

# WHAT IS IDOLATRY?

Any addiction, whether to alcohol, drugs, prescription medicines, pornography, gambling, cigarettes, or even food, is a form of idolatry. The first commandment is, "You shall not have any other gods before Me." The second commandment is, "You shall not bow down to them or serve them" (see Exodus 20). When a person is addicted, they are really bowing down and serving that addiction as their god. It is the sin of idolatry. They become a slave to it, and they are held in bondage.

Jesus said, "Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34).

Adam had perfect liberty in the garden. He had the freedom to eat of any tree in the garden that he pleased, but God warned him, "Don't eat of that tree! That will bring you into bondage. That will bring you into death." God didn't tie him up in the corner of the garden, nor did God build a high wall around that tree. He had the freedom to eat of it. But Adam exercised that freedom in such a way as to bring death and bondage to sin and to the flesh. As he obeyed the desires of the flesh rather than the Word of God and the commandment of God, he then found himself a victim to his flesh.

So many people are dying a slow death because their addiction has a hold on them, almost as if it were demonic, and the only thing that can free a person from this hold is the power of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to open the eyes of those that are blind and "to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" (Isaiah 61:1). "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:30).

## GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

Proverbs 5:22-23  
1 Corinthians 6:12-13  
1 Corinthians 9:24-27  
1 Timothy 6:6-10  
James 1:14-15  
1 Peter 4:1-3  
2 Peter 2:19

## GOD'S PROMISES

John 8:34-36  
Romans 8:12-15

## MAKE A CHANGE

Proverbs 23:20-21  
Rom. 6:1-2, 11-13, 16  
Romans 12:1  
1 Corinthians 6:19-20  
2 Corinthians 7:1  
1 John 1:8-9

## BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Proverbs 23:29-35

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ALCOHOL?

Drinking alcohol has been debated within the church for years. There are many Christians who feel at liberty to drink wine, and to be frank, I cannot make an airtight scriptural case against it. However, Paul said, "All things are lawful for me," but he declared, "I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6:12). I personally feel that it is unwise to take anything into your system that can bring you under its power, or "under the influence." It alters a person's thinking, and thus their judgment. In addition, alcohol has been proven to damage a person both physically and mentally.

There is a thirst within the spirit that can't be satisfied with material or emotional things. Only a meaningful relationship with God can satisfy that yearning within. Sometimes people seek to drown this thirst with alcohol. Ironically, all they're doing is creating a fuzzy mind so they won't have to think about it. But when they sober up, the thirst is still there. By turning to the bottle, an alcoholic only creates new problems greater than the first.

If you will turn your life over to Jesus, He will set you free from that which is destroying you. More than that, He'll bring you satisfaction; He'll fill your thirsty soul. Be filled with the Spirit of God and you will find that which your soul and spirit are longing after.

Though it may be lawful, I believe you're better off not to drink or ingest anything that can bring you under its influence. Live a life that's completely consecrated and committed to God. The Bible says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise (Proverbs 20:1 KJV).

### GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

Proverbs 20:1  
Proverbs 21:17  
Proverbs 23:29-32  
Isaiah 5:11, 22  
Habakkuk 2:15  
Galatians 5:19-21

### MAKE A CHANGE

Proverbs 23:20-21  
Luke 21:34  
Romans 13:12-14  
1 Corinthians 5:11  
1 Corinthians 6:19-20  
2 Corinthians 7:11  
Ephesians 5:18-21

### GOD'S PROMISES

John 7:37-38  
John 8:36  
1 Corinthians 10:13  
1 Corinthians 5:17

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DRUGS?

The word *sorcery* stems from the root word *pharmakeia*, which is also translated as witchcraft. When we find sorcery or witchcraft in the Bible, it refers to the use of drugs for hallucinogenic or mind-altering purposes, like narcotics. God’s law strictly prohibits drug abuse because when you allow the abuse of drugs to reside in your life, it will ultimately destroy you. Narcotics are very insidious. The very first thing a narcotic will do is attack a person’s willpower to resist. People can become hooked so quickly. Narcotic abuse then destroys good judgment and sensitivity to right and wrong, and people soon find themselves doing things they would have been appalled and shocked at before.

One of the most devastating effects of drug abuse is becoming enslaved to drugs. Satan loves to take a person captive, holding them as a hostage against their will. Paul wrote to Timothy, “that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will” (2 Timothy 2:26). Satan does not fight fairly or by the rules. But thank God, Jesus Christ came to set at liberty those who were captive and to open the prison doors to those who are bound.

The power of Jesus Christ can break the hold that Satan has upon someone bound by drug addiction, “to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus” (Acts 26:18). That’s what the gospel is all about, freeing people from the power of darkness.

## GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

1 Samuel 15:23  
Psalm 52:7  
Isaiah 47:9  
Ezekiel 18:30-32  
Malachi 3:5  
Galatians 5:19-21  
Revelation 21:6-8

## GOD’S PROMISES

Revelation 22:14-15

## MAKE A CHANGE

Ephesians 5:18  
1 Corinthians 6:12

## BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Revelation 9:20-21

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SMOKING?

