

**Ethics & Morals**  
**Social Drinking**  
**(Ep 5:18; Pr 23:31)**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Good Evening
  - a. Greeting
2. Series of lessons
  - a. We are going to start a series of lessons in the evenings on “Ethics & Morals”
3. We are going to look at the much need topic of "Social Drinking"
  - a. This is an epidemic that is destroying the church & many are simply ignorant about the truth on it or unconcerned about the truth of it.
4. If the consumption of alcohol as a beverage is an action that is Scriptural, we certainly do not want to “spy out the liberty” of other Christians.
  - a. **Ga 2:4**
5. But if on the other hand, the consumption of alcohol as a beverage is unscriptural, we want to resolutely stand and speak out against it.
6. I also want to be clear what I am going to be discussing.
  - a. That is the use of alcohol as a beverage, not medicine.
  - b. I don't think anyone would disagree with the medical use of alcohol but the social use is another story.

**I. The Old Testament & Alcohol Consumption**

- A. The priest were not to have any alcohol when they entered the tabernacle.
  1. **Lv 10:8-11** "Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: 9 “Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, 10 that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, 11 and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.””
- B. Civil leaders were forbidden to drink alcohol because it would pervert their Judgment.
  1. **Pr 31:4-5** "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Nor for princes intoxicating drink; 5 Lest they drink and forget the law, And pervert the justice of all the afflicted."
- C. The Jews were not allowed to look at intoxicating wine.
  1. **Pr 23:31** "Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly"
  2. Remember drunkenness was punishable by death.
    - i. **Dt 21:20-21** "And they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ 21 Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear."

- D. Drinking alcohol was considered a defilement of the body by Jews.
  - 1. **Da 1:5-8** "And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king....<sup>8</sup> But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."
- E. It was even a crime to give alcohol to another person.
  - 1. **Hk 2:15** "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing him to your bottle, Even to make him drunk, That you may look on his nakedness!"
- F. The Jews were not allowed to drink alcohol so that they always knew who God was.
  - 1. **Dt 29:5-6** "And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet. <sup>6</sup> You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or similar drink, that you may know that I am the LORD your God."
- G. Total abstinence was admired by God.
  - 1. **Je 35:2-19**
    - i. Jeremiah was to go to the Rechabites and invite them over and offer them wine to drink. The Rechabites had vowed never to drink at their father's request & wouldn't drink.
- D. All of this proves social drinking to be a complete lack of wisdom.
  - 1. **Pr 20:1** "Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.
  - 2. Because of this lack of wisdom the Jews were not even to be around those that were drinking.
    - i. **Pr 23:20** "Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat"
  - 3. Thus it has and will always cause God's children to do wrong.
    - i. **Pr 23:29-35; Gn 9:21-22; Is 28:7**

## II. The New Testament & Alcohol Consumption

- A. As we saw the priest under the O.T. were not allowed to have been drinking before entering the tabernacle.
  - 1. We as Christians are priests today
    - i. **I Pt 2:5-9** "you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." <sup>7</sup> Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," <sup>8</sup> and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"

2. We as Christians are living in the perfect tabernacle constantly...the church
    - i. **He 9:11** "But Christ came as High Priest of the **good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle** not made with hands, that is, not of this creation."
    - ii. **He 8:2** "a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man."
      - a. **Mt 16:18**
  3. That sobering thought makes **Romans 15:4** seem extremely applicable
    - i. **Ro 15:4** "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."
- B. Christians are even told not to take a single sip!!!
1. Notice what Paul wrote to the Ephesians.
    - i. **Ep 5:18** "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit"
      - a. "The Greek expression, mee methuskesthe "be not drunken" is present tense, imperative, and passive voice. It could accurately be translated today as, "be not being drunken or intoxicated." This prohibits the start of a process which ends in a drunken state...Do not find yourself in the process of BEING intoxicated and means to avoid the first drink! (Murphey 407)" (Beverage Alcohol by Rushmore, Louis pg. 21)
      - b. "methuskesthe, 2nd person plural, present, imperative, passive form of the root word methusko. ...to get drunk, or to grow drunk...the process of...The clear import of the definition of the term is that we are not to engage ourselves in the process which will make us drunk...How much liquor starts the process? The answer is the very first drop. That means that the social drinker has sinned with his casual drink. (Willis 171) (Ibid)
  2. Knowing that, that one sip is a sin think about these verses.
    - i. **I Co 6:9-10** "Do you not know that the **unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.** Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, **nor drunkards**, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."
    - ii. **Ga 5:19-21** "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, **drunkenness**, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things **will not inherit the kingdom of God.**"

