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simply look like evil to someone else (a rather arbitrary standard). Since this is the case, why do so many Christians twist this passage into meaning something Paul never intended? With many people I think you could blame laziness. Let me show you what I mean.

When a teenager asks what is wrong with going to the public beach, what do you tell them? You could tell them this practice "appears" evil in the sight of some and therefore they can't go. But friend, parading around half-naked at the beach is not wrong simply because it "appears" evil to someone else. It is wrong because of what the Lord taught on modesty (**1 Timothy 2:9**). It takes more time to explain what modest apparel is and how when a man "looks at a woman to lust for her (he) has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (**Matthew 5:28**). Sometimes parents are too embarrassed to explain the affect our clothing (or lack thereof) might have on members of the opposite sex. So, instead of explaining lasciviousness and lust to their teenagers, they will talk about the "appearance" of evil. It usually does not take a teenager long to see through the diversion – they quickly see that the "appearance of evil" standard is arbitrary at best.

What is wrong with smoking a cigarette? I know it "appears" evil to some people – but I seriously doubt if one person in ten actually thinks it is "evil." If you are trying to discourage your children from smoking on the basis of its "appearance" you are wasting your time. Instead, talk with them about drug addiction – something the Bible plainly condemns. Study what Paul said about "sorcery" in **Gala-**

**tians 5:20.** "Sorcery" is from the Greek word *pharmakia*, from which we get the English word "pharmacy." It might take a bit longer to explain, but at least you will be on solid ground – instead of trying to determine who might find the "appearance of evil" in smoking.

If your neighbor wants to know why you don't buy a lottery ticket you could reply, "Well, I know it appears to be evil to a lot of folks and so I can't purchase one." Have you ever considered that the purchase of that same ticket might "appear" to be a good thing to some people. Before introducing the lottery, most states had politicians telling us how much good was going to be done with the proceeds from the sale of lottery tickets – they made it sound like buying a lottery ticket was the patriotic thing to do – it would help the public schools and keep taxes low. If you argue about the virtues of the lottery on the basis of its appearance, you have already lost the discussion. Instead of discussing the lottery (a topic the Bible does not mention), we need to discuss covetousness (a topic the Bible has a great deal to say about). Paul tells us to "put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (**Colossians 3:5**). What is it that motivates people to buy a lottery ticket? If they really wanted to help the schools they would give the money directly. If they want to try and get "something for nothing" they will gamble on a lottery ticket.

Study and apply what the Bible actually says about morality instead of setting arbitrary standards.

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**What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

- Hear and Learn - **Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3**
- Believe - **Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24**
- Repent - **Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30**
- Confess the Lord - **Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21**
- Be Baptized - **Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27**
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - **Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17**

**About the Hillcrest church of Christ**

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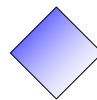


**Schedule of Assembly**

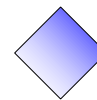
**Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am**  
**Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am**  
**Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm\***

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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# The Voice of Truth



August 29, 2010

**What Is Your Attitude Toward Sin?**

By Jimmy Pettigrew

There is a trend to believe that the possibility of offending someone in teaching the Bible is to be avoided. In our society people are taught to get along with everybody. We don't want to hurt anybody's feelings. Brethren, we are to preach the word, not pamper the world (**2 Timothy 4:2**). We are to reprove, rebuke, not relax in sin, approve it, deny it, mock it, minimize it or exonerate it!

Brethren, there is an attitude, a stance, which has crept in the Lord's church; it's our attitude toward sin, the tolerating of sin. First, I want to say that the Lord desires that His church be pure. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (**Ephesians 5:26-27**). Knowing we are to keep the church, a glorious church, pure, why do my brethren minimize sin? Let us stop treating sin lightly. Don't my brethren realize, when we treat sin lightly, we are treating the cross lightly!

I will say this, we will cease minimizing sin when we (1) call it what it is, (2) see what it is, (3) consider what it does, and (4) think where it ends. Instead of tolerating, minimizing sin, we are to reprove it (**Ephesians 5:11**). Tolerance of sin is condemned (**Revelation 2:20-21**). And toleration of sin leads to a love of sin, the love of sin leads to a practice of sin, and the practice of sin leads to spiritual death (**Romans 6:23**). The church is wounded when we fail to reprove and rebuke sin. A single sin which is permitted to remain in the body will destroy the whole body (**Revelation 2:1-5**). When we cover up sins in the church, we corrupt the morality and virtue of the church and destroy its efficacy to honor God or to save men. Sin must be exposed and purged out of the church. God cannot be honored by covering up evil in the church. To expose sin is to proclaim to the world that they seek truth, purity, holiness, and godlikeness.

