

Alcohol and Social Drinking

The Burden of a Mother
(Proverbs 31)

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On August sixth and ninth, 1945, the first atomic bombs used on human beings were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, ushering in the apocalyptic nuclear age. When the atomic explosions were over and the mushroom clouds had ascended 80,000 of Hiroshima's citizens were dead. In Nagasaki 35,000 lives were snuffed out. The misery among the living was unthinkable. Most Americans would rather not dwell on the awful destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki because of the great loss of human life. And yet, there have been millions of human lives that were slain and snuffed out since 1945, through the abuse of alcoholic beverages.

Man's oldest enemy is alcoholic drink. Beverage alcohol takes the lives of countless millions in this country and throughout the world every generation (forty years). Hitler and his Nazis during the Holocaust took the lives of six million Jews throughout Europe's death camps. And yet alcohol has claimed millions of more lives since the days of the Holocaust. Alcohol is a destroyer. Millions of Americans are alcoholics. According to a recent National Alcohol Survey, approximately 14 million Americans abuse and/or are dependent on alcohol. An increasing number of babies are born drunk because of their mother's alcoholic intake and fetal alcohol syndrome is still with us. Beverage alcohol continues to destroy the emotional, physical, and spiritual lives of millions of people every year. It is a destroyer and enemy of mankind. Alcohol has left a trail of blood across America.

Abraham Lincoln said this about alcohol use:

"It is a cancer in human society, eating out its vitals and threatening its destruction."

Today one family in three is estimated to be affected in some way by a drinking problem. The Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences estimates that each year alcoholism and alcohol abuse in the United States cost society from \$40 to \$60 billion, due to lost

production, health and medical care, motor vehicle accidents, violent crime, and social programs that respond to alcohol problems. Others have estimated costs to be \$100 billion per year. In the United States, 97,000 deaths annually are related to excessive drinking. One-half of all traffic fatalities and one-third of all traffic injuries are related to the abuse of alcohol. Millions of work hours are lost because of alcohol related absences and work accidents.

Statistics also reveal that one-third of all suicides and one-third of all mental health disorders are estimated to be associated with serious alcohol abuse. The abuse of alcohol doesn't limit itself to adults. It has been estimated that there are over 3 million problem drinkers between the ages of 14 and 17 in the United States. In addition, ninety-five percent of violent crime on college campuses is alcohol-related. Sixty percent of the female students who had sexually transmitted diseases were "under the influence of alcohol at the time of intercourse," and alcohol was involved in 90 percent of all campus rapes.

These statistics reveal to us why a godly mother should possess a burden for her children in relationship to the issue of alcoholic consumption. This study comes from the burdened heart of a mother who knows about the dangers and pitfalls of alcohol consumption. A godly mother will teach her son and children the danger of drinking alcoholic beverages and the importance of total abstinence. This is what our Bible lesson is about in Proverbs 31.

Proverbs 31:4

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink."

In this study a mother is sharing a Biblical burden with her son concerning the dangers of drinking alcohol. The advice of this mother and the ancient wisdom of the Proverbs will advise every person to stop using the substance that destroys the lives of millions of people. Abraham Lincoln also stated that alcohol was: "Like the Egyptian angel of death, commissioned to slay if not the first, the fairest born of every family."

Proverbs 31:1

"The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him."

In Proverbs 31 we have a mother teaching her son how to live right in a world that has gone stark raving mad! The word for "prophecy" is an oracle or utterance that is delivered with a deep burden. One of the burdens of this mother's heart was to see her son steer clear of alcoholic drink because of the potential devastation it brings upon the lives of those who drink it. This is a message and burden that every mother should share with her children. This chapter begins with a mother warning her son about alcohol. Apparently this is something she had instilled within her son while he was young. Now he was a king and as a mother she continues to remind him what he has been taught and what his relationship should be to alcoholic beverage. The mother taught her son total abstinence and her words makes this very clear.

Proverbs 31:4

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink."

This should be a burden upon every woman's heart. Every mom should possess a deep burden for her son and seek to teach him about the dangers of drinking alcoholic beverages. Please note something. The concerned mother is not simply addressing the sin of drunkenness but the sin for kings to drink alcoholic liquor beverages. Many today teach that the Bible only condemns drunkenness. But a more honest and closer examination reveals that the Bible actually teaches abstinence. Christians should not drink alcohol socially or in any quantity because of the potential dangers that it can bring into their lives. This is the teaching and warning of the Proverbs. The Bible warns against the dangers of drunkenness, not so God's people can drink less and get away with it, but so they might not imbibe liquor and take the risk of falling and hindering their spiritual progress in life.

The old adage is true:

"The best way to avoid drunkenness is not to drink at all."

This is the message of the Proverbs. Don't drink because of what alcohol can do to you. So the godly woman warns her son about drinking alcohol beverages and tells him to shun drinking. This is total abstinence.

Proverbs 31:2

"What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?"

In verse two we see how the mother realizes the solemn responsibilities she has toward her own son by her expressions "my son" and "the son of my womb." This was her son. God gave him to her. She knew her responsibility to raise this little child for the Lord. Psalm 127:3 says, "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." God gave her this son and she remembers how that little man came forth from her womb that day long ago. He is now bigger and stronger than her but he is her son. She knew that God was behind this birth and that God now holds her responsible for teaching this boy how to live right and steer clear from the alcohol soaked society in which he lived. She calls him "the son of my vows" meaning that when that little child came out of her womb she dedicated him to the Lord. Like Hannah, she made a vow to God that she would raise her son for the Lord and dedicate him to the Lord's work and service.

1 Samuel 1:11

"And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."

Ladies, have you turned your children over to the Lord? Have you given them to the Lord? Have you held them up to God and dedicated them to Him for salvation, service, and sanctification (holy living). When you do this you will be ready to teach him about the dangers of alcohol. When you make this vow as a mother, you are in essence committing yourself to your children and saying, "Lord, I will be there for them and raise them for Your glory and honor. I will teach them about the dangers and pitfalls of drinking alcohol and let them

know how to live a life that is pleasing to God." Mom, the time to dedicate your children to the Lord is right now and then assume the responsibility of being the kind of mother that God wants you to be. "*It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink*" (Prov. 31:4). A businessman had a placard on his desk, which read:

WHICH?
Wife or Whiskey?
The Babies Or The Bottles?
HEAVEN OR HELL?

This little sign sums up how alcohol ruins the lives of people and even sends them to hell because of their failure to repent over this terrible vice or sin and turn to Christ for salvation and deliverance. Like money, alcohol will keep people from coming to Christ and "drown men in destruction and misery" (1 Tim. 6:9). The Bible teaches that drunkards, whose sins have never been forgiven, will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:10).

Galatians 5:21

"Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Those who never repent of their sins before God (2 Pet. 3:9), those who openly and defiantly live in a drunken state all of their lives ("do such things") and never seek deliverance from their sins, such as drunkenness, cannot be saved. As a result, they will not enter the future blessings that God has in store for all those who are His children. Many drunkards die and go to hell everyday.

