
Words of Truth

Alcoholic Beverages Are Not Harmless

By: Brian A. Yeager

As I am writing this article, I am sitting in an automobile dealership waiting on repairs to my vehicle. I overheard boasting by an employee about his drinking over the weekend. All too often I stand in line at a grocery store and the person in front of me is purchasing some form of alcohol. The mindset of a beer or two after work is common. Wine is seen as a beverage that goes well with certain foods. Vineyards seek to attract tourists with their wine tasting events. Certain days of the year have a focus that surrounds alcohol (i.e. New Year's Eve). Sporting events promote alcohol within the arena and even during the advertising on television.

With the popularity of alcoholism, we'd be fools if we think these things are not a threat to Christians. Jesus said: *"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"* (Matthew 26:41). Christians have people at work, worldly family members, etc. who try to get us to engage in activities wherein there is "social drinking". Churches of Christ have divided over this subject (recently in Greenville, TX). Here in El Paso, we've had to discipline someone who, contrary to the will of God, was drinking alcohol (Kim Wright). Thus, I'd be failing as a teacher if I do not keep us aware of God's view on this subject (cf. Acts 20:26-27).

God's View Of Alcohol Is Very Clear

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). If the Scripture I just quoted was the only thing in the Bible about alcohol, don't you think we'd have enough evidence not to drink it? We know that God wants us to be wise (Proverbs 4:5-7), why therefore would one pursue that which is unwise (Ephesians 5:17)?

Having lived with an alcoholic (my deceased brother). I fully understand how devoted people are to alcohol when they love it. Alcohol causes them to fall, even in their jobs (cf. Proverbs 21:17). Moreover, alcohol becomes the first thing they care about in life. Notice a few things in the following text. First, notice how we should not even look on wine when it becomes alcohol. Secondly, notice how alcohol affects one's judgment. Finally, notice how one given to alcohol becomes addicted to the point of wanting it first among their daily activities. Here is the text: *"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 his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again"* (Proverbs 23:29-35).

The drinking of alcohol causes people to forget the law of the Lord and to pervert judgment (Proverbs 31:4-5). As we've seen clearly already, one cannot drink alcohol and maintain clear thinking. Brethren, how can one then fulfill the command of sobriety when drinking alcohol? God does command us to be sober, clear in thinking (I Thessalonians 5:6, I Thessalonians 5:8, Titus 2:2-6, I Peter 1:13, I Peter 4:7, and I Peter 5:8). Again, if what we've addressed in this point were all that we knew about God's view on alcohol; we'd know to steer clear of it.

It is not just being unwise or losing our sobriety that makes alcohol sinful (though either would be enough). The Lord also says the following: *"Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them... Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink... Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart... Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness... And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares... Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God"* (Isaiah 5:11, Isaiah 5:22, Hosea 4:11, Habakkuk 2:15, Luke 21:34, and I Corinthians 6:9-10).

If there is a person who can read through all that we've discussed and still think that alcohol is harmless, I don't know how to help that person. Any, of the many points we've covered thus far, should be enough to convince an honest truth seeker to steer clear of all forms of alcoholic beverages. Yet, as we all know, there are those who want to justify their actions. There are those who are right in their own eyes (Proverbs 16:2, Proverbs 16:25, Proverbs 21:2, Proverbs 30:12, and Galatians 6:3). The most common defense of alcohol, with those who will even discuss the Scriptures, is that social drinking is okay.

God Shows That Social Drinking Is Not Harmless

You cannot disobey God and be okay (Matthew 7:21-27 and II Thessalonians 1:7-9). God's will is that a Christian ceases from the ways of the world. This includes drinking parties [revellings] and social drinking [banquetings]. Notice: *"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries"* (I Peter 4:1-3).

Conclusion

The word of God shows us that alcoholic beverages are not harmless. There is harm both to the body and the soul. The one who involves him or herself with alcohol is a fool. Disobedience to the Lord results in damnation (John 5:28-29 and Ephesians 5:6). If you've been tempted to engage in the drink of disobedience to the Lord, repent before it is everlastingly too late (Luke 13:3)!