



Obeying the Law: A Biblical Perspective on Marijuana Use for Breakaway Church Members

Executive Summary

As followers of Christ, we are called to live lives that honor God, including submitting to the governing authorities He has established (Romans 13:1-7). This white paper addresses the topic of marijuana use in the context of Texas law, providing clarity on what is legal and illegal, while emphasizing the importance of obedience to the law. It explores nuances such as low-THC products that may not produce intoxication but could still violate statutes, and encourages members to prioritize biblical principles of sobriety, stewardship of the body, and respect for civil authority. While societal views on marijuana evolve, our commitment to God's Word remains steadfast.

Introduction

The landscape of marijuana-related laws in the United States is rapidly changing, with varying degrees of legalization across states. In Texas, however, the approach remains conservative, prioritizing public safety and health. As a church community, we recognize that marijuana use raises not only legal questions but also spiritual ones. The Bible instructs us to "be subject to the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1) and to avoid anything that impairs our judgment or harms our bodies, which are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

This document aims to equip church members with accurate information on Texas marijuana laws as of March 2026, highlight key nuances, and offer guidance rooted in Scripture. It is not legal advice but a call to faithful living in obedience to both God and the law.

Legal Overview of Marijuana in Texas

Texas law distinguishes between marijuana (cannabis with higher THC levels) and hemp-derived products based on THC concentration and intended use. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the psychoactive compound in cannabis that produces a "high." Under federal law, cannabis remains a Schedule I controlled substance, but Texas has carved out exceptions for medical and hemp products.



What Is Illegal in Texas

- **Recreational Use and Possession:** Recreational marijuana is illegal statewide. Possession of any amount of marijuana (defined as cannabis with more than 0.3% delta-9 THC by dry weight) is a criminal offense under the Texas Controlled Substances Act (Health and Safety Code Chapter 481). Penalties vary by quantity:
 - Up to 2 ounces: Class B misdemeanor, up to 180 days in jail and \$2,000 fine.
 - 2-4 ounces: Class A misdemeanor, up to 1 year in jail and \$4,000 fine.
 - More than 4 ounces: Felony charges, with increasing severity.
- **Delivery, Sale, or Cultivation:** Selling, distributing, or growing marijuana without authorization is illegal and carries harsher penalties, including felonies.
- **Smokeable Hemp Products:** As of early 2026, new rules from the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) have effectively banned or severely restricted smokeable hemp products, including THCA flower and extracts. This includes redefining THC measurement to close loopholes, making many previously available products illegal.
- **Hemp-Derived THC Products Exceeding Limits:** Products like delta-8 or delta-9 THC edibles, vapes, or tinctures must contain no more than 0.3% delta-9 THC. Anything exceeding this, or sold without proper regulation, is treated as illegal marijuana.
- **Use in Public or While Driving:** Even if obtained legally (e.g., medical), using marijuana in public or operating a vehicle under its influence is prohibited, similar to alcohol DUI laws.

Recent attempts to ban all consumable THC products outside the medical program were vetoed by Governor Greg Abbott in 2025, but an executive order directed state agencies to regulate these products strictly. Efforts to fully legalize recreational use, including a non-binding Democratic primary ballot measure approved by 80% of voters on March 5, 2026, have not changed the law. This measure signals public support but is advisory only; lawmakers may address regulation in the 2027 session.

What Is Legal in Texas

- **Medical Cannabis Program (Texas Compassionate Use Program - TCUP):** Texas expanded its medical cannabis program in 2025 via HB 46, making it the 40th state with a comprehensive (though restrictive) medical cannabis law. Qualifying patients with conditions like epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, autism, cancer, PTSD, or chronic pain can access low-THC cannabis (up to 1% THC by dry weight, increased from 0.5%). Products include oils, tinctures, edibles, and lozenges—but not smokeable forms. Patients must obtain a prescription from a registered physician and register with the state. As of 2026, the program serves over 100,000 patients but remains limited to low-THC options that typically do not produce a strong high.



