

The Truth about Smoking

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The Truth about Smoking

Tobacco is a plant that has grown wild in the Americas for thousands of years. Native Americans cultivated its leaves to smoke or chew in rituals that were thought to expand the mind and heightens one's senses. Smoking tobacco was also considered a way to connect with spirit beings.

When Columbus landed in the territory, he observed natives using what they called the grand pipe or pipe of peace. This pipe was considered sacred. Those who used it were thought to be presenting themselves honorably before deities. It was believed that the smoke intertwined with spirits and would form a bond between those who partook of smoke. This belief was so strong that if a member of an enemy tribe entered a tepee and smoked with the host, he was guaranteed a peaceful passage after leaving the dwelling.

Some Indians would burn tobacco as a form of incense believing that smoke from the plant would ascend to heaven as an acceptable offering to their gods. Certain tribes smoked tobacco as a means of honoring a god of the sun and fire. They would inhale the smoke and blow it in the direction of the sun.

Many of these people also believed that illnesses came upon them from evil spirits flying through the air disguised as owls. To protect and heal themselves, natives would cut their legs or arms and the subsequent bleeding was thought to be a way of cleansing themselves of bad blood. Once cleansed, they would inhale tobacco which they believed to be the smoke of good spirits preventing evil spirits from entering them again.

Inhaling tobacco smoke was a characteristic of many rituals conducted by most of the Native American community. The plant had a major role in their religious ceremonies for centuries. Dried leaves were eventually rolled inside corn husks and smoked through that medium. This practice was the predecessor to paper wrapped cigarettes.

The Growth of the Industry

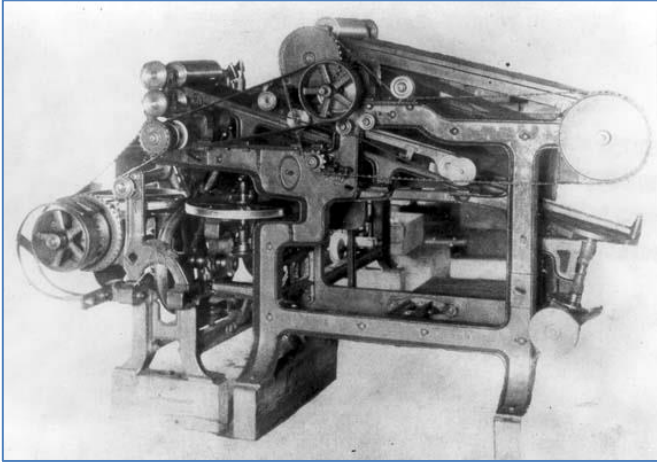
The use of tobacco was introduced to Spanish and European explorers in the late 15th century. The southern variety quickly became the most popular, and by the mid-1500s the recreational use of smoking tobacco became the most profitable export from the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of the Americas. The English established their first tobacco colony in 1607 at Jamestown in Virginia. In 1610, John Rolfe became wealthy due to his efforts and further popularized smoking around the world. Tobacco plantations expanded throughout Virginia leading to war between natives and the growing colonies. From that time, the British and American tobacco industry grew dramatically.



The favored variety of the genus *Nicotiana tabacum* became an industry standard that was simply called tobacco. Tobacco plantations flourished in Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas. Over the next four hundred years, vast numbers of people all around the world became addicted to the naturally occurring substance known as nicotine found in tobacco.

James Abert Bonsack invented the first cigarette rolling machine in 1881. His invention generated 120,000 cigarettes a day. This breakthrough enabled him to assemble what previously took 50 expert rollers 13 hours to produce. This made tobacco much more accessible to common people. Cigarettes could be purchased in already rolled packages

making it easier for more people to smoke. Bonsack's invention was a transformation for the industry and gave birth to the most common form of recreational tobacco—the cigarette.



James Buchanan Duke 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. The edge enabled him to build what eventually amounted to a tobacco empire.

Duke quickly began to utilize mass-production and advertising. He undercut his competitors, and finally created the first tobacco trust in the America. 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, farmers formed associations to fight back using the court system.



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 Myers. With the addition of Philip Morris, these companies comprised a 95 percent share of America's modern tobacco market.

