

Seek Ye First...

"...the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

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PURITY

J. D. Sweeten

Our nation's moral health is a hot issue these days and, especially in an election year, discussing values and morality can cause tempers to flair. However, our recent presidential legacy has revealed, if nothing else, that our nation's concern for purity is nominal at best, and for a seeming majority, irrelevant. This apathetic insensitivity toward integrity ought to scare the Christian into action, both politically and personally. Great civilizations have rotted from the inside out in their descent to destruction by ignoring the value of values. Little compromises here and there in moral codes and standards are indicators of a dying nation. When we lose a sense of right and wrong, when purity becomes irrelevant, our very freedom is in danger. In the next two issues of *Seek Ye First*, we intend to address the issue of purity.

ROOTS OF IMPURITY

Selfishness is at the root of impurity. It is no secret that immorality is based in the old adage, "If it feels good, do it." We are reaping the fruits of such nonsense, however, and it is reflected in the devaluation of human life (*i.e.* marketing aborted babies' body parts, a rising acceptability of euthanasia, etc.), in the violent and perverse nature of public entertainment (often an accurate reflection of our society), and in the compromises that are being made in our worship of God (both public and private). Likewise, the unsavory habit, the slip of the tongue, the conduct unbecoming of Christians compromises our influence and our salvation. Only a return to God's morality will salvage our nation's conscience.

SOURCE OF PURITY

The return to purity must begin in the hearts of faithful Christians, for Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart" (Matthew 5:8). Purity is cultivated in the mind, and Paul encourages us to keep our thoughts pure (Philippians 4:8). However, sin's stains are hard to remove, especially at the heart level, so prevention is always the better choice. This cannot be done if we are courting our lusts and catering to every whim of the flesh. Paul encouraged Timothy, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). It is no easy chore to maintain pu-

urity in mind and body in the "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" (Philippians 2:15), so it is critical that we constantly feed our minds with the purity that emanates only from the word of God. James says, "the wisdom that is from above is first pure..." (James 3:17); it all starts with purity. Again, "the words of the LORD are pure words" (Psalm 12:6; Cf. Proverbs 30:6). A constant diet of God's word will clarify the choices that we must make each day concerning our conduct.

IMPACT OF PURITY

Our return to purity will save our souls and the souls of those in our sphere of influence. A Christian's greatest impact may lie in a pure life. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Proverbs 20:11). What we do and say has a bearing on those around us. The stagnation of growth in churches of Christ is the direct result of our inability to evangelize our neighbor. Will God give increase to hypocrisy (1 Corinthians 3:6)? "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16-17). It may be easier to send a dollar to India or Africa, but the true test of purity manifests itself in our influence on those close to us. Impurity in the life of a Christian kills the soul of both the hypocrite and the prospect. An unclean life even affects our relationships within the family of God. A Christian cannot properly love his spiritual siblings in the absence of purity since we are told to "love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). We can't escape the influence of our impurity.

As you read the next two issues of *Seek Ye First*, keep in mind that it is not just the conduct, habit, or issue that is being dealt with, it is also the influence that you have on others that motivates our exhortation. If you want to be effective in service to the King, "Keep thyself pure" (1 Timothy 5:22). Let us say with the Psalmist, "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it" (Psalm 119:140).

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Seek Ye First...

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Our Purpose

The editors of *Seek Ye First* produce this biblical journal to provide scriptural material dealing with the issues that are currently affecting our families, our nation and the world. Our intent is to challenge souls to return to the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16) for their sole source of authority in religious matters. Our policy is to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), encouraging people to study to show themselves approved unto God, enabling them to rightly divide the word (2 Timothy 2:15). We make every effort to deal boldly with the issues that confront Christianity, with no apology, and strive to do so "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

DRINKING ALCOHOL- SOCIAL OR SINFUL?

