

Which Issue Will You Back This November?

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According to a newspaper article I read this week, General Motors Corporation spent \$5.3 billion dollars on medical bills last year, of which 25% were directly related to avoidable things such as overeating, smoking, lack of exercise, and alcohol. The ultimate cost is much more than higher production costs that translates into higher car prices. Those who fail to take care of their bodies often face less active and shorter lives than those who make good health choices do. Many American corporations have hired physical trainers and dietary experts to help their workers lead healthier life styles.

Recently the Walt Disney Company announced they would begin serving more nutritional foods at its domestic theme parks. The move, which is designed to decrease fat, calories and sugar in the food served at places like Disney World comes as parents express more concern about their children's eating habits.

The Bible says that our bodies are the temples of the Lord and that we ought to take good care of God's temple. Christians understand that, when possible, they are to be concerned about the physical well being of others as well as of themselves. But secular corporations like GM and Walt Disney also understand that good citizenship includes doing what they can to promote good health habits.

The question at the election in a few weeks will be whether or not the general electorate is willing to do what the Bible teaches and what GM and Disney have already done. Will we vote to allow less restrictive tobacco rules, will we leave things as they are, or will we opt for more stringent prohibitions on smoking? There is no doubt that smoking often shortens lives and decreases the quality of living not only for the smoker but also for those who inhale second hand smoke. Now we can give our vote on what, if anything, we want to do about it.

But there are some potentially confusing issues on this year's ballot. Issue four, which is being touted by some as "Smoke Less Ohio" is a constitutional amendment that may, in some cases, actually allow increased smoking in some public areas. Issue five, sometimes called "Smoke Free Ohio", would further decrease smoking in public places and workplaces. And, of course, defeating both issues would leave things as they are.

Some may think that voting for both issues is the best way to go, but if both are passed only issue four will go into effect because, as a constitutional amendment, it would trump issue five. In other words, voting for both issues is about the same as only voting for issue four.

So, which one should we back? Maybe looking at the sponsors of each issue will give us a clue. Issue four is backed by the tobacco industry, while issue five is backed by the American Cancer Society. It would seem to me that the Cancer Society has my interests at heart more than the tobacco industry.

The Bible says, *"Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others"* (Philippians 2:4). Christians should carefully weigh which issue, if either, best looks out for the interests of others and then vote accordingly. The Bible, teaches that we are to especially care for the young and the defenseless. As we vote this November on issues four and five, I hope we will ask ourselves what is best for our children, our young people, and for our society as a whole.