

A COMMITMENT TO TOTAL ABSTINENCE

PROV. 20:1

September 14, 1997

INTRODUCTION: Why is there so much in the news about alcohol? Because we in America have a big problem. About 40% of adult Americans have direct family experiences with alcohol abuse and alcoholism. Marvin Bloch, former chairman of the American Medical Association Committee on Alcoholism, said, "Ours is a drug-oriented society, largely because of alcohol. Because of its social acceptance, alcohol is rarely thought of as a drug. But a drug it is, in scientific fact."

Advertisers will spend over \$500,000,000. to tell us to drink this year. Seventy-five percent of all high schoolers drink, and 50% of all junior highers. Four hundred and fifty thousand teenagers are alcoholics in the U.S.A.

An estimated 17, 274 persons died in alcohol-related traffic crashes; an average of one every 32 minutes. Forty-one percent of all traffic related deaths in 1996 were related to alcohol. Another 1,058,990 were injured in alcohol-related crashes; one person every 30 seconds. Every weekday night, from 10 P.M. to 1 A.M., one in 13 drivers is drunk. Between 1 A.M. & 6 A.M. on weekends, one in seven is drunk. About 2 in every 5 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives. From 1982-1995, 300,274 people died in alcohol related crashes. In the past ten years, 4 times as many Americans died in drunk driving crashes as were killed in the Vietnam War.

Alcohol is a **downer** that reduces activity in the central nervous system. The alcohol intoxicated person exhibits loose muscle tones and loss of fine motor coordination. It decreases heart rate and lowers blood pressure. What our nation considers drunk (or 0.07) causes slight impairment of balance, speech, vision, reaction time, and hearing. Judgment and self-control are reduced, and caution, reason, and memory are impaired.

John 10:10, "The thief cometh not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The younger an individual starts drinking, and the greater the intensity and frequency of alcohol consumption, the greater the risk of using other drugs.

Youth who drink alcohol are 7 1/2 times more likely to use an illicit drug, and 50 times more likely to use cocaine than young people who never drink alcohol.

I. DRINKING ALCOHOL AND SPIRITUALITY.

Prov. 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

"brawler" - raging

“led astray” - deceived

Billy Sunday called liquor **“the Devil in liquid form”**

Compare:

Wine is a deceiver - devil is a deceiver

“bites like a serpent” - devil is the old serpent

Prov. 23:32, “At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.”

Many people believe, for whatever reason, that the answer to drinking alcoholic beverages is moderation. I personally believe that moderation is not the solution but the cause of alcohol abuse.

I am going to assume that all “Christians” believe that drunkenness is a sin, however, many are unconvinced that alcohol used with moderation, simply drinking socially, recreationally is hardly a problem, much less a sin.

Church-goers may not be any more sympathetic to this message than the general population. One half of all ordained ministers drink, and 1/3 of all active church-goers drink. Forty-eight percent of Southern Baptists drink, and an estimated 16% of those who do drink become alcoholics (a higher % than virtually any other religious group in the nation). One-fourth of all active Southern Baptist church teenagers have used alcohol in the past 12 months.

According to **Prov. 20:1**, wine/strong drink has an inherent tendency to **“lead one astray.”** From what? The path of wisdom. The idea is that wine mocks the one who drinks it, and strong drink makes him aggressive.

The over-consumption of alcohol makes a mockery (even a monkey) out of me.

In other words, as alcohol tends to lead me astray from the path of wisdom, so the path of wisdom will lead one away from alcohol.

Some say that alcohol is a cultural thing. Take the French, for instance. They may say, “We can handle our liquor. We are not like those abusive Americans.” Their attitude is that they grew up with wine, no skidrows in Paris. They drink wine in place of water.

MYTH: In France, alcohol is the number one health menace.

- average Frenchman drinks more than any other citizen in the world (65 gallons of wine a year)

- 23,000 Frenchmen die every year from liver disease (cirrhosis of the liver)

- 10 times that of the U.S.

- 1/3 of all traffic accidents are alcohol-related.

MAJOR ARGUMENT:

It is not wrong to drink wine, a beer, or a mixed drink. The Bible does not condemn it, and by the way, did not Jesus turn water into wine?