From these early beginnings, the tobacco industry would grow to become one of the most lucrative in the world. Today, over a billion people smoke, and more than 1.6 million people work in tobacco manufacturing in 85,883 factories around the world, generating over \$250 billion (USD) of the total tobacco production (<https://www.pmi.com/tobacco-economics>, retr. 5/8/2024).

Tobacco faced its biggest crises in the mid-1900s when it was proven that inhaling tobacco smoke caused lung cancer. This discovery led many to quit the habit, but the industry responded. They created chemical additives to make cigarettes even more addictive. They developed low-tar brands, and added filters to existing products. By the mid-twentieth century, many who suffered from the effects of tobacco filed suits against the major tobacco companies. In 1965, Congress ordered the following warning be placed on all cigarette packages.

**Caution: Cigarette Smoking
May Be Hazardous
To Your Health**

Tobacco companies readily agreed to this and even helped to write the script. The tobacco industry benefitted from the warning labels because they could now claim that smokers understood the risks. Corporations would no longer be liable to pay individual lawsuits.

In 1996, the state of Connecticut filed a billion-dollar lawsuit claiming tobacco smoke caused 5,000 deaths in the state, and cost them \$100 million 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.

Effects of Smoking on Health

Medical science and clinical experience have proven beyond any doubt that consistently inhaling tobacco results in addiction, disease, and can ultimately lead to death. The substance in tobacco called nicotine is purported to be more addictive than heroin and results in approximately 350,000 annual deaths in America alone. Even nonsmokers have been alerted to possible dangers of secondhand smoke. As a result, many restrictions have been implemented on smoking in public places.

The greatest danger from inhaling smoke is 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 the disease. This malady develops when normal cells are constantly irritated and mutate to an uncontrolled growth process. Worldwide, 5 million people die each year from smoking related cancer.

Other debilitating effects are bronchitis and emphysema. Lung tissue must remain flexible and delicate in order for the organ to efficiently pass oxygen to the bloodstream. When inhaling smoke contaminated smoke or vapor, each time the lungs expand and fill, residue is left imbedded in the tissue. Pockets of pulmonary alveoli become more and more congested causing lungs to lose their elasticity. This worsening process can be compared to an overly stretched-out rubber band. Lungs easily take in the air, but find it increasingly difficult to force it out again.

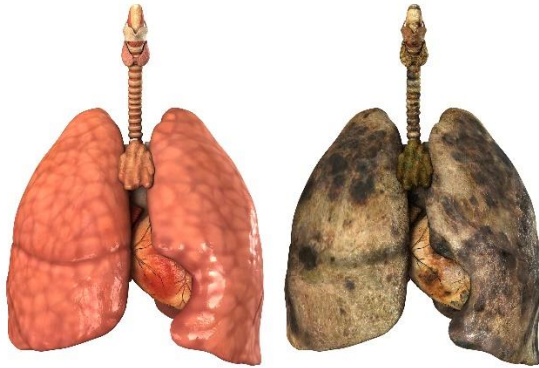
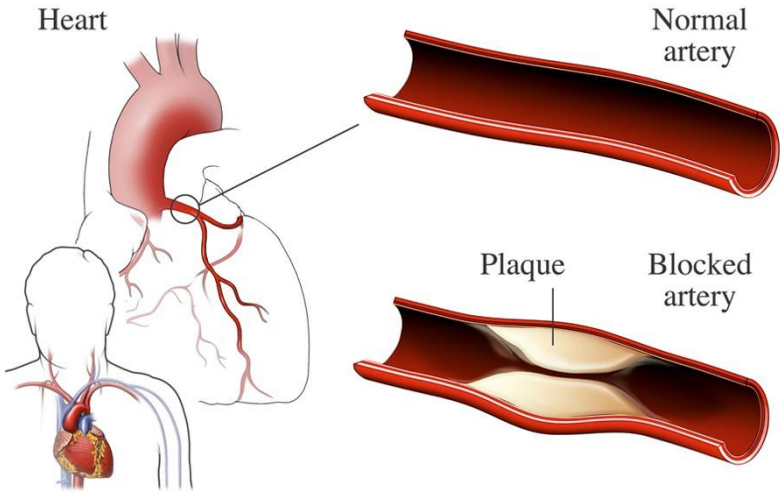


Illustration of healthy lungs opposed to smoker's lungs

Smoking allows a quick delivery of nicotine into the blood stream. The nicotine in cigarette smoke and other vapors start a rush of adrenaline that provides a seemingly pleasant shot of energy. However, while users enjoy the lift, their heart is suffering. Adrenaline speeds up the pulse and causes arteries to contract. Blood pressure rises putting extra strain on the heart. Carbon monoxide inhaled robs the body of much needed oxygen resulting in the heart beating faster in an attempt to distribute more oxygen to organs.

