

# **Sermon & Bible Study Guide**

## **Substance Abuse**

### **March 2005**

## **Sermon Outline**

### **Avoiding Evil (Click 1)**

#### **Emphasis Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 (Clicks 2-3)**

### **Context**

In 1 Thessalonians 4, the Apostle Paul began teaching the people of Thessalonica about the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. His purpose was to give them a message of hope in the face of all that they endured on a daily basis from their unbelieving neighbors. He continued that message in chapter five. Beginning in verse 12, Paul proceeded to give practical instructions for daily life in light of the Lord's return. One of those injunctions concerned the evaluation of all that they heard—whether to accept it or not.

Though the issue of substance abuse is not specifically referenced in this passage, certain principles enunciated here apply to it. The Christian is to examine everything before allowing it into his or her life.

### **Introduction**

(Clicks 4-5) Substance abuse, which includes the abuse of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, seems to be an ever-increasing problem today. (Click 6) For example, in 1988, the costs associated with alcohol abuse amounted to \$184.6 billion (see OS1). (Click 7) The costs associated with drug abuse in 1995 amounted to \$109.8 billion (see OS2). (Click 8) And the costs of tobacco abuse in 2002 were \$155 billion (see OS3).

That totals almost \$450 billion. (Click 9) Those figures do not include the cost of the substances themselves nor the attendant costs that accompany them (i.e., law enforcement, etc.). And when we take into account that two of those figures, which represent some of the latest ones available, are ten or more years old, today's costs are probably even more staggering.

(Clicks 10-11) But substance abuse is far more costly than just the economic costs. (Click 12) There are physical, emotional, spiritual, and social costs as well.

#### **I. The dangers of substance abuse (Clicks 13-14)**

- A. Dangers to oneself (Click 15)
  - 1. Addiction (OS4) (Click 16)
  - 2. Health problems (OS5) (Click 17)
  - 3. Death or injury (OS5) (Click 18)
  - 4. Academic problems (OS5) (Click 19)

5. Relationship to Christ **(Click 20)**
6. Relationship with others **(Click 21)**
- B. Dangers to others **(Clicks 22-23)**
  1. Assault **(OS5) (Click 24)**
  2. Sexual abuse **(OS5) (Click 25)**
  3. Unsafe sex **(OS5) (Click 26)**
  4. Crime **(OS5) (Click 27)**
  5. Drunk driving **(OS5) (Click 28)**
  6. Birth defects **(OS6) (Click 29)**
  7. Meth lab toxic fumes and explosions **(OS7) (Click 30)**
  8. Second-hand smoke **(OS8) (Click 31)**

## **II. The alternative to substance abuse (1 Thess. 5:21-22) (Clicks 32-33)**

- A. Test everything **(WS1) (CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4) (Click 34)**
  1. **(Click 35)** The Scripture test—evaluate everything in light of Scripture **(Click 36)** [example of the Bereans (Acts 17:11) **(Click 37)**] **(CC4)**
  2. The personal test **(Clicks 38-39)**
    - a. The physical test—will this harm me physically? **(Click 40)**
    - b. The emotional test—will this lead to emotional dependence? **(Click 41)**
    - c. The social test—will this damage my relationship with other people? **(Click 42)**
    - d. The spiritual test—will this damage my relationship with Christ? **(Click 43)**
- B. Hold on to the good **(WS2) (CC1, CC5) (Clicks 44-45)**
- C. Avoid every kind of evil **(WS3, WS4, WS5) (CC6, CC7, CC8, CC9) (Click 46)**

## **Conclusion**

Substance abuse leads to ruined lives through the emotional, physical, spiritual, and social trauma experienced by the abuser and the effects that person's abuse have on others. When added to the economic costs, substance abuse spells tragedy for everyone affected. It should be avoided altogether. God can give the spiritual and emotional strength to do that.

## **WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?**

- If you are a pastor, preach on substance abuse. If you are not the pastor, ask him to do so.
- Learn how to counsel those involved in substance abuse.
- Volunteer to work a few hours each month in a rescue mission.
- Check with your local Christian bookstore or visit the ERLC bookstore ([www.familybookstore.net](http://www.familybookstore.net)) to find books that will help you understand the issue of substance abuse. Once you find a good resource, make it available for others to read as well.
- Ask your church to invite a local expert on the subject of substance abuse to lead a seminar describing what actions can be taken to help those who are addicted.