The old drunken sailor (William McCoy) was on an island in 1790. His ship (the Topaz) was docked there for a time. Alexander Smith told the story of how this unsaved alcoholic was found crouched down in a corner with a table upset and pulled up close to him in order to hide from what he said were the horrors that were coming. He imagined that one of the fearful natives called Minarri was coming to kill him. Minarri was dead and buried for a long time but McCoy fought and screamed like a madman all night. At the first light of dawn he ran out

of the house as though all the devils of hell were on his track. He ran straight toward the cliff above the sea and over he went, and down, down, onto the jagged rocks below. Like many unsaved souls, alcohol brings them to their final death. The devil had them in this life and now he has them in the next life. Sad, sad, the bitter wail! The devil wins and the drunkard loses.

The saying of the old captain Billy Bones, in Robert Louis Stevenson's, "Treasure Island," comes to mind:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

The godly mother warns her kingly son about drinking booze since kings had the tendency to drink wine and throw parties that involved binge drinking. Such was the case with King Belshazzar (Dan. 5:1-4). A godly mother will warn her son of the dangers of alcohol. If this is true, then any mother who wants to have a godly influence on her children will not drink alcoholic beverages. A mother must practice what she preaches and set an example that will have a spiritual impact upon her children for the rest of their lives. The Bible gives repeated warnings about drinking wine and yet many young men still indulge in drinking booze. Why can't we accept the fact that God knows what is best for our lives? Why on earth would we want to drink alcohol and go back to the old way of living? Someone told me that "Drinking booze is the biggest waste of nothing that they ever did in life." I agree. The godly mother knows this to be true. This is why she is warning her son against drinking wine and strong drink.

The word "wine" speaks of a drink that had less alcoholic content whereas the "strong drink" had the largest amount of alcoholic content. It was said that only barbarians would drink strong drink. The booze we have today in our land comes under the banner of "strong drink" because of its alcoholic content but the godly mother knows that all booze, from wine to strong drink, is a trap waiting to overtake the king. Let me say this. Alcohol can also overtake you. When you play around with drinking you are playing with fire. Proverbs 6:27-28 says, "Can a man take a fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be

burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" The answer is no! Sooner or later alcohol will burn you! You have no assurance that you can remain a social drinker or a moderate imbiber. You are playing with a time bomb.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote:

“Touch the goblet no more!
It will make they heart sore
 To its very core!
Its perfume is the breath
 Of the angel of death,
And the light that within it lies
Is the flash of his evil eyes.
 Beware! Oh, beware!
For sorrow, sickness, and care,
 All are there!”

The repeated warnings of Scripture about alcoholic consumption and the Biblical godly advice that this mother gave to her son is very clear. We are to steer clear from alcoholic beverage in all of it forms. We are to practice total abstinence. This is the only Biblical and Christian way. The Bible does not advise any person to drink sociably. Drinking sociably is an abuse of Christian liberty that opens up the door for the flesh to do its thing (Gal. 5:13 - “only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh”). Those who try and use certain Bible prooftexts to condone their drinking habits, like Jesus turning the water into wine (John 2:1-12) and Timothy using a little wine for his stomach (1 Tim. 5:23), overlook the clear and repeated warnings of Scripture dealing with the beverage consumption of alcohol. Jesus is falsely accused of serving alcoholic wine and Timothy is falsely accused of being a drinker (actually he was an abstainer) so that the modern-day drinker can avoid the repeated warnings of Scripture that denounce alcoholic consumption.

The Bible does not contradict itself. It is a Book that is in agreement concerning the matter of alcoholic drink. This is not a technical study dealing with all the alcohol related texts, but when one understands that there are two different types of wine presented in the Bible (fermented and unfermented), when one understands that the

ancients preserved their juice (wine) sweet, and when you read the multiple warnings of Scripture related to alcohol consumption, it becomes increasingly clear that there is absolutely no reason to support social drinking or the use of alcoholic beverages. The Bible teaches abstinence and every godly mother should teach her children this important lesson.

It is time to tell it like it is. Christ and cocktails do not mix! The drinking of alcohol has led to the downfall of countless millions. To drink alcohol socially goes against the wisdom of the proverbs because of the potential harm that alcohol can bring into your life. Many today feel that drinking sociably is a sign of camaraderie, acceptance, and social prestige or distinction. This claim is deceitful. Ask any person who is on skid row, in the state prison, or the insane asylum if drinking leads to social prestige, distinction, and acceptance within society. They will tell you quickly that it leads to poverty, prison, disgrace, and shame. When you drink alcohol it is mocking you, as you drink it, for the Bible says that wine is a mocker and is something that is also raging and deceptive.

A Mocking Drink

Proverbs 20:1

“Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”

We would be much wiser to accept God’s evaluation of alcohol than man’s. We know that wine is a mocker because it turns people into mockers of God and scorners of everything that is decent, holy, and right (Prov. 19:29; Ps. 1:1). However, this text states that wine in and of itself is a mocker regardless of the quantity that you drink. *Wine by its very nature is a mocker.* It is called a mocker because of the *potential* harm that it can have in your life. When you guzzle down that beer it is laughing at you. Do you know why? Because it knows that it can overtake your life and cause your life to become a mockery to God and His holiness. Wine is a mocker for what it does to you. Because of what alcohol can *potentially* do to a man it is best to avoid it completely and not engage yourself in drinking it. Wine always mocks you when you drink it because of the *potential* harm that you are setting yourself up for when imbibing it. *The spirit and teaching of*

all of the wine passages found in the Old and New Testaments is the same. A person should avoid that which can intoxicate them and bring mockery into their lives. A person should steer clear of intoxicating beverage.

Of course, wine also mocks people when it causes them to engage in adulterous relationships with others, when it keeps them from serving God, when it causes them to stumble and stray from God in life, when it causes them to become impoverished, and when it causes slavery and addiction. Alcohol mocks many people the whole way to their grave. They die of liver disease and other alcohol related problems. The ministers might as well hang Budweiser cans over the coffins of drunkards to warn about the dangers of alcohol. Their homes are shattered and tattered from a dad who went the way of boozing. If you think you can drink socially and get away with it then wine is already mocking you (Prov. 20:1) and will make a mockery out of your life! A moral principle is involved when people drink alcohol. People violate an ethical standard when imbibing ethyl alcohol. They overstep a line that God has clearly drawn.