One “minister” a few years ago applied for license for beer/wine for their church. His argument: “Jesus was the first bartender.”

Let’s look at the **words** for wine and strong drink -

Strong drink - (Shay-kahr) pronounced she-care; refers to a drink that has been distilled from fermented dates, grain, apples, and honeycomb. Universally condemned everywhere it is used. Only time it is recommended is a sort of narcotic in **Prov. 31:6**, **“Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that are of heavy hearts.”** (time of extreme sorrow)

In **Prov. 31:4-5**, tells us that kings and national leaders are to leave wine and strong drink alone.

Prov. 31:4-5, **“It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink, lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the justice of any of the afflicted.”**

Again, in **Isaiah 28:7-8**, leaders are rebuked.

“But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way. The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink; they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink, they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.”

EXAMPLE: Washington had 3 parties: Republican, Democratic, and Cocktail

The word for wine in **Prov. 20:1** is the Hebrew word Yayin (Ya-yin) - may be intoxicating; may not be; generic word. Not-intoxicating here in **Isaiah 16:10**,

“And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting; the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease.”

This word is used 141 times in the Old Testament.

It is probably intoxicating in **Prov. 20:1**.

How can you know? Attempt to know the content. For instance, if Jim gave me a ride home and asked if I wanted to stop and get a drink. I think he is talking about a coke, orange juice, etc.

In **Isaiah 65:8**, the word Tirosh (Ti-rosh) is used. Refers to grape juice right out of the grape.

Isaiah 65:8, “Thus saith the Lord: As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them all.”

In **Prov. 23:29-31**, it is fermented. When it is in a certain condition, leave it alone.

Prov. 23:29-31, “Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.”

“woe and sorrow” 29: Emotional problems

“contentions and complaints” 29: Social problems

“wounds and redness of eyes” 29: Physical problems

“see strange things and utter perverse things” 33

New Testament word is Ionos; generic word

John 2:1-11 says nothing about man being drunk

Bill Graham Association was questioned concerning Jesus and wine.

“It was not heavy wine which was known to be intoxicating, but fermented wine.”

Yale University’s Study on alcoholism - it was revealed that the normal process of fermentation of “fruit of the vine” does not produce a drink with sufficient alcohol content to bring on drunkenness. There must be a mechanical interference with the normal process, such as the addition of pure alcohol or other mechanical processes of distillation or it will not produce the kind of wine that is common today.

The Hebrews would have referred to our wine and beer as **“strong drink”**.

Ladies and gentlemen, Jesus is not in the liquor business.

NOTE: We are not dealing with “apples for apples”

A New Testament scholar named Robert Stein researched the wine drinking of the ancient world in both Jewish sources and the Bible. He made a fascinating discovery about the wine of Bible days, as compared to the wine of today.

The wine of biblical times was not like the wine that exists today. Stein's research uncovered the fact that wine in the days of Jesus, for example, was actually wine mixed with water. On average, it would be three or four parts of water mixed with one part of wine. In other words, what the Bible calls wine was basically purified water.

He points out that water in the ancient world was unsafe to drink. It could be made safe by boiling it, filtering it, or the safest way was to put wine into the water to kill the germs.

The problem today is the alcohol content. By the way, concentrated alcohol was only known in the Middle Ages when the Arabs invented distillation, so what is now called liquor or strong drink, and the 20% fortified wines of today were unknown in Bible times.

Dr. Stein noted that one would have to drink 22 glasses of wine in order to consume the alcohol in only 2 martinis today.

In summary, though fermented wine was drunk in Bible times, and though the Bible approves of wine-drinking, one needs to remember that the alcohol content of ancient wine was much less than that of wine today. What is consumed today is not the wine of the New Testament. To equate the two would be like comparing apples and oranges. Dr. Norman Geisler concluded, "Therefore, Christians ought not drink wine, beer, or other alcoholic beverages, for they are actually 'strong drink,' and are forbidden in Scripture. Even ancient pagans did not drink what some Christians drink today."

LET'S DEAL WITH WINE AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus never called the drink wine.

