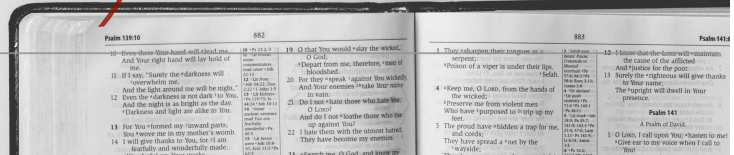


WORDS *of* TRUTH

"Alcohol"



Youth Article

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Ladies Article

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Theme Articles

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Spiritual Poison

There is no verse of scripture specifically forbidding the use of alcohol in any form, but there are warnings as to the physical and emotional effects of abusing it (Pro. 20:1; 23:29-35). The purpose in God's giving us these warnings is to provide us with enough information to make a choice which glorifies Him regarding the use of alcohol.

Alcohol is a drug. It is a depressant. Dependence develops through prolonged use, and dependence on a substance in order to make it through a day is a form of idolatry. There is no good to come from recreational use of beverage alcohol.

This issue of *Words of Truth* is not meant to convince you that alcohol is sinful in all its forms, but to help you make wise choices regarding its use. May we intentionally glorify God with everything we do, say, think, and take into our bodies.

-DD

Youthful Perspectives

Use Your Brain

Joe Manasco

There are certain issues in the church sphere that carry an aura of importance. They are veiled in intense, impassioned teaching that often (unfortunately) evolves into heated arguments. If someone were to compile a list of those hot-button church issues, you might find this near the top: ALCOHOL.

It isn't at the top because it starts with "a."

Even bold, set-apart letters don't convey the amount of controversy that surrounds alcohol in the church. As a young person, I know that this topic is especially relevant to my age group, and I've heard many outstanding lessons on why drinking is wrong. What I haven't heard enough is how alcohol actually affects young people like myself.

Typically, discussions on the topic include statistics, horrible stories of tragedy, and a collection of verses condemning drunkenness, in order to discourage the consumption of alcohol. While I agree with and see value in certain aspects of these approaches, I hope to address the issue from a different angle than those mentioned above. Discouraging negative behavior is beneficial and necessary; likewise, encouraging abstinence from or avoidance of negative behavior is a means to the same end that we all hopefully are seeking—growth in Christlikeness.

It's a common temptation to approach Scripture with the hopes of finding the answer to an often-asked question: "Can I ___?" We search passage after passage, desperately hoping to find either a permission slip from God or a passage that proves our opposing viewpoint correct. Those familiar with the Bible would agree that Scripture clearly condemns drunkenness, thus more specific questions are asked, such as: "Can I drink alcohol at all?" "If so, in what context?" "In those contexts, how much is too much?" As long as they are not asked in a loaded manner intended to abuse God's word, these questions are valid, and it is not sinful to look for what answers Scripture may give. However, I want to humbly consider a different question that I hope can provide, at the very least, food for thought.

Do you have a possession that means the world to you? A thing so special, that maybe there's a special place for it in your home. Maybe the sentimental value of that thing makes you happy every time you see it, or the tradition that it represents is so beautifully woven into your life that you treasure it dearly. Or maybe this item was so useful to you, you can't remember what life was like before you got it. Perhaps the thing itself isn't special at all, but the person who gave it to you holds a special place in your heart. How do you treat that thing?

Are you careful with it? Do you let others see it or touch it? Do you share it with people and tell them the story of its meaning? Now, would you ever consider taking that special item and doing something to intentionally damage it or make it less special? Obviously, the answer is no. Why not? The answer is clear: doing so would totally contradict the entire purpose of having the special possession! We all understand that important things deserve honor, respect and gratitude.

Do we realize that the God of the heavens and earth, Creator of all things gave mankind a possession like nothing anywhere else in creation? In all His power He gave us a remarkable brain, ruled by a conscience capable of discerning and loving. Ask yourself: How do you treat it?