Michael Light

We cannot long discuss morals in America and not soon enter into a conversation on the topic of drinking. As we look through magazines or view commercials on the television, we are bombarded with advertisements for alcoholic beverages. Alcoholic consumption is somewhat unique in the discussion of morals. Most moral matters are at least tentatively agreed on by most religious people as right and wrong and the battle lies primarily in convincing the non-Christian of the Bible's position. However, many if not most religious people will argue that some drinking (specifically social drinking) is not a violation of the scriptures. In this article we will examine this idea in light of the Bible. First we will notice some arguments given to defend the consumption of alcohol, then we will examine the preponderance of the biblical evidence on the subject.

ARGUMENTS DEFENDING SOCIAL DRINKING

Invariably, those seeking to justify such consumption will cite John 2. This was the first and one of the better known miracles the Lord performed. Jesus turned six pots (120-160 gallons) of water into wine. The problem here is in assuming this was alcoholic wine. The word "wine" was used in a different way during biblical times than it is today. The word could refer to pure non-intoxicating grape juice, as well as fermented drink. As we read the Bible we see the word "wine" being used in these different senses. Fermented wine was always condemned regardless of the amount being consumed (Genesis 9:20-21; Proverbs 23:29ff; Isaiah 28:7). While the pure grape juice, unfermented, was always acceptable (Isaiah 16:10; Jeremiah 40:10). Only the context can determine which "wine" (fermented or unfermented) is being discussed. It is of great importance to notice that AMOUNT is not under discussion. There is a type of wine that is acceptable (unfermented) and a type that is sin (fermented). The nature of the beverage determines whether it is right or wrong, not the amount.

The question is then, "Did Jesus Christ give intoxicating drink, or unfermented grape juice to the crowd?" It is inconceivable to assert that Jesus concocted 120-160 gallons of wine, especially in light of Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Cf. Proverbs 23:29-34). And Habakkuk 4:15 makes it clear that it was a sin to give wine to one's neighbor. Yet, Jesus never sinned (Hebrews 2:15), therefore, He could not have provided alcoholic wine to those at the wedding feast. To assert otherwise is to accuse Jesus of sin; such is blasphemy.

Others cite 1 Timothy 5:23, which states, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." The assertion is then made that a little wine, social drinking, is authorized by God. However, such is not the case. This passage is clearly discussing the use of wine in a medicinal capacity. Many seem completely happy ignoring the obvious. Morphine administered by a doctor is beneficial (and legal) and is not a sin, while morphine taken for "recreational reasons" is dangerous (and illegal) and sinful. This passage is in no way authorizing social drinking. It is

somewhat amazing to see people try to justify having a beer Or a glass of wine, on the basis of a passage clearly dealing with the ingestion of wine for a medical reason.

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE AGAINST SOCIAL DRINKING

The Bible not only doesn't authorize social drinking, it forbids it. Based on Romans 15:4, we are to learn from the Old Testament writings. As quoted earlier, Proverbs 20:1 and 23:29-35 make it perfectly clear that it is both unwise and hurtful to consume alcoholic wine. We are not to look at it nor be deceived by it. Yet, untold millions have totally ignored the principles of the Bible with regard to this topic. These passages leave no room for "social drinking." The effects of alcoholic wine as set forth in these verses are certainly to be avoided by all Christ followers. James 4:17 states, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." God points out in Proverbs 23:29-35, (1) a description of the effects of intoxicated drink, (2) a clear admonition to abstain and to completely avoid it, and (3) a warning of what will happen if His warning is ignored.

Some try to argue that it is the abuse of alcohol that is condemned, but such is not the case. The Bible's instruction concerning beverage alcohol is abstinence not moderation. It is not biblically sound to affirm that something that is sinful if done abundantly, is alright if done in moderation. A little fornication is just as much an act of sin as much fornication. You cannot sin "in moderation" with God's approval. If consuming ten beers is a sin, so is consuming one. It is the content not the amount that makes the alcoholic drinks sinful.