What am I talking about? I am talking about smoking; I

am talking about one brought under the power of any chemical substance, legal or illegal; I am talking about alcohol. I am talking about addiction! These things are addictive. Paul writes, "...but I will not be brought under the power of any" (**1 Corinthians 6:12 ASV**). One version reads, "but I will not be enslaved by anything" (**RSV**). The word of God teaches that the Christian is to be God-controlled. While the Christian is a new creature in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), he is also a servant. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof." "For sin shall not have dominion over you." "But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness" (**Romans 6:12, 14, 17-18**). The Scriptures boldly proclaim that man cannot serve two masters (**Matthew 6:24**). The Christian is to be under the power of divinity, first, last, and always. It is an undeniable principle in the Bible that the Christian, as a servant of God, is never to be brought under the power or control of anyone or anything.

When a Christian becomes addicted, enslaved to smoking, alcohol, or brought under the power of any chemical substance, legal or illegal, he is attempting to serve two masters and forfeits the servant-master relationship which exists between himself and God. The Christian, as he serves the eternal Master, must be free from ALL enslavement! The child of God is to be God –controlled (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**).

Nicotine is the drug in tobacco that causes addiction; alcohol is a drug, an addictive drug; legal and illegal drugs are also addictive. Being controlled by these is in conflict with **1 Corinthians 6:12**. Also smoking, alcohol, legal and illegal drugs goes against the teaching of the Scriptures that teach your body is a temple, that you are to glorify God in your body (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**). Those who engage in these things use their bodies for carnal pleasures,

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and are in sin. Jesus Christ cannot live in the individual who is walking contrary to the principles set forth in His word. To be cleansed by the blood of Jesus the Christian must walk in the light as Jesus is in the light (**1 John 1:7**). Jesus tells us that we are: "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**). Question: Can a Christian's light shine when he disobeys God? Can a Christian's light shine when he lives to fulfill the lust of the flesh (**Romans 13:14**)? Can a Christian's light shine when he is intoxicated (**Galatians 5:21**)? Can a Christian's light shine when he is controlled, mastered, by a chemical substance (nicotine etc. ;) (**1 Corinthians 6:12**)? Can a Christian's light shine when he destroys, harms, the temple of the Holy Spirit which is the physical body (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**)? If a Christian's light is not shining he deprives God of glory, the world of godly influence, is this not sin?

Listen, I do want to make my point; I am talking about how the church ignores these things, or supports these things. What do I mean? We have many in the Lord's church, who are doing these sins, and we know it to be sin, instead of reproving and rebuking these members about their sin, we will ask them to be the song leader; we ask them to serve on the Lord's Table or lead prayers. We act like nothing is wrong! These things are sin, and abomination to God, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah" (**Proverbs 17:15**). Do you think God is happy when we allow such a person to lead us in worship to God? Do think God is happy when we give money to these people so they can buy a pack of cigarettes or some beer to support their sin? Do you think God is happy when members of the body of Christ go behind the church building and practice sin (smoking)? Maybe it's alright to commit fornication, use profanity, or drink alco-

hol as long as it's behind the church building?

Oh, it's just a little sin! A tiny spark can cause a great forest fire. A little member in our body, the tongue, can send us to hell (**James 3**). Remember that it was a little fruit in Eve's case, a little touch in Uzzah's case, a little bundle of sticks in the Israelite's case. Any sin, whether we classified it big or little, will keep a man out of heaven (**Revelation 21:27**). One sin unrepented of is enough to render one a sinner, and cause him to be lost (**James 2:10**). There is no little sin, because there is no little God to sin against. Sin is sin! But we allow such a person to lead the congregation in worship because we feel sorry for him, or we don't want to make him mad and run him off, these things ought not to be brethren! Smoking, alcoholic beverage and drugs has many defenders but no defense.

Brethren, these things (smoking, alcohol, misusing of legal or illegal drugs) are sin! Would we allow a man living in adultery or who steals lead the congregation in worship? Then why would we allow a person who smokes, uses alcohol, or one brought under the power of any chemical substance, to lead us in worship? Is not a sin a sin? If a congregation permits such individuals to remain unchastened within its fellowship, allows such a person to lead in worship, it thereby becomes a partaker of their sin and will also drift out of favor of the Lord (**Revelation 2**). Sin must be exposed and purged out of the church or the church becomes corrupt and a synagogue of Satan instead of the church of Christ. We need to hate every false way (**Psalms 119:140**). To ignore or tolerate wrong doing among its members is not love just because you felt sorry for that person. The question is how much do you love God, His Word, the church, your brothers and sisters? "We ought to obey God rather than man" (**Acts 5:29**). Let us pray that God will, "grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (**Acts 4:29**). •

## The Appearance Of Evil

By David Padfield

The apostle Paul wrote "some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures" (**2 Peter 3:16**). Sometimes people "twist" the Scriptures because they have an evil heart and do not really care what God has said -- they will twist the Scriptures to justify their own evil actions. Other people will unknowingly "twist" the Scriptures -- usually as a result of a lack of Bible study.