- C. Christians are to be "sober-minded"
1. **I Th 5:6-8** "Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation."
    - i. The Greek word for sober-minded here is "nepho"
      - a. This means literally, "sober, temperate; abstaining from wine, either entirely 1 Ti 3:2,11" (from Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2000, 2003, 2006 by Biblsoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)
      - b. Vine's defines it as "to be free from the influence of intoxicants" ([http://www.antioch.com.sg/cgi-bin/bible/vines/get\\_defn.pl?num=2682#A1](http://www.antioch.com.sg/cgi-bin/bible/vines/get_defn.pl?num=2682#A1))
      - c. Notice how the word was used in the Greek.
        - i. Josephus used the word "nepho" in talking about the way the priest were to be in their "sacerdotal garments" where they were not "permitted to drink wine so long as they wear those garments." (The New Complete Works of Josephus "Jewish Antiquities 3:12:2" pg. 135)
        - ii. The phrase not "permitted to drink wine" literally means "holding no wine" (<http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/308-what-about-moderate-social-drinking>)
      - d. Scientifically speaking the intoxicant alcohol, from the beginning, influences the brain.
        - i. The American Medical Association has stated that "There is no minimum blood alcohol concentration which can be set at which there will be absolutely no effect."
- D. Christians are to avoid every kind of evil.
1. **I Th 5:22** "Abstain from every form of evil." (ESV)
  2. **I Th 5:22** "Avoid every kind of evil." (NIV)

### III. Scriptures Used To Justify Social Drinking

- A. **I Timothy 3:8 & Titus 2:3**
1. First notice the qualifications here are to mirror those of the elders
    - i. **I Ti 3:8** "Likewise deacons must be...not given to much wine..."
      - a. The word "likewise means "in the same way" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.). New York: United Bible societies.)
  2. Second the word "much" doesn't allude or even say a little is ok.
    - i. Notice these verses
      - a. **Ec 7:16-17** Be not **overly** righteous, and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself? 17 Be not **overly** wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time?"

- b. **Ja 1:21** "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and **overflow** of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."
- c. **I Pt 4:4** "In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same **excesses of dissipation**, and they malign you" (NASU)
  - 1. KJV & ASV say "excess of riot"
- d. **I Ti 3:8** "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of **filthy lucre**" (KJV)
  - 1. NASU says "fond of sordid gain"
  - 2. ESV says "greedy for dishonest gain"
- ii. This is all the same type of language.
  - a. Common sense must come into play at some point.
- 3. Third, once gain common sense.
  - i. Common sense would say that old women, which is subjective, and deacons only doesn't make sense to allow to social drink.
    - a. Not to mention I have never seen a deacon or person using these verse to justify social drinking stop when they no longer fit them.

**B. John 2:1-10**

- 1. It is argued that Jesus made alcoholic wine and thus it is fine to socially drink.
  - i. "Jesus was a social drinker" (Rebecca Yeager on facebook in response to my update on social drinking is wrong May 30, 2010)
  - ii. " Jesus was the bartender for the wedding feast in Cana." (Notes on General Studies "Social Drinking" by Stapleton Robert)
- 2. First remember that it was a sin for Jews to look at or give away alcoholic beverages.
  - i. **Pr 23:31; Hk 2:15**
  - ii. Jesus wrote the Bible (**II Ti 3:16**) He would know it.
    - a. He also lived by it perfectly.
      - 1. **He 4:15** "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."
- 3. Second notice the sheer amount...there were 6 washing pots - **Jn 2:6**
  - i. 6 X 20 gallons = 120 g
  - ii. 6 X 30 gallons = 180 g
    - a. This is a lot of wine to "not" get people drunk on.

