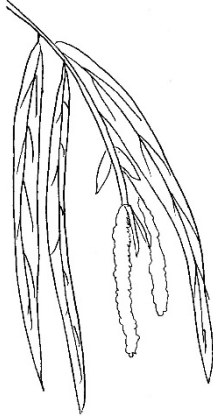


## Harmful Drugs



Medicines come from the parts of some plants or chemical substances. They are used to try to help a sick or injured body to heal better and in brief times such as surgery when the pain would be too great. Sometimes, for various reasons, a person might have to take medicines for a very long time. Medicines are sometimes called “drugs” but on this page, the word “drugs” is used to describe something else.

Plants are good and have a good purpose to their parts. But that good purpose might be beneficial for one thing could be harmful for something else. Example: some herbs are good as cleaners but are not edible to humans even if some animals might thrive with them.

Harmful drugs also come from the parts of some plants or chemical substances. But drugs are taken because a person wants to feel good or popular, not to help heal a sickness or injury. Taking this kind of drug actually harms the person more than it helps him or her. How?

1. A harmful drug makes the mind not as alert as normal for a period of time after swallowing or breathing in the drug or letting it absorb into the skin. There is a lessened ability to choose wisely during that period of time and a person might make some very foolish choices that could further injure another person or him/herself.

2. A harmful drug needs more and more of it to keep the person happy. This is called addiction. Not only is this an expensive and unnecessary habit which wastes money, using drugs ends up controlling a person's whole life. More and more of the person's time and energy goes to finding, buying, and taking more drugs including sometimes other kinds of drugs which are stronger and have even more bad effects on the body's insides.
  
3. Taking drugs often changes who the person socializes with and usually, the people taking drugs have other bad habits that harm themselves or others. The person can feel lonely and helpless.

Taking drugs is not a good habit to start.

It is best to stay away from people who are not taking good care of their minds.

*Parents: You may wish to discuss these matters further with your child and perhaps find pictures of plants for some specific kinds of common drugs that harm a human body.*

## ☐ Habits:

We are not to harm our bodies with evil/sinful choices but rather take good care of it. We should respect God and reject harmful things:

*“Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.”*

*Proverbs 3:7-8*

*“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*

To live wisely, Christians should not be under the harmful influence/control of something which foolishly changes the way we talk, walk, and think but rather under the direction of the Holy Spirit:

*“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit”*

*Ephesians 5:15-18*

Exercise can be beneficial:

*“For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” 1 Timothy 4:8*

Handling conflict:

(There are so many verses on this topic, including many in Proverbs and the Epistles. These are just a few.)

*“Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.”*

*Psalms 34:13-14*

*“A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.”*

*Proverbs 15:1*

Part of a Letter(s) about a now-legal street drug written in response to someone who offered it to me...

**“When my heart is overwhelmed, when I feel discouraged, discontented with my limitations that I live with, weak, sickly, when I can’t sleep well, when I am low, I pray like the psalmist David, “Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I” (Psalm 61:2 NKJV). There is no equal or greater “high” than knowing the comfort of the Lord and His peace and joy that yes, remain right in the midst of trials and suffering, not just in the absence of them. And my desire is that God would guard my heart and mind and keep it clear to think and rest in Him.**

So when I look at medicines (also foods)...

1. It doesn't matter to me if it is legal (unless it is illegal in which case, obeying authorities is important)— there are many things that are legal in various parts of the world that are unwise – drunkenness, pornography, prostitution, abortion, artificial colouring and some food additives, to name a few. It really doesn't matter to me if an “expert” recommends it. (Experts don't know everything and sometimes, an ordinary person has more sense.) So, we don't do things just because a doctor or research or social media or whoever tells us it is “safe” and “legal”. There has to be more to it than that. We live in an imperfect world and solutions have side effects so we have to figure out what the risks versus benefits are for each thing. These aspects can differ from person to person – figuring out what is best for an individual.
2. It is more than just “trial and error”. My acceptance of a particular medicine isn't just because “it works” to soothe a symptom – there are a lot of “band aid solutions” around that may appear to be good in the short term but not in the long term. Medicine/drugs rarely have as many benefits [in comparison to healthy lifestyle changes which might mean for us to slow down, eat better, sleep at night] in the long-term compared to the short-term unless it is supplying a chemical that the body should be making but isn't or if it is fighting an infection or some cancers.
3. In addition to that point, I need to consider what my motive is behind wanting something to work – the reason for why I desire the problem to be solved in the first place. What is my attitude towards what is troubling me? Is it so I can do the work God has directed me in general to do? Does He want me to rest or work at this specific point in time or is His plan to involve other people to help me that weren't in “my plans”? Does He then want me to do a different activity today if I'm not going to be well enough for “my plans”? Will I accept my disability or complain about it? What is God's purpose in allowing affliction in my life? And what if I get a choice between something that will “work” to heal my physical body but the method could easily lead me away from walking close to God OR just remain “unhealed” but daily depending on God's strength? What will I do with such a temptation to try something that would have a spiritual impact as well as a physical one? God promises He will provide me a godly option to each temptation: *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.* 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Some Christians might say, “If it works and does someone good, then it is from God.” This idea is NOT taught in the Bible. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23 says, *“Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* We need to remember that *“Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”* 2 Corinthians 11:14-15. That means that, in this world and while we're living on it, God sometimes does allow “righteousness” (e.g. healing) to be because of an evil source (cross-reference: *Matthew 7:22-23*). Just because “it works” and someone “gets better”, does not mean that God wants us to try it.- is it worth it to have a healthier body but your spiritual