In 2 Timothy 4:5, Paul encourages young Timothy to "always be sober-minded." While it is unlikely that Paul is specifically referring to the idea of abstaining from drunkenness, it's obvious that Paul thought a sober mind was important enough to mention. Paul was well aware that in order for Timothy to lead and serve at his maximum potential, his most valuable asset—his mind—needed to be functioning at its best as well.

The same applies to us today, with big or small decisions, at all times. We need our minds to be clear, ready for whatever life throws at us. Isn't it true, then, that willfully choosing to impair such an incredible gift is not only unwise, but also ungrateful to the God who gifted us with it?

So, what does this all mean? If you couldn't already tell, this article doesn't draw any distinct doctrinal lines in the sand. You won't find here a yes or no answer to the question of: "Can I drink alcohol?" Personally, I believe that's the wrong question altogether. If you ask me, the right question is "*Should* I drink alcohol?"

To that, I would say no. No, because a dependence on alcohol replaces our dependence on God, leaving us with temporary fulfillment and physical damage. No, because alcohol could rip apart our future families. No, because alcohol has negative physical effects on our bodies. No, because alcoholism could ruin our careers and relationships. No, because alcohol robs us of the sober mind that God commands we have. Those are merely some of the potential effects; must we really say more?

Now you might be asking, what if I don't drink enough to impair myself? Is God upset if I have a glass of wine? That's not for me to say. My best answer to that question are a couple of return questions. Are you comfortable with the potential consequences of the drinks following the first sip? In other words, will the first taste be worth all that could possibly go wrong down the road? If that seems a bit dramatic, ask yourself this: what does it say about my relationship with God when I'm more concerned with what He'll allow me to do rather than who he desires I be? I only ask that you put a sober, God-given mind to use and think on these things. God loves those who love him fully. May we all use our greatest tool to do just that.

There's a Snake in the House

Judy King Dixon

If you knew there was a snake in your house, would you get rid of it? Seek help? God's word calls strong drink (aka, alcohol) a serpent, an adder. (Pro. 20:1). An adder is the fastest-striking venomous snake, whose bite can paralyze and kill within six hours. God calls Satan a serpent many times within His Word. In the Garden of Eden, Satan, that serpent, caused spiritual death for Adam and Eve. God also calls wine a "mocker" and one is unwise if deceived by it (Pro. 20:1). So, let's examine the facts.

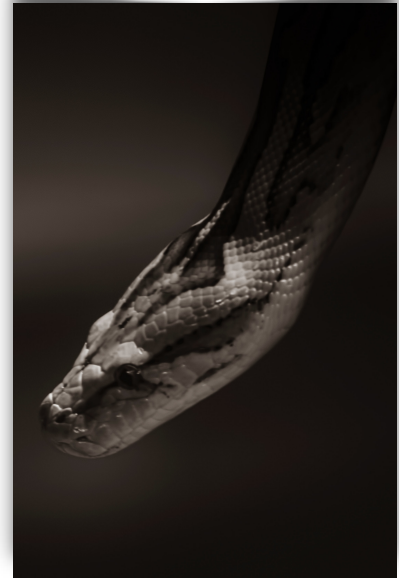
According to Advanced Recovery Systems, alcoholism is called a family disease because it is an addiction that affects the entire family. Even though the alcohol addict suffers the physical problems, the entire family is victim of this abuse. Relationships are built on trust. Trust is destroyed when alcoholics blame others for their problem and lie about the quantity of their drinking. Alcohol addiction can cause parents to be impulsive and unstable. Parenting skills diminish as alcoholism progresses. One of the mixed signals that these parents send their children is the acceptance of alcohol use. Children of alcoholic parents tend to have more academic problems, and may grow up to have problems with relationships or become alcoholics themselves.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that alcohol is our greatest health problem. It causes over half of all fatal traffic accidents, costs over \$249 billion per year, and increases healthcare costs by 100% or \$171 billion per year. Most consumers of alcohol spend \$300 to \$1,000 per month on their habit. The biggest hit to a family's budget is when alcohol causes job loss. The Institute for Alcohol Abuse (NIAA) states that one-half of divorces are related to alcohol. Domestic violence (verbal and physical) is directly linked to alcohol, increasing by four times when alcohol is involved. According to the World Health Organization, alcohol increases the frequency and severity of domestic violence. The economic effects on the family are severe; the social isolation while trying to conceal the problem can be devastating. It is the number one cause of teenage deaths in the U.S.