“As a Christian, can I smoke cigarettes? I find that it just sort of calms me down.” Let me ask you this: Can it get a hold on your life so that you’ve just got to have another one? Is that really calming you down? God never intended that man should be ruled by his flesh; God intended the Spirit should rule you. There are things that will hinder your progress in your walk with the Lord. They’re not wrong, whereby it’s a sin, but they are hindrances in the way of following Jesus.

You’re a born-again Christian—so why does it seem impossible to stop smoking? Second Timothy 3:5 says, “Having a form of godliness but denying its power.” That is an accurate description of much of the church today. They observe rituals by going to church every Sunday and have a form of godliness, but they lack power.

Jesus said, “Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). When you come to Christ and understand the cross, you realize not only was Jesus crucified for your sins, but you are crucified with Christ. I no longer am held by the power of sin, but I am dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ. Sin no longer rules over me. So this is the principle: As a believer, I am now crucified with Christ. I have reckoned my old life and nature to be dead.

Now, that doesn’t mean I completely lose the desires of the flesh, but they no longer rule over me. I no longer have to obey them. I’m no longer a slave to my fleshly desires, but I’m a slave of Jesus Christ. I desire to obey Him and to please Him. And because of this, I can overcome sin through Him.

God has given us pure air with oxygen to breathe. But when you breathe in chemical substances, such as nicotine, it will affect your brain to provide an altered state of consciousness. It will give you a feeling of euphoria or excitement. But the truth is, that isn’t why God created your breathing. By smoking cigarettes, or anything else for that matter, you are twisting the use that God had originally intended. And what happens? You soon become addicted and then you become enslaved. Now your body is ruling over you. You’re no longer in control. God never intended that man should be ruled by his flesh; God intended that you should be governed by the Spirit.

Some things will hinder my progress in my walk with the Lord. They’re not wrong, whereby I can label them as sin, but they are hindrances. Paul said, “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). In the book of Hebrews it says, “Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1). And so we need to deny those things that would hinder us that stand in the way of following Jesus. We need to use wisdom in the exercise of our liberty in Christ. Don’t use your liberty as an occasion for the flesh, because if you do, it’ll bring you into bondage.

First John 2:14 declares, “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.” In other words, John gives us the secret to how these young men overcame sin: they were strong in God’s Word. They lived in it. King David asked, “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word. With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against You” (Psalm 119:9-11).

Oh, how we need the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God working in our lives. To ignore the power of the Holy Spirit and God’s Word is to teach people how to get along in life without God, and without Him we can’t do anything. We’re no longer slaves to our flesh, sin, or Satan when we’re born again (Romans 6; 2 Timothy 2:26). We’re also free from the Law. But we must exercise our freedom in a way that will not bring us back into bondage.

Excerpted from *Biblical Counseling* by Chuck Smith, 2016, *The Word For Today* (used by permission).

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SEXUAL IMMORALITY?

One of the great weaknesses of the church today is the toleration of sexual immorality such as fornication, or people living together outside of marriage, or homosexuality. Don't give it an inch. Make no provision for it but put on the Lord Jesus Christ. It's important that we cast off the works of darkness and we put on the armor of light. That means to put a block on the Internet so sexual images don't pop up. These are the last days and we must walk in holiness and purity because we want to be found in the righteousness of Christ.

There are always those who fool themselves into thinking that they could live immorally and still be Christians. But the apostle Paul made it clear that "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners will not inherit the kingdom of God" (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). That was a part of your past life. If you want to be God's child, He will clean up your life. Don't go back to that.

There are still others who say, "It's my body, I can do as I please." Isn't that what we're hearing today, especially when it comes to pro-choice? Well, that may be true of the person in the world, but it is not true of the child of God. It's not your body anymore. It's been redeemed. You've been bought with a price. Jesus redeemed you from that lost, enslaved state, that you might be free now to serve, worship, and to glorify God in your body. The Bible teaches that the end result of being sexually promiscuous will be disastrous. It will destroy you and your life, and it will bring you into poverty. It will rob you of everything that is worthwhile and good, including your health.

Paul said to the church of Corinth, "Don't you realize that you cannot be joined together with a prostitute? Since you are Christ's, then you are seeking to make Christ a participator in that immorality" (see 1 Corinthians 6:16-18). It can't be! The Lord won't join Himself to sin. He cannot be one with sin. It is important that we purpose in our hearts to live a life of moral purity. That is what enabled Joseph to flee Potiphar's wife when she sought to entice him (see Genesis 39). He had already determined in his heart that his body belonged to God, so when evil presented itself he knew he must flee. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Flee youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22).