The Bible also forbids alcoholic consumption by its appeals for us to be sober. The definition of the Greek word for "sober" is critical in this discussion. Literally, "without wine; to drink no wine; to abstain from intoxicants." Based on this definition, if we find verses in the New Testament that call upon us to be sober, then we should recognize these verses as prohibitions against drinking alcohol. Notice 1 Peter 1:13, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (emp. mine M.L.). Also read 1 Peter 4:7, "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." And 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The calls by God to be sober, watchful, wary, etc., demand that we keep all of our senses sharp in the detection of temptations and trials. Since alcohol hinders our judgment, diminishes our powers of reason, and dulls our awareness, it is off limits to the Christian.

CONCLUSION

Though many will argue to the contrary, the Bible does not authorize the use of alcohol in any capacity other than medicinal. The only consistent position for one to take in light of the totality of what the Bible has to say on the subject of alcohol is, that only the foolish or ignorant would argue that God wants or allows the social or recreational use of alcoholic beverages.

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Theme This Issue:

“PURITY”

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TOBACCO TOMBSTONE

Tom Moore

We are called on constantly to make divers decisions. Some choices we make are more significant than others—carrying greater consequences. One decision we will be confronted with is whether we will or will not use tobacco. Tobacco is most commonly partaken of in two forms: 1) smoking and/ or 2) chewing and dipping.

My prayer is that “in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy sould prospereth” (3 John 2). It is important that we realize our body is the temple of God, and His Spirit dwells in us (1 Corinthians 3:16). Also, our bodily temple should not be controlled or enslaved to or by any foreign substance (1 Corinthians 6:12). Paul says we are to “abstain from all appearances of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). The information that follows is for the purpose of preventing the use of, and encouraging one to give up the use of, tobacco in any form.

CHEWING TOBACCO

“Smokeless” tobacco (chewing tobacco or dipping snuff) causes many problems to one’s health. A look inside a “dipper’s” or “chewer’s” mouth will frequently reveal soft tissues on the inside of the cheek that appear peculiarly wrinkled, thickened and white (very much like the hide of an elephant). These leathery appearing areas are called “leukoplakia.” Studies have shown that a great percentage of patients with leukoplakia develop oral cancer. In the October 1985 issue of the *Reader’s Digest*, Dr. Gregory Conny, director of dental health for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, stated that each year there are 29,000 cases of oral cancer and 9000 deaths. Tobacco use is believed to be the cause of 70% of them.

Chewing tobacco also contains nicotine that is absorbed through the skin. Nicotine affects the heart—tightening the arteries, clotting blood platelets—and increases the heart rate. Because of this, one’s blood pressure rises, increasing the risk of strokes and heart attacks (information from the American Cancer Society).

SMOKING TOBACCO

There are in excess of 45,000 scientific studies that document the dangers of smoking tobacco. In a 1986 article, written by Dr. Stephen A. Schroeder (*JAMA*, Vol. 250, 0. 2062), the following eye opening statements are made:

“Smokers die five to eight years earlier than nonsmokers and have twice the risk of fatal heart disease, ten times the risk of lung cancer, several times the risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus,

pancreas, kidney, bladder, and cervix, a twofold greater incidence of peptic ulcers (which heal less well in smokers), and about a twofold to fourfold greater risk of fractures of the hip, wrist, and vertebrae.”

Today, and every day, more than 1,000 tobacco associated deaths occur in this country. There are approximately one million tobacco related deaths annually worldwide. These numbers account for more than one-third of the premature deaths in our society. It is known that 40% of all smokers will die prematurely, and these deaths will be attributed to smoking related diseases.

THE COST OF TOBACCO

Not only do we need to consider the health hazards of tobacco, we should also consider the cost factors as well. It is stated that a 40 year old male who smokes two packs of cigarettes a day spends about \$880 per year on cigarettes in addition to the hidden costs of such things as higher insurance premiums. This same two pack a day smoker can expect to incur medical expenses and lost earning of at least \$56,000 in his lifetime. Is this being a good steward of what the Lord has provided us? “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithfull” (1 Corinthians 4:2)?

Concerning our youth, an average of 3,000 American high school students will take up cigarette smoking for the first time. Sooner or later 30 of them will die in traffic accidents. But more than 20 times as many—750—eventually will die from tobacco related diseases. Yet many parents worry more about their children’s driving habits than the fact that they are smoking. What a shame!

