
**BREAKING THE BONDS
OF ADDICTION
— THE *COVENANT WAY* —
(*Tobacco*)**

Please Note: Although this booklet has been written primarily for those who are addicted to tobacco, it is my prayer that many, especially young people, who may be contemplating *trying it* would find the contents to be of encouragement to them in making a lifetime commitment to remain tobacco free.

Clarence L. Blasier

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The Covenant Way (Tobacco)

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PREFACE

Although we may have never met and probably never will, please consider this as a *personal letter* to you. If we were casually conversing across a table from each other, with your permission, these are things we might share about the addiction which not only you but millions of others struggle with day by day.

I know about that struggle because for 35 years I was one of the most severely addicted—a 2-3 packs a day cigarette smoker. I don't know whether or not that qualifies me as an authority in your eyes or gives me the right to offer these thoughts to you, but because of what I believe is the encouragement of the Lord, I feel led to do so.

Please be assured that there is no intention to mind your business or in any way condemn you, nor do I want to put a guilt trip upon you. This *letter* is not directed only to you either. I believe these thoughts and supporting information apply to each of us no matter what the *stronghold* is that we are facing in our life. Addiction to tobacco is just one of myriad others.

It's also important for you to know that I am praying for you and all those who will read this brief attempt to offer you hope for freedom from a tobacco addicted life. Lastly, I may be very direct in some of the observations and suggestions, but I imagine you have thought of and prayed about many of them yourself. I'd just like to try to pull things together.

I believe there is a *spiritual solution* to tobacco and other addictions. I'll try to explain the best I can. But first, let's lay the groundwork.

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FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

There are four fundamental truths which are important as a basis for understanding this *spiritual solution*:

- *It's All About God!*
- *“For Without Me You Can Do Nothing.”* *
- *“I Can Do All Things Through Christ Which Strengtheneth Me.”* †
- *There Is God's Part and There Is Our Part.*

*John 15:5(b) †Philippians 4:13

It's All About God!

“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:36)

Eventually, everyone, not just Christians will come to realize that everything in this universe is about God (*see* Philippians 2:9-11). He created it all, including you and me. He owns *everything*, including each of us. Our bodies, minds, souls and spirits are *His* property. Not only did He create us, but after we (humankind) turned our backs on Him in the Garden of Eden and became Satan's property, He purchased us anew with the shed blood of a suffering Christ. The declaration *“For ye are bought with a price”* found in 1 Corinthians 6:20 affirms that fact.

So why did He create us? Several Scriptures give us incite into the reasons for our existence.

“ For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” (Colossians 1:16).

“ Thou art worthy , O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

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Pretty plain and easy to understand isn't it? We were created for God, not for us—for His pleasure, not for ours.

If we will prayerfully meditate on just these things, hopefully, we'll realize that their truth is sufficient to cause us to glorify God by caring for *His property* in every way possible and refrain from contaminating our minds and bodies with poisons of any kind. But there is more.

Thoughts for Prayer and Meditation:

If God created us for His pleasure, shouldn't we dedicate ourselves to those things that do bring Him pleasure? Certainly, allowing ourselves to become addicted to tobacco does not bring Him pleasure. It also cannot help but have an effect upon our relationship with Him. Just as an enjoyable relationship is what we want most from those we love and cherish, it is a close relationship that God wants most from us. Bringing Him pleasure enhances that relationship. It is because we were created in God's image (*see* Genesis 1:26-27) that a close relationship with Him is what we also inwardly long for and desire.

Although she never criticized or condemned me for smoking, I guess my dear Mother's understanding of these things is why she once lovingly wrote, "*Clarence, as long as you smoke, you will never have the relationship with God that you desire.*" Years later, praise God, I came to comprehend the wisdom of her words—but she left out one thing. It is *God's* desire for this relationship, not mine, that matters most because ***It's All About God!***

Thoughts for Prayer and Meditation:

If it's ***All About God***, and if God said that we should have no other gods or idols before Him, shouldn't we consider whether addiction to tobacco or any other substance is a serious violation of this commandment? Doesn't the thing that we are addicted to become both physically and emotionally an idol that we worship? False gods and idols come in many shapes and sizes and one of them is any substance that causes us to become addicted to it. As human beings, it's so easy to be dominated by things in our lives which we, either consciously or subconsciously, consider more

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important than God. He knows this. It is one reason why He speaks so emphatically about having any other gods before Him.