God's Word is very clear on this matter of drinking alcohol. *It gives warning not only against drunkenness but the actually drinking of alcohol beverage for the potential harm it can have upon our spiritual lives.* Wine is a mocker because of the potential pitfalls and problems it brings into our lives. Alcohol mocks us when we drink it in any quantity due to the adverse effects that it can bring upon our lives such as poverty, pain, promiscuous sex, prostitution, problems (spiritual and family related), profanity, personality changes, permanent damage to relationships, personal sins (theft, lying, cheating, cursing, scorning God), purposeless living, pursuit away from God, potential health problems, private hallucinations, paralyzing addiction, premature death, and even perdition (hell). Alcohol starts people on a slippery slope that can eventually make them into mockers and scorners of those things that are decent, godly, and holy. Wine is a mocker in all of these ways. Who would ever want to drink it? Wine is a mocker. It laughs at us the moment we begin to drink it, knowing what it can do to us, and it laughs at us when we follow its path and course. In the end wine mocks us by making us objects of scorn and ridicule. In the end it makes a laughing-stock out of us.

I read in the local newspaper just last week how a man was found lying face down with a partially consumed cheeseburger hanging out of his mouth. He was attempting to eat a cheeseburger while he was in a drunken stupor and at one point he passed out with the burger and bun sticking out of his mouth. There he was lying on the ground, in view of everybody, with a cheeseburger sticking out of his mouth. Wine is a mocker! It promises social acceptance but brings shame, it promises joy but brings sorrow, it promises life but brings death. According to the Bible, no wise man will drink.

A Raging Drink

Wine is also called “raging” (Prov. 20:1). This text states that liquor is intrinsically raging regardless of the quantity or amount that you drink. Alcohol is called raging because of the *potential* harm that it can have in our lives. The word “raging” speaks of commotion, tumult, and brawling. It can refer to both internal conflicts that war against the soul and external conflicts that a person faces in society due to his alcohol consumption. Alcohol affects a man in both ways – internally and externally. Alcohol by its very nature and design is also a drink that can cause people to experience internal rage or conflict within their soul. This is because alcohol tempts them and causes them to depart from Christian character and the course that God wants them to pursue in life. As a Christian, we will experience an internal raging war between the flesh and the Spirit, when we depart into the alcohol lifestyle (Gal. 5:17).

Of course, the primary meaning is that alcohol causes external conflicts within families and relationships, since drink destroys the power of reason and causes a person to express fury and a fighting spirit. When drinking alcohol we have the potential of causing great tumult, brawling, and unrest in our families because of the kind of life we are living. Liquor results in many quarrels that end in wounds and blood. Alcohol stirs up squabbles and fights (Prov. 23:35). It is a raging drink because of what it does. People can't live peaceably with their families and dwell with their marriage partners in a suitable fashion when under the influence of alcohol. Instead of a peaceable home atmosphere there is bitterness and brawling in the household due to the control and influence of alcohol. Booze or alcohol brings

disharmony and division into the family life. It is the number one home wrecker. It is a drink of rage.

How many mothers must explain to their children to stay away from daddy since he is drinking again? How many dads must tell their children that mom is gone again with her friends drinking and carrying on in the world? How often has a dad or mom been drunk and committed sexual sins outside of the marriage bond? How often have a husband and wife locked horns because of the ill effects of alcohol? What about the abuse of children that goes on because of alcoholic parents? Booze breaks up families and causes all kinds of conflict and turmoil. Wine is raging! It has the potential to cause havoc and division in the lives of everyone who touches it.

Why would you as a mother or dad want to drink wine when all of these potential evils can befall you and your family? Why would you want to set a bad example of drinking in front of your children? What kind of life and family problems will your children have if they follow your example of drinking alcoholic beverage? Many parents set their children up for social drinking and the dangers of liquor. I tell you, most parents don't think when they put the booze bottle to their lips. They can't see past their Budweiser cans when they are drinking and contemplate the tremendous harm, horror, and heartache that alcohol can cause in their family and children's lives. Wine is raging because of what it does to people and families. It causes conflicts and breaks them up by turning people into raging monsters who live for themselves.

B. Charles Hostetter said:

“Strong drink will turn a gentleman into a beast. It will make him a reproach. It will wreck his home. It will waste his money. It will ruin his business. It will damn his soul. The drinker's path is always down. Beverage alcohol is one of God's worst enemies and the devil's best friend.”

A Deceptive Drink

The person who drinks alcohol has the potential of deceiving himself (“whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” – Prov. 20:1). The idea is this. Since wine is a mocker and raging substance those who drink

it open themselves up for deception and a fall. The word “deception” means to err or go astray morally and mentally. This verse is speaking about the mental deception that comes through ignorance. This word can literally refer to the reeling to and fro, or swerving back and forth of a drunkard, who is under the influence of alcohol. The figurative meaning of the word suggests that alcohol can deceive a person mentally and cause him to stumble or go astray.

Alcohol misleads people through its mental deception. It sells them a bill of goods that it can never deliver. It makes promises that it can never deliver. What are some ways that alcohol deceives people? It promises the high life but brings the low life. It promises prosperity but brings poverty. It promises fulfillment but brings futility. It promises sensational feelings but delivers suffering and sorrow. It promises purpose in life but brings pain. It promises hope but brings helplessness. It promises release but brings ruin. It promises a new start to life but eventually ends a person’s life. Alcohol is deceptive. People are continually being deceived by alcohol. Alcohol says, “Just one drink” but people who want to drink never stop at just one. Their drinking goes on and on throughout a lifetime until the drink finally it takes them under. “Just one.” This is the deception of alcohol. Alcohol will try to be your master. Don’t be deceived.

People drink alcoholic beverage thinking that it will somehow liberate them and give them social acceptance. However, in the end they find themselves in a drunken stupor committing all kinds of horrible and wicked sins that they will someday regret. Alcohol deceives people. The intoxicating substance of alcohol promises people an escape from reality but in the end it only adds misery to their lives and soils their Christian character and testimony. Alcohol is a deceiver. It’s like a 300-pound man selling diet pills. Alcohol says, “You need a break from the family. You need to clear your mind. Go down to the local bar and drink one with the boys.” It sounds reasonable and fair at the time but many a man who has followed the deceptive advice of alcohol ends up losing his family. At this point we could share countless stories of how alcohol has wrecked the lives of people and their families. The allurements of alcohol is deceptive but in the end it can destroy you and your family.

Two boys were met by a dog. As they approached the dog he was wagging his tail while at the same time growling and showing his teeth. Like the wagging tail of the dog the liquor industry wants us to believe that drinking alcohol is harmless and possesses no threat to our way of living. However, the Bible speaks of the growls and teeth of the dog or the dangers lurking behind every drink that you imbibe or consume. Alcohol has the tendency to wag its tail in a friendly manner but in the end it will bite you.

The implication of Proverbs 20:1 and the other proverbs that warn against alcohol consumption is this. Don't drink alcohol because of the potential harm and spiritually debilitating impact it can have upon your life. Stay away from it. Don't even look at it with the intent to drink it because of the potential harm that it can bring upon your personal life and family. When you plan to drink beverage alcohol you place yourself in a position of danger. You set yourself up for heartache and misery.

