

# 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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## GENERATION WHY

Jeff Sweeten

It could be that "Generation Y" is waking up to become "Generation Why." It's a good thing, too. Judging from the current status of our dysfunctional society, they may be our last line of defense in an ugly war against anarchy, immorality, and implosion. A country once known for staples like freedom, moral fiber, and work ethic has become a cesspool of anti-authority animals, hyper-tolerant of perversions, and drowning in government dependency. Rightfully, Generation Y is refusing to accept this legacy. In a nation gloating with pride and bloated with indulgence, how can the church of Christ survive this next century? Teaching practical, Divine submission is bound to be unpopular, even repugnant, to the contemporary "Me-First" (and often "Me-Only") mentality. Until young people look to the Bible as their guide, they will never find real, lasting answers to the questions of purpose, meaning, and existence.

Technological advances are also a major factor in the battle for souls, providing instantaneous information from religiously oriented broadcasting to the smut peddling sit-coms that attempt to normalize deviance. Marketing has become a formidable influence, and from jeans to cosmetics superficiality dictates the criteria of acceptance. Convenience is too often a deciding factor in conduct, and pragmatism is substituted for common sense. Should a Christian participate in the modern dance? drink beverage alcohol? imbibe in tobacco products? What is "wholesome" entertainment for Christian eyes and ears? And, just how far should a Christian go to "fit in"? Youngsters are certainly under peer pressure to conform in ways past generations might possibly understand but could never appreciate, as do the young people whose lives are saturated with invitations and enticements to satisfy the lusts of their flesh (Romans 12:1-2). Further, the world's temptations are packaged in ever more creative ways. Using humor, shock, and intrigue, companies are foisting sin onto younger audiences while parents progressively cave in to adolescent angst. The ravages of sin's consequences finally generate justifications and rationalizations that reign supreme in the blame game that attempts to explain away disobedience to God and the certainty of sin's negative aftermath. The warning of old still stands, "Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God,

in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day" (Deuteronomy 8:11).

As in every other area of the church's survival, old battles fought long ago tend to reinvent themselves, and the fight is on again. In this issue of *Seek Ye First*, we hope to address some of the old issues that are resurfacing with a new façade of contrived respectability. Disregard for God's marriage bond, intravenous entertainment, and the ever-popular sins of the flesh (from fornication to tobacco) are shortsighted sirens and an escapism that both tempts and taunts Generation Y.

In such short articles, it is impossible to give the necessary attention and detail that might be necessary to fully convince young people of the inherent evil of these pursuits, but all we ask is that they at least question the nature of these activities in light of the Scriptures. We do not recommend that Generation Y accept traditional answers by virtue of their long accepted certitude, but to question these ancient maxims to refresh our conviction of their veracity. At issue is the eternal destiny of young souls. However, it is the objective standard by which we judge conduct right or wrong that holds the key to unlocking righteousness in the hearts and minds of future generations. Deep study and honest introspection will go a long way in determining whether a behavior is good or bad, and whether young Christians should participate in it. Further, a fair concession to consequences that often follow foul deeds will avoid a painful past; even worldly people recognize the rotten fruit of poor picks: "Scars are souvenirs you never lose, the past is never far" (Goo Goo Dolls, Warner Bros. Record Inc., 1995).

We publish this issue as a challenge to Generation Y, and invite them to ask "Why?" Find the authority for any conduct, and one can be fairly certain of participating in safety; if there is no authority, it is no good (Colossians 3:17). We commend to our young people this issue of *Seek Ye First*, addressing the evils of our day and a Christian's response.

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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).

# DATING AND MARRIAGE

Michael Light

There are many spiritual dangers facing the young people of America today. This particular issue of *Seek Ye First* is dedicated to the young people of the Lord's body. Perhaps too little time has been spent in truly preparing the next generation for the challenges it will face. It is easy to take our young people skating and bowling, but much more difficult to truly impart unto them the morality, ethic and doctrine of Christ. In this series of articles we will be offering some basic Bible teaching that should be taken to heart by the youth of the church.

Today's young person is beset with many temptations that were unknown to previous generations. Our culture has made sinning easy. In fact it is in vogue to dabble in many actions that the Bible clearly condemns as sinful. We could write of drug abuse, alcoholism, gambling, fornication, bad attitudes, immodest dress etc..., but we will focus on a danger that is easy to overlook.