growth/fellowship gets damaged in the process? Psalm 106:12-15 gives an example of the children of Israel's desires: *"Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."*

Proverbs says that *"the prudent/wise see danger and take refuge; but the simple/foolish keep going and suffer for it."* (22:3) I guess part of my point here is to say that I personally don't have to experience or try something out to see if it is harmful – I can learn from other people's experiences of what they did and how eventually things ended up in their lives and in doing so, save myself a lot of trouble.

4. "Natural" doesn't mean it's healthy for humans. Natural is great in many ways in comparison to synthetic but we must remember that natural does not always mean good – there are a lot of natural things that are bad. Disease, destructive molds and bacteria, viruses, poisons – all may serve a purpose yes, but these natural things are not all beneficial to humans. Nor are all plants beneficial for ingestion or inhaling – only some are. Some herbs are better used as things like microbial cleaners or weed controls or animal care items – not all need to be thought of as "if it is natural, then it is good for me to put into my body".

Example of Alcohol: God knew all about the possibilities of fermentation and alcohol when He created grapes. Had He made a mistake to make a product that could harm? No but there is a wrong way to use it and a right way to use this natural substance. Right uses mentioned in the Bible include as a topical antiseptic to clean wounds, as a painkiller for the dying, and to purify water for Timothy's stomach issues. Wrong use was drunkenness where one lost self-control temporarily under intoxication. God wants us to keep our wits alert unless sleeping [or situations such as needing surgery]. And He wants us to be safe around other people too.

God knows all the possibilities of medicinal properties of plants. Has He made a mistake in creating the plants used for cannabis products, leaves with cocaine, rhubarb? Nope, but there is a wrong way to use them and a right way to use them. Leaves of the rhubarb are poisonous to us to eat but can be used in clothing dyes or as a pesticide. And just because a thing "can" kill an infection inside of our bodies [in case studies] doesn't automatically imply that it "should" be used to kill an infection inside of our bodies.

5. Research is ongoing. I don't doubt that there ARE medicinal properties that can be used for good coming from the hemp and related plants. As to the balance between what is beneficial and what has too many downsides for using a specific component of the plant for good medicine, that debate is left to others with more interest than I. CBD doesn't look attractive enough to me for my specific health conditions or overall well-being so quite honestly, I don't want to try any. (I realize that CBD is not supposedly giving a mind-altering experience ("high") and is not supposed to be addictive.) I'd say that if you are taking it as medicine, that you should use a purer type that doesn't also contain contaminants that have other effects – apparently some people have concerns with impure sources which have not been processed as carefully. I'd also say that long-term effects have not yet been studied, so it is still a risk just like anything else on the market that has not been used like this in long-term studies. "Harmless" will take time to prove – most inventions [this is a processed product] have some downsides to them. Research can be really cool but only God can be trusted completely to never fail in His promises.

#### 1. About the Mind-Altering Factor...

a) There are drugs that make a sick person's mind clearer so they can function. Example: a person with dementia or someone who had chemotherapy that killed his cancer cells but also permanently damaged chemicals in his brain so he got life-long chemical depression and needs daily medicine in order to keep his mind clear.

