

***Can I Smoke Pot? Marijuana in Light of Scripture*** by Tom Breedan and Mark Ward, Jr.; Cruciform Press, Minneapolis, MN: 2016. (23 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols).

## **1. The Bible Contains Everything We Need for Life.**

If you can't use the Bible to answer your questions, you don't really understand it.

The Bible contain all the divine words we need to know God, to please Him, and to live righteous lives. Even if it doesn't always answer our specific questions, it does peak *in some way* to every aspect of life. Often it does this through general commands. For example, there are no situations in which it's okay to take part in "the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11), no ways in which you can be "conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2), and no places where you can make "provision for the flesh" (Romans 13:14). No corner of human life is exempt from the norms in Scripture; we are to do "all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). [page 5]

## **2. God Is Creator.**

Before we find out that God exists in Trinity or that He is love—and long before we find out that just because God created something doesn't necessarily mean you should put it in your mouth—we learn that God is Creator. [page 7]

## **3. Creation Will Be Restored.**

Creation is not accomplishing everything it was designed to do; it has been "subjected to futility." But at the "revealing of the sons of God"—when the children of God are revealed in glory at the return of Jesus Christ—so too will creation be glorified. When Christians receive their fully resurrected, glorious bodies on the last day, creation itself will be set free from futility and attain that same glory. The new creation is not a replacement. It is a restoration. [page 14]

## **4. God Redeems His Fallen Creation.**

The Bible is the story of what God is doing to glorify Himself by redeeming His fallen creation. One day he will remove the curse complete and restore the world to the way He created it to be. [page 15]

## **5. Distinctions Illustrated.**

...we have to make an important distinction before we talk about medical and recreational uses of pot: there is a major difference between saying *there must be good purposes for marijuana* and saying that *all purposes of marijuana must be good*.

Fire is used for cooking and for warmth. But fire has also been used to destroy via arson, and to murder via Molech. Fire is good, but not every use humans make of it is

good. Fire is good, but (unless you work in the circus) that doesn't mean you should put it in your mouth. [page 17]

## **6. Others Have Authority over Us.**

We cannot decide to smoke marijuana without taking others into account.

Two quick examples:

- If a parent instructs you not to smoke marijuana, you have a moral obligation to obey. Why? Because God gives parents to children as an extension (however imperfect) of His authority over all creation, and over people in particular. Even if you don't live in your parent's home, and no matter your age or degree of independence, God still calls you to give serious consideration to any guidance you receive from a parent. Even evil fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, Jesus said (Matthew 7:11), and one of those gifts is often a healthy caution rooted in experiences parents wish they hadn't had.
- If God has placed you under employers or other authority figures (pastors, teachers, mentors) who discourage the recreational or medical use of marijuana, the Bible's default counsel is that you honor such people. They will give an account for their leadership over you; make sure they do it with joy and not grief (Hebrews 13:17). [page 20]

## **7. Government Has the Right of Punishment.**

No further details are given [in Genesis 9:5-6] regarding civil government. But in speaking these words to Noah, God establishes the obligation to carry out the most severe punishment (the taking of human life) in retribution for the most horrible crime (the murder of another human being). Once this principle is established, then the imposition of lesser penalties for lesser crimes is also validated, since if a government has the right to carry out the most severe kind of punishment, then it certainly has the right to carry out lesser punishments for lesser crimes as well. [page 24]

## **8. Government Is Used to Restrain Evil.**

Government exists in part to restrain evil. It constitutes a major portion of "common grace" God shows to mankind. [page 24]

## **9. Smoking Pot Is Resisting God.**

Wherever Caesar speaks out of both sides of his mouth on this question, only one group will surely be safe: the abstainers. As of this writing, for any Christian, anywhere in the United States, to smoke pot is to resist the governing authorities. It is, in unmakeable terms, to resist God. [page 32]

## **10. Others Still Have Authority over You Regardless of Government.**

What is the role of government in determining whether someone is permitted, biblically, to “use” marijuana, whether medically or recreationally? Our answer: If government forbids marijuana use, don’t use it. The government is God’s minister to you for good. Thus, if any level of government under which you live outlaws marijuana use, you are not permitted by Scripture to break that law.