Alcoholic drink is ethanol. Yes, the gas you put in your car; the varnish with which furniture is refinished. It remains in the system for at least 24 hours and can be detected up to 3 months. Pregnant women should never drink alcohol. It can cause Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, resulting in physical and mental birth defects. Even one drink can reduce the brain's communication functioning, loss of control, and lack of judgment. It can damage the heart, the liver, and the pancreas. It can cause cardiovascular illness (high blood pressure), pneumonia, cirrhosis, and several forms of cancer.

God's Word is explicit in its condemnation of alcohol. In Leviticus 10:9, strong drink was forbidden, as well as in Ephesians 5:8 and Romans 14:21. Ezekiel 44:21 says that a priest cannot drink wine. First Peter 2:9 states that we as Christians are a royal priesthood. Look at Noah in Genesis 9. Intoxication caused the banishment of one of his sons. In Genesis 19, we see incest resulting from alcohol. In 2 Samuel 13, we see the murder of one of David's sons resulting from drunkenness. In Esther, we see the alcohol-related lewd behavior of King Ahasuerus toward his wife Vashti. Children do suffer for the sins of the parents. Look at the 40 years of wilderness wanderings caused by disobedience. King David's family was forbidden to enter the temple for ten generations because of Judah's sin with Tamar. No man can be an elder nor a deacon if he consumes alcohol.

The most ludicrous slogan is "drink responsibly." What an oxymoron! Truly, the effects of alcohol are great and long-lasting. Are you willing to sacrifice your marriage, your children, your soul for a drink of gasoline? That sounds harsh, but it is true. Don't seek the world's acceptance of alcohol. Remember who the prince of this world is (John 14:30). Seek God's acceptance of our lives by abstaining. Keep that snake out of your house.



Words For Wine

John Allan

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 KJV

The word “alcohol” is not in our most reliable English translations of the Bible. Yet, God’s word is not silent on the topic. There are two main English terms in scripture connected to alcohol: wine and strong drink. Deeper study reveals nearly two dozen words in the Bible associated with those two terms. Those words range from discussing the winepress—where juice is squished out of the grapes—to various products of the grape itself. “Strong drink” in the Bible generally has reference to an intoxicating beverage, but the same Hebrew word (*shekar*) has a broader meaning in extra-biblical sources, and its meaning is disputed in at least one Bible passage (Deu. 14:26).

We cannot exhaust all that could be said about the twenty-three words that factor into this discussion. Instead, we will synthesize the information to address two common misconceptions.

Misconception #1: “Wine” must mean Alcohol.

First, let us understand that “wine” in the Bible is not always a reference to an intoxicating beverage.

In the Old Testament, the most common word for wine is *yayin*. It often refers to an intoxicating beverage, but not always. For example, in Numbers 6:4 it refers to the grapevine. “All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin” (NKJV). In Isaiah 16:10 the same word refers to the juice produced from trampling grapes in the winepress. Undoubtedly, this juice would not be intoxicating. It would have to be collected and allowed to ferment before it would be intoxicating.

Wayne Jackson identified four different meanings for *yayin* in the Old Testament. He summarized by writing: “*Yayin* is thus a **general term** referring to a variety of products from the grape vine” (“What About Social Drinking and the Old Testament,” emphasis his).

Another word for “wine” in the Old Testament—*acyc*—refers to new wine, sweet wine, grape juice (e.g.: Joel 1:5; 3:18). Yet another Old Testament word refers to “the pure blood of the grape” (Deu. 32:14).

In summary, a careful look at the thirteen Hebrew and Aramaic words connected with wine shows we would be wrong to conclude that “wine” in the Old Testament automatically refers to an intoxicating drink.