Proverbs 23:31 gives the timeless advice:

“Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright.”

We have then seen how the Scripture presents intoxicating wine as a mocker, raging drink, and a deceiver (something that leads us astray). No wonder a person should never take their chances with liquor and look upon it with the intent to imbibe it. The word “look” means to desire or crave to drink alcoholic beverage. When someone looks at alcohol he is longing to drink it and have it become part of his life. God says we should not look at alcohol with the desire to consume it because of the potential harm it can have upon our lives. The temptation to drink comes when one looks at the color of the wine, the movement and sparkle of the wine in the cup, and how the wine would taste if it were slobbered around in the mouth and consumed. I'm convinced that drinking alcoholic beverage is wrong because God is against it! You should be against what God is against (“I hate every false way” - Psalm 119:104).

The rest of the proverbs speak of alcohol as something that can bring us to poverty (Prov. 23:21), potentially poison our lives (Prov. 23:32) with all kinds of sins (Prov 23:33), bring spiritual heartaches and

problems into our lives (Prov. 23:29), and result in bondage or addiction (Prov. 23:35). Who in their right mind would want to drink alcohol when reading all the warnings that the Scripture gives concerning its evils? Every bottle of booze should have a warning label on it that reads: "I'm a Mocker, I'm Raging, I'm a Deceiver." This warning label tells the true story of alcohol. Drinking will not make you into a man of distinction but a man of delusion ("whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" – Prov. 20:1).

Let me ask you a very pointed question. Why would you want to drink something that has the potential of making a fool out of you? Why would you want to drink something that has the potential to poison you and make you stray into all kinds of sins? Why would you want to drink something that wants to make a mockery out of your life? Wine is a mocker (Prov. 20:1). Wine or alcohol mocks men because of the way it leads people astray and what it does to men. Drinking alcohol opens up people to drunkenness and all kinds of moral evils and this is why the godly mother and Bible forbid the use of it (Prov. 23:31; 31:4). Wine is also raging! It leads to internal rage or spiritual conflicts that war against the soul and outward rage or conflict that results in family divisions and heartaches. Do you really want to drink something that mocks you and which can ruin your life and family?

Near the Temple Bar on London's Fleet Street was a tavern known as the "Devil and St. Dunstan." Many lawyers at the end of court frequented it and when one left his office to visit the tavern he was likely to put up a notice to that effect on his door reading, "Gone to the Devil" -- Devil being the tavern's abbreviated name. The sign became such a common sight that it finally took on the meaning of "going to ruin." The Bible gives so many warnings against the use of alcohol one must wonder why anyone would want to engage in drinking this beverage.

The Warnings of Alcohol Consumption

Repeated warnings against drinking alcohol are given in the Bible because of the effect and dangers that this drink has on people. The warning is not to partake of this manmade substance because of the adverse effect that it can have upon your life and the lives of others. Alcohol is a mocking, raging, and deceiving drink because it has the

potential for producing poverty, laziness, sorrow, strife, needless wounds, heartache, perverse language, and slavery or addiction. *God counsels us to keep on remembering the end results of drinking alcohol.* He gives us ample warning concerning associating with this type of lifestyle and the adverse effects that alcohol can have upon our lives. There is a high risk and cost that is associated with drinking alcohol.

The Warning of Evil Association

Proverbs 23:20

“Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh.”

William Jennings Bryan said that drinking holes where drunkenness is openly glorified and practiced “is the first place that a policeman looks for crime and the last place he would go to look for virtue.” The Bible verse warns us about the danger of hanging out with drunkards or the cocktail crowd when it says, “Be not among winebibbers.” We must remember the age old adage that says “evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). If you hang around people who drink, booze, and carry on you will eventually become like them. If you go to their places and parties that promote their sinful lifestyle then you will eventually be tempted to participate with them in their barbarian ways. This verse speaks of the danger of associating with drunkards in those specific places where they drink and party or where they practice their binge drinking (1 Thess. 5:22).

The writer is referring to drunken feasts where people drink heavily with the intent to become drunk and revel in the sins that accompany drunkenness. This kind of lifestyle should be something that a Christian no longer associates with (1 Pet. 4:3-4). *Evil is associated with strong drink and strong drink with evil.* Therefore, Christians should not associate themselves with those places that are known to promote drunkenness and a party spirit and become a partner to their worldly ways (1 Tim. 5:22; 1 Cor. 10:20). These types of practices and places should not be promoted by the Christian. They are not becoming to holiness (Titus 2:3). The effects of being at home among drunkards (“to eat and drink with the drunken” - Matt. 24:49) and their places of drunken festivities will have serious consequences upon your life. We must be careful that our contacts with unbelievers do not

begin to make us comfortable with the anti-God philosophies and practices. For this reason, we should avoid those places that promote drunkenness and a party spirit which leads to all kinds of vice and wickedness.

Remember one thing:

“The company that you keep indicates the kind of person that you are.”

Many people want to drink to be socially acceptable with others. However, if your friends reject you because you don't drink, then they are really not your friends (Prov. 17:17). A true friend would not insist that you do something harmful, or something that you just don't want to do. And why is your decision not to drink classified as "pushing your beliefs" on someone else? In actuality, they are pushing their beliefs upon you by using peer pressure. Furthermore, our true friends as Christians should not be those who are considered drinkers but abstainers, since we have been delivered from the old manner of living and friendships that tear down our spiritual lives.

1 Peter 4:4

“Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*.”

Let's state it in a very clear fashion. God does not want Christians hanging around those types of places that are nothing but booze holes or places where people are known to party and become like drunken fools (Eph. 5:11 - "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"). These places are not a wholesome atmosphere for Christians nor do they represent a good Christian testimony (1 Tim. 4:12). The Christian should want to show what God is like and avoid indulging in those vices and promoting those vices that contradict a godly and good Christian testimony.

The Warning of Poverty

Proverbs 21:17

“He that loveth pleasure *shall be* a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.”

Proverbs 23:21

“For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe *a man* with rags.”

Drinking and poverty go together. Verse twenty-one reminds us that alcohol can bring people to poverty (“come to poverty”) since this drink has the potential of overtaking people’s lives to such an extent that they spend much of their earnings to support their habit. Furthermore, their drinking habit or addiction to alcohol can make them lazy (“drowsiness”), keep them from work, and cause them to become poor and clothed “with rags.” Alcohol does not take people from rags to riches; it can take them from riches to rags. A drunkard will seek his baby’s shoes and steal from his little girl’s piggy bank to obtain a drink. Do you want to be poor? Do you want to become like this person? We could give many examples of those who have used alcohol and who one day found themselves in the poor house or on skid row.

The Warning of Emotional, Social, and Physical Problems

Proverbs 23:29-31 says:

“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.”

Drinking alcohol can create emotional problems (“woe” and “sorrow”), social problems (“contentions” and “babbling”), and physical problems (“wounds without cause” and “redness of eyes” - bloodshot eyes) in a person’s life. Alcohol has the potential of adversely effecting our lives emotionally, socially, and physically.

