

# OVERCOMING WORLDLINESS: ALCOHOL

Is it sinful to drink alcohol for social  
or recreational purposes?

- Facts about alcohol
- But doesn't the Bible praise wine in some places?
- What does the wisdom of God teach?
- What does the New Testament teach?
- Some objections considered

## Some facts about alcohol:

- “A central nervous system depressant and an anesthetic” (Clinlab website)
- Classified as a drug
- Is a known human carcinogen (Report on Carcinogens, Fourteenth Edition, National Toxicology Program, Department of Health & Human Services)
- “Associated with a variety of short and long term health risks, including motor vehicle crashes, violence, sexual risk behaviors, high blood pressure, and various cancers” (CDC)
  - “The risk of these harms increases with the amount of alcohol you drink. For some conditions, like some cancers, the risk increases even at very low levels of alcohol consumption (less than 1 drink)” (CDC)
  - “For some conditions, such as certain types of cancer (e.g. breast cancer) and liver disease, there is no known safe level of alcohol consumption” (CDC)
- “Impairment begins with your first drink!” (National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information)
- “Once swallowed, alcohol is rapidly absorbed into the blood and moves to all parts of the body, including to an unborn baby. Alcohol in the blood quickly moves to the brain. Effects can be felt within five to ten minutes after drinking” (Health Promotion Agency of New Zealand)

## Some facts about alcohol:

- From the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism:
  - “Alcohol interferes with the brain’s communication pathways and can affect the way the brain looks and works. Alcohol makes it harder for the brain areas controlling balance, memory, speech, and judgment to do their jobs, resulting in a higher likelihood of injuries and other negative outcomes. Long-term, heavy drinking causes alterations in the neurons, such as reductions in their size”
- From CDC:
  - “There are some people who should not drink any alcohol, including those who are:....
    - Younger than age 21.
    - Pregnant or may be pregnant.
    - Driving, planning to drive, or participating in other activities requiring skill, coordination, and **alertness**.”
      - *“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”* (1 Peter 5:8)

## But doesn't the Bible praise wine in some places?

Ecclesiastes 9:7

“Go, eat your bread with joy,  
And drink your wine with a merry heart”

- “Wine” in the Bible is used of both unfermented and fermented drink. For example:
  - Isaiah 65:8; Deuteronomy 32:14; Genesis 49:11; Lamentations 2:12
  - Genesis 9:21-24; Ephesians 5:18
  - Must distinguish by context!
- In the New Testament, the main word for wine is “oinos.” It can be fermented or unfermented; context must determine! (“gleukos” used once, Acts 2 – “sweet wine”)
  - John 2
  - 1 Peter 4:3

- **There is a wine in the Bible associated with**

- Irreverence & profaning religion (Isaiah 28:7)
- Intoxication and drunkenness (Hab. 2:15; Ephesians 5:18)
- Arousal of unrighteous conduct and leading astray (Prov. 20:1)
- Woe and misery (Prov. 23:29)
- Perversion of judgment (Prov. 31:5)
- Enslaving of the heart (Hosea 4:11)

- **But there is also a wine in the Bible associated with**

- Blessing from God (Deut. 7:13)
- The first-fruits offered to the Lord (Num. 18:12)
- Gladness of heart (Eccl. 9:7)

**One is a curse and the other is a blessing!**

# What does the wisdom of God teach?

- Proverbs 20:1
- Proverbs 23:29-35
- Compare to
  - Proverbs 5:7-14
- Proverbs 4:14-15
- Proverbs 19:29
- Ephesians 5:15-17

**The wisdom of God says stay away from intoxicating drink!**

# The New Testament teaches us of the error of drinking intoxicating drink

- *Drunkenness is a process*
  - Ephesians 5:18
  - Methusko
    - “...to make drunk, or grow drunk (an inceptive verb, marking the process of the state expressed in methuo), to become intoxicated (Vines)
    - ...begin to be softened (Young’s).
    - ...to grow drunk (marking the beginning of methuo) (Bullinger)
    - ...causal of methuo, to make drunk with wine, to intoxicate...to get drunk... (Liddell and Scott)
  - The process of drunkenness starts when the drinking starts. Do not grow drunk – don’t start the process!