The word transliterated *oinos* is the one used most often for “wine” in the New Testament. Like *yayin* in the Old Testament, *oinos* does not always have reference to intoxicating wine in the New Testament. In Revelation 19:15 the word is rendered “winepress.” *Oinos* is sometimes described as “new.” This new wine appears to be reference to grape juice. It would not be sensible to put unfermented wine (grape juice) into old wineskins. Those skins had already been stretched to their limit from grape juice that had fermented inside, and would burst if fresh grape juice were inserted and put through the fermentation process.

One might contend that since Jesus referenced wineskins, it must have been common (and therefore acceptable) for individuals to drink fermented grape juice. It might help to keep two things in mind: First,

evidence supports the ancient practice of mixing fermented wine with water. Doing so would dilute the wine, thus requiring larger quantities to be consumed before intoxication would occur. Second, Jesus can refer to a behavior without condoning it. When Jesus told of the “Good Samaritan” (Luke 10:30), he did not condone a man being stripped, beaten, and left half dead. Nor did he condone the priest and the Levite neglecting to help.

“Wine” is a generic word. Its mere appearance in scripture does not mean it refers to an intoxicating beverage. Sometimes it obviously does. Sometimes it obviously does not. Sometimes it is difficult to tell. In any case, we must consider the context. Let us remember “context determines meaning” no matter what word we are dealing with.

Misconception #2: If they drank back then, we can drink today.

Yes, there are examples of people who consumed fermented beverages in the Bible. There were men of whom scripture elsewhere speaks favorably who clearly drank intoxicating wine. Noah—yes, that Noah!—and Lot are obvious examples. At least two things should be kept in mind when trying to reason from “people consumed fermented beverages back then” to “I can participate in social drinking today.”

First, it should give us pause when we recognize that even a man the caliber of Noah was overcome by intoxicating wine and guilty of drunkenness (Gen. 9:21). If we think we can succeed in drinking without ever becoming intoxicated—when so many others have failed—we are deluding ourselves.

Second, scripture warns us against intoxicating beverages in both the Old and New Testaments. Proverbs 20:1 “Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise” (NKJV). Romans 13:13, “Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying” (NKJV). It is not enough to prove people in the Bible sometimes consumed fermented wine, especially when the New Testament instructs Christians to be sober and vigilant (1 Pet. 5:8, etc.)

Some suggest that if a Christian drinks alcohol slowly enough to avoid intoxication then it is fine to drink. This argument sounds good in theory, but crumbles in practice. People who participate in social drinking do not drink slowly enough to avoid intoxication. Even if they sincerely try to, they needlessly subject themselves to a tempting situation wherein a momentary lapse can send them tumbling into sin. It is interesting to think about Paul’s instruction to Timothy that he “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” (1 Tim. 5:23) If Christians commonly drank fermented wine in the first century, it seems odd that Paul had to instruct Timothy to use wine in the first place. Further, the context shows this consumption had a medicinal, not social or recreational, purpose. Finally, even in a medicinal context, he was instructed to use only “a little.”

People will keep trying to justify social drinking. Many will not be convinced it is wrong regardless of what evidence is placed before them. Nonetheless, we can urge one another to live in a way that glorifies God (1 Cor. 6:20). It is hard to imagine a context wherein social drinking does so.

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Approved Alternatives to Alcohol

David Stafford

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

1 Peter 5:8-9 KJV

The absence of alcohol is difficult for some people to imagine. Alcohol, to some people, is just part of their lifestyle. It is consumed as an attempt to relieve stress, to celebrate, and to forget one's sorrow. It is served at many weddings and class reunions, because many believe that one cannot celebrate without its use. Alcohol, however, is not served at every wedding reception, which includes this author's reception! Every moment of those receptions is rejoiced and remembered! Alcohol is justified, even among members of the Lord's church, yet it never helps the cause of Christ; it only hinders it! We as Christians must understand that there are approved alternatives to this deceptive device of the Devil (Eph. 6:11).