Do you want this kind of life? Do you want to be full of woe? This means to cry out in utter despair. It is a passionate cry of grief and despair because of the results that alcoholism brings into a person’s life. Many a man has cried out in utter hopelessness because of the ravages that alcohol has had upon his life. I will never forget seeing a man lying face down on the ground on New Year’s Eve with a river of

regurgitated booze running out of his mouth. He was flat out on the ground moaning and sighing for what he had done. And you ask me if wine mocks men? You ask me if wine is raging?

Dear friend, do you want a life of sorrow? Sorrow speaks of pain and uneasiness. Is that what you want in life? Do you want “contentions” or strife in your home, marriage, and family? Then drink alcohol. Alcohol wrecks marriages, families, and the individual lives of people. Do you want to be known as a babbler or a person who is angry, complaining, and making trouble? Then drink alcohol. Do you want to have bruises over your body and not know what caused them? Then drink booze. Boozers get into fights and fall down causing injury to their bodies but they cannot remember when and where the injuries occurred (“they have beaten me, and I felt it not” - vs. 35). Is this the kind of life that you want? Does this sound like fun to you?

The Warning of Sexual Sins and Corrupt Speech

Do you want to become mixed up in sexual sins and be known as a foul-mouthed person? Then drink alcohol. Alcohol promotes promiscuous sex and the foul-mouthed gutter talk of the world. The vice of alcohol leads to other vices. This has always been true.

Proverbs 23:33 says:

“Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.”

This is what a drunkard *desires*. Alcohol kindles impure appetites for sex and all kinds of sensuality. This is why the bar atmosphere is an atmosphere for sex and lewdness. Alcohol is involved in 90 percent of all college campus rapes. Many people have lost their virtue as a result of drinking (Joel 3:3). Some things never change. Alcohol and illicit sex go hand in hand. They are two peas on the same pod. Liquor and lewdness are twin sins. Don’t fool yourself. The Bible records how alcohol consumption can lead to immoral behavior and sexual sins (Gen. 9:20-26, 19:30-38; Hosea 4:11). The warnings are very clear and every godly mother will want to convey these dangers to her children.

The “perverse things” (Prov. 23:33) are what a drunkard *declares*. The drunkard speaks forth floods of vulgarity, profanity, and words of gossip. Foul-mouthed speech and indecent speech spews forth from a drunkard’s lips. Alcohol, promiscuous sex (‘strange women’), and vulgar speech (“perverse things”) come from the same source - alcoholic drink. Alcohol promotes immoral behavior and improper, wicked, and corrupt speech. It leads to sins that are immoral and humiliating. This is another reason why the godly mother warns her son to practice abstinence.

Wine is a mocker! Wine is raging! When you drink wine you are setting yourself up for this kind of wicked, godless, and empty lifestyle. Alcohol promotes all kinds of sins within our personal lives and the society in which we live, such as theft, rape, and murder (2 Sam. 13:28-29; 1 Kings 16:8-10). Booze is behind many of the sins that plague civilization.

Billy Sunday said:

“Strong drink is the stem around which cluster most of the infamies.”

Dear friend, why would you drink? Alcohol has nothing to offer you but false security, failure, and the far-reaching effects of misery and woe. Alcohol is setting you up for a fall. It wants to ruin your life. It’s a mocking, raging, and deceiving drink.

Would you want to play around with a deadly snake? Ladies, would you want a rattlesnake to roam freely around in your house? Why not? It’s because of the potential deadly effect that it can have on your household. A rattlesnake always has the potential to bite and this is why it’s better not to have one slithering around your household. This is why the Bible forbids the use of alcohol even in connection with social drinking. Alcohol is like a rattlesnake that is waiting to strike or bite you.

“At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder” (Prov 23:32).

This verse teaches that alcohol has the *potential* of having a spiritually deadly effect upon our lives. *Alcohol promises great things but its real character is not revealed until it is too late.* In the end it

bites us and takes us down. Notice that it does not bite or sting at first. The true consequences are not known until later. The devil always says that we can have fun (Heb. 11:25) and then sends us the bill later! God counsels us to keep remembering the end results of drinking. Alcohol has the potential of taking a person down. This is why we are called upon to “Look not thou upon the wine” (Prov. 23:31) or not even think of drinking alcohol.

We are to crush the craving to drink alcoholic beverage because of the dangerous course of life we may embark on if we imbibe or consume the drink. Don't look upon the wine. Don't crave the alcoholic beverage. We are told to resist wine's allurements which consists of sight, taste, and feel. Don't let its color, sparkle, or texture tempt you to drink. Why? It's because of what it can do to our lives. It's because of the potential harm that it can bring to our lives. In short, it can ruin our lives and the lives of others. You think of that the next time you are ready to open a beer and drink one with the boys. You think about that the next time you are about to go to that party where alcoholic beverages are served.

An unusual goblet was used to serve liquor. At first glance there seemed to be nothing unusual about it, but a closer examination revealed a figure in the bottom of the glass. It depicted a snake in a coiled position, its mouth wide open and its fangs exposed. It was poised to strike out at its victim. When the goblet was filled with an alcoholic beverage, the snake was indiscernible. But when the contents were drained to a certain level, the unsuspecting drinker would be startled by the shocking sight of that serpent's head with its glaring eyes, its gaping mouth, and its deadly fangs. The craftsman who designed that goblet certainly knew what he was doing. Those who use strong drink are exposing themselves to a "deadly serpent" that is ready to strike out at its unwary victims and destroy them.

Proverbs 23:31 says that when a person looks at wine with the intent to even drink it (“Look not thou upon the wine”) he is setting himself up for the kind of wicked and worthless lifestyle described in the proverbs. This is why it makes no sense to drink socially. If you drink socially as a Christian, you are ignoring the warnings of the proverbs. *The proverbs argue against the practice of social drinking because of the potential pitfalls and spiritual problems that alcohol can bring into*

the lives of people The proverbs not only condemn drunkenness but the path that leads to drunkenness - the drinking of alcoholic beverage. The best way to avoid drunkenness is not to drink at all.

A Japanese proverb warns:

“First the man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, and then the drink takes the man.”

Warning after warning is given so that a person may understand God’s mind on this matter. Don’t drink alcohol. You say, “I can handle my beer.” That is not the point of the proverbs. They are not teaching that if a person can handle their beer they can freely drink it or imbibe it. No! A thousand times no! The warnings of the proverbs are teaching not to drink alcohol because of the potential harmful effects it can have upon your life and the lives of others. It’s not about handling one or two beers but steering away from beer and alcohol because of the potentially harmful effects it can have upon your life.

