That’s Not Helpful

Week 2 – Drugs

What would you do to fit in? What would you NOT do? In other words, where do you draw the line at putting aside what you believe is right or wrong to be accepted by a person or by a group of people? Have you ever even thought of it? Whether or not you have an answer to those questions – I’m going to challenge you to lean in over the next few minutes and really see what this will spark inside of you. Here we go.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 says: “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”

What is your ‘prize?’ Are you chasing after acceptance and approval from others? Are you seeking love from others because you feel overlooked at home? Are you just trying to escape the pains of this world? And what are you doing to get your prize?

Today we are going to cover a topic that to one degree or another, all of us are going to be influenced by or attempted to be pressured into at some point in our lives. Drugs. Now, I’m not just going to stand here as another talking head that you’re going to tune out while I tell you why you should say no to drugs. Instead, I want to walk you through the reasons why out of everything we can benefit from here in this life and on our walk with Jesus, drugs just aren’t helpful.

Paul writes these words as a part of his first letter to the Church of Corinth to say, “LOOK! We are here to live for a bigger cause! We aren’t supposed to indulge in the rewards of the world because they won’t last. We, as Christians, are going for something much bigger than that!” Basically, warning against falling into the trap of doing what everyone else does, how everyone else does it and WHY everyone else does what they do. Friends, we are called to be set apart from the culture that surrounds us. The same culture that is going to tell you “one puff is okay” or that says “everyone is doing it” when it comes to using drugs. But we see here in this verse that we should have our sights set on things far greater than momentary pleasure.

What do I mean by momentary pleasure? The average nicotine buzz lasts about a half an hour. A marijuana high lasts about 3-6 hours and an acid trip can be anywhere from 6-15 hours. Which on a small scale can seem like a lot of time to be feeling good. But for some context, the average person lives to be 79 years old. That’s 692,000 hours.

That means that a nicotine buzz equals about 0.00072% of your entire life. A marijuana high is about 0.00043 and the effects from taking acid only last a mere 0.00086% of your lifetime. That is pretty momentary. And because it’s momentary, people have to use it over and over and over again to get that same feeling. But here’s the thing, that feeling will always go away. The high never lasts longer than the pain you are trying to escape from. In the words of Paul, “The crown will not last.” We’re called to focus on things of eternal importance and chase a crown that will last forever.

A lot of my story consists of doing things in order to gain the approval of others. And as someone on the other side of that struggle, I can honestly tell you that drugs are not worth it. It’s not worth the destruction of friend groups. It’s not worth the pain caused within a family. It isn’t worth the long-lasting effects of those things on your body.

Friends, what if we shifted our focus to something that didn’t fade away? What would it look like for us as a church to say no to what culture is offering to fix our brokenness because we are devoted disciples of Christ that lean on His promises and rely on nothing else? This is a conversation that you need to be ready to have. This isn’t something that you can wait to decide on later, you have to decide now where your healing comes from. Because if you wait until you’re in the middle of a situation where everyone around you is doing it to decide whether or not you’ll fall in line, more than likely you will chase their approval.

I understand that some if not many of you watching have never been faced with this reality. But what we are passionate about as the ones who have the privilege of leading you in this season of life is to prepare you for what is to come long after you move on from Northview Students. We want each of you to make your faith your own and realize through your own experience and walk with Jesus that you want to run the race to win the crown that will last forever.

However, there are some of you watching that have been exposed to drugs whether it’s because your family has a history of addiction or maybe because your friend group thinks that’s the cool thing to do. There are some of you watching who currently are using drugs. I want to be here to tell you that your experiences in life are valid. The pain you feel that you might be trying to escape from is valid. The desire to be seen and loved by others is valid. But I also want to tell you that there is a better way to live. And that life is available to you whether you believe it or not. You are not alone.

1 Corinthians 10:13 says: “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind.”

Jesus sees you and understands the heartache that you have experienced in your life. There are others around you that have fought the same battles that you have and you may not even know it unless you have a conversation about it. The enemy wants nothing more for you to feel like you are alone in your sin and in your addictions and he wants you to feel shame to the point of not thinking you can choose to live a different way. But the enemy is out to steal, kill and destroy and doesn’t want you to know the truth about Jesus. And that truth is that Jesus came and died for every single person. For YOU! And that one day we will spend an eternity with Him in heaven where there is no pain and there is no guilt. But until that day – you have to intentionally choose to reject the things of this world and lean on the healing power of Jesus that will never leave you. Wherever you are when it comes to this topic, I hope that you are encouraged by the truth of the God we serve.

I want you all to take the next several minutes and discuss your own experience when it comes to this topic. Then I want you to make individual decisions about what you would or would not do to fit in.