Thoughts for Prayer and Meditation:

God's desire, and our growing desire as we mature in Christ, is for us to at all times strive to exercise *Spiritual* self control. Human self control is *self* in control. *Spiritual* self control is self *under* control of the Holy Spirit. But, don't we many times allow an addiction to place us under its control rather than the Holy Spirit's control? Whoever or whatever is in control affects everything we do, say, or think—even our fellowship with God and other people.

Further, if the Holy Spirit, for whatever reason He has, is urging us to become a non-user of addictive substances and we continue their use, are we not *quenching* and *grieving* the Spirit? (*see* 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30).

If we continue to quench and grieve the Spirit, how long might it be until He no longer tries to influence us, at least in the matter of our addiction? God said that He would not always strive with man (*see* Genesis 6:3; Romans 1:28). It is only because of His immeasurable love for us that He is at all patient and continues to offer His guidance and help even when we resist Him as we so often do. I can't begin to imagine the feelings of emptiness and remorse that must come when we know that God, through the Holy Spirit, has stopped trying to influence our thoughts and actions.

Thoughts for Prayer and Meditation:

Let me ask you, "*Is addiction to tobacco and other substances the work of God or is it the work of Satan?*" The answer is obvious and the conclusions that can be drawn are even more obvious. As Christians, if we do anything which is of Satan, then we are attempting to serve two masters and Christ said it cannot be done (*see* Matthew 6:24). Either we will love the one and hate the other or else we will hold to the one and despise the other. God gave us free will, so it is our choice to determine which master we will serve.

1 John 3:8 tells us that one reason Christ came to earth was to destroy the works of the devil. If we agree that smoking is a work of the devil, then if we smoke, aren't we thwarting Christ in

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the purpose to which He was called? Our mission in life is to *support* the work of Christ, not suppress it.

Thoughts for Prayer and Meditation:

If we are espoused to one husband (*see* 2 Corinthians 11:2) and the marriage will be consummated when Christ returns, and if our addiction has become an idol or a god, is not that relationship with that idol or god an adulterous one? If so, then each time that we smoke a cigarette or ingest a harmful substance to which we are addicted, aren't we committing spiritual adultery? If we have studied God's word at all, then we are well aware of the consequences of human adultery. How much more severe they must be when we commit spiritual adultery.

Scripture for Prayer and Meditation:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Romans 12:1.

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 6:20

Summation:

The question now is: Will all these thoughts and Scriptures, and the many more which we have not considered, be convincing enough to cause us to take the next step? Have we come to a full realization that it truly is *All About God*? If so, we can move on to our second fundamental truth.

"For Without Me You Can Do Nothing."

What does it take for us to realize that without Christ, we really can do nothing, especially battle against the forces of evil which plague us?

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Part of the problem seems to be that we don't fully understand that our struggles in life are not all in the physical realm. The Apostle Paul explained this fact clearly: "*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*" (Ephesians 6:12).

When it comes to ordinary day by day living and the challenges we face, not only are we in a physical battle, but we are in a spiritual battle as well. It's only through the enabling power of God that this battle can be won. It is why Jesus said, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself*" (John 5:19). And in John 14:10 He stated, "*The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.*"

We live this life in perpetual need of the power of God, but in attempting to overcome our tobacco addiction, it seems we most often rely upon man-devised means. We use products which supposedly control the desire for nicotine. We may even subject ourselves to demon possession through hypnosis. We engage in group therapy (which certainly has merit as long as God is not excluded). We make resolutions and break them. We throw our packs of cigarettes away and then recover them or buy more. We quit for short periods, sometimes days or even months, and then begin again. We attempt to *taper off* with the false conviction that eventually we'll lose the desire. We exert our own inadequate willpower. And the list goes on and on, and these things hardly ever work permanently. They may help temporarily but almost never permanently because they are not done through the power of God but through human effort.

The fact is that when we go it alone without God, we may have a short-lived victory but never a lasting one. We may have stopped ingesting the poison but the addiction and the desire is ever present. It's one reason people often say that they quit smoking years ago but still have the desire and could begin again as though they had never stopped.

BUT, when we rely upon God, and when it is God's will to empower us to win the battle, not only do we stop yielding to the addiction but the addiction and desire is removed permanently.