He called it "fruit of the vine" or "cup" **Matt. 26:29, Mark 14:25, Luke 22:18**

Bread - unleavened bread; leaven bread for fermented; it had foreign substance in it working, not pure.

Wine - is rotten grape juice. I don't believe Jesus would have used something with foreign substance to equate with His precious blood.

II. DRINKING ALCOHOL AND SOCIETY.

Shakespeare said, "Oh God that men would put an enemy in their mouth to steal away their brains."

SPEAKS OF MY AREA OF INFLUENCE.

You say, "I will never abuse alcohol. I will never become an alcoholic.

One out of every ten that start to drink will become an alcoholic.

One man put it this way: **Wine is a deceiver**

- We drank for happiness and became unhappy
- We drank for joy and became miserable
- We drank for sociability and became argumentative
- We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious
- We drank for friendship and became enemies
- We drank for sleep and became awakened without rest
- We drank for strength and felt weak
- We drank for relaxation and got the shakes
- We drank for bravery and became afraid
- We drank for confidence and became doubtful
- We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech
- We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like we had been to hell
- We drank to forget and were forever haunted
- We drank for freedom and became a slave
- We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply
- We drank to cope with life and invited death.

STATISTICS:

- 18 million alcoholics in America
- 80,000 deaths per year related to alcohol
- 55% of all traffic accidents related to alcohol

- #3 health problem in our country, next only to cancer and heart disease

- 80% crime related to alcohol

-50% of murders related to alcohol

Someone says, "But, it is good for business. It will guarantee lots of revenue. For every dollar in revenue, it costs 8 dollars to clean up.

ILL. Donkey and Flea

Let me suck 8 quarts of blood and I will give you back one for every 8. Sounds like a good deal to me.

Only a donkey would think this way!

NOTE: Fewer than one-in-three parents of tenth graders are giving their children a clear "no use" message about alcohol.

When parents "bargain" with youth; for example, allowing them to drink as long as they promise to not drive, the youth are more likely to drive after drinking, or be in a vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking.

When school-age youth are allowed to drink alcohol at home, they are not only more likely to use alcohol and other drugs outside the home, but they are more likely to develop serious behavioral and health problems related to their use of alcohol and other drugs.

One-in-three college students now drink primarily to get drunk.

Each year, students spend \$5.5 billion on alcohol - more than they spend on soft drinks, tea, milk, juice, coffee, or books combined. On a typical campus, per capita students' spending for alcohol is \$446. per student. This far exceeds the per capita budget of the college library.

Sixty percent of college women diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease were drunk at the time of infection.

Nearly 1/3 of college students surveyed said they wished alcohol was not available at campus events, and nearly 90% wished other drugs would disappear from campuses.

Approximately 240,000 to 360,000 of the nations' 12 million current undergraduates will ultimately die from alcohol-related causes; more than the number that will get MA's and PhD's combined.

Alcohol destroys our **homes**, our **lives**, and our **nation**, and ultimately our **souls**.

As God allows me to personally be Salt and Light, I commit to never drink alcohol. Your children will not be encouraged where I pastor. Moderation or Recreation is not my testimony, but **TOTAL ABSTINENCE.**

III. DRINKING ALCOHOL AND SANCTITY.

SPEAKS OF MY AREA OF WITNESS

I am hard-pressed to think of any way that casual, social drinking can enhance your witness, much less bring people to Christ.

Alcohol grips; it is an addictive drug. Jesus Christ came to set me at **liberty** not **bondage.**

Abraham Lincoln said, "Alcohol has many defenders, but no defense."

HIS RESOLUTION:

Whereas, the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage is productive of pauperism, degradation, and crime; and believing it is our duty to discourage that which produces more evil than good, we therefore pledge ourselves to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage."

QUESTION: Not, "Will it hurt me?" but "Will it cause me to hurt someone else?" "Would someone else stumble by my influence or witness?"

Romans 14:21, "It is good neither to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor anything by which thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

CONCLUSION: Alcohol is just one of the many substitutes for the joy of Christ.

Eph. 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit."

No need for the bottle if you know the Lord Jesus Christ. You can have a good time and remember it the next day.

Hear My Heart: This message is not to condemn the drinker, but to warn you and encourage you to Christ.

Prov. 10:22, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."