Study God's Word

God gives us time (Gen. 1:1), and time gives us opportunities. Christians are commanded to redeem the time (Eph. 5:6; Col. 4:5). Alcohol is not a good use of a Christian's time (Pro. 20:1), since it detracts from the Christian's call of sanctification (Mat. 5:13-16; Rom. 12:1-2). Alcohol is not a good use of time, because it impairs the mind and injures the body (Pro. 23:29-35). There is, however, an approved alternative for the Christian to spend his time, and that is studying God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15)! We as Christians should love God's law and meditate day and night (Psa. 1:2; 119:97). We should have a strong desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). This is the way we draw closer to our great God (Jam. 4:8)! We must hide His Word in our hearts that we might not sin against Him (Psa. 119:11). Hiding God's Word in our hearts (Pro. 3:1-4) will enlighten us (Psa. 119:105) of God's will (Eph. 5:17). Studying God's Word is never wasted time for the Christian!

Seek and Save

Redeeming the time is additionally accomplished when we fulfill our mission. Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Yet, it is also the mission of each Christian (Mark 16:15-16)! Time is unwisely spent when souls are neglected while a Christian indulges in that which will impair and injure his body (Pro. 23:29-30)! We must sow the seed of the kingdom, and the seed is the Word of God (Mat. 13:19; Luke 8:11). We cannot sow what we do not know (John 6:44-45), because our minds are impaired or ignorant of God's Word. Let us utilize our time seeking the lost!

Stewardship

God, the Creator of all earth (Gen. 1-2), owns everything (Job 41:11; Psa. 50:10-12; 1 Cor. 10:26, 28), and this most definitely includes the money in our wallets and bank accounts. We are merely stewards of God's money. A steward is a manager of property that belongs to someone else. God expects for us to be good, faithful stewards of His money (1 Cor. 4:2), and we will be judged by this principle (Mat. 25:15-30; Luke 16:2). Alcohol is not a faithful use of the Lord's money, because it promotes the worldly model (1 John 2:15-17). Americans spend much money on alcohol. According to

the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Americans spend about one percent of their gross annual income on alcohol. That amounts to about \$565 a year, \$5650 in 10 years, or a whopping \$22,600 over a 40-year period (Linton). Think about how many missionaries would do well with that money, the local congregation, or a man desiring to attend preaching school! Think of the bills that are left unpaid or families neglected (1 Tim. 5:8), because money was ill-spent rather than well-spent. Let us ensure we are using the Lord's money carefully for the cause of which His Son died (2 Cor. 5:21)!

Sobriety

There are times in which the worldly individual wants to forget and forsake his responsibilities. He wants to refrain from having a sound mind with the attempt to forget his sorrows. His sorrows, however, are only intensified with alcohol (Pro. 23:29-30)! He may even think it is humorous that he cannot remember what he did the day before. Sobriety is a Christian command, and it is essential for the Christian to fulfill his responsibility to God and to others. The word *sober* (and its variants) occurs sixteen times in the King James Version. There are two Greek words that are translated as *sober*. The first Greek word is *sōphroneō*, and it means “to be of a sound mind.” It is translated as “right mind”, “soberly”, and “sober-minded” (c.f. Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35; Rom. 12:3; 2 Cor. 5:13; Titus 2:16; 1 Pet. 4:17). The other primary Greek word is *nēphō* which means “to abstain from wine.” It also means “to be sober.” It is translated as “sober” (c.f. 1 The. 5:6, 8; 1 Pet. 1:13; 5:8), and it is translated as “watch” (2 Tim. 4:5; 1 Pet. 4:7). The primary definition is prevalent in both terms. Alcohol prevents a Christian from having a sound mind. His mind is impaired (Pro. 23:29-30). The Devil is the Christian's adversary, and we must be sober and vigilant, for he, as a roaring lion, seeks whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). Sobriety is needful to resist him steadfastly in the faith (1 Pet. 5:9). We cannot resist him if we are under the influence of alcohol. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23), but a Christian cannot exercise this godly command when he is under the influence of a controlled substance! The world indulges in whatever pleases them, but this is not the Christian call. The grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness, worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-12)! We ought not to be brought unto the power of anything (1 Cor. 6:12)! We must understand that we are servants of Christ (Rom. 6:16-18), and we yield to His will! The world lives unto themselves, but we live unto Him!