AVOID TOBACCO

Tobacco use in all forms is a personal, social, and national problem of great magnitude. I also believe that it carries spiritual consequences as well.

In the words of the inspired apostle, “Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). “Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? And ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

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Guest Article...

WAGING WAR ON WAGERING

Sam Dilbeck

Gambling's ability to devastate families, destroy societies and decimate souls is alarming. Its declaration of war against God, spirituality and righteousness demands Christians' attention. It is easy to underestimate the deleterious effects of gambling on our culture. Therefore, we shall show not only its sinful nature, but its destructive connections as well.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION

Historically, gambling has been considered a destructive vice. Only the elite of immoral society dabbled in its games. In 17th Century Europe, gambling was prominent, but considered a "bad habit." In fledgling America, colonies initially tolerated gambling, but they discovered it corrupted good character.

Gambling continues to corrupt people. Although the number of gambling cities (*i.e.* Las Vegas, Reno, Atlantic City) has grown along with gambling's popularity, it continues to be regarded as a vice. Historically, many sins have grown in popularity, but their connection to sin has not been erased. So it is with gambling. The historical connection of gambling as sin stands through its rise in acceptance.

BEHAVIORAL CONNECTION

Perhaps the most compelling argument for the sinfulness of gambling is its sinful nature. Gambling results from two sinful behaviors. First, gambling manifests greed. Solomon likened greed to one lying in wait for his own blood (Proverbs 1:18-19). Greed traps the soul in covetousness and destroys the man from the inside (1 Timothy 6:10). Greed and its manifestations contradict Christianity.

Greed is the desire to take something from others, usually money. Those who gamble, gamble for one reason—they want to win. By winning, they take money from the losers. Gamblers desire to take something from someone else—greed by definition.

Second, gambling breeds idleness. One of the reasons that gambling was outlawed in early America is because it took workers from the field and made them idle and slothful. Communities were forced to support gamblers who were "down on their luck." To expect payment for participating in leisure activities is to expect payment for idleness (Proverbs 16:19; Ecclesiastes 10:18).

Solomon connects greed and slothfulness (Proverbs 21:26). Gambling is a greedy desire to gain money without work.

IMMORAL CONNECTION

Gambling is detrimental to the soul because of the company it keeps. Every city with legalized gambling has seen crime increase. Those who engage in gambling keep company with drunkards, addicts, thieves and hookers. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners (1 Corinthians 10:12).

In addition, gambling is connected to base and lewd behavior, that may not be illegal by man's laws, but certainly crosses God's law. Sins such as profanity, smoking and social drinking surround gamblers. Again, these evil companions are sure to corrupt even the strongest Christian.

SOCIAL CONNECTION

States that have introduced lotteries or legalized gambling have seen increases in crime. In 1996, *US News and World Report* revealed that crime rates in casino communities were 84% higher than the national average. There is a marked increase in welfare recipients with gambling problems; a rise in the number of bankruptcies; and an increased need for state-funded counseling centers for out of control gamblers.

Gambling also affects minors. In an Atlantic City area school, 64% of teens admitted they had gambled in casinos (an illegal activity because of their age) and 40% of teens said they started at age fourteen.

Hundreds of families a year are destroyed by gambling. And there is an increased risk of poverty, criminal behavior and domestic violence. Children in such families are more likely to experiment and become addicted to gambling.

The monetary cost to communities far exceeds the revenue generated by lotteries and legalized gambling. This does not even include the emotional, psychological and moral costs.

CONCLUSION

Gambling has sinful and destructive elements that can be traced back throughout history. Its behavioral and moral connections identify it as a sinful activity that harms the masses by paying dividends to the lazy. In addition to the toll it takes on the soul, gambling extracts a toll on society. Christians cannot engage in gambling of any kind and be acceptable to God. It does not matter what form of gambling is used or the amount of the wager, God is not pleased with those who gamble.