I am fully convinced that God is *able* to destroy any addiction without the aid of any other form of assistance. In fact, if we

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believe that we *must* combine other things with relying upon God, we are really saying that the power of God is insufficient. We are saying that it must be God *plus* something else. We are denying the omnipotence of God and His promises to us. This is not to say that He does not use human assistance and other means to accomplish His purposes. He does so more often than not. The question is: “*Where are we placing our faith and trust?*”

“I Can Do All Things Through Christ Which Strengtheneth Me.”

Either every word of this verse of Scripture is true or the entire statement is suspect. The words *all things* are extremely important because *all things* means *ALL* things. It means that through Christ *every* stronghold can be destroyed and *every* battle can be won. And the reason is that when we rely upon Christ, it is not us but *Christ through us* who is fighting *for* us. What a tremendous consolation that is!

We often read in the Bible such messages as:

“Then I said unto you, dread not, neither be afraid of them. The Lord your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes.” Deuteronomy 1:29-30.

“One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.”
(Joshua 23:10)

And what about Gideon who with only 300 men defeated thousands of Midianites just by doing nothing but carrying torches in pitchers and then smashing them and blowing trumpets at the appointed time? It sure wasn't the power of Gideon and his men. It was the power of God.

All this does not mean that it is entirely up to God to deliver us from addiction and we do absolutely nothing. There are preparations we must make and actions we must take. And that brings us to our fourth fundamental truth and the proposed *spiritual solution*.

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There Is God's Part and There Is Our Part.

Alert! Before examining this claim, let's make certain that when we say *God's Part*, we fully understand that God is not in any way or at any time *obligated* to do anything for us except that which He desires to do. It is only because of His love for us, His grace, and His mercy that He showers us with daily blessings and encouragement. We deserve nothing. He deserves everything.

God's Part:

God's part, performed through the Holy Spirit, seems to be bringing us to a point where we want to do His will above everything else and then giving us the power to do it. "*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*" (Philippians 2:13). But He does not act alone. He calls on us to cooperate with Him so that *He* can work through us. This brings us to:

Our Part:

Our part in breaking the bondage of addiction is always more difficult than God's part because:

- We are human and sinful. God is a Spirit and holy.
- We exist in a sin-filled environment. God lives in a sin-free environment.
- We can fail. God can never fail.
- We can be and are tempted by Satan. God can never be tempted.
- We can yield to temptation. God cannot. When Christ was tempted by Satan, Satan did not appeal to Christ's divine nature. He appealed to His human nature. But it was Christ's divine nature that prevailed so that His human nature could resist the temptations and defeat Satan in his futile attempts.

Our part is both passive and active. Our passive role is to yield to God and trust Him to do His part. Unfortunately, all too often this "passive" role, this yielding to Him and trusting in Him to work in us to do His pleasure, is so strongly emphasized that we neglect the active role that God expects us to play.

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Our prayer often goes something like this; “*God, I have this addiction which is causing all kinds of other problems. Please remove it from me so that I am able to take care of these other matters.*”

Certainly, God who created all things and is in control of all things is more than able to do just that. But wouldn't God prefer that our prayer be: “*God, please show me what I can do now to cooperate with You as You work in me to deliver me from this addiction which is causing so many other problems?*” We are incapable of doing God's part and, for our own good, God is not going to do ours.

In order for the bonds which bind us to be broken, and in order for us to be set free from our addiction, our active part must be to: **(A)** Be prepared spiritually; **(B)** Be prepared to suffer; **(C)** Be prepared to commit to God; and **(D)** Be prepared to fully trust in God to do His part.

(A) Being Prepared Spiritually:

Unless we are *spiritually prepared*, it will be extremely difficult to bear the withdrawal suffering which will come; or make a commitment which will stand against all negative influence; or adequately trust in God. Being spiritually prepared means that we are so filled with the realization of God's love for us and what He has done for us, and so consumed with the desire to place Him first in our life and glorify Him that we cannot help but take the action necessary to become what He wants most, a person living in a close relationship with Him, a person who understands the purpose for which he/she was created—a person who will make any sacrifice or suffer any agony for Him—all because he/she not only knows intellectually, but fervently believes with all his/her heart that *It's All About God*.

Our *spiritual preparation* will be complete when we have prayed enough, studied and absorbed God's Word enough, and meditated enough to cause us to want freedom from bondage *for God's sake* more than anything in the world. Unless we are fully prepared spiritually, it will be futile to take any further action. It's what we've done far too often and it hasn't worked. It must be authentic, genuine and heartfelt. We must *die unto self and live unto God*. All focus has to be on Him for a sustained period of time.