There are approved alternatives to alcohol. Time is ill-spent when alcohol is involved. Studying God's Word, seeking and saving the lost, practicing good stewardship, and sobriety are approved alternatives that will help the cause of Christ! The days are evil, so let us as Christians redeem the time with the things that please our great God (Eph. 5:16)!

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ACCEPTING DRINKING BY NOT REJECTING IT!

Dale Jenkins

[Editor's note: *This article appeared in the May 7, 1993 issue of Words of Truth. Bro. Jenkins now preaches for the Spring Meadows Church of Christ in Spring Hill, TN. He has been instrumental to the success of such events as Exposure Youth Camp and is known for his outrageous collection of socks.*]

Johnny Carson said the first clue that something was wrong on Northwest Airlines Flight 650 was when the pilot (Captain Norman Prouse) boarded the 727 jet wearing a lampshade. That's incorrect!

The first clue was when about six hours before the flight he fell off his bar stool at the Minnesota bar he had been drinking at since 5:30 the evening before he was to pilot the ill-fated flight. Alcohol causes over 100,000 deaths each year in drinking related incidents. Its use causes many more disasters than that of all other drugs combined. It doesn't take much to alarm one about the potential dangers of alcoholism. None of us wants a drunk piloting any vehicle in which we are passengers. We have seen the effects of beer and other alcohol upon citizens of our area. While not having all the answers there are some things we might do:

1. Be consistent. Those who drink socially can't consistently tell their children not to drink. Statistics have shown that one in three social drinkers becomes an alcoholic. A recent study chaired by Dr. Robert Sparks revealed that "more problems are created by moderate drinkers than by heavy boozers." It is said that only eleven percent of all drinkers consume more than two drinks daily. Social drinking is harmful and wrong. If my children do not know my strong convictions against drinking, even a little they may think "just a little won't hurt." To buddy with and teach children to respect those who drink publicly seems to me to say that you approve of that action. As Christians we are to "...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

2. Stop throwing up "red-herrings." A "red-herring" is a smoke screen to take the light off the true issue. While I know that Jesus turned water into wine in John 2, I also know he is not making a blanket statement in favor of drinking. And if there is anyone out there that seriously thinks he is, maybe social drinking is not the place to begin with them. The wine he made would not cause an individual to become drunken. I know this because if it would have, he would have caused an individual to stumble (sin), (Hab. 2:15; Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:21), and that is a sin. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock

or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Rom. 4:13). Our Lord never sinned (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:9).

Another red-herring heard often by this pudgy scribe suggests that gluttony is as much a sin as drunkenness. We preachers don't like to admit it, but God does classify sin! He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. He said, "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea" (Mark 9:42). Inspiration lists six abominations in Proverbs 6:16-18. The effects of gluttony are very limited when compared to the scope of desecration of alcohol. Alcoholism affects every individual close to the situation and thousands of others who never even meet the drunkard who kills them. It is a massive red-herring to try and compare the two.

3. We must teach. I know the TV tunes are catchy and I like the NBA and Superbowl as much as the next guy, but have you noticed how many of the ads are wrapped up in alcohol and drinking? They spent over two billion dollars last year producing and airing those catchy tunes. Why? To break down the negative feelings and to make us see beer and such like in a comfortable spot. They put our "favorite actors and actresses" on to endorse alcohol. They are there to make us believe that it must not be that bad. They cast a positive light on drinking! Listen brethren, flip that channel during the drinking ad. Spend time discussing the "problems" with your child. When one gets by and you watch the ad, talk to your children about its merits. Does it present a true picture of happiness brought on by drinking? What does the ad not tell and show us?