In our world today we have many people who worship sex; it's their god or goddess. They're too sophisticated to carve out little idols anymore, but nonetheless it is still their god. They may have pictures that would be an equivalent in a sense to these idols. If you observe that person's life, you see that their whole life revolves around sex and sexual encounters. That's what they live for and that's what they talk about. It is really the god that controls their life. However, the Bible teaches that the end result of being sexually promiscuous will be disastrous. It will destroy you and your life, and it will bring you into poverty. It will rob you of everything that is worthwhile and good, including your health.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE	GOD'S PROMISES	MAKE A CHANGE	BIBLICAL EXAMPLE
Genesis 2:24	Psalms 119:1-2	Prov. 5:1-5, 8-9, 15-23	Genesis 39:12
Exodus 20:14	John 8:32	Proverbs 6:23-29	1 Corinthians 6:15-17
Leviticus 20:10	Galatians 5:16	Proverbs 7:1-5, 24-27	
Deuteronomy 5:18		Romans 6:12-13	
Proverbs 2:16-19		Romans 12:1-2	
Matthew 5:27-28		Romans 13:14	
Matthew 15:19-20		1 Corinthians 6:18-20	
Romans 1:18, 22, 24, 26--29, 32		Colossians 3:5-7	
1 Corinthians 6:13b, 16		2 Timothy 2:22	
Galatians 5:19-21		1 Peter 2:11	
1 Thessalonians 4:3-8		1 John 2:15-16	
Hebrews 13:4			
James 1:13-14			

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## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PLEASURE?

Many people have stunted spiritual development because pleasure is their thing. Their minds are distracted and drawn away by the pleasures of this world. Movies, television, and video-gaming contribute greatly to this. So many people spend their evenings in front of the television set, seeking pleasure, seeking to be entertained. Yet, Paul, the apostle speaks about the decadent society, the horrible things that were going on as far as violence and immorality, and he said, “Not only do they do such things but they take pleasure in those that do them” (Romans 1:32).

Now you may be true and faithful to your marriage, you may be of the character and sort that you would never cheat on your wife, but if you are watching adultery on TV, in being entertained by it, you are vicariously entering into it. When pleasure supersedes your relationship with Jesus, it can sap spiritual life from you, and it can keep you in an arrested spiritual state. Those who spend maybe eight, ten hours a week in front of the television will tell you, “Oh, I just didn’t have time to read my Bible.” And so many people allow these other things to become first and supersede their relationship with Jesus. And thus, though they have received Jesus and claim to be Christians, their lives never bring forth fruit. They never develop; they never grow. The fruitfulness is choked out by these other things.

I would like to suggest that this week, during that time when you normally sit down and pollute your mind with television—instead of clicking on the remote, turn your face towards God. Dedicate yourself to prayer and reading the Bible. Turn off the TV and turn your face to God.

### GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

Luke 8:14  
Romans 1:28-32  
Romans 6:21  
Romans 8:7  
2 Corinthians 10:4-6  
Ephesians 4:17-19  
1 Timothy 5:22  
Revelation 18:4

### GOD’S PROMISES

Isaiah 33:15-16  
Romans 8:13  
Galatians 6:7-8

### MAKE A CHANGE

Psalm 101:2-4, 7  
Romans 13:14  
Romans 16:19b  
Ephesians 5:11-16  
Philippians 4:8  
Colossians 3:16  
Colossians 4:5  
1 Peter 4:3

### BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Psalm 50:18

### PRAYER

Psalm 119:37

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ANGER?

Are you quick-tempered or quick to “fly off the handle” when something doesn’t go right? The only thing some people are ever going to know about Jesus Christ is what they see in you. How do you represent Jesus? Do you represent Him as being upset, mad, or angry over small annoyances?

The only way we can really be His representative is through the power of the Holy Spirit. We can spend our lives thinking about all of the things that make us upset, or we can spend our lives thinking of God’s lovingkindness, goodness, mercy, and grace—and extending that to others. Proverbs 19:11 reads, “The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.” It’s the discretion of a man to put off his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. Love covers a multitude of sins. Don’t respond or react in anger to a situation. Defer that action until your anger has subsided. Then, many times, once it’s subsided, you’ll say, “Well, what difference does it make? Nobody was hurt.” This is a good rule for driving the freeways. Overlook someone’s transgression, rather than get frustrated and stew over the matter.

The next time something upsets you, don’t react. Instead, I would exhort you to just count your blessings and be thankful for what God has done. And then let your heart rejoice in His goodness.

### GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

Proverbs 10:12  
Proverbs 12:16  
Proverbs 14:17, 29  
Proverbs 15:1  
Proverbs 19:11  
Proverbs 25:28  
Proverbs 29:22  
Ecclesiastes 7:8--9  
Galatians 5:19-21

### GOD’S PROMISES

Romans 12:19

### MAKE A CHANGE

Psalm 37:8  
Proverbs 22:24-25  
Luke 6:28-29  
Ephesians 4:26-27, 30-32  
Colossians 3:8  
James 1:19-20