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Through the confirmation of the Holy Spirit we will know when we *are* spiritually prepared—when the time has come for us to take the final steps that will free us from the bondage of our addiction.

(B) Being Prepared to Suffer:

Addiction to nicotine is one of the strongest there can possibly be, so let's not kid ourselves—in most cases there will be withdrawal suffering—usually for just a short time. But, with God's help it will not be as severe as if He were not leading us on our road to freedom. In fact, there have been many cases where, thanks to God's support, there were no withdrawal problems whatsoever.

BUT, there is no comparison between any suffering we will endure and the suffering Christ willingly endured so that we could be forgiven of our sins and have eternal life. For this reason alone, if for no other, we should be more than willing to accept any physical discomfort we might experience *for His sake* and anticipate the suffering with joy in our hearts as Christ did.

Before His crucifixion, Jesus did not consider how much he was to suffer physically. His agony at Gethsemane came from knowing He would *become sin* and the resulting separation from His Father in heaven. What He did consider was the *joy that was set before him* (see Hebrews 12:2)—the joy of knowing that His work on earth (the sacrificial shedding of His blood for the remission of our sins) would be complete—the joy of defeating Satan—and the joy of being reunited with His Father. For us, the joy that is set before us is the exhilaration that comes with victory—the assurance that a barrier between us and God no longer exists—freedom from bondage—and knowing that we are living in obedience to God's will for us.

The good news is that there is one group of people who will never have to worry about suffering from withdrawal. It is those who never started using tobacco. If you are fortunate enough to be one, it is my hope and prayer that you might be encouraged to use what you may learn from this *letter* to make a lifetime commitment to remain a non-smoker.

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(C) Committing to God:

Everything that we have discussed so far has led to the commitment we make to God. As I mentioned earlier, I believe the *form* of the commitment will make the difference. With no intention to set myself up as an example, I would like to give you my testimony concerning this *form* of commitment. It's only through the grace of God that I am privileged to do so.

I was raised in a Christian home and accepted Christ as my personal Savior when I was 12 years of age. However, after I was discharged from the service I began living a dual life—things of God and things of the world. I attended church and prayed and read the Bible occasionally. I also did a lot of good for many people through my various leadership rolls in a national civic organization, but I was not *sold out* to Christ.

I began smoking while in the service and continued the habit for 35 years. I also drank. I was what is known as a *social drinker* (which is a cop-out), but alcohol did become important in my life—so I thought.

Over 25 years ago, I did what I knew I should have done long before that. At 2:30 in the morning, I knelt at my bed and committed my life totally to Jesus and asked Him to forgive me of my sins and to become Lord of my life—and this is when things changed, when I really became a different person in Christ.

Not long after, I came under the conviction of the Holy Spirit concerning my smoking. I tried to quit, using all the methods I described earlier, but to no avail. Finally, after coming to the realization that without Christ I could do nothing but with Him I could do all things, I began my spiritual preparation. And then I made my commitment, a *COVENANT* with God that I would never again smoke a cigarette or use any tobacco substance. I did not *promise*. I did not *pledge*. I did not make any kind of *resolution*. And I did not *ask* anything in return. I *covenanted* with God—and that is what this *letter* is all about—*covenanting* with God. That is the form of commitment I would respectfully suggest to you.

Through His grace, God empowered me to live up to my *covenant*. He delivered me from the addiction and with minimal withdrawal problems. I can honestly say that because it was God that empowered me, I have never had any desire for tobacco since that time.

This was my experience in breaking the hold that tobacco had on me all those years. However, it may not be that of everyone because no one can guarantee what God may or not do. It is entirely in His hands. He may have reasons why He would withhold His empowerment and allow us to continue as the Apostle Paul did, with a “*thorn*” in our side.

Because of the seriousness of making a *covenant* with God, I have made only four in my lifetime. I'll mention them now and

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then discuss what I believe is the difference between other commitments and a *covenant*.

Shortly after being delivered from the tobacco addiction, the Lord began to convict me of using alcohol and to show me His desire for me to glorify Him by becoming a non-drinker. This conviction became more and more intense until I could not take even one drink without feeling extreme guilt.

I'll never forget the day when at 4:30 in the morning I made my second *covenant* with God—I would never again take a drink of alcohol the rest of my life. As before, I did not *promise*. I did not *pledge*. I did not make any kind of *resolution*. And I did not *ask* anything in return. I *covenanted* with God.

