

# The Old Paths

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## “Warning Labels That Are Needed”

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A couple of years ago, the Phillip-Morris company ran some TV ads saying that they would no longer use billboards, T-shirts, cartoon characters, etc., to promote their tobacco products. Perhaps you remember when these television spots ran, as it was a nation-wide campaign. This ad campaign was part of the multi-million dollar tobacco settlement they had reached with several states.

Even before this settlement, tobacco products carried labels that stated explicitly that these products contained within them the potential for causing cancer in various organs (lungs, lip, gum, mouth, throat); they could produce cardiac problems and emphysema; these products could lead to some women having premature births, or underweight babies, as well as other health problems.

In spite of the warnings, people continue to use tobacco products and ruin their health. Therefore, some made a push for tobacco advertising to be very limited, and taken off of T-shirts, billboards, etc. This was primarily an effort to keep young people from trying them, but ultimately it is an effort to keep all people from using tobacco products regardless of their age. The purpose of this article is not to discuss the rightness or wrongness of such civil actions against a company, but to consider the thought-process in using warning labels, and doing away with advertising of harmful

products. In considering these things, let us ask why it is that people do not see the need for such warnings in other areas of life. If there are those who recognize the need for warning labels on tobacco products, as well as a need to hinder the advertising of such products ....

### **What About In The Area Of Immodesty?**

I imagine that with most, immodesty is a sin that is almost as universally accepted as lying. Yet, the Bible condemns immodesty (as well as lying) and has since the beginning. From the beginning, we see that man and woman were not clothed until “*God ... clothed them*” (Gen. 3:21). From that time until the present, God has demanded that people be clothed modestly. Nakedness is something that is proper between a husband and wife in the marriage relationship, and no where else (Gen. 2:25; Heb. 13:4). Yet, if people were able to recognize and stop tobacco advertising due to its power to persuade, why do they continue to use immodesty as a way to sell their products? The reason: sex sells, and most are not willing to give up that source of revenue.

The Bible condemns immodesty, stating that women ought to dress “*in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array*” The NAS says “*with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments*” (I Tim. 2:9). Of course, one’s mind must first be right, and then the dress will follow! Peter shows us that the proper way to dress begins with “*the hidden man of the*

*heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price*” (I Pet. 3:4). Though this command is addressed primarily to women, men must also dress modestly! God has no double standards (Acts 10:34; Eph. 6:9).

If there are warning labels on tobacco products, then why not warnings concerning immodesty? I assure you that such warnings are already in place, and are found within the pages of Inspiration! As you view billboards, TV ads, magazine ads, and other media, notice carefully the use of immodestly dressed men and women selling products, and remember these stunts are used to get us to buy their products! If people understood the harm tobacco advertising has on the population, they should also see the harm that advertising with immodestly dressed people has as well on our society. It is a poor rule that doesn’t work all the time.

### **What About In The Area Of Drinking?**

Have you ever seen a true beer commercial? I doubt it. Any commercial for alcohol is going to show people having a good time at sophisticated parties, or with “buddies” cutting up and acting silly. Where are the ads which show the man in the gutter with his bottle of wine? Where are the ads showing the man who gets drunk and beats his wife? Or the ads showing the man who commits suicide, or perhaps kills others after he has gotten drunk and wrecks his car into another on the road?

Yes, some warn about not “drinking and driving.” Organizations like MADD, SADD, and others promote a message of not drinking excessively. Though the warnings are abundant, isn’t it interesting to note the type of ads that are used in the media. Just as with their use of immodestly dressed people, ads today slant the use of alcohol until people think that drinking is what *all* “adults” do. Is it

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any wonder we have so many teenage alcoholics today? They are imitating what they think “**all adults**” do! What ought to be obvious to us is that many times, the sin of immodesty and drinking go hand-in-hand!

Some try to soothe their consciences by saying that they merely drank one drink, or only drink on “social occasions.” The truth is that drinking alcohol in any quantity is wrong in the sight of God. Peter said, “*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you*” (I Pet. 4:1-4).

In these sins mentioned, notice that Peter discusses some engaging in: “excess of wine” (drunkenness, Strong’s); “revellings” (carousal, letting loose, Strong’s); and “banquetings” (drinking parties, NKJ, NAS). Therefore, in whatever stage of drinking one might engage, from the “social drinker” to the falling-down drunk; Peter showed that it is sin, and in the same category as lasciviousness, lusts, abominable idolatries, and excess of riot!

Let us realize how dangerous it is to drink alcohol, and stay as far away from it as possible!

### **What About In The Area Of The Music Or TV Shows We Watch?**

A few years ago, a song came out suggesting there needs to be warning labels on sad country songs. The reason he gave was they made you feel worse when you were already sad. One line of the

song was, “They warned me about cigarettes, whiskey, and beer. No one ever warned me about the music I hear...” While that was a cute line in the song, let me suggest that deeper meaning can be applied to those words. In fact, there are now some CD’s and tapes with warning labels, warning of explicit lyrics. Consider what is on the radio and what is on TV today. Do you imagine our Lord would be watching some of the things we watch, or listening to some of the songs we listen to? There are some songs with terrible language, and TV shows with the same. No, this is not an indictment of every TV show, nor every song, but it is clear that there are songs and shows not suitable for public consumption. It seems that the passage of time only brings with it worse shows and worse lyrics in songs. Many times, these shows and songs glamorize the very sins we have addressed in this article: immodesty, drinking, smoking, and bad language. There are songs and TV shows which glamorize murder, rape, and similar things which I hope we understand are sin as well!

Let us remember that Paul said, “*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*” (Phil. 4:8). Thinking on proper things results in proper actions. Solomon said, “*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life*” (Prov. 4:23). We need to guard our heart. It is a fact that some of the things that are being broadcast over the TV and radio waves are destroying the very thing we are trying to protect — our heart, as well as the hearts of our children, for whom we are responsible before God! **How can we justify as “entertainment” what God condemns in real life?**

### **Conclusion**

If people can see how ads on T-shirts, and cartoon characters can be enticing to get someone (especially the young) to smoke cigarettes, why not be consistent and see the danger these other sins are presenting in the lives of our children as well? Lest I be misunderstood, I am **not** trying to lobby for some government body to do this. I don’t think that is needed. Rather, what is needed is a return to the principles laid out in the Bible and a return to common-sense. Government is not the answer to our problems, Christ is! God’s word is truth (Jn. 17:17), and as such, when we follow it, we will have the truth which makes us free (Jn. 8:32)!

Let us return to a spiritual mindset, wanting to live closer to God. Let us realize that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world (Heb. 11:13), and have nothing to do with the devices of Satan that so permeate society. (Read: II Cor. 6:17)

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