4. What about the phrase "well drunk."
  - i. Doesn't that mean that they were drinking alcoholic wine?
  - ii. Doesn't that mean that they were drunk by the second round and that is why the less good wine was brought in?
    - a. The phrase doesn't mean stumbling over from alcohol.
      1. It means filled or well full.
  - iii. It also **couldn't here mean drunk** as we think of it because this was the 2nd round that Jesus is making and thus if they guests were already drunk then Jesus was "adding" 'to their drunken state or intoxicated state. That is simply absurd.

C. **I Timothy 5:23**

1. Isn't Paul telling Timothy it is ok to drink alcoholic wine?
  - i. Didn't Paul use wine in the sense of alcoholic wine in chapter 3 with the elders and deacons qualifications, so wouldn't that mean this is alcoholic wine?
2. First just because wine is used to indicate alcoholic wine by context in one spot doesn't mean it has to be in the next. Context & common sense must play a part as well.
3. Second notice what Timothy was doing.
  - i. He was drinking "only" water.
  - ii. Outside of the "Lord's Supper" he was not drinking any wine, grape juice, or any other juice.
  - iii. The question is why do you think he was doing this? We are not told why he was though it might have something to do with what happen to Christ.
    - a. **Lk 7:33-35** "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' 34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' 35 But wisdom is justified by all her children."
4. Third notice something about alcohol and the body.
  - i. "Alcohol can irritate the stomach to the point of inducing gastritis (inflammation of the stomach lining), ulcers and acid reflux. Prolonged exposure to alcohol can erode the stomach lining and cause chronic blood seepage into the stomach. If the individual is particularly unlucky, a vessel can rupture and cause major bleeding." (<http://www.bloodalcohol.info/how-alcohol-affects-your-body.php#alcohol-stomach>)
5. Fourth wine studies on the "heart" are bias...
  - i. "No direct comparison trials have been done to determine the specific effect of wine or other alcohol on the risk of developing heart disease or stroke." (American Heart Association "<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4422>")
    - a. In other words they have not studied the bad effects just the good...seems bias to me.
    - b. Like how half of all stomach & esophagus cancer are linked to alcohol. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE4AG5Q220081117>)

6. Fifth it isn't even the alcohol that is good for the heart it is the flavonoids & other antioxidants that help w/ the blood clots and reducing of plaque on the artery walls.
  - i. According to Georgetown University researcher Jane Freedman MD both grape juice & red wine reduce blood clots and help with the flow of blood which helps with the artery walls of the heart. She goes on to say however, "Wine only prevents blood from clotting (when it's consumed) at levels high enough to declare someone legally drunk." ([http://www.lightplanet.com/mormons/daily/health/wow\\_grape.htm](http://www.lightplanet.com/mormons/daily/health/wow_grape.htm))
  - ii. "University of Wisconsin researcher John Folts, Ph.D. "With grape juice, you can drink enough to get the benefit without worrying about becoming intoxicated.'" (Ibid)
7. Seventh if it is alcohol under consideration by Paul it is still dealing with a medical issue.
  - i. However this medical issue is not nerves. Paul is not telling Timothy to calm his nerves with an alcoholic wine.
    - a. **Ph 4:6-7** "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
  - i. Wasn't Timothy nervous with fear **II Ti 1:7**?
    - a. Yes, but how did Paul tell him to deal with it?
      1. To rely on God and be not ashamed of the Lord.
        - i. II Ti 1:5-12
      2. In other words he told Timothy to stand up not drink it down.

## CONCLUSION

1. The O.T. says don't even look at alcoholic wine, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly"
  - a. **Ps 23:31**
2. The N.T. says don't even take a sip, " And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit"
  - a. **Ep 5:18**
3. Having weighed the biblical evidence it is clear social drinking is wrong ie condemned by God.
  - a. The question is now of those here that drink and of those that we know that drink are you going to stop based on God's Word or simply continue drinking due to your own lust for sin?
  - b. Alcohol as a beverage deprives, destroys, deceives, and eventually will damn those who flirt with it.
    - i. **Pr 20:1** "Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise."
4. Invitation
  - a. God's Plan Of Salvation