Drunkenness is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:21). Therefore, to open the door to the works of the flesh by consuming any form or quantity of alcoholic substance, which can readily overtake our lives and lead to fleshly living, contradicts what the Bible says a Christian should do, which is to make no provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:14). Drinking alcohol sets a person up to sin and experience a spiritual downfall in his life. This is why the Scriptures look down upon social drinking and give no approval for the social drink. The condemnation of drunkenness (“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess” - Eph. 5:18) is not intended to be a license for lesser forms of alcoholic consumption.

Dare we say that taking drugs like cocaine and heroin is okay in moderation? Does the condemnation of pornography give license for lesser forms of pornography? The Bible gives us no warrant or sanction for social drinking. The proverbs give us God’s complete wisdom on the matter of consuming alcoholic beverages. It’s not a matter of drinking less but avoiding the dangers related to drinking by practicing abstinence. The logic of total abstinence cannot be overlooked. If something can take you down then why play around with it.

The Warning of Addiction

Proverbs 23:34, “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.”

This is what a drunkard *does*. The verse records the sad condition of the drunkard under the influence of alcohol. He has wobbly legs and sways back and forth as he tries to walk. This drunken scene is comparable to a sailor at sea. Of course, it's hard enough for a sailor to sleep on any part of the ship when it is tossing back and forth. However, if he perches himself on the ship's rigging far above the ocean he has even more difficulty resting. The movement of sleeping sailors at sea rocking back and forth pictures the drunkard who sways back and forth as he walks in his drunken condition.

Proverbs 23:35

“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.”

This is what a drunkard *discovers*. When a drunkard passes through one of his intoxicating stupors he experiences bruises and beatings but has no way of knowing how he got them due to his drunken state. This is yet another way that wine mocks a man. But in this verse we also see that wine is addictive for after people are intoxicated and pass through a drunken stupor most people “awake” and “will seek it again” (Prov. 23:35). This is what the drunkard *decides*. He decides to go back to the bottle. This is the horrible nature of addiction to alcohol. You can't get away from it. You can't leave it alone. It runs your life. You become enslaved to it. “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly” (Prov. 26:11). This is true for the alcoholic. The drunkard, after all of his hardships and misery, awakens to once again seek another drink. The easiest course of the drunkard is to resubmerge himself in a nonsense or make-believe world where alcohol is king.

Alcohol addiction is an epidemic in this country. It's estimated that there may be 14 million alcoholics in this country alone. Why? It's because alcohol brings people under bondage. The Bible speaks about those who are “brought in bondage” (2 Pet. 2:19) and

overcome by the powerful sway of fleshly lusts that war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11). You may be one of these victims today. Alcohol enslaves millions of people and brings them under a vigorous life of bondage in the dungeon of despair and doom.

I can tell you one thing. Alcohol has the potential to wreck your life and keep you away from God's will and plan for your life. It can eat away your soul and keep you from living a life of true joy and fulfillment. Why can't we just come before God and say, "Dear God, you know what is best for my life. I will not drink and open myself up to temptation and sin." Every godly mother knows that drinking booze can eventually lead to her demise and spiritually shipwreck the lives of her children. No wonder this mother had a burden for her son who was in the place of authority and temptation.

Proverbs 31:4

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink."

The name "Lemuel" means "devoted to God." If you are going to be devoted to God you must never set yourself up to fall into the sinful traps of alcohol. You must take the advice of the godly mother and the wisdom of the Proverbs and abstain from beverage alcohol.

Many children in the home have been abandoned and devastated by a boozing dad or mother who has become addicted to alcohol. The godly wife knows that many kings and men that are leaders have been overtaken by alcohol and strong drink. Mockery, poverty, perverse speaking, sexual sins, abuse within the home and destruction of the home, the physical and spiritual collapse of a person's life, the lack of discerning leadership in society, addiction, bondage, emptiness, futility, and false security are all valid reasons why this godly mother gives a stern warning to her son about drinking alcohol. We ought to take heed to this warning today and every mother here ought to teach their children of the dangers of alcohol.

Addiction to strong drink was the undoing of Alexander the Great. He conquered the known world before he was forty but then died prematurely as a drunkard because he could not control his desire for alcohol. Recent studies show that 10 to 15 percent of all Americans

over sixty are alcoholics. What incredible folly it is to take that first drink!

If you were to go to an airport and board a plane but were informed that one out of every eighteen seats will drop or fall through the floor before the flight is over, what would you do? Would you take your chances and go on the flight? No person in his right mind would board an airplane like this. And yet any person who takes his first drink is like an individual who would take his chances to board an airplane where the seat would fall through the floor at ten thousand feet while moving at 300 miles per hour.

Stop living in a fool's paradise! The wisdom of the proverbs warns against taking that first drink or any alcoholic drink because of the potential spiritual harm and devastation alcohol can bring into your life and the lives of others.

The Warning of Perverted Judgment

Wine also perverts right moral and spiritual judgment or discernment. The particular danger for a king to drink alcohol lies in the alcohol's tendency to cloud his memory and judgment, resulting in injustice to those who are needy and oppressed.

The mother reminds her son in Proverbs 31:5:
"Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted."

Proverbs 31:8-9 adds to this thought:
'Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.'

The mother reminds her son to stay mentally alert because of his important role as king. Alcohol dulls the senses so that people are no longer mentally discerning ("forget the law" and "pervert the judgment" - vs. 5). Therefore, a king should stay off the booze for the simple reason that he needs to make sound and fair judgments for those who cannot speak for themselves ("the dumb" or speechless) because of their lack for words and their low status in society. The

words of the rich would often be heard but disregard for the poor and their needs in life would not be addressed. However, a king who defended those who could not defend themselves, and who made little contribution to him, would be noted as a just and gracious man who could “judge righteously” (vs. 9). He was to judge fairly, regardless of a person’s social status. The point of the matter is this. A king could not do this if he was drinking alcohol for booze clouds the judgment of those who use it. This is a known fact.

Alcohol and civic responsibilities don’t mix, according to Proverbs 31:1–9; yet the alcohol flows freely under capitol domes and at embassies. A resident of Washington, D.C. said, “There are three parties in this city: the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, and the cocktail party.” The Bible teaches that those who drink “err in vision, they stumble in judgment” (Isaiah 28:7). Alcohol keeps people from making wise and discerning judgments. It also keeps people from focusing on the things that are important and of value. It causes people to become undiscerning and cloudy in their perception or way of thinking. In short, alcohol keeps people from proper discernment. This is true in the spiritual realm as well. Alcohol keeps us from having our minds spiritually sharp and sensitive to God’s truth and direction for our lives. Alcohol dulls our spiritual senses so that we cannot think properly about spiritual things.

1 Timothy 3:2-3 gives this requirement for elders:

“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous.”