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DRUG ABUSE

Tom Moore

Almost two-thousand years ago, our Lord declared, “They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick” (Luke 5:31). Paul to the young preacher, Timothy, said, “Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities” (1 Timothy 5:23). These two passages, in a very clear manner, teach that drugs may be used to save or cure life’s physical ills. Holy Writ also tells us that Christians are the temple of the Holy Spirit and our temple is to be used to glorify God. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19). Therefore, we are obligated to take care of our bodies.

DRUGS IN OUR SOCIETY

There are drugs in our society that are of benefit to us physically. The trouble is, though, many use these drugs to get a “high” instead of using them therapeutically as prescribed by the doctor. There are also illegal drugs in our world today. The use of illegal drugs and the misuse of legal drugs are a major problem in the United States, as well as around the world.

It is estimated that Americans are spending about 220 million dollars a day on illegal drugs! The total dollar volume for drug trafficking in America has been estimated to be as much as 110 billion dollars a year. In America there are over 22 million users of marijuana, 20 million users of cocaine, and over 10 million Americans using legal drugs for recreational purposes. Beloved, there is a big problem in the land!

The Bible teaches that we are not to use illegal drugs and neither are we to abuse legal drugs. Shall we let the word of God speak?

Scripture says, “Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment” (Romans 13:1-2). As children of God we must recognize that our government has the authority to make law prohibiting the use of certain drugs, and how legal drugs are to be used, To violate these laws is to violate the law of God.

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

Paul write, “Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to

fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:13-14). When one uses drugs (legal or illegal) for the purpose of getting “high” he is making “provision for the flesh.”

Holy Writ records, “All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Corinthians 6:12). The Christian life is to be one of control, and we must not allow any substance (legal or illegal), any habit, or any person to control our lives. The Lord must be in control of our lives.

WORKS OF THE FLESH

In the “works of the flesh” we find “idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties” listed in Galatians 5:20. Sorcery (or witchcraft) comes from the Greek word *PHARMAKIA*. This Greek word is defined by W. E. Vine’s *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* as “one who uses drugs, potions, spells, and enchantments.” The recreational use of drugs fall into this category and therefore is unlawful.

Inspiration says that those involved in “envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:21). The word “drunkenness” comes from the Greek word *METHE* and should not be limited to alcohol, but should include any drug that would cause one to loose mental control.

Consider these words, “Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well” (James 2:8). Love of self is a biblical principle. Jesus said, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 22:39). If we are using drugs illegally we are doing harm to our bodies, and therefore, are showing a lack of respect and love for ourselves.

EXAMPLE AND INFLUENCE

Finally, Jesus says, “Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). We cannot be the example that God demands of us if we are involved with the recreational use of drugs. Recreational use of drugs is a sin, and must be avoided if we are to be pleasing in the sight of God.

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IN EXCESS

J. D. Sweeten

Excess is a serious problem in our country today. We are rich, blessed beyond every nation on the face of the planet. However, we fail at times to realize the extent to which our blessings are being abused, specifically, in the malady of gluttony that plagues our society. Technology has afforded us conveniences that no other generation in the history of humanity has witnessed. While the serf survived hand to mouth, we mushroom, microwave to mouth. Prepackaged, vitamin impregnated, nutritionally balanced, and best of all, ... instantaneous! However, our dilemma is not the fault of technology.

While at a fellowship dinner several years ago, where a Christian's primary purpose for meeting is the enjoyment of fellowship via the subservient medium of a simple meal, a rather portly lady laughingly commented on the fact that gluttony was the one sin that preachers wouldn't condemn. After the congenial, nervous round of cordial laughter, I began to seriously consider this "ailment" that has become so severe, that it has caused no small percentage of our nation to obsess over health issues. National figures even indicate that our young people have not escaped unscathed, *i.e.* their figures are not what they ought to be. We generate jargon to satirize our affliction (like "couch potatoes") and in the same breath, we make excuses for our obesity (genes, sedentary jobs, etc.). As a Christian, known for expediency and moderation (1 Corinthians 9:25), what should our response be?