- b) There are drugs that are used for surgical events called anaesthetics and painkillers and these either knock a person unconscious purposely or sedate them or deaden the pain with a side effect of a fuzzy mind – ideally very short-term, not daily, not regularly.
- c) When a body can't learn to sleep any other way such as through lifestyle changes, there are drugs used in sleep disorders. (e.g. sedatives) so that a body can sleep.
- d) Sedation is also used to control unwanted behaviour. But, not always without cruel side effects – it is risky. It can take months and careful management to recover people from those medicines.
- e) There is the kind of drugs used in life and death emergencies where long-term side effects just aren't as important – e.g. some palliative care painkillers. The Bible talks about giving “strong drink” (intoxicating) to those who are dying/perishing so that is an acceptable usage of mind-altering medicine.
- f) Then there is the kind of mind-altering drug that is used to feel good where the person is not in full control of one's mind while “high”. The person doesn't have to take them but rather chooses to take them in order to decrease troubling physical or emotional symptoms and/or increase spiritual experiences. Example: THC form of cannabis.

When thinking about drugs that fit under the “f)” category, I need to think, should I take something to make me “high”? My answer is honestly, “no”. Here is why:

As a Christian, I believe the Bible has many principles for us to apply our hearts to for wisdom and knowing how to live. I think God put things in there for us to pay attention to because He knows what is best and often we humans don't. (Most times, any wrong choices we make were ones we originally thought were good ones at the time. Humans are quite inadequate to figure out life on their own so we need God and His Word.)

In Bible times, the most common mind-altering drug was alcohol and so all of the commands that are given about that, really could apply to any legal or non-legal mind-altering drug. Sorceries involved using drugs as a mind-altering gateway into occult experiences and sorcery is a sin. Drunkenness is a sin. (Note: I did not say drinking alcohol was a sin. What the Bible says is sin is being under the control of something intoxicating so you are no longer self-controlled.) We are to be sober in contrast. And the word “sober” doesn't mean no smiling or laughing – it means to be in full control of your mind. One thing that I, as an older woman, am commanded by God to do, is to teach younger women “to live soberly”. What this means, is that God doesn't want your mind to go on a trip out of your control. It isn't His plan. He won't be the One behind someone telling you that THC is OK.. 1 Peter 5:8 - the Greek word translated as “sober” is *nepho*, which literally means “drink no wine.” A broader meaning is “of being self-controlled, free of confusion, clear headed, sound of mind, or keeping your head.” We should avoid things that impair clear thinking.

It is far better to say “no” to the ungodly high and live your life feeling good in other ways that aren't going to lead you away from Him. Getting “high” on drugs never will bring you closer to your Creator. Drugs don't have to have a physical harm to be harmful – a spiritual harm is far worse.

2. Addictions: Things other than drugs can become addictive. But choosing something that is addictive is a very poor choice because it makes you a slave. 1 Corinthians 6:12 “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything.” And God's plan for our lives is not that we should be enslaved to anything other than to be servants of His. When we serve Him out of love and a grateful heart for all He has done for us, this is the best way to live in any circumstance, sick or healthy. He gives freedom and power to stand up against things that are harmful to us. He offers all

that is needed to be content and thankful in any situation. And since He never will run out of power, we are secure.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *"Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison"...* He didn't want us suffering with the effects of a dying world for all of eternity. Had Jesus not come to save us from our sins, we would never have had the opportunity to be in God's presence away from sin and its effects. Because of Jesus, suffering does not need to last forever and it will not last forever for people who have placed their trust in Him.

We aren't puppets – God gives us each the freedom to make our own choices. But not all those choices are good for us and He doesn't just forget them or forget us; He cares enough to have consequences for our choices, not to spoil our fun or our freedom but rather because He is good and wants us to learn what is good.

Shall I try \_\_\_\_ if "people" say it will help me feel better but God already warns me in the Bible with things that point to the idea that doing so is unwise? My decision is better to say that I will be determined to choose God's way more than my perceived cure for my symptoms (even if it might look like it would make me feel better) and I will take steps to avoid the temptation to reconsider my decision otherwise. Personally, I'd actually rather be permanently freed from my suffering in death than to be temporarily freed from my suffering through a method that turns me away from God's principles found in His Word. And that means turning away from some of the methods that websites or even a medical professional may suggest, even if my physical body deteriorates and dies. I've turned away from tests that would put my unborn child at risk for an abortion when the reason for the test was just because people thought I was too old. To me, wasting a few minutes or several hours (if added up over the years) in order to get "high" and lose part control of my mind but make it purposely fuzzy on a regular basis is not a good use of my time. Life is too short to be wasted like this.

*"Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator."* 1 Peter 4:19 God is faithful. He can do anything – to heal me or not – but if He does, He'll use something that He'll agree with. I truly believe that God only offers what is good for us. The bad stuff might look promising and good but in reality, in the end, it will be harmful. 2 Peter 2:19 *"They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved."*

I'll end with a part of my dad's favourite Psalm (103:1-5): *"Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."*

- Jory