But we must also add that, even if all levels of government over you permit marijuana usage, there are still other people who have some right over your opinions and practice – including God. Thankfully, with the continued help of Scripture it is possible to gain some understanding of God’s view of marijuana use. [page 35]

## **11. Leaders Serve without Mental Impairment.**

The mother of King Lemuel, who taught him the wisdom of Proverbs 31, also instructed her son not to drink at all—precisely because kings must not be permitted to forget their troubles. Their troubles are the nations troubles, and they are called to serve without mental impairment (Proverbs 31:4-5). [page 43]

## **12. Healing Is God’s Mercy to the World.**

God can work His divine purposes through everyday means—He can and does heal through ordinary means of medicine. Divine healing does not have to be something fantastic and other worldly. Sometimes it is as simple as cleaning a wound, yet still God is at work in bringing relief. Although ancient medicine was fairly basic, the Bible commends it as a display of God’s mercy to the world. [page 47]

## **13. Smoking Pot and Drinking Alcohol.**

It’s probably safe to say that every Christian who favors recreational marijuana use will base his or her argument in large part on what the Bible says about drinking alcohol. [page 55]

## **14. From Different Views.**

The author of this book, who composed the initial argument, drinks alcohol in moderation. The coauthor, who has tried to make that argument stick with illustrations and an occasional dash of humor (for which he takes sole blame), is a teetotaler who has never taken a sip of alcohol (except once by accident on a mission trip in South America—it looked like fruit juice!). The author drinks occasionally, and does so to the glory of God out of a humble desire to receive God’s good gifts in creation. The coauthor, out of a desire to honor his parents and heritage, to be “led not into temptation,” and to minister to the down-and-out, plans to save his enjoyment of

alcohol for the new earth – when Jesus said He will drink it “new with you in My Father’s Kingdom” (Matthew 26:29). [pages 55-56]

### **15. Maturity and Faithfulness in Christians.**

Drunkenness lowers our inhibitions and makes it more likely that we will give in to certain temptations of sin. Elders are people too; they face the same temptations every Christian does. It is important for elders to model faithful, holy living.

But these qualifications aren’t just relevant to church leaders. They’re instructive for all Christians. The Bible’s qualifications for elders are overwhelmingly about character rather than skill, because the portrait is that of a mature and faithful Christian. These are men who should lead God’s church. If the image is of maturity in faith, then these characteristics are surely instructive for all Christians. [pages 70-71]

### **16. Loss of Self-control.**

The only thing that pot does for you—get you buzzed—is the one use prohibited concerning alcohol. When Paul tells us not to be drunk with wine, he did not mean that getting drunk with beer or scotch was acceptable. The problem is not the wine, but rather the loss of self-control. And because such mental impairment is the whole *point* of smoking pot, recreational marijuana use is a serious sin. [page 71]

### **17. Lowering Inhibitions, Clouding Decision-making, etc.**

It is sinful to get high for the same reasons it is to get drunk. Being high lowers inhibitions, clouds decision making, and deprives people of fruitfulness in their work. Alcohol and marijuana share this danger. So we can conclude that the Bible forbids getting high just as it condemns drunkenness. Smoking marijuana recreationally in order to get high is sinful. [page 72]

### **18. Not a Lot of Marijuana Needed.**

It takes very little marijuana to get high. [page 73]

### **19. All Smoking Is Dangerous.**

Smoking is a dangerous way to ingest any substance, even a beneficial one. Whether the active ingredient delivered by the smoke is nicotine from tobacco or THC from marijuana, similar substances come along for the ride into the lungs. [page 73]

### **20. Lives Going Nowhere.**

One author (Mark Ward) asked children of the 1960s and 1970s about their views on weed, and they all remembered specific people whose lives went nowhere after they began smoking marijuana regularly. [page 74]

## **21. Getting High and Getting Drunk.**

Perhaps there are recreational marijuana users who smoke without trying to get high, but this really does not seem the case. If the purpose of smoking marijuana recreationally is to get high from it, that is no different than drinking with the intention of getting drunk. [page 75]

## **22. What Scripture Says about Alcohol Pertains to Marijuana.**

The thing we are *forbidden* by Scripture to do with alcohol appears to be just about the only thing we can *possibly* do with marijuana recreationally. [page 81]

## **23. Use the Bible to Answer Questions.**

Observe, interpret, and apply. Do this well, and you'll be able to use the Bible to answer your questions. [page 103]