If I were to make a list of the most abused (or "twisted") passages in the Bible, I think that **1 Thessalonians 5:22** would be near the head of the list. In the King James Version of the Bible this passage simply commands us to "abstain from all appearance of evil." This verse is explained by many folks to mean that if some act "appears" to be evil then we must abstain from it. Of course, the person explaining the passage gets to determine what "appears" evil and what doesn't. If they don't like going to

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the movie theater then you can't go either -- it "appears" to be evil. If they don't like playing cards then you can't play either -- it "appears" to be evil. If they don't like vanilla ice cream then you can't eat it either -- it "appears" to be evil.

I have memories from Bible classes of my youth when other teenagers would ask questions about the morality of certain activities. Often a Bible class teacher would respond that the suggested activity was sinful because it "appeared" to be evil in the eyes of some folks. I am sure such teachers thought they had given a "Bible answer to a Bible question." After class the teenagers would often talk about the "profound" answer we had been given, then we tried to come up with a list of things that wouldn't "appear" evil to someone -- the list was mighty short.

I went to high school with several Mennonites and nearly everything I said or did "appeared" evil to them. My clothing was sinful because it wasn't black. I drove a car that had chrome bumpers and they considered that sinful because it was "too flashy" (it's still hard for me to imagine a beat-up AMC Rambler as "flashy"). We used electricity in our house and that was considered a sin -- it "appeared" to be evil. Conversation without using words like "Thee" and "Thou" was taboo -- it "appeared" to be evil.

Maybe by now you can see the problem. It is hard to imagine anything that doesn't "appear" evil to someone! Worshipping God on the first day of the week "appears" to be evil to the Seventh Day Adventists. Referring to Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the Messiah "appears" to be evil to the Jews. Our disregard for the "Pope" appears to be evil to Catholics. Saluting the flag "appears" to be evil to Jehovah's Witnesses. Preaching on the consequences of adultery "appears" to be evil to several "heretic finders" in the brotherhood.

The word translated as "appearance" in the King James Version is the Greek word *eidōs*. Concerning this verse **Marvin Vincent** wrote, "As commonly explained, abstain from everything that even looks like evil. But the word signifies form or kind...It never has the sense of semblance. Moreover, it is impossible to abstain from everything that looks like evil." (*Word Studies in The New Testament*, Vol. IV, p. 51).

Translations of the Bible render this verse in a variety of ways. The New King James, Revised Standard, American Standard, New Revised Standard, New American Standard and Moulton translate this verse as "abstain

from every form of evil." In similar fashion, the New International Version gives us, "avoid every kind of evil." Weymouth sounds a bit more formal with, "hold yourselves aloof from every form of evil." The Contemporary English Version, recently introduced by the American Bible Society, translates this verse as "don't have anything to do with evil."

In his commentary on **First Thessalonians**, **H.A.W. Meyer** wrote: "But **(1)** *eidōs* never signifies appearance. **(2)** A distorted thought would arise. For as the apostle has required the holding fast not that which has the appearance of good, but that which is actually good; so also in ver. 22, on account of the close reference of *poneros* (*evil, dp*) to the preceding *kalon* (*good, dp*), the discourse must also be of an abstinence from that which is actually evil. **(3)** To preserve oneself from all appearance of evil is not within the power of man." (*Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Thessalonians*).

In his critical commentary on the Greek New Testament, **Henry Alford** wrote: "These words cannot by any possibility be rendered as in E.V., 'abstain from all appearance of evil.' For **(1)** *eidōs* never signifies 'appearance' in this sense: **(2)** the two members of the sentence would thus not be logically correspondent, but a new idea would be introduced in the second which has no place in the context: for it is not against being deceived by false appearance, nor against giving occasion by behavior which appears like evil, that he is cautioning them, but merely to distinguish and hold fast that which is good, and to reject that which is evil." (*Alford's Greek Testament*, Vol. III, p. 281).

In 1891 Cambridge University published a series of commentaries on the New Testament under the general title of The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. In the volume The Epistles To The Thessalonians, **George Findlay** wrote: "The Apostle does not advise the Thessalonians to avoid what looks like evil; the command thus understood encourages the studying of appearances, and tends to the 'doing of our works to be seen by men' which our Lord condemns (Matt. xxiii. 5). But in completing on the negative side the previous command, 'hold fast the good (in prophesyings),' he gives to it the widest possible extension: 'Keep yourselves not only from this, but from every sort of evil.'"

By now we can see that in **1 Thessalonians 5:22** Paul is speaking about us abstaining from every manifestation and form of evil -- he was not telling us to avoid things that

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