

brain are too numerous and overwhelming. It is also impossible if there is only an intellectual attempt to align the human will with God's grace. Grace is simultaneously too close and too magnificent for comprehension by the intellect. The alignment of our will with God's must happen at a heart level, through authentic choices of faith that are empowered by God.

As we turn to God, it is grace that enables us to do so. Grace enables dignity within us by empowering our efforts to be honest and responsible. Grace enables humility within us by empowering our realization that our efforts are insufficient by themselves. Grace enables receptivity and responsiveness within us by empowering our growing trust and our willingness to take the risks of faith. All this grace comes from God; God moving gently in us, and God in compassion reaching out to us in unconditional love.

If our desire is to simply quit smoking because of some outside influence, we will hardly be interested in giving our life to God in order to do so. Why should we embark on a spiritual journey that threatens the foundations of all our normalities of life when the only thing we want to do is to quit smoking? We must view smoking the same way we view alcohol or drug abuse, or any other idol that we put before God. It is SIN! The only way to overcome habitual sin is to completely give it to God and NEVER take it back. Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* Radical discipleship means denying oneself and taking up the cross. This means personal sacrifice. Jesus is not promoting self-hatred, but rather denial of the things of our flesh that cause separation from Him. If you have picked up this pamphlet on smoking and have read to this point, I would suggest that you are being moved by the Holy Spirit and God is moving you to some tough decisions. I want you to know that God will help you if you truly want the help. Get on your knees and cry out to Him. He will take it away if you are sincere in your commitment to change that area of your life.

## Now Some Advice From Someone Who Has Been There

- 1) **First, if you don't know Christ as your Savior, cry out to Him and ask Him to forgive you of your sin and come and take up residence in your heart.** If you are a believer then you need to surrender all of your life to Christ.
- 2) **Be honest with yourself and God.** Admit that your addiction to nicotine is wrong. Don't make excuses, don't rationalize your situation and don't blame your plight on others.
- 3) **Cry out to God and ask for His forgiveness.**
- 4) **Just stop smoking.** Walk away from the cigarettes. There is powerful spiritual aid available in the Scriptures and local Christian support groups. But it is up to you to seek the help. God personally invites you to call on Him for the answers you need no matter how great your addiction (Jeremiah 33:3).
- 5) **Trust God.** Give Him your habit. 1 John 1:9 lets us know that His forgiveness is already extended even before we ask. He invites you to *"place all your problems upon Him for He cares for you"* (1 Peter 5:7).
- 6) **Maintain a daily routine that builds your relationship with God.**

*All scripture is from the New King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.*

## DIGGING DEEPER

*For more help on this topic or for information on the multi-faceted ministry of America's KESWICK call 800.453.7942 or visit our website at [www.americaskeswick.org](http://www.americaskeswick.org).*



601 Route 530 • Whiting, NJ 08759-3599  
800.453.7942 • 732.350.1187  
fax 732.849.1392

[colony@americaskeswick.org](mailto:colony@americaskeswick.org)  
[www.addictionrecovery.org](http://www.addictionrecovery.org)

Addiction Recovery | Christian Events  
Conference & Retreat Facilities | Training & Resources

## SMOKING



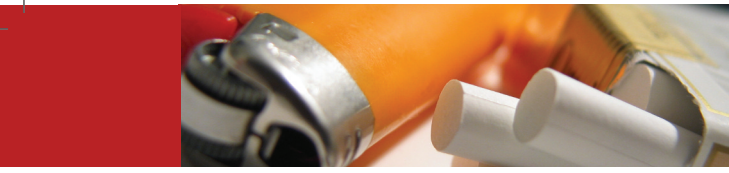
## Smoking Christian Liberty or Bondage?

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

by THOMAS RIGBY  
Colony of Mercy Graduate



Transformation Resource Series



The Bible, in 2 Peter 2:19, says that a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. You have most likely chosen this pamphlet because you or someone you know is struggling with the stronghold of tobacco in his or her life.

