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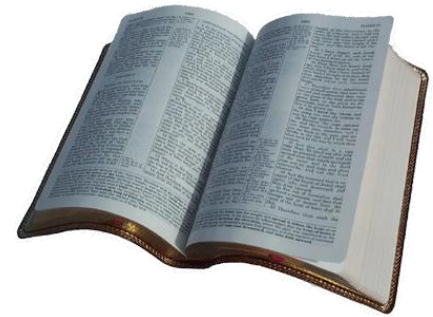
It is not a medically controlled substance such as other medicines; Christians must then know that medical marijuana has a great deal of danger for the limited value it may provide.

Finally, there is the matter of the culture that comes with marijuana use. Much like alcohol, marijuana users are often involved in a culture of use. Alcohol is distributed with an intent to be part of social discourse; even different types of alcohol are marketed for different situations. Wine culture seeks to promote sophistication, while beer culture imbeds itself into blue collar circumstances. Marijuana is also marketed with a distinct culture in mind; as with alcohol, that culture itself is one contrary to the Kingdom of Christ.

Can a Christian use marijuana? For recreational purposes, absolutely not. Using it for medicinal purposes becomes problematic as the actual medicinal use of marijuana is controversial at best, and is often used to cloak recreational users. The medicinal values of marijuana are

found in other medicines that do not have the intoxicating effect. We need to remember that Christ suffered for us in the flesh so that we would no longer spend our time living for the lusts of the flesh, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries, of which marijuana is now entrenched (1 Peter 4:1-3).

Marijuana



Our society is always changing. One of the changes we are seeing across the US today is the legalization of marijuana. This refers to both legalization for medicinal use and legalization for recreational use. As Christians, how are we to view these changes, and what posture ought we to take to this issue in the world?

First, we need to ascertain that our position will not be one that is established by simply accepting the way it has always been nor by the desire to change for the sake of change. In other words, Christians do not determine what is right or wrong by past choices or societal pressure. What is right and wrong is not determined by what we desire to be right or desire to be wrong. It is only by the Word of Truth that anything can be properly assessed. *“Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil”* (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22).

As stated, marijuana use falls into two categories: medicinal and recreational. Additionally, there are derivatives and related products (CBD oils and hemp for example) that are also related to the cannabis

plant, the plant from which marijuana is taken. The matter of debate is those cannabis substances which contain the chemical THC, a mind altering substance.

Christians are authorized to use medicines (natural or artificial) in order to treat health conditions. We find this in various places in the Scriptures; Isaiah prepared a poultice for Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:21); Jacob’s wives traded for mandrake in Genesis 30:14-16. Some of the process of anointing with oil seems medicinal (James 5:14, Ezekiel 16:9), and Jesus discussed the need for physicians in Luke 5:31. We might even go so far as to accept that medicines that affect our minds (i.e. intoxicate) may have their place, as described in Proverbs 31:6-7. Thus, if marijuana had a genuine medicinal purpose addressing a genuine medicinal need, using it for that purpose and intent would be an appropriate action for a Christian.

What about recreational use? The recreational purpose of

marijuana is often summed up in the age old expression “to get high”, to experience a euphoria or sense of ease. This purpose corresponds almost exactly with social (or recreational) drinking of alcohol. A Biblical perspective then is that getting high is a type of drunkenness, a dissipation of our spiritual control (Eph. 5:18). On this subject the Bible is very clear: *“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither..... drunkards, nor revilers.....will inherit the kingdom of God”*. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

There is another important point to consider in the distinctions between medicinal and recreational marijuana use. While it is the case that Christians are permitted to use medicines to treat health conditions, there is a very great problem in our society of an absence of distinction in that circumstance when it comes to marijuana. When studies examine medicinal marijuana use, 80% of those same people also report using marijuana recreationally. (cont.)