Furthermore, chemicals added to tobacco further accelerate the development of atherosclerosis. Arteries become irritated, inflamed, and resulting damage to the inner lining makes it easier for lipids to attach to vessels. As a result, deposits called plaque buildup and cause the arteries to harden. When enough plaque builds up on an artery wall, the vessel can become narrow and obstructed.

Coronary heart disease develops when the heart is being starved of oxygen. When an artery becomes completely clogged, part of the heart will shut down. This is called a myocardial infarction—heart attack.



How Nicotine Affects the Body

The primary reason why people smoke cigarettes is to receive a quick dose of nicotine. Nicotine can act as both a stimulant and depressant. After exposure, there is a phase that depresses muscles in the airway. This first phase can seem euphoric due to the relaxation it appears to cause. However, the drug also has an opposite reaction. Nicotine increases the heart rate ten to twenty beats per minute. It can also increase the individual's blood pressure by five to ten points.

Nicotine has proven to 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 possible convulsions in those who use high doses. Nicotine tends to elevate the level of blood sugar, thus increasing insulin production and can result in sweating and nausea. The drug also works to enhance platelet aggregation in the red blood cells which can lead to obstruction of a vessel causing permanent paralysis.

Nicotine also temporarily acts to stimulate memory and alertness in those who use it. For this reason, it has a strong psychologically addictive effect. The individuals who inhale tobacco regularly come to depend on the substance to

help them accomplish various tasks in which they need high levels of performance. In addition, nicotine tends to act as an appetite suppressant. A fear of weight gain can influence some to continue smoking.

Nicotine is regarded as a strong mood and behavior altering drug. Tobacco is reckoned to have an addictive potential comparable to alcohol, cocaine, and even morphine.

Other Harmful Ingredients

Most commercial tobacco contains many ingredients that are harmful. Additives are frequently used to release high levels of “free” nicotine which acts to increase stimulation. Ammonium compounds are sometimes used that fulfill this role by raising the alkalinity of smoke.

Some additives are used to enhance the taste of tobacco thus making the product more attractive to consumers. Although seemingly innocuous, the addition of flavorings making the product palatable is cause for concern. Flavor enhancers make tobacco more enjoyable to young people and first-time users. Eugenol and menthol are 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 complex mixture of inorganic compounds.

Some of the chemicals found in cigarette smoke include cyanide, benzene, formaldehyde, methanol, acetylene, ammonia, nitrogen oxide, and carbon monoxide. These chemicals are toxic of themselves and become highly noxious when combined. The purpose of additives is to make smoking more enjoyable and addictive. However, additives make the tobacco a complex mixture of compounds and thereby increases the dangers of smoking.

The Cost of Smoking

Besides the fact that smoking can cost the user their life, it also adds a tremendous financial burden to the entire country. The economic burden of smoking cigarettes in America alone is estimated to be anywhere between \$300-600 billion annually. Adverse effects to various individuals are beyond estimation. Entire families are often affected financially and emotionally. Since its inception as a nationally common habit, smoking-related illnesses have taken tens of millions of lives.

Rising health costs, combined with oversized proportion of insurance claims attributed to smokers, has led some employers to not hire applicants who smoke. Union Pacific Corporation stopped hiring smokers in many states. In some cases, employers ask workers to report their smoking habits. Some companies attempt to offset their costs by charging smokers significantly higher health insurance premiums.

The productivity cost of smoking exceeds \$167 billion per year in the United States alone. The lost productivity stems from time spent on smoke breaks, clinical visits, sick days, and hospital stays due to smoking related illness. Deaths resulting from the inhalation of tobacco costs the nation \$92 billion annually, and an estimated 438,000 people die prematurely every year from smoking cigarettes. The accumulated cost is staggering.