OUR SERVICE TO CHRIST

First and foremost, we belong to Christ (Galatians 2:20). If it is the case that we are not our own, how is it that we allow physical sustenance to lead to excess? Are we at liberty to abuse the master's wares (1 Corinthians 6:19)? It is not fashionable, becoming, or healthy to "carry a little more weight than we should." Worse, it is a reflection of our inability to control ourselves. It is ironic that Jesus used the cup and platter to point out the Pharisees' excess (Matthew 23:25). Note, also, that gluttony often finds itself attached at the hip to drunkenness (Proverbs 23:21; Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34), and often under stringent condemnation (Deuteronomy 21:20). By virtue of mere companionship, this can't be good! Certainly, there are instances where health is an issue, but I would assert that most of American's problems with those "love handles" has nothing to do with health, but with a lack of discipline. One old octogenarian was asked what exercise kept him so healthy, lo, these many years. He stated, "Pushaways." "Pushaways?" the inquisitor queried. "Yes," he said. "When I am full, I 'pushaway' from the table." We must come to grips with the

fact that our bodies are the receptacles of the Holy Spirit and we are not our own (Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Timothy 1:14). We are called to be a reflection of a disciplined, pure life (1 Corinthians 9:27; 1 Timothy 4:12). If we are to reflect true Christianity, we must sacrifice this sacred cow of gluttony.

OUR SERVICE TO SOCIETY

Gluttony has never held a place of honor. Ancient history derided the glutton, "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags" (Proverbs 23:21). Israel's overindulgence was rewarded with wormy, stinky manna (Exodus 16:20). Gluttony rated high among the many clerical abuses against which Martin Luther raged during the Reformation. Renaissance writers lampooned the fat friar and rotund royalty. The Temperance Leagues that arose during the Industrial Revolution in America included health issues in their war on excess. The mere fact that, today, there is a "diet" for every demand (and most have sold books numbering in the millions) is an indictment against an overindulging society. God's children should, to the contrary, be an example of mediocrity, for "Life is more than food" (Luke 12:23, NKJV). Our calling is to servitude (1 Corinthians 7:22), not to self-service (Mark 9:35). If we are to be pleasing to God, our service will include a control over our appetites. "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, *but I will not be brought under the power of any*" (1 Corinthians 6:12, eph. JDS). Paul was specifically denying the power of meat sacrificed to idols from being able to hinder his influence, however, in a broader sense, the *quantity* of meat should not be allowed to infringe upon our ability to be effective in God's Kingdom, either. "Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Finally, the wise man warned, "And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite" (Proverbs 23:2). Clamoring for royal favor may not bear pleasant fruit, but the subordinate advice about eating too much candy-coated fruit can have its downside, too; you don't wear it well. From the ancient Garden of Eden to the modern jungle of suburban cities, forbidden fruit is that quantity in excess of what God allows. How much is that? For today's Christian, going beyond what is necessary for the maintenance of the body or exceeding what our body can reasonably accommodate, is a detriment to our soul (Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:8).

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Jeff & Kelly Sweeten—Comanche, TX

In Memory Of

Pauline Blair—Bangs, TX
Jewel Martin—Bangs, TX

Memorials Given By:

Bangs Church of Christ
Joy Early—Bangs, TX
Troy & Darlene Hanley—Bangs, TX
Pauline Hopkins—Bangs, TX
Michael & Carrie Light—Bangs, TX
Tom & Carole Moore—Port Lavaca, TX

Seek Ye First Web Site

In order to stay abreast of technology, the editors of Seek Ye First have developed and posted a web site. Tom Moore will be overseeing the production and posting of this site, and he welcomes your comments. The address is:

<http://www.seekyefirst.f2s.com>

On this site, you will find biographical information and a picture of each editor. Also, we have included various articles written by each editor of the paper suitable for bulletins, flyers, etc. The articles are downloadable in text form. You may also send e-mail to any of the editors from the web site.

We are endeavoring to make biblical materials available for use in bringing souls closer to Christ. We pray that this site will be a benefit to the growth of the Lord's Kingdom.

The Editors