Just as with tobacco, I was delivered. God removed all desire for alcohol. Through His enabling, I have never touched alcohol since nor have I ever been tempted to do so. The deliverance was complete and permanent.

As enjoyable and challenging as they are, there is no question but what computer games can become addictive. But what may be even worse is the mesmerizing effect that they can have on the brain. Someone once said, "*They can fry your brain*"—and I believe it.

Over an extended period of time, I had also gotten caught up in this time consuming *entertainment*. I was not addicted, but I was close. Fortunately, the Lord spoke to my heart and showed me the effect on my thinking and creative ability, not to mention the time that was being wasted. He did not hesitate to remind me that whatever mental and creative ability I might have come from Him and that what I was doing was not pleasing to Him.

Again, the conviction that *it's all about God* took over. I first *covenanted* with Him that I would never again play computer games in my office. A short time later, I *covenanted* that I would never play computer games—period.

I realize this may seem trivial to some and they may think that it has no relation to addictions such as tobacco and the others that beset us, but I believe they are in error. There is a similarity between all addictions, especially when we look at them in the light of the sovereignty of God.

In each case that I have described, the deliverance was complete, but the greatest blessing I have received has been what these *covenants* have done for my relationship with God. They certainly have been turning points in my life. It's been a great ride. I wouldn't change it for the world.

Covenants

A *covenant* is a permanent and very serious commitment. When we make a promise or a resolution or a pledge or some type of similar commitment, it obviously is important that we keep our word. But in reality, when we promise or make a resolution or a pledge, we are saying *to the best of my ability*. That ability can be affected by our own humanity, or weakness, or health, or circumstances, or many other factors.

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A *covenant* is forever. It should never, under any circumstances, be broken. For that reason, we should be very careful and prayerful about making a *covenant* and what it is that we *covenant* about. It should never be used as a quick fix or entered into hastily.

One of the first *covenants* God made was when He declared that He would never again use a flood to destroy mankind. He said, “*And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.*”

(Genesis 9:16)

We read in the book of Genesis about God’s *covenants* with Abraham which have never yet and never will be broken. God has made many *covenants* with His people and all are everlasting. A great way to understand the importance of a *covenant* relationship would be to undertake a biblical *covenant* word study, paying special attention to the permanence of every *covenant* God ever made.

There are numerous passages of Scripture which demonstrate how important God considers His *covenants* to be: Among them are:

Joshua 21:45: “*There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.*”

Psalm 105:8: “*He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.*”

Psalm 106:45: “*And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.*”

And then the seriousness of breaking a *covenant* or causing one to be broken is found in Joshua 23:16: “*When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from all the good land which he hath given unto you.*”

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(D) Trusting in God To Do His Part:

In discussing God's part in empowering us to keep any *covenant* we make with Him, we need to emphasize again that God's part is only what He wants it to be. He is not obligated in any way. However, from my own experiences, from what I have observed in the lives of other people, and from what His Word teaches, I believe that when we enter into an agreement with Him that is as serious as a *covenant* is, we can fully trust Him to empower us to live up to that which we have committed to do. That is God's part and we can count on Him to never fail us—to *never leave us or forsake us*.

The *covenant* that we make is a one-time commitment which does not have to be repeated over and over. However, in order to maintain our faith and continue to keep our commitment strong, it is important and helpful for us to spend as much time as possible with the Lord in prayer and the study of His Word. The practice of daily devotions will always help us grow spiritually and add depth to our relationship with God.

The Bible is filled with encouraging Scripture which, if relied upon, cannot help but draw us closer to the Lord and strengthen our trust in Him. Providing us with the Scriptures is one of the means God has used to *do His part*. It will be most helpful if you will select several verses and commit them to memory or write them on a 3 x 5 card which you can carry with you and repeat aloud as often as possible. You notice I stressed reading or repeating *aloud*. The Bible says that faith comes by *hearing* and hearing by the Word of God.

Two verses which many have found to sustain them in all kinds of situations are found in Isaiah 41:10 & 13. "*Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen ye; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*"

"For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."

As you repeat these verses aloud and meditate on them, can't you just picture God clasping your right hand as He leads, directs, encourages, and strengthens you in the fulfillment of your covenant with Him? It is His pleasure to do so.

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A Suggested Covenant for Those Addicted:

“Dear Lord, for many days, Your Holy Spirit has shown me that it is Your desire for me to become a non-user of tobacco and other harmful substances. He has shown me also that everything truly is all about You.