# The New Testament teaches us of the error of drinking intoxicating drink

- *Drinking violates the command to be sober*
  - 1 Peter 1:13-16
    - Sober = free from the influence of intoxicants (Vines); to be sober, abstain from wine (Strong)
  - 1 Peter 4:7
  - 1 Peter 5:8
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:5-7
  - Proverbs 31:4-7
  - Leviticus 10:9-10

# The New Testament teaches us of the error of drinking intoxicating drink

- *Drinking destroys self-control*
  - Galatians 5:23
  - 2 Peter 1:6
  - Proverbs 23:29-35
  - Hosea 3:11

# The New Testament teaches us of the error of drinking intoxicating drink

- *Drinking provides for the fulfilling of the lusts of the flesh*
  - 1 Peter 2:11-12
  - 1 John 2:16
  - Romans 12:13-14

# The New Testament teaches us of the error of drinking intoxicating drink

- *The drinker willfully harms his body*
  - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

# The New Testament teaches us of the error of drinking intoxicating drink

- *Drinking damages and destroys influence*
  - Matthew 5:13-16
  - Philippians 2:15
  - Matthew 18:6-7

## The New Testament teaches us of the error of drinking intoxicating drink

- *Drinking is contrary to the new man in Christ*
  - 1 Peter 3:10-11
  - 1 Peter 4:1-3
    - Drunkenness
    - Revellings
    - Drinking parties, banquetings
      - A drinking, a carousing (Thayer)
      - The drinking bout, the banquet, the symposium, not of necessity excessive (Trench)
      - Verb form of the word in Matthew 10:42 translated “to give to drink” (a cup of cold water)
  - **The Bible condemns more than drunkenness!**

# Objections Considered

- Someone may say, “History tells us that Jews drank intoxicating wines in Old Testament days....It was common in the days of Jesus for Jews to drink intoxicating wines....It was common in Roman days.”
  - What men do or don't do does not define the law of God!
  - The question must be: What does the law of God say?
    - Colossians 2:6-8,19; 3:17

## Objections Considered

- Someone may say, “Jesus turned water into wine”
  - Yes He did. John 2:1-11.
  - But some of the assumptions being made by this objector are:
    - The wine Jesus created was fermented
    - The wine already drunk was fermented
    - It was not possible to preserve wine from fermentation (the wedding was 6 months after harvest)
    - The good wine Jesus created means it gave the best “buzz”
    - The wedding party having well drunk means they were intoxicated



## Objections Considered

- “Jesus turned water into wine”
- The truth is
  - Wine could be and was preserved without fermentation in that day
  - Good wine is the freshest, not intoxicating
  - Well drunk can refer to being full
  - If Jesus created 120-180 gallons of fermented wine for people who were already buzzed, He violated divine wisdom and encouraged the drinking of intoxicants and drunkenness; instead of exposing sin, He had fellowship with it.
    - That would mean He sinned!

# Objections Considered

- Someone says, “Timothy was told to drink a little wine”

1 Timothy 5:23

“No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities.”

- Timothy was a teetotaler
- Timothy was told to
  - “use” a little (“to make use of a thing”)
  - “for” (indicating purpose and function)
  - Medicinal use, not social or recreational use
- Fermented not demanded by context

## Objections Considered

- Someone says, “Wine is a matter of liberty in Romans 14:21”
- The word for “wine” can mean fermented or unfermented. Context must determine.
- This objection is assuming that which must be proven – that the wine in the context is fermented.
- Let’s see if wine that is intoxicating holds up to the test of Romans 14.
  - Can you take your children and your brethren into a liquor store and show them that the things in there are:
    - To the Lord? (v.6)
    - Clean? (v.14)
    - Good? (v.16)
    - Pure? (v.18)
  - Intoxicants do not fit in Romans 14

# Is it sinful to drink alcohol for social or recreational purposes?

- Yes.
- It violates the command to be sober
- It is contrary to the fruit of the Spirit – self-control
- It makes provision to fulfil the lust of the flesh
- It is a willful harming of the temple of the Holy Spirit
- It damages and destroys influence
- It is contrary to the new man in Christ