While the Bible does not provide a chapter spelling out in detail how and whom we should date, it does supply many principles that can guide us in this area if we will let them. The Book of books helps us know how to treat each and every relationship we have in this life. To begin with we should take dating seriously. The statement, "You marry who you date," is certainly true. It is very easy for a young person to lower their standards in order to have a date. Young people need to be more concerned about the spiritual quality of those they date, rather than the numerical quantity of dates they have.

God expects us to love Him with all of our heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22:37). This principle means we must put God first in all of our decision-making. Matthew 6:33 applies to our dating choices as well as anything else. We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11). It is not cute to God for our daughters to go out with the local thug or our sons to date girls of low moral standards.

A Christian youth cannot do like everyone in the world. We are different (1 Peter 2:9). We are to realize that dating is for the purpose of choosing a mate. This marriage partner is to be someone who will help us go to heaven. If the young man or young woman you have a crush on is deficient in spiritual matters, move on to another one. Too often we are taught to look on the outward appearance rather than on what really counts. It doesn't matter is he's six feet tall with blond hair and blue eyes. It doesn't matter that she is as pretty as any model in Hollywood. What matters is their inner beauty (or lack thereof). Do they love Jesus? Do they respect the authority of the Bible? Do they have your spiritual interest at heart? Are they interested in following the Bible in the way they dress? Do they control their tongue? Are they morally strong? Can they do what's right even when the crowd laughs at them? If you answered "no," to any of the above questions, then he (or she) is not the type of person you need to be dating.

Denny Wilson (a minister from Odessa, TX) has compiled some interesting material that can be helpful for young people at this juncture of our discussion. Notice:

- A. Seven Habits of Highly Defective Dating
- Dating leads to intimacy but not necessarily commitment.
  - Dating tends to skip the “friendship” stage of a relationship.
  - Dating often mistakes a physical relationship for love.
  - Dating often isolates a couple from other vital relationships.
  - Dating, in many cases, distracts young adults from their primary responsibility of preparing for the future.
  - Dating can cause discontentment with God’s gift of singleness.
  - Dating creates an artificial environment for evaluating another person’s character.
- B. Rejecting the Seven Habits of Highly Defective Dating
- I reject defective dating that leads to intimacy without commitment, and I embrace the beauty of total intimacy and total commitment in marriage.
  - I reject defective dating that tends to skip the “friendship” stage of a relationship, and I choose to build my future marriage on the solid foundation of friendship with my spouse.
  - I reject defective dating that mistakes a physical relationship for love, and I choose purity and the clarity that comes in relationships undistracted by premarital physical involvement.
  - I reject defective dating that isolates me from other vital relationships, and I’m saying yes to the joy, wisdom, and glory perspective that comes from investing in family and other friends.
  - I reject defective dating that distracts me from my primary responsibility of preparation, and I choose to glorify God and serve my future spouse by using this time in my life to prepare for the future.
  - I reject defective dating that causes discontentment with God’s gift of singleness, and I embrace the contentment that comes with a heart of gratefulness and an attitude that seeks to make the most of today.
  - I reject defective dating that creates an artificial environment for evaluation of another person’s character, and I choose to get to know my future spouse in a setting that lets us both see who we really are and what our true character is.
- C. Five Attitude Changes to Help You Avoid Defective Dating
- Every relationship is an opportunity to model Christ’s love.
  - My unmarried years are a gift from God.
  - Intimacy is the reward of commitment – I don’t need to pursue a romantic relationship before I’m ready for marriage.
  - I cannot “own” someone outside of marriage.
  - I will avoid situations that could compromise the purity of my body or mind.
- D. Three Steps to Help Us Maintain Healthy Friendships with the Opposite Sex
- We need to understand the difference between friendship and intimacy. Friendship is about something other than the two in the relationship – intimacy is about each other.
  - When spending time with members of the opposite sex, we need to be inclusive, not exclusive. This means including others instead of isolating ourselves with just one person. Inclusion must stem from a sincere desire to involve as many people as possible in fellowship and service.
  - Seek opportunities to serve, not to be entertained. In service we find true friendship and can know our friends in a deeper way than ever before.

The decisions we make concerning dating, and ultimately marriage, must be directed by God’s word (Psalm 119:103). If we will determine to follow Christ we will make good wholesome decisions concerning who we date and marry. Ephesians 5:20ff give us additional insight into the kind of man and woman we are to be seeking in our relationships. Young people need to realize the seriousness and life altering potential of inter-personal relationships. May we encourage our youth to be wise beyond their years in this area of life.