Heavenly Father, the reason for the declaration that I am about to make—the covenant that I will now establish with You is to glorify You and be obedient to Your desire for me. I ask nothing in return. It is for You and You alone. I trust in You to empower me to fulfill this covenant regardless of the severity of the withdrawal and any temptations I might experience. I look forward with joy to the victory and to the renewed fellowship I will have with You.

Precious Lord, in the name of Jesus, I now covenant with You that I will never again use tobacco in any form. I am now, by Your grace and Your power, a non-user of tobacco. I praise You, Lord, and thank You for guiding me in making this everlasting commitment to You.”

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

A Suggested Covenant for a Non-smoker:

“Dear Lord, the reason for the declaration that I am about to make—the covenant that I will now establish with You is to glorify You and be obedient to Your desire for me. I ask nothing in return. It is for You and You alone. I trust in You to empower me to fulfill this covenant regardless of any temptations I may face. I look forward with joy to a lifetime of victory and to the new fellowship I will have with You.

Precious Lord, in the name of Jesus, I now covenant with You that I will never use any tobacco substance. By Your grace and power, I will always continue to live as I am now, a non-user of tobacco. I praise You, Lord, and thank You for guiding me in making this everlasting commitment to You.”

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

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Conclusion

Perhaps, after reading this attempt at encouraging you, there is a feeling that this *spiritual solution* is just too difficult and complicated. If so, **you are right!** It *is* too complicated and difficult for you—or for me—or for anyone other than God. And this is the point I've tried so hard to stress: Success does not lie in your strength or resolve or in my strength or resolve. Success lies solely in God's power and our unwavering faith in Him and His promises.

You may have noticed that I have said nothing about lung cancer or heart disease or decrease in longevity or other physical problems that medical science has attributed to cigarette smoking. Nor have I said anything about the horrendous monetary cost over a lifetime. The reason? Please understand me. Those things are not the real issue. The true issue, and the only one that really counts, is abandonment to God—completely yielding to Him. Remember! ***It's all about God!*** It is when we come to the realization that it is God we want more than anyone or anything this life has to offer that we abandon (yield) ourselves to Him, asking nothing in return, only God. In conclusion, this is my heartfelt prayer for you:

It will be apparent to anyone reading this *letter* that the benefits derived from it will be largely dependent upon that person's relationship with God. Perhaps you have not yet established that relationship. If that is the case, may I respectfully suggest that you consider the following?

The truth is that a relationship with God can be established and our sins forgiven only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6). Jesus did not say that good works is the way; that any *religion* is the way; that church attendance and membership is the way; that any other *god* is the way; that any ghuru or spiritual leader is the way; that any man-made method of any kind is the way; that He *plus* anything else is the way; or that there could possibly be any other way. He said, "***I AM THE WAY!***"

The Apostle Peter said, "*For there is non other name [Jesus] under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12).

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If you have never with your whole heart confessed your sins to Jesus, asked for His forgiveness, and asked Him to come into your heart and take over your life, perhaps you would like to take that soul-saving step now. You can do so by praying this simple prayer:

“Lord Jesus, I believe that you are the Son of God, that You died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins with Your own blood. I believe that you rose from the dead the third day, that You are now in heaven at the right hand of God and will return again.

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I come to You now to ask forgiveness for my sins and to ask You to come into my heart and take over my life. I commit my life to You now.”

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

If you prayed this prayer, or one similar to it, with complete sincerity and from the depths of your heart and meant every word you spoke, you have received forgiveness of your sins and eternal spiritual life. You have become a child of God and precious to Him.

It may be that you accepted Christ as your Savior some time in the past but have not lived a truly dedicated life. If that is the case, now would be a very opportune time to rededicate your life to Him.

This is my heartfelt prayer for you:

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ might dwell in your heart by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:14-19

May God Richly Bless You!

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About the Author

Clarence L. Blasier is a resident of North Canton, Ohio. He is a charter member of *The Chapel in North Canton* and is active in evangelism training and other ministries.

Blasier is founder and president of *Bethesda Outreach Ministries* which offers financial assistance to low income families. He is the owner of *Matthew Publishing Company*. He has an extensive business and public service background and has held prominent local, state, and national civic organization offices.

Other Books By Clarence L. Blasier

The Prayer for Abundant Favor

Bible Answers for Every Need

What To Believe and Why

God's Encouraging Word

*May I Share Something With You
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*Breaking the Bonds of Addiction the Covenant Way
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(Generic)*