## The Problem

*"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

Many Christians who smoke often use the liberty found in Christ as a way of justifying their actions. The words "all things are lawful for me," can and do become a slogan to cloak the immorality in a Christian's life. Although the statement is true, it requires qualification. Paul qualified liberty with the principle of love applied to both neighbor and self as stated in Mark 12:31 *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* Liberty which is not beneficial but detrimental to someone else is not

**Christ is the great Liberator who sets believers free from bondage.**

loving and is to be avoided. So, too, liberty which becomes slavery (I will not be mastered by anything) is not love but hatred of self. Smoking has absolutely no benefit to oneself nor anyone around us. This has been

proven by medical research as far as the consequences smoking has on our bodies and what secondhand smoke has on those subjected to it.

*"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."* – GALATIANS 5:1

The key word here is bondage. People may say that nowhere in the Word of God does it say that a Christian cannot smoke. While it may be true that the Scriptures do not directly name smoking as a sin against God, it is hard to argue that an addiction to

nicotine does not result in bondage to a believer and does go against many other Scriptures that speak on this matter. Christ is the great Liberator who sets believers free from bondage.

Ask yourself some tough questions. Do you need to have a cigarette first thing in the morning before you can begin your day and before you get into God's Word? Do you light up a cigarette when stressful circumstances come about in your life or do you run to God with your stress? Do you avoid places where other believers are because they don't smoke? Do you try to hide your smoking from those you look up to as spiritual men or women? If you said "yes" to any of these questions, then you are a slave to nicotine and God says that is sin!

**Do you need to have a cigarette first thing in the morning before you can begin your day and before you get into God's Word?**

*"Or 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."* – 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20

How can we separate the union a believer has with Christ? We cannot. What we do with our bodies affects both us and Christ. We subject the Holy Spirit to all the pollutants that we put in our body, whether it be gluttony, addiction to drugs, alcohol, sexual immorality, or smoking. How can one glorify God with his body while at the same time being a slave to any one of these sins?

## TESTIMONY

I began smoking cigarettes at age thirteen. All I wanted at that time in my life was to fit in with the other kids and do what they were doing. My father was a smoker, so I never thought there was anything wrong with smoking. Smoking cigarettes turned into smoking pot, which turned into drinking alcohol, which turned into much harder drugs. As I look back now I see that cigarettes were a

gateway to the other addictions in my life.

When I came to know the saving power of Jesus Christ, I gave to God the drugs and alcohol dependency, but not the dependency to cigarettes. I found out very quickly that it was easier for me to stop using drugs than it was to stop smoking cigarettes. There are a couple of reasons why this was true. One, I did not view smoking cigarettes as a sin against a Holy God and two, I had given God the drugs and the alcohol but I was not willing to give Him the cigarettes, too. In 1997, God called me into ministry at America's KESWICK Colony of Mercy. I knew I had to quit smoking in order to work as a counselor. I wanted the job enough to quit smoking, but not for the right reasons and it was only a matter of time before I began smoking again.

After one and a half years I began to smoke again. Due to the consequences of smoking my life began to change. I was fired from my job as a Chaplain, my family and I had to move out of the house we were living in and yet I still would not stop smoking. For the next six years I was in and out of my addiction to drugs and alcohol again, because of my rebellion towards God in the area of cigarettes. Fast forward to June 8, 2009, when I came back to the Colony of Mercy as a resident in the program. God showed me that in order to have an intimate relationship with Him I had to put down the cigarettes. This wasn't easy and it brought me to a crisis of faith in my life. I had to decide if I could fulfill God's will for my life to its full potential with this idol in my life. When I answered God and said no, I couldn't do His will completely and smoke cigarettes at the same time, He gave me freedom from the power that cigarettes had over me.

## THE ANSWER

For the power of addiction to cigarettes to be broken the human will must be aligned with God's will. The human nature must surrender to the Holy Spirit. Personal power must interact with the power of grace. How does this happen? It is surely impossible by our willpower alone; the addicted systems in the