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Theme This Issue:

## Youth Don’ts

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All donations towards this work are greatly appreciated. Please note that every contribution, great or small, is beneficial to the paper.

# TELEVISION AND MUSIC

Tom Moore

What are our young people watching? An average teenager watches 6½ hours of television a day, and will see 22,000 hours of television by the time they graduate from High School (U.S. News and World Report, August 2, 1982). I am sure the figure is higher in 2003. That is roughly twice as many hours in front of the Television as in school. Now, I am not anti-television. The television is a wonderful invention, and I love watching my Dallas Cowboys but the problem is, more often than not, that it promotes immorality, violence, wrong values and anti-Christian principles. There is no way that a teenager can watch 6½ hours of television and keep his mind clean and pure.

Christians are responsible for what they feed their minds. The Psalmist declares, **“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me”** (Psalm 101:3). The apostle Paul instructed, **“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things”** (Philippians 4:8).

Let us consider some of the negative impacts of the television on society. The average fifteen-year-old has witnessed 13,000 deaths and hundreds of crimes and violence on television. Robbery, rape, assault, child abuse, and every conceivable form of murder have been violently portrayed in our living rooms. Is it any wonder that violent crime has experienced a whopping increase since the invention of television?

A report prepared by the Judiciary Committee on the U.S. Senate says that **“Crime, violence, brutality, sadism and eccentric sex on the television screen must be regarded as a major factor contributing to the rising tide of juvenile delinquency all across the land.”** This committee found that in one popular 60-minute program, there were 23 killings - nine by shooting, two by stabbing, one by torture, and one by smothering. Television plots inspire many crimes. The promotion and encouragement of crime by television is a curse on America!

It is also difficult to find a television program on the major networks that promotes the family or Christian principles. On the other hand, much of television encourages adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and riotous living. It should be easy to see the evils associated with programs on our televisions. Remote controls are a wonderful invention - they can be used to change a channel or turn an evil program off.

There is also another harm-filled issue facing our young people - and that is the music they listen to. Much of the popular music of our day promotes every evil imaginable. I realize that not all Rock music, Rap Music, and Country music is evil, but good wholesome music does not seem to be the norm. Ultimately, our youth choose the kind of music that influences them - so they must choose wisely from a Christian perspective.

Music is everywhere and is extremely powerful. Music inspires and motivates us. It controls our mood, catches our attention and sticks in our mind, and will call people to action. Yes, music is a powerful force in the life of our youth - a force that the devil uses freely and skillfully.

The performances and lifestyles of many musicians indicate the low level of living they advocate. Many groups like AC/DC (which is a sexual euphemism) has music that deals in sex, violence, and satanic imagery. Their music suggests that they are involved in Satan worship. Other groups in their music and videos glory in graphic sex, violence, homosexuality. Madonna has often preformed in lingerie, and has negatively influenced thousands of young teens with her emphasis on sexual revolution and self-expression. Other musical “artists” speak of drug use as the answer to one’s ills. Horridly, even the “suicide solution” has been the theme of many songs. There are songs glorifying lying, stealing, drinking alcohol, having premarital sex, cheating on one’s wife, and anything that is evil. I might add, that when young people say they are not listening to the words - just the beat of the music, they are either lying or very naïve.

**What should a Christian’s response be to evil music?** Be honest, and do not deny there is a problem of evil with much of the music of our day. One also needs to avoid music which violates the standard of Philippians 4:8. Young people need to alert their friends to the negative influences in popular music. Our youth need to learn to appreciate good music. There is nothing wrong with love, romance, adventure and fun in music, so long as it does not include obscenity, vulgarity, pornography, Satanism, and violence. So, choose the good, the beautiful, and the moral in music.

One cannot seek **“first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness”** (Matthew 6:33) and participate in most of what is known as modern music, and most of what is aired on our televisions.

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Guest Article...

## EVIL COMPANIONSHIPS

Denny Wilson

I was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade the first time I tried Copenhagen (smokeless tobacco). It was not the great taste or fresh smell that tempted me nor was it an eye appealing package. The product did not offer me anything that I just had to have. The temptation I faced is what is known as peer pressure. I wanted the other kids to think I was cool. I thought by doing the things they were doing I would be accepted in the “in crowd.” The results were not good. In fact, the embarrassment from vomiting repeatedly and the disappointment in the eyes of my parents were quite a contrast to what I thought I would gain. Throughout my teenage years, I developed a liking to Copenhagen and Levi Garrett (leaf chewing tobacco). Somehow that first experience was not bad enough to keep me from trying tobacco again. Even though I chewed tobacco until I was in my late 20’s, I cannot tell you of one friend I gained because I indulged my desire. The only thing that I truly gained from tobacco was gum disease.

