

Toking and the Holy Ghost?

As marijuana continues to increase in popularity and cultural acceptance, some key questions are increasingly being asked in faith circles. Among them: Is recreational marijuana use moral?

This is just one of the topics being tackled by Dr. Todd Miles, professor of theology at Western Seminary and author of *Cannabis and the Christian: What the Bible Says about Marijuana*.

Miles recently told the “Edifi With Billy Hallowell” podcast that, though the Bible says nothing explicitly about marijuana, the scriptures do offer a plethora of “wisdom” and guidance that can help Christians address the issue.

“We have all the divine words that we need in order to live faithfully,” he said. “There’s plenty to inform the question of recreational and even medicinal marijuana use.”

Listen to Miles reveal his take on marijuana and the Bible.

As marijuana continues to be legalized in states across the U.S., Miles said he’s hoping to help guide Christians to “start thinking intentionally” about the complex issue, particularly when it comes to dangers surrounding the drug that are often downplayed.

“Mental health officials know that there is a strong link between earlier onset of mental illness, schizophrenia ... and marijuana use,” he said. “And we ought not to be saying otherwise.”

Among the many issues surrounding marijuana is the need to differentiate medicinal from recreational use, as it is the latter that is often being perpetuated and pushed, Miles said, without the proper framing and information.

“We’re being told that [marijuana] is safe,” he said. “But once you dig below the surface, you find, well, maybe not so much.”

Miles said one of the misconceptions and mistruths is that marijuana is not addictive. While the drug might not be as habit-forming as other substances, he pushed back against this sentiment, and noted some of the additional impacts that must be considered when discussing the issue.

“Demonstrably, getting high on cannabis ... impairs cognitive abilities, it impairs physical abilities and it impairs moral judgement,” he said, noting that these consequences are “unhelpful.”

Miles pointed back to the biblical command against drunkenness, which in its entirety parallels what unfolds when a person engages in recreational marijuana usage.

“Is there a non-medical reason to smoke pot other than to get high?” he rhetorically asked. “I don’t think that there is.”

As for those who believe recreational marijuana offers relief from anxiety and other such issues, Miles cautioned that this sort of usage should be differentiated.

“At that point, it seems you’re self medicating and we’ve moved into a category of medicinal marijuana, not recreational,” he said, urging people to separate the two.

Miles said he’s hoping people will take a deeper look at these issues and the impact marijuana can have on the individual.

“Just because the law says something is right doesn’t necessarily mean it is,” he concluded.

Find out more in “Cannabis and the Christian: What the Bible Says about Marijuana.” {[eo](#)}

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