Is Vaping Safter?

Vaping involves breathing in an aerosol that contains several chemicals including nicotine and flavoring. The vapor is inhaled using an e-cigarette or vape. The legalization of cannabis has led to a popular additive of THC. Vaping has grown in popularity, and many believe that it is safer than smoking. This is not necessarily the case. We are now moving into uncharted medical territory, and mounting evidence suggests that vaping is just as dangerous, but in different ways.

Neither smoking nor vaping is good for human health. While smoking appears more harmful than vaping, that does not mean vaping is safe. These manmade vapors often contain large doses of nicotine. Nicotine is a substance known to slow the development of brains in unborn babies, children, and teenagers, and young adults.

There are also dangerous chemicals in the liquid that creates the vapor. Vaping delivers toxins known to cause cancer as well as diacetyl, heavy metals, and unstable organic compounds. Lung injury from vaping is becoming more common. Most cases occur due to products that contain tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which comes from marijuana. By January of 2020, there had been around 2,602 cases of vaping associated pulmonary injury (VAPI) with 59 deaths.

E-cigarettes and vaping a release of free radicals that promote cancer development. It weakens the immune system, and delays brain development. It results in damage the lungs. There is little to no proven benefit to vaping instead of smoking cigarettes.

Inhaling vs. not Inhaling

We must admit that there is a difference between inhaling smoke and vapor and not inhaling. For example, there are many who use cigars and pipe tobacco who do not inhale the smoke. It is done for the enjoyment of flavor and not for a dose of nicotine.

While smoking anything comes with a risk, puffing cigars or pipe tobacco, while not inhaling, is minimally dangerous and does not pose a threat of addiction to nicotine, THC, or other additives. For this reason, it is our judgment that using tobacco for taste in a cigar or pipe is not the same as smoking cigarettes and vaping.

Is Inhaling Smoke or Vapor a Sin?

All of these facts should motivate smokers and vapers to quit. However, even though smoking and vaping are dangerous habits, are they a sin?

Biblically speaking, sin is defined as the transgression of the law (1Jn. 3:4). Based on this definition, how could inhaling nicotine, THC, and other chemicals, habits not mentioned specifically in the Bible, be a transgression of the law? There are a few reasons why smoking tobacco, marijuana, or anything else, can be considered a sin.

First, willfully using anything that is harmful is an affront to the body. Second, when we examine the behaviors of addiction, we find that it is a form of idolatry. The Apostle Paul stated that Christians are to glorify God in their body:

Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's (1Corinthians 6:19-20).

Smoking cigarettes does not glorify God in our body. It causes appalling physical damage. It also costs others billions of dollars in health care. There are hundreds of chemicals used as additives to cigarettes and various vapors—dozens of which are attributed to forms of cancer. When they are burned or vaporized, there are thousands of chemical byproducts released. Darlene Marlow echoes the view of hundreds of 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 (<https://www.quitsmokingsupport.com/whatsinit.htm>, retr. 10/30/2012).

It is not surprising that hundreds of clinical studies have confirmed the relationship between prolonged inhalation of smoke that leads to a number of respiratory disorders, as well as other devastating diseases. The destructive nature of inhaling such substances is vital to understanding why smoking can be considered a sin. The Apostle Paul emphasized one's body as being a type of the temple and asked the following question:

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, which *temple* you are (1Corinthians 3:16-17).

After baptism and the laying on of hands, a genuine Christian receives God's Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18, 1Tim. 4:14, Heb. 6:2). By making this comparison between a body that is henceforth to be holy, and defiling that body with impure behaviors, smoking can be considered a sin. James also wrote:

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

Smoking cigarettes and vaping defiles the user and harms the economy. It would be good for any user to quit smoking. Knowing this, if a person to smokes, it is a sin.

Degrees of Sin

Some may be willing to admit that smoking is a sin. Nonetheless, they may consider it to be a relatively small and insignificant sin. Could this be true? Is smoking an unimportant sin?