- **Hemp-Derived Products:** Under the 2018 federal Farm Bill and Texas House Bill 1325 (2019), hemp products with 0.3% or less delta-9 THC are legal. This includes CBD oils, gummies, and topicals sold at retail stores. However, new TABC rules effective January 2026 require:
 - Buyers and sellers to be 21 or older.
 - Age verification for all purchases.
 - Child-resistant packaging and warning labels. These products are regulated but not banned, provided they comply with THC limits and are not smokeable.

Nuances: Low-Dose THC, Intoxication, and Legality

A key nuance is whether one can consume a small amount of THC without getting "high" and still comply with the law. The answer depends on the source and concentration:

- **Low-THC Products That Do Not Intoxicate:** Legal hemp-derived CBD or low-THC medical cannabis may contain trace THC but are formulated not to produce euphoria. For example, ingesting a CBD gummy with 0.3% THC is legal if it meets hemp standards and does not exceed limits. These products are often used for pain relief or anxiety without impairment.
- **Illegal Even If Non-Intoxicating:** If the THC comes from marijuana (over 0.3% delta-9 THC), even a tiny amount—such as puffing a joint or ingesting a micro-dose—is illegal, regardless of whether it causes a high. Texas law criminalizes possession based on the substance's classification, not its effect on the user. For instance:
 - Puffing a joint containing marijuana is possession and use of a controlled substance, punishable as a misdemeanor.
 - Ingesting any portion of THC from an illegal source (e.g., unregulated edibles or black-market products) is illegal, even if the dose is so small it has no psychoactive effect.

This distinction highlights a "zero-tolerance" approach for non-hemp cannabis: Legality hinges on THC levels and authorization, not personal experience. Church members should err on the side of caution, verifying products through licensed dispensaries or reputable hemp retailers.

Additionally, while some hemp products like delta-8 can produce mild intoxication within legal limits, their sale is now age-restricted and heavily regulated. Consuming them in ways that mimic illegal use (e.g., smoking) may violate new bans.



Biblical Principles for Church Members

Scripture provides clear guidance on this issue:

- **Submission to Authority:** "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God" (Romans 13:1). Even if we disagree with laws, obedience honors God unless they directly contradict His commands (Acts 5:29). Marijuana laws do not force sin; thus, we submit.
- **Sobriety and Self-Control:** The Bible warns against intoxication: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). This extends to any substance that impairs judgment, as we are to "be sober-minded" (1 Peter 5:8).
- **Body as Temple:** "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit... Therefore honor God with your bodies" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Using substances that could harm health or lead to addiction dishonors this stewardship.
- **Love for Neighbor:** Avoiding illegal activities prevents stumbling others (Romans 14:13) and models Christ-like citizenship.

While medical use may be permissible under law and conscience (e.g., for pain relief akin to other medications), recreational use—even if legalized elsewhere—conflicts with these principles.

Elder Guidance for Church Members

1. **Abstain from Illegal Use:** Refrain from any recreational marijuana, including possession, puffing joints, or ingesting unregulated THC. If considering medical options, consult a physician and ensure compliance with TCUP.
2. **Seek Legal Alternatives:** For wellness needs, explore non-THC options like pure CBD (0% THC) or other natural remedies. Discuss with church leaders or counselors for support.
3. **Educate and Advocate Biblically:** Engage in civic processes (e.g., voting) to influence laws, but always prioritize obedience. Support expungement for past offenses as an act of mercy (Micah 6:8).
4. **Community Accountability:** If struggling with substance use, seek help through the church or professional counseling, remembering God's grace (2 Corinthians 12:9).



Conclusion

In Texas, marijuana laws emphasize restriction, with recreational use illegal and medical/hemp options tightly controlled. Nuances around low-dose THC underscore that legality is not subjective—small, non-intoxicating amounts from illegal sources remain prohibited. As a church, we urge members to obey the law fully, viewing it as an opportunity to glorify God through disciplined, sober living. Let us pray for wisdom in navigating these issues and for lawmakers to govern justly. For further discussion, contact church leadership.