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# BIBLE TALK

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This week the question is: **What about Holiday Parties and drinking?**

I would like to begin this study with some commonly known facts about alcohol:

- Alcohol is a drug - a drug that begins working on the central nervous system.
- The first drink of alcohol begins to impair one's reflexes and his ability to judge.
- Alcohol begins to remove one's inhibitions. In other words, alcohol makes it more difficult to resist a temptation.

Temptation is difficult enough to resist all by itself. When one begins drinking alcohol, it becomes virtually impossible to resist what one knows to be sinful.

A common idea is that the Bible forbids drunkenness, but not moderate drinking. But ponder these questions:

- Since alcohol impairs one's ability to judge, can we reasonably assume a moderate drinker will stop short of drunkenness?
- Furthermore, what exactly is "drunkenness"?

Is it scriptural to drink just so long as you never pass out?

Is it scriptural to drink just so long as you don't get sick and vomit?

These are serious questions which people must answer before they think about drinking. If someone is truly concerned about their soul and living for God, they better decide exactly what constitutes drunkenness and they better decide how they will stop short of drunkenness after their judgment has been impaired from the first drink.

## **SCRIPTURES ABOUT ALCOHOL**

There are many, many warnings given in the scriptures about the dangers and deceitfulness of drinking alcohol.

### **Proverbs 20:1**

<sup>1</sup> Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

### **Proverbs 23:29-35**

<sup>29</sup> Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?

<sup>30</sup> Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine.

<sup>31</sup> Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly;

<sup>32</sup> At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.

<sup>33</sup> Your eyes will see strange things, And your heart will utter perverse things.

<sup>34</sup> Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, Or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying:

<sup>35</sup> "They have struck me, but I was not hurt; They have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?"

Alcohol is destructive and ruinous when used for recreational purposes.

- Alcohol promises joy, but brings heartaches.
- It promises to "clear one's thinking," but actually clouds the mind.
- It promises to "settle one's nerves," but makes a nervous wreck out of its victim.
- It promises freedom, but delivers bondage.
- It promises relaxation, but produces frustration.

Anyone thinking that recreational use of alcohol is harmless is deceive by alcohol according to Proverbs 20:1.

## **MEDICINAL USE**

The only legitimate use of alcohol, according to the scriptures, is medicinal use. In other words, small amounts of alcohol may be used as medicine, but may not be drunk for mere pleasure. Notice carefully:

### **1 Timothy 5:23**

<sup>23</sup> No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

This is what the apostle Paul told Timothy. Timothy was trying to be a model Christian (1 Tim. 4:12). He was trying to set the best example he could set in order that God might be glorified and that sinners might be converted. As a model Christian he drank only water. That is, he drank only non-alcoholic beverages. However, for medicinal purposes, the apostle instructed that a little wine could be used.

There is nothing sinful when a Christian today takes a cough syrup or cold medicine which contains alcohol, provided he follows the directions and takes only a small quantity.

In contrast, however, there is no scripture to justify a recreational, or casual use of alcohol for mere pleasure.

## **A SPECIAL NOTE ON "WINE"**

Many, in order to justify themselves, refer to the miracle of Jesus in turning water into wine (Jn. 2:1-12). Their argument is that if Jesus would provide wine for a wedding, then casual and recreational drinking is acceptable.

In response, there are two things to remember:

- According to John 2:6, Jesus made many gallons of wine. If this miracle proves social drinking is acceptable, it also proves drunkenness is acceptable. However, we have already noted that drunkenness is sinful.

- The Greek word for "wine" (οἶνος) may mean either alcoholic wine, or simply grape juice. Isaiah 65:8 is a clear example where "wine" simply means the juice of the grape.

The problem with many, when reading John 2, is that they cannot conceive of a wedding party taking place without alcohol. Since they themselves would never attend a party without alcohol, they think Jesus wouldn't either. Since they laugh at the thought of drinking grape juice, they think it's impossible that Jesus provided grape juice for others. Rather than judging the scriptures for what they say, they make up their minds what they want to believe first and then search for passages which they think will support their conclusions. This is not "handling the word of God aright" (2 Tim. 2:15).

There is nothing in John 2 which demands that alcoholic wine was used, and there is convincing evidence to suggest that the wine used was nothing more than grape juice.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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