There are transgressions that directly violate the Ten Commandments, but some would think that smoking does not fall into any of those categories. However, when examined in detail, we find that smoking is worse than some think. The fact

that smoking is an addition and harmful raises it to the level of idolatry.

Addiction takes a prominent role in an individual's life. The addict becomes enslaved to the habit because it affects their behavior and productivity. In that context, Matthew 6:24 records the words of Jesus, stating that a person cannot serve two masters that oppose one another. Because of the addictive qualities of nicotine, THC, and other additives, smokers become a servant to their habit. They need to take breaks from work or play to get their fix. That lifts addictive smoking to commandment breaking because it causes individuals to obey something other than God.

That is why the most important function of the cigarette is the most dangerous to our spiritual potential. Cigarettes and vapes are designed to be quick delivery systems for nicotine and other drugs. Additives make it even worse causing the smoke or vapor to become a toxic cocktail. Each puff contains chemicals that are used in paint stripper, toilet cleaner, lighter fuel, mothballs, rocket fuel, gas chambers, and numerous other toxic substances.

Whether or not the nicotine is natural or chemically enhanced, inhaling smoke becomes an addiction of the flesh, and Christians are told to control the harmful fleshly demands that the body makes upon us. Paul stated:

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 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 8:12-13).

In one of his letters to brethren in Corinth, Paul related an analogy regarding the Greek games and the Christian's pursuit of the Kingdom of God. The apostle encouraged every genuine Christian with the following example of those who compete in a contest for a prize:

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 (1Corinthians 9:25-27).

Paul believed and taught that if he did not bring his body under control, he would be in danger of losing his salvation. Clearly an addict has not brought his body under control. If that person continues to neglect overcoming their addiction, they put themselves at risk for physical harm, a loss of life, and being disqualified from the Kingdom of God.

God tells us that uncontrolled pulls of our body can lead to missing out on the opportunity for eternal life. This can occur when we let those desires take control of our behavior. 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 (1Corinthians 6:12).

We are to submit ourselves to the authority of God. Our covenant at baptism is to be subject to Him in all things. For this reason, Satan uses the tobacco and marijuana industries to bring people under a form of bondage. The Apostle Paul explained this principle:

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... 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).

We are to be under God's influence, and that influence in the mind must be reflected in how we live. Our behavior, attitude, speech, and activities should reflect the moral standards of God. That is the definition of God's grace. We cannot continue to live in sin, and sin includes allowing something other than God to dictate our behavior.

A person worships whatever they obey. Therefore, if we are addicted to nicotine, if we misuse alcohol or other drugs, we are not subject to the Almighty. We are moved by a lust of the body that is harmful to our God-given vessel. It is a violation of the first three commandments that state:

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain (Deuteronomy 5:7-11).

Smoking cigarettes or vaping may not seem to be a big deal, but from God's perspective it is a serious problem. They are unclean habits that violate principles found in His law. Something else that the Apostle Paul wrote is an admonition in this regard:

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

The Christian body was made by God, and the life within was purchased by the blood of Christ. As Paul said, "you are not your own" (1Cor. 6:19). This connection shows us addictions such as smoking are a form of idolatry.

Cutting Back or Smoking Light Brands

Some believe they can make their smoking habit safer and more acceptable by smoking fewer cigarettes or using low-tar tobacco products frequently referred to as light brands. But this little good.

When people switch to a low tar brand, they often smoke more to get the same effect as before. Also, a low-tar cigarette can be just as harmful when a person puffs more often, inhales deeper, or increases the number of cigarettes smoked per day.

Even if smokers cut back, the health benefit is small when compared to the benefits of quitting. The spiritual correlation of cutting back or using low tar products would be like saying too much sin is bad, but lesser amounts of sin is okay. 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).

Smoking less or using light brands is not the answer. The only real solution is to stop smoking cigarettes. 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. We have been purchased by Christ's blood. We have no right to damage His property. We should offer our life to Him in gratitude realizing that we must quit all harmful and unclean habits and addictions. God's desire is that we do not smoke cigarettes, marijuana, or vape. If we do, then we must quit!

Reasons to Quit

The Son of God said that, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10). When an addict decides to quit, God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the angels in heaven rejoice! The act of stopping an unhealthy and sinful habit will change our lives for the better. Friends and family who truly love us will also be glad. It is a necessary step toward that which is good.

