCEED!** Like the old adage goes, where there is a will there is a way. If you have the will, the following points can be helpful.

- Pick a date to stop smoking, and then prepare for it.
- List your reasons for quitting and read it frequently.
- Note what you do when smoking. Break the connections.
- Find activities to replace smoking. Be ready to do something else when you feel the desire to smoke.

Ask your doctor about using nicotine supplements or a nicotine-free prescription medication like Zyban that can help you to quit smoking.

Tips for Quitters

What can you expect when you first quit smoking?
What can you do to help the process?

- Don't focus on what you are missing. Think about what you are gaining.
- Tell yourself you are a better person for quitting. Remind yourself of this when you desire to smoke.
- When you get the urge to smoke, take a deep breath. Hold it for 10 seconds and then release it slowly or chew gum.
- Keep busy. Exercise, play sports, walk, read a book, knit, or work on a computer.
- Don't carry a lighter, matches, or cigarettes.

- Go to places that don't allow smoking, such as museums and libraries.
- Eat low-calorie, healthful foods when the urge to smoke strikes. Carrot and celery sticks, fresh fruits, and fat-free snacks are good choices.
- Drink a lot of fluids. Cut down on alcohol and caffeine they can make you want to smoke. Select water, herbal teas, caffeine-free soft drinks, and juices.
- Hang out with non-smokers.
- Seek support for quitting. Tell others about your milestones with pride.

What Will I Experience When I Quit Smoking?

When smokers first quit, they go through withdrawal and the symptoms are not easy to bear. The withdrawal symptoms will be the strongest when first quitting, but they should dissipate as time goes on, and disappear within a few weeks. Possible withdrawal symptoms include the following:

After 20 minutes of not smoking

- Blood pressure and pulse decrease.
- The temperature of your hands and feet increase.

After 24 hours

- Craving for cigarettes
- Coughing
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling tired and fatigued
- Restlessness
- Increased appetite
- Headaches
- Constipation
- Sore throat
- Difficulty sleeping

After 48 hours of not smoking

- The carbon dioxide level in your blood returns to normal.
- Oxygen levels in your blood increases.
- Your nerve endings adjust to the absence of nicotine.
- Enhanced ability to taste and smell begins to return.

After 72 hours of not smoking

- Bronchial tubes begin to relax.
- Coughing begins to subside

After 2 weeks to 3 months of not smoking

- Your circulation improves.
- Your exercise tolerance improves.

After 1-9 months of not smoking

- Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue and shortness of breath decreases.
- Cilia in the lungs begin to re-grow, increasing the ability of the lungs to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce infection.
- Your overall energy level increases.

After 1 year of not smoking

- Your risk of dying from heart disease decreases to half that of a lifelong smoker's risk.

After 5 years of not smoking

- Your risk of dying from lung cancer decreases to half that of a lifelong smoker's risk.

After 10 years of not smoking

- Your risk of dying from lung cancer drops to almost the same rate as a lifelong non-smoker.
- Your risk of other cancers, such as cancer of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases.

What if I Try to Quit and Fail?

To quit smoking, you must be ready emotionally and mentally. Naturally, some people are more ready to quit than others. Notice the five stages that people generally go through to successfully quit smoking.

1. **Pre-contemplation.** You don't want to quit smoking, but you feel pressured to quit.
2. **Contemplation.** You want to quit someday. You haven't taken steps to begin the process, but you want to.
3. **Preparation.** You take small steps to quit such as cutting back on smoking or switching to a lighter brand.
4. **Action.** You commit to quitting. You make changes in your actions and environment to help cope with urges to smoke and remain smoke-free for six months.
5. **Maintenance.** You have not smoked for one year.

If you fail at some point in your attempt to quit smoking, do not beat yourself up over it. When failure occurs, many become negative and self-critical, thinking only of their failure. But the truth is that those first steps of desire and motivation are crucial to success.

Remember that relapse is common. In fact, studies show that 75% of those who quit will smoke again. Statistically, most smokers try to quit three times before being successful, so don't ever give up! Even if you fail, you will learn many things that will help you do it differently and better the next time.

As long as you do not give up trying to quit, each attempt increases the chances that you will eventually succeed. However, repeatedly trying to quit will not somehow mysteriously make you smoke-free. Your efforts must be serious and determined realizing that nicotine in cigarettes is tremendously addictive. The physical reasons why it is so tough to quit smoking are very real.

You Can Do It

Millions of people have quit smoking. You can too! Many have done it with no aids, but Christians have a power they can call upon that can virtually insure success. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13).

If we truly desire to quit smoking, then we can. Jesus Christ will give us the power we lack. If we desire it with all our heart and work as hard as we can, then asking for His divine help, He promises to give it (Mt. 7:7). Keep trying, and keep praying. You will succeed!

The Eternal Church of God offers a variety of books, booklets, articles, video, and audio to help people better understand God's Word and His plan for humanity. Some of the printed material available includes:

The Truth about Christmas

Are the Ten Commandments Required Today?

What Does it Mean to be Born Again?

The Truth about New Year's Day

Truth about Valentine's Day

Sabbath Confessions

The Truth about The Cross

The Truth about Halloween

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday!

Is This the Only Time of Salvation?

Why the Unclean and the Clean?

The Historical Jesus

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