From the time Eve encouraged Adam to taste the forbidden fruit, peer pressure has been a reality in the life of man. God knew it would be a problem and guarded against it in the Law, “You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice” (Exodus 23:2). In other words, do not follow a crowd to do evil and do not lead a crowd to do evil. In the New Testament, we find a similar warning, “Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals” (1 Corinthians 15:33 – ASV).

Consider Pilate and the Jews who gathered for the Passover almost 2000 years ago. Pilate had questioned Jesus and knew that Christ was not worthy of death. Pilate knew that Jesus had been handed over because of envy (Matthew 27:18). Pilate’s wife had warned him not to have anything to do with “that just Man” (Jesus). Pilate thought he would have a way out without having to take a stand. He thought that he could release Christ by following through with a custom of the time of releasing one prisoner during the Passover. Pilate even found the perfect candidate for standing opposite of Christ, Barabbas. Surely, the people would not release a murderer and a thief instead of the Christ. “But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes and that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus” (Matthew 27:20). The people cried out for Barabbas to be released.

When asked what to do with Jesus, the people shouted, “Let Him be crucified!” (v. 22).

Jesus Christ our Savior was crucified in part because of peer pressure from evil companions. Jesus had warned the people and had challenged the Pharisees just hours before being arrested. In Matthew 23, Jesus gave a harsh rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees. He called them hypocrites, fools, blind guides, serpents, brood of vipers, and whitewashed tombs. These evil men proved Christ correct in their active role in persuading men to call for His death.

How can we overcome peer pressure? How can we avoid evil companions? First, we must separate ourselves from people who will not help us to get to heaven. In 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Paul instructed the church at Corinth to keep themselves apart from unbelievers and lawlessness. It is common for man to be led astray by the friends he keeps. It is essential that we choose our friends wisely if we are to live faithfully until death. Second, the Christian cannot act like the world. We are to “have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them” (Ephesians 5:11). We must study the Bible and teach others God’s ways. Find friends who are willing to submit their lives to God and His word. Together, stand against error. Third, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). Instead of being influenced by others, become the leader among your friends. Be an example of proper Christian living. Be a strong pillar upon which others may lean. Be a light that causes others to see your works and glorify God (Matthew 5:16). Fourth, be willing to suffer for the cause of Christ. “If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter” (1 Peter 4:16). If your friends mock or ridicule you, or if they do some harm to you because of your stance, remember that you are in good company. Christ suffered at the hands of His peers. He endured the cross and made possible eternal life for all who obey the Gospel. Fifth, find someone who will help you get to heaven and follow his example. Paul said, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Choose your friends well.

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# DANCING DESTRUCTION

Tom Moore

Dancing is one of the most popular pastimes of our day, and to refuse to dance is to exclude one's self from many social circles. Any one who speaks out against the modern dance and its many evils is definitely not pursuing the pathway of popularity with young people or parents who condone such. Those who believe dancing is wrong will be considered an "odd ball," an "old foggy" or an "ancient fossil."

In this article I will NOT be discussing: 1) How you were raised or taught on the subject. 2) What you personally believe about dancing, 3) What you have done or haven't done, or 4) What everyone else is doing or thinking about dancing. My only concern is what does the Bible say? There are many young people today who honestly do not know or see what is wrong with dancing. Some say, "My parents don't want me to go to the dance, but I don't see why."

God demands that we be pure. This is evident from the Old Testament. For example, "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:16). The New Testament enjoins purity on us as well. We are to be a people for God's own possession (1 Peter 2:9). We are to keep ourselves pure (1 Timothy 5:22), and our hearts pure (Matthew 5:8). We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27). We are not to love the ways of the world (1 John 2:15-17), nor be conformed to the ways of the world (Romans 12:1-2). Thus, Paul said we are to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Dancing is lascivious and reveling. Inspiration declares, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness... envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19, 21). "Lasciviousness" is defined as lewd, wanton and lustful behavior. It means: "tending to promote lewd emotions." "Lewd" means given to indulgence of lust or having unlawful sexual desires. Anything that tends to promote lewd emotions, create evil thoughts, or excite unlawful sexual desires is lascivious. "Revellings" is defined as feasts/parties accompanied with music and dancing and whatever could promote hilarity and sexual gratification.