Stopping unhealthy addictions gives a person more time to work on their growth in grace and knowledge so that they may improve their character, and strengthen their relationship with God (John 17:3, 2Pet. 3:18). It will prolong life in this world so that we have time to qualify for God's Kingdom. This is a necessary step to conversion.

How to Quit

There are many ways to stop smoking and vaping. Tens of millions have successfully quit using a variety of methods. However, there is no single way that works for everyone. The nature of our existence means that we all have different ways to approach necessary steps in life. What works for one person may, or may not, work for another.

A smoking cessation program can be helpful, but one thing is certain. You must want to quit! Without a desire to stop the habit, you will not succeed. If you desire to quit, you surely can succeed! Like the adage goes, “Where there is will, there is a way.” If you have the will, the following can be helpful in finding your way:

- List your reasons for quitting and read it frequently
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- Pick a date to stop smoking and then prepare for it
- Note some of the things that you do while smoking, and break the connections
- Find activities to replace smoking such as chewing gum, journaling, or going for a walk
- Ask a healthcare professional about methods that can help

Cessation Tips

- Do not focus on what you are missing—think about what you are gaining
- Know that you are a better person for quitting. Remind yourself of this when you desire to smoke
- When you get the urge, take a deep breath. Hold it for 10 seconds and then release it slowly
- Exercise, walk, read, or write
- Frequent places that don't allow smoking
- Eat fruits and vegetables when the urge to smoke comes.
- Drink lots of fluids such as water, herbal tea, and juices.
- Spend time with non-smokers
- Tell others about your goal and look for support

What You Will Experience When Quitting

When smokers first quit, they go through a period of withdrawal. The severity of symptoms will be different for each person, and will be the strongest when first quitting. The urge to smoke may be ongoing, but the physical symptoms will dissipate as time goes on—generally within a few weeks. Some of the possible withdrawal symptoms include:

After 20 minutes of not smoking

- Lowered blood pressure and pulse
- A feeling of warm hands and feet

After 24 hours

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

After 48 hours of not smoking

- The carbon dioxide level in your blood returns to normal
- Oxygen levels in your blood increases
- Nerve endings adjust to the absence of nicotine
- Enhanced taste and smell begin 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

- Improved circulation
- Improved tolerance of exercise

After 1-9 months of not smoking

- Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease

- Cilia in lungs begin to renew
- Overall increased energy level

After 1 year of not smoking

- The risk of dying from heart disease decreases

After 5 years of not smoking

- The risk of dying from lung cancer decreases

After 10 years of not smoking

- The risk of dying from lung cancer drops to almost the same rate as a non-smoker
- The risk of other cancers decreases

What if I Try to Quit and Fail?

You must be ready emotionally and mentally to quit. Notice the five stages that people generally go through to successfully quit smoking cigarettes:

1. **Pre-contemplation.** You do not really want to quit smoking, but you feel pressured to quit.
2. **Contemplation.** You want to quit someday, but have not taken steps to begin the process.
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 the urge and withdrawal symptoms.
5. **Maintenance.** You have not smoked for 6-12 months.

If you fail at some point in your attempt to quit, do not get discouraged. Many become negative and self-critical thinking only of their failure. But the truth is that those first steps of desire and motivation are important to success.

Remember that relapse is common. Studies show that 75% of those who quit will smoke again. Statistically, most smokers try to quit three times before succeeding. Do not ever

give up! Even if you fail, you will learn things that will help you do it better the next time. If you do not give up trying to quit, each attempt increases the chances that you will succeed.

However, repeatedly trying without improvement will not mysteriously make you smoke-free. Your efforts must be serious and determined realizing that the nicotine in cigarettes is highly addictive. There are real physical reasons why it is tough to quit smoking cigarettes.

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 ensure 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 (Mat. 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 Ten Commandments

What it Means to be Born Again

The Truth about New Year's Day

The Shocking Truth about Valentine's Day

Sabbath Confessions

The Truth about The Cross

The Truth about Christmas

The Truth about Easter

The Truth about Halloween

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

This is Not the Only Time of Salvation

The Unclean and the Clean

The Historical Jesus

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