

Substance Abuse: The Biblical Perspective

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Texts: Gen. 9:20-22; 19:30-38; Deut. 21:20-21; Prov. 20:1; Hos. 7:5-7; Eph. 5:18; 1 Tim. 3:3; 5:23

Topic: Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Central Idea of Message: The Bible and common sense each speak loudly against the use of debilitating substances. Alcohol is a drug to which we have unwisely grown accustomed and accepted, in part because it was legalized years ago; however, it is a terribly lethal substance.

Introduction: A young wife sleepily looks up as a husband comes in the front door. It is 2:27 A.M. "I was worried about you," she says. He stumbles into their bedroom, tumbling onto the bed. She begins to question him. Tempers flare, voices get louder and harsher. "Daddy" strikes. A trickle of blood oozes from the mouth of an abused wife.

A car speeds out of control on a narrow road. Swerving to avoid striking the guardrail it slams head-on into another vehicle. Within the hour a mother answers the phone only to be told by a police officer that her son will not be coming home.

A homeless man is found lying on the street, frozen to death. He had been an electrical engineer before addiction robbed him of his profession, his family, and now his life.

What do these events have in common? All are related to the use of alcohol or other drugs. The scenes are repeated countless times each day in America, often in "the best of families." In a nation whose people boast of being so educated and culturally advanced, somehow we have missed one very simple teaching from the word of God: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

The writer of Proverbs chose strong words to address this sinful, self-destructive, and socially-noxious problem. The language personifies wine and strong drink as beings acting to destroy the dignity and lofty calling of those created to praise and honor God. Under the influence of these deadly substances, people are routinely turned into mockers who malign and make light of things good and true, often scoffing at God himself. The second personality, strong drink, is depicted as a raging