From these definitions it is obvious that anything that would produce or promote lewd emotions, create evil thoughts, or excite unlawful sexual desires is to be avoided.

Friends, dancing promotes this! Now tread slowly; think carefully; be frank and honest about the matter. In an audience of 1500 men the question was asked: "How many can dance and not have evil thoughts?" Not one hand raised. There are some things that just naturally tend to excite lust more than other things. The close embrace of the opposite sex in mixed dancing cannot but be lust-exciting and passion-arousing, you will agree to this if you will be honest with yourself. Liberties on the dance floor pave the way for petting, and petting kindles the passions that open the door for premarital sex. If only one girl or boy is led to a life of impurity from the dance floor each year, is it not worth the price of shunning such a practice? Furthermore, those who have studied the modern dance tell us that it had its inception in a house of prostitution in Paris, France. The very city and the very place in that city of its origin say much about its unwholesome beginnings, its infamous origin.

What is the fruit of the dance? Is it wicked and wanton, or wholesome and wise? Quite realistically, it is the downfall of people's character, brokenhearted parents, divorce, drunkenness, and other sins too numerous to mention. Mr. J. Edgar Hoover said, "Most juvenile crime has its inception in the dance hall, either public or private." Some years back the FBI put out a tract and listed the top six ways in which young people get hurt: 1) Dancing, 2) Drinking and drugs, 3) Gambling, 4) Reckless driving, 5) Parking and petting, and 6) Mixed swimming. Did you notice what was on the top of the list? Why is it that so many young people and their parents can't see what is so obvious to the FBI?

Dancing is bad fruit from a bad tree (Matthew 7:17-20). Good fruit cannot come from a corrupt tree. Dancing has never produced more love for God, more devotion to the church, more respect for the opposite sex, more Bible reading, more prayer, or more interest in heaven. Dancing has never led to any good thing. Instead, it causes people to loose interest in the church, Bible study, holiness, teaching the lost, and heaven. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" (Proverbs 6:27-28)

Friends, the modern dance as generally practiced by our youth today is sinful in itself and leads to numerous sins as well. As Christians we should not participate in this evil activity. Love the Lord enough to do the right thing. Keep yourself pure and unspotted from the world (James 1:27).

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# ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Jeff Sweeten

It is amazing what a “Christian” will defend. Yes, Christian in this sense belongs in quotations in the way in which it will be used in this article. These two vices (note: vices!) are both readily recognized by worldly sinners as bad for the health and detrimental to the spirit. Political attempts to legislate societal restraints to control the bleeding are no more effective than Band-Aides on bullet wounds. Our society is killing itself with these products (both personally and publicly) and “Christians” would justify them? In point of fact, most non-Christians who imbibe in these two poisons candidly admit that a part of the enjoyment in them is directly connected with the spiritual stigma tattooed to these habits; one simply cannot separate one from the other. Still, “Christians” rise in their weak-minded semi-defense to rationalize and excuse these ungodly and addictive habits, which have plagued every society into which they have been introduced. One has to wonder at the deceptiveness of sin (Hebrews 3:13).

When the “Christian” attempts to present a case for recreational drinking or tobacco use, where exactly does he turn in the Scripture for authority (Colossians 3:17)? This is the often overlooked and foundational error of those who attempt to defend alcohol and tobacco use: there is no scriptural authorization for their use. Further, from health to influence, they harm, destroy, and denigrate the “user” (a term carefully used and currently connected to a damnable drug epidemic in this country, and correctly used in this context in that both are drugs). Where is the supposed justification in the use of alcohol and tobacco? And, to what lengths will some go in order to whitewash the blackness of these sins?

One example might be the wresting of scriptures. To pull a text out of its context to defend a casual, public, or frequent use of beverage alcohol, equating a recreational use and medicinal use, only reveals an ignorance of a text (*i.e.* Proverbs 31:6; 1 Timothy 5:23; cf. Proverbs 20:1; Habakkuk 2:15). The fact that it is effective in dulling the senses in medicinal use damns the recreational user, whose commandment is self-control (cf. Galatians 5:23; 2 Timothy 3:3). The allure of alcohol is readily seen in the wise man’s warning: “*Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder* (Proverbs 23:31-32). It’s addictive nature is well documented and gives deeper meaning to Galatians 6:1 – “*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted*” (emp. JDS). Consigning alcoholism to the hapless

contraction of a disease or relegating it to a genetic accident of birth ignores the free moral agency many exercise, to the disregard of Scripture, in taking that first drink. A poem authored by my father, Charles Sweeten, humorously exposes the tippler.

