

The Morality of Drinking **10-13-13**

Proverbs 20:1 - *Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.*

Some statistics from our society: Drug related deaths are 20,000 annually; Murders are 20,000 annually; Alcohol related deaths are 85,000 annually. Numbers such as these would suggest where our society ought to be minded towards prevention and enforcement. However, our society is doing the opposite.

“The more alcohol ads young people see, the more they drink. Communities with more alcohol ads have higher levels of youth drinking. Each additional dollar alcohol companies spend on advertising raises the number of drinks youth consume by three percent.” Snyder, Leslie B., et al. (2006) “Effects of Alcohol Advertising Exposure on Drinking Among Youth.” Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine 160(1), 18-24

Youth are more likely to see alcohol advertising on TV than ads for products such as juice, gum, chips, sneakers, or jeans. Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth. “Television: Alcohol's Vast Adland.” (2002)

Anheuser-Busch ranks number one among all companies in producing kid-friendly advertisements. A study of children ages nine to 11 found they were more familiar with Budweiser's frogs than with Kellogg's Tony the Tiger, the Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers, or Smokey Bear. Lessons Learned: Appreciating Kids' Diverse Tastes.” Selling to Kids , April, 2000.

Youth who own alcohol brand promotional items—such as T-shirts and baseball caps—are more than 1.5 times more likely to use alcohol than youth who do not. Auden C. McClure, JD, et al. (2005) “Kids who own alcohol promotional items more likely to be drinking, Dartmouth study finds” Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.

The Bible introduces alcohol in Genesis 9:22-24; the result? Noah cursed his sons. Now jump all the way to Revelation, where we meet the drunken Harlot of Babylon. Beginning to end, the Bible does not view alcohol in a favorable light. Now for everything in between.

The Bible Says (1) Being drunk is a sin; (2) Being a “reveler” is a sin; and (3) Worldliness is the enemy of Godliness. Just to be clear, ANY intoxicant fits this lesson; drugs, prescription drugs, anything that alters the mind or inebriates would be fitting to the points made here.

Drunkenness: What does the Bible say about Drunkenness? First, in Romans 13:12-14 we are told that it is a work of darkness. This means it is Satanic. Second, we are told in I Corinthians 5:11 that it is a matter of church discipline. Finally, in I Corinthians 6:9-10 we find that it kills the soul and takes away the hope of heaven.

Revelry: What about social drinking or drinking to relax? The Bible speaks a lot about that as well. In the same breath as drunkenness, revelry (social drinking) is called a work of Darkness (Romans 13:12). Revelry is the Greek word “*komo*”, which means letting loose, i.e. “relaxing”. Some say they do not drink to get drunk, just to unwind. This is revelry, and it is Satanic as well as drunkenness. Peter warns about this in I Peter 4:3-4, where he speaks about the “flood of dissipation”.

Worldliness vs. Godliness: Titus 2:11-12 tells us that we are to abandon worldly lusts for spiritual living. When we ask ourselves what is “worldly”, we find it defined for us in I John 2:15-16 tells us that the world is “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”

Alcohol fits this description well. The lust of the flesh - Galatians 5:19-21. The lust of the eyes - Proverbs 23:31. The pride of life - Proverbs 31:5. Alcohol is the very embodiment of worldliness.

Does this make alcohol an “unclean” substance, something that just touching becomes a sin? Is it a sin to use cough syrup or pain pills? The Bible makes it clear that nothing is unclean of itself any longer (Romans 14:14). Instead, it is our use of things that makes them clean or unclean.

The Bible even “prescribes” a proper uses for alcohol. In Proverbs 31:6 we have a declaration that alcohol is for those who are perishing, i.e. an anesthesia or pain relief. Paul told Timothy something similar in 1 Timothy 5:23.

We don’t use alcohol for medicine any longer. We have more effective substances like morphine or codeine. We even make the case that it is appropriate to take relief when offered; even Jesus on the cross accepted the gall the second time it was offered. We may need anti-depressants or pain relief, and it is better to use them in moderation that to deny them, then “self-medicate” later, or even curse God in agony.

But we have the same obligation to use these substances with the expectation that they are not towards drunkenness or revelry. For many, the line between the proper use and improper use is indistinguishable. Remember, the doctor who prescribes these things has no concern of the spiritual implications of these drugs.

Conclusion: From Noah until the Harlot of Babylon: alcohol has been tied to worldliness, and alcohol has defeated spiritual people. What do you think God desires? Living for Him and not the Flesh:

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 1 Peter 4:1-2