It’s not the purpose of this study to examine every verse dealing with wine. That will have to be done in another more technical study. Let me just say this. There is no reason why we should not understand the word “vigilant” in its literal meaning or sense (“wineless” – nephaleos). It leaves no room for elders to drink alcohol. They are quite literally to be wineless men! A man who is a drinker has no place in the ministry. He is a poor example, and will surely be the cause of serious sin and disaster in the lives of others who follow his example as drinkers, justifying their indulgence because of their leader. A leader must be a man whose association with alcohol is

radically different from those of the world, and whose example leads others to righteous conduct - not sin (Rom. 14:21).

The next word in Timothy's list is "sober" (1 Tim. 3:2) and is joined with the previous word vigilant for an important reason. An elder should be vigilant (abstain from wine physically) so he can remain sober mentally (abstain from improper spiritual judgment). The word "sober" (sophron) means literally, "to possess a sound mind." This word comes right after the command for an elder to be vigilant (nephaleos - wineless) and suggests that when an elder is "sober" from a physical standpoint that he will remain in his right senses (mind). The English word "sober" then suggests that an elder is to remain sane in his senses or ability to think clearly as a result of refusing wine. Sobriety is something he cannot have unless he is a sober man free from all intoxicants. He is to think clearly, wisely, sensibly, and spiritually because he has been freed from alcoholic beverage that distorts the mind. The point seems to be this. The physical nature of a sober man gives way to the metaphorical meaning of sober (spiritual alertness).

I think Paul has both a literal and then spiritual teaching behind this English word sober. *A person who is physically sober can think straight.* He does not put himself in the place or position where he can become mentally confused. His judgments will not become clouded, irrational, bizarre, or out of the ordinary. Therefore, instead of drinking wine (booze) he is to drink in the Word of God so that he can lead a church in a spiritual and sensible way. He is to have a quality of mind that is serious, sensible, and Spirit-directed. We must understand that when a man is vigilant, or when he physically abstains from wine, he then can remain physically sober with the result of maintaining spiritual sobriety to do the work of the ministry. The combination of these words then stress physical abstinence with the result of sobriety in living and thinking.

Alcohol is a narcotic that affects the brain causing a person to lose control of their senses. Alcohol is not a food. It is a poison. The fact of the matter is this. A person cannot be fully sober when he drinks any amount of wine or alcoholic beverage. This is because wine dulls the senses – even a little wine! The Bible has a different definition of sobriety than America does. The point is this. When a man is

wineless he will think in a rational and clear fashion. If he is not wineless he will not think rationally and spiritually. So an elder must refuse to drink alcohol and do so on the ground that he can think clearly about spiritual matters and make wise decisions and stay spiritually sober in his judgments. After all, a sound mind can only occur in a sound body! A sound mind is a sound body. The two work together. Any amount of alcohol dulls the senses. In very small doses alcohol destroys perception and mental sharpness. The only real difference between the loss of brain cells or mental perception between that of a social drinker and heavy drinker is one of degree.

Shakespeare said,
"O God! That men should put any enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains."

Although it's long been known that excessive drinking damages the brain, a new report contends that even social drinking destroys brain cells. At the 28th International Congress on Alcohol and Alcoholism, Dr. Melvin H. Knisely, professor of anatomy at the Medical College of South Carolina, offered evidence to show that when a drinker begins to feel the least bit giddy, a few of his brain cells are being killed. A heavy drinking bout can damage or destroy as many as 10,000 such cells. Beer, wine, and liquor from toxic substances called aldehydes that destroy the liver, kidney, and brain cells. Alcohol especially effects the brain, acting as an anesthetic that progressively paralyzes the drinker's control centers.

Thomas Edison said:

"I do not drink alcoholic liquors. I have better use for my head. To put alcohol in the human brain is like putting sand in the bearings of an engine."

The point is this. When one imbibes ethyl alcohol in any form, he will invariably be influenced and controlled by it to some extent. Drunkenness is not defined as a condition but as an action (Eph. 5:18 - "be not drunk with wine"). I think there is a reason for this. *Nobody knows the exact time they become drunk.* Wine is a mocker! Alcohol deceptively and gradually takes over the senses and affects our personal lives. This is why social or moderate drinking is so dangerous. Where does the so-called "justifiable drinking" stop and

drunkenness begin? Nobody can say and this is a valid point. When drinking alcohol people begin to gradually yield themselves to the control of ethyl alcohol instead of yielding to the control of God (Roman 6:12-13).

Proverbs 31:5 says:

“Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.”

The godly advice of this mother cannot go unnoticed. Her advice with the other wisdom passages found in the proverbs teaches us the danger of alcohol and the lack of wisdom when we drink of this potentially soul-destroying substance.

Drowning Your Sorrows in Alcohol

Proverbs 31:6-7

“Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.”

At first it sounds like this mother is contradicting herself concerning the advice she has just said concerning alcohol. But this is not the case. Mother is not saying that alcohol is all right for dying people, or those who are depressed and who want to drown their sorrows in alcohol, in order to forget it all. A godly mother would never contradict herself in this way. Her statement was actually an explanation of what *heathen* people do as they try to get away from the realities of life and not face their problems. Isaiah 56:12, “Come ye, say *they*, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, *and* much more abundant.”

It was a generally acceptable practice for a heathenistic society to give people drink who sense that they need an alcoholic stimulant, depressant, or drug. This is why the mother speaks of giving strong drink to those people who crave it. *She was not suggesting that her son give alcohol to others but was simply stating what a society devoid of God's truth practices.* They turn to the bottle instead of God in their attempt to overcome life's difficulties. They want to exit this life

without giving thought to dying, their accountability to God, and the afterlife.

It would seem that Proverbs 9:6–7 are spoken in irony and not as a commandment since nobody's problems are solved by forgetting them! Furthermore, who wants to spend their last minutes of life on earth drunk? When Jesus faced death on the cross, He refused to accept the wine sedative that was offered Him (Matt. 27:33–34). We help people, not by deadening them to their problems and pains, but by encouraging them to trust the Lord and lean on His Word.

Someone said: "The dying person needs help in preparing to meet God, and the suffering person needs help in solving life's problems; drinking alcohol will accomplish neither one."

It was the acceptable heathen practice for people to drown their sorrows in beer and booze. But let me say something about this. There is another way out! His name is Jesus! Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain." Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." When we allow Jesus Christ to be Lord of our lives He will take us through our problems by giving us His grace, strength, peace, and joy. A Christian does not need to drown his sorrows in booze. He can take his sorrows to the "man of sorrows" (Isa. 53:3) who understands his problems in life and He will heal up his hurts and wounds.

"No one understands like Jesus
He's a Friend beyond compare.
Meet Him at the throne of mercy;
He is waiting for You there.

No one understands like Jesus
When the days are dark and grim.
No one is so near, so dear as Jesus;
Cast Your every care on Him.

No understands like Jesus;
Every woe He sees and feels.
Tenderly He whispers comfort,
And the broken heart He heals."