He insisted on wine  
 For his “stomach’s sake,”  
 Though it often  
 Made him quiver.  
 I don’t know if it helped  
 His stomach or not,  
 But it sure did  
 Blow his liver

Tobacco products remain a puzzler. Why would anyone intentionally ingest a product containing poisons like nicotine, cyanide, and arsenic, and whose commercial uses are proven as insecticides, disinfectants, and fertilizers. Fertilizer... and you put that in your mouth? How “manly” it must be to spew a black tar fluid from your mouth. And, your wife is going to kiss that mouth? Several years ago, a 32-year-old aspiring doctor at Loyola University in Chicago, revealed more than he probably wanted to when he explained his use of smokeless tobacco: “You just have that bovine sense of calm.” And, pray tell, where is the enhanced image of the smoking “Christian”? There’s nothing attractive about a human chimney, puffing noxious fumes, poisoning the public from their designated dungeons. Health hazards aside (and only the blind fool denies them), one’s influence is certainly not enhanced with the use of these products and I would submit, does grave damage to the cause of Christ.

Finally, one cannot consistently depict Christian purity while participating in these vices. Their consumption is the source of physical disease and compromises a positive influence. It’s hard to imagine how we can “*cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*” (2 Corinthians 7:1) while drinking, smoking, or chewing. A cancer-stick hanging from the mouth, or a leukoplakia producing “chaw” being expectorated over stained lips, doesn’t conjure up a picture of purity (but “dip” takes on new meaning!). The contrast between “Christians” and Christians is directly related to their purity, “*for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s*” (1 Corinthians 6:20). There is no glory in the health hazards and damaged influence of alcohol and tobacco. They are twin sons of different mothers, both illegitimate; and both originate in their father, the Devil.

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Goldthwaite, TX
- Hillcrest Church of Christ  
Stephenville, TX
- North Main Church of Christ  
Malvern, AR
- McCloud Church of Christ  
McCloud, OK
- Portland Church of Christ  
Portland, TX
- Rising Star Church of Christ  
Rising Star, TX

## Individual Contributions

- Mr./Mrs. Ronald Allen—Lake City, FL
- Ed Armstrong—Pecos, TX
- Johnny/Mindy Arnold—Harrison, AR
- Norman/Loma Barnes—McCloud, OK
- James/Jean Berry—Montgomery, AL
- John Brown—Magnolia, AR
- Margaret Chandler—Camden, AR
- Charlene Chesshir—Cisco, TX
- Mr./Mrs. Wayne Griffitt—Leonard, TX
- Lloyd/Elsie Haggerty—New Braunfels, TX
- Justin/Sydney Hewlett—Cleburne, TX
- Pauline Hopkins—Brownwood, TX
- James/Doris Jacobs—Humble, TX
- Jarrett Family—Granbury, TX
- Wilma Jewett—Poolville, TX
- Aaron LeMond—Bangs, TX
- Michael/Carrie Light—Bangs, TX
- Jack Lusk—Sidney, TX
- Cynthia McIntyre—Magnolia, AR
- Mr./Mrs. James Meredith—Dixon, MO
- T.W./Mary Meredith—Coldwater, MS
- Weldon Miller—Mt. Pleasant, TX
- Anna Ruth Moore—Bangs, TX

- Tom/Carole Moore—Malvern, AR
- Eddie/Oleta Pafford—Bangs, TX
- Mr./Mrs. Allen Phillips—Rising Star, TX
- Ruth Price—Temple, TX
- Kenneth/Anna Reed—Bangs, TX
- Brandon/Amanda Renfroe—Birmingham, AL
- Cecil/Rena Robertson—May, TX
- Charles/Julienne Sweeten—Camp Wood, TX
- Ray/Lucile Sweeten—Uvalde, TX
- Jeff/Kelly Sweeten—Odessa, TX
- Steve/Cathy Wilson—Rising Star, TX

## In Memory Of

- Ora Cate
- Ken Burchett
- Helen Hunter

## Memorials Given By:

- Bangs Church of Christ
- Bernice Chick
- Michael/Carrie Light
- Terry Burress

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