4. We must love the alcoholic with a God-like love. If our children hear us wish them all dead, yet some of their friends, whom they love are drinkers, we are wishing their friends dead!

5. Finally we must present Christianity in a positive light! When your child sees a fun loving ole' chap living it up with a Bud in his hand and sees you as an ole' prune soured on life, which type of life is he going to want to have? Which one would you choose? If he hears church members and leaders bad-mouthed constantly, isn't he going to want to be a part of that lifestyle where there is total acceptance, like that at a bar?

Brethren, let us wake up to these serious facts and be prepared.

Sobering Statistics

From the-alcoholism-guide.org (accessed 3/2020).

- * Treating alcoholism and its effects on health, costs more than treating cancer.
- * Addiction costs every American citizen \$1000 per year.
- * 4 in 10 prisoners say drink was a factor in their crime.
- * One-third of all suicides, one-half of all murders, one-half of all domestic violence cases, and one-quarter of all emergency hospital admissions are alcohol related.
- * Alcoholics, on average, lose 26 years from their normal life expectancy.
- * Elderly alcoholism is a major problem. 3 million citizens older than 60 abuse drink.
- * Many more males in the US (9.8 million) are dependent on drink, than females (3.9 million).
- * 6.6 million minors in the US live with at least one alcoholic parent.

From the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (niaaa.nih.gov)

- * An estimated 88,000 people die from alcohol-related causes annually, making alcohol the third leading preventable cause of death in the US, behind only tobacco and poor diet.
- * In 2010, alcohol misuse cost the US \$249 billion.



- * In 2012, 3.3 million deaths, or 5.9% of all global deaths, were attributable to alcohol consumption.
- * Globally, alcohol misuse was the fifth leading risk factor for premature death and disability in 2010. Among people between ages 15-49, it is the first. In the age group 20-39, approx. 25% of all deaths are alcohol attributable.
- * More than 10% of US children live with a parent with alcohol problems.

If you or someone you love is struggling with alcohol addiction, don't wait. Get help. The Church is a group of people with problems, struggles, and most importantly, a willingness to help each other.

PLEASE SUBMIT CHANGE OF ADDRESS!

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sixthavenuechurch.org

We hope and pray that you will use our website for personal growth in the faith of Jesus Christ. On our website you will find many resources including bulletins, sermon audios, Bible correspondence courses, Searching for Truth materials, and House to House/Heart to Heart materials. You can also sign up to receive our bulletin by email or submit questions you would like to have answered. On the website you will also find back issues of *Words of Truth*. Please visit regularly and use the resources available to you!

ASK A BIBLE QUESTION

QUESTION: My friend's preacher keeps telling her to pray this prayer: "Open my eyes illuminate me, Spirit divine." Is this correct to pray?

ANSWER: This is known as the doctrine of Holy Spirit Illumination, which says, "The Holy Spirit speaks directly to our minds, directly stimulating our intellects to perceive the true meaning of Scripture." This is NOT a biblical doctrine; it is a false doctrine! This is true for four reasons:

- First, those claiming to be illuminated by the Spirit often have different and even opposing understandings of the same passages of Scripture.
- Second, those believing in illumination recognize that people grow in their understanding and sometimes change their interpretations of Scripture. When this happens, one always assumes he is changing from a mistaken view to the correct view or from a nonilluminated view to an illuminated view. This clouds one's perception of how and why interpretations change, based on what he assumes is illuminated or not. If indeed they changed once, could they, then, not change again?
- Third, this doctrine is the product of "Universal Total Depravity," which requires the necessity of illumination because the totally depraved person is completely blind in his intellect and incapable of understanding the Bible unless illumined by the Spirit.
- Fourth, this doctrine has NO biblical basis! The passages often cited as proof-texts for this doctrine are themselves misinterpreted and misapplied.

The most important thing the Holy Spirit ever did for us was to give us the Bible; thus, the Bible alone is sufficient for our understanding of Divine Will (cf. 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17).

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