Jesus is the healer of broken hearts – not booze! Psalm 147:3 says, “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Alcohol is a patch. People use alcohol because it makes them feel good. What they really mean is that alcohol provides an escape from reality, life’s pressures or problems, and provides them a sense of false security. This is why people use and abuse alcohol. Many are seeking a pleasure that only lasts for a season (Heb. 11:25 – “the pleasures of sin for a season”). But when a Christian develops a close walk and relationship with Jesus Christ and “draw nigh to God” (James 4:8) they will come to realize that Christ will provide them with the peace, lasting pleasure, true joy, strength, and the stability that they need in life, as they face life’s problems and pressures. Christ will also give them complete fulfillment for He said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might it more abundantly” (John 10:10). There is complete joy and fulfillment outside of alcohol since the Christian is “complete in him” (Col. 2:10) and possesses all that he needs for enriching life and godliness (“granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness” - 2 Pet. 1:3). Fulfillment and joy are not found in a bottle but in Christ!

When a person comes out of their drunken world of hide-and–seek (Prov. 23:34-35) the problems and perplexities are still there and they still can’t face them in their right mind. Dear friend, you need Jesus! Jesus is still the answer – not alcohol. The so-called Miller High Life is not a high life. It is the low life and it only leads to despair, misery, and emptiness. Alcohol is not the better way. Jesus is the better and only way that brings satisfaction, freedom, joy, and peace. Proverbs 31:6-7 again says:

“Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.”

The mother’s statement is not a statement of what people do who know the truth and dangers about alcohol. It is a statement of what people do who are heathen in their ways of living and ignorant about God’s wisdom and will for their lives. The statement was given by the godly mother to teach a lesson to her son. The lesson was simple. Don’t learn the way of the heathen (Jer. 10:2). Don’t occupy yourself

with what others are doing. Just do what I tell you to do and follow what is right.

A similar expression was made by Jesus in Luke 9:60 when he said, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." In other words, don't occupy yourself with what others do. Instead, follow Me! In the same way this mother was teaching her son, "Let others who feel they have desperate need to indulge in intoxicating drinks or beverages do so. But you don't touch the alcohol. You do what is right" The mother said, "Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more" (Prov. 31:5). This is what the heathen would do but the son was instructed by his mother to take the clean road instead of the booze road and refuse to drink alcohol. The burdened mother wants her son to stay away from the vice of drinking alcoholic beverage since it could potentially strip away his spiritual life and leave him empty, purposeless, worthless and godless in life.

Have you ever asked yourself these questions? Does drinking alcohol bring me closer to God or take me further away from Him (James 4:8)? What is my motive in wanting to do drink alcohol? Is it to please myself or to give glory to God (1 Cor. 10:31)? Do I drink to escape reality and be accepted by others who are not Christians (1 Cor. 15:33)? Do I drink because I am not relying upon the life of Christ to supply my every need in life (Phil. 4:13, 19)? Furthermore, when I drink will it cause my brother to stumble (Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8:9)? Will my action or conduct become a weight in my life (Hebrews 12:1)? Can drinking alcohol have the potential to enslave me (1 Cor. 12)? Will drinking hurt my testimony as a Christian (Ephesians 5:8; 1 Timothy 4:12; Matthew 5:14-16)? Many times Christians drink without thinking. They develop this bad habit without realizing how it can effect their life and the lives of others.

People often say, "Drinking makes me feel good." We have to understand, first of all, that alcohol is a drug. It is a narcotic which stimulates the brain and produces the "buzz" that so many people like. At first, this stimulus can make you feel more free in your actions and words. This is why people do things after drinking alcohol that they would normally never do. Alcohol seems to make your worries and problems leave. Everything seems to become rosy. But alcohol is

really a two-edged sword. It makes a person feel giddy while at the same time depressing their central nervous system and slowing down their physical reactions. It can also lead to depression in a person's life.

One thing is certain. When a person comes down off of the effects of alcohol, his problems are still the same, if not worse, because he has not dealt with them. As a person drinks more, alcohol begins to affect him in greater ways. It can act as a depressant lowering the spirits of people causing them to go into bouts of depression. This is why many drinkers eventually become isolated and secluded. So much for the goal of being "social." The "good feeling" or "high" that comes from drinking does not last. It's temporary. Anybody that has experienced a hangover after a late-night drinking spree knows that there is nothing to feel good about the next morning! Solomon said I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine (Eccles. 2:3) but in the end he said, "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all *is* vanity" (Eccles. 12:8).

A member of Alcoholics Anonymous once sent columnist Ann Landers the following:

We drank for happiness and became unhappy.

We drank for joy and became miserable.

We drank for sociability and became argumentative.

We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious.

We drank for friendship and made enemies.

We drank for sleep and awakened without rest.

We drank for strength and felt weak.

We drank "medicinally" and acquired health problems.

We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.

We drank for bravery and became afraid.

We drank for confidence and became doubtful.

We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.

We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell.

We drank to forget and were forever haunted.

We drank for freedom and became slaves.

We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply.

We drank to cope with life and invited death.

Alcohol is a dead end street that leads to emptiness and misery. This is the message of a burdened mother (Proverbs 31:1-9). Mom, is this

your message to your children? You better change your ways so you can change little Johnny's ways! A godly mother will give this Biblical advice to her children for she knows the dangers of alcohol and will want to rescue her children from the path of destruction, misery, and sin. Dear friend, we live in a hedonistic, sex-saturated, and alcohol-soaked society. Mom, your children are wanted by the beer barons. The kids are being told to drink beer because everyone is drinking it. Recent statistics tell us that 95 percent of college students drink beer. Two out of fifteen become alcoholics who take their first drink. The other four will become problem drinkers.

Dad and mom, you might say, "We are going to teach them to drink in moderation." Oh really. Moderation is where everybody begins. Let me tell you something. Nobody drinks to become a drunkard. Nobody takes that first sip believing they will end up in the gutter. *The Bible not only condemns drunkenness it condemns drinking.* Preachers and churches today are opening up their children to the beer barons of Budweiser and to Beelzebub (Luke 11;15), the devil himself, who loves to drown people in drink.

Isaiah 5:22 declares:

"Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink."

Social Drinking

What we desire usually determines what we do. Many Christians desire to drink socially but let me tell you once again what the Bible says about social drinking. Proverbs 23:31, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when it moveth itself aright.*" The wisdom of God's proverbs teaches that a person should not even look at alcohol with the intent or desire to drink it because of the devastating impact it can have on one's life. *God keeps the bitter end before us so that we might not take the first drink!* No Christian should crave to drink socially or desire to consume alcohol even moderately since the end results can be devastating to them and all who touch it. Again, it's not a matter of being able to control one's intake of liquor. Rather, it's a matter of obeying God's advice and command to not look upon the liquor with the desire to consume it and set ourselves up for a great fall. The

advice of the godly mother was to completely abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages (“it is not for kings to drink alcohol” - Prov. 31:3). Don’t look at it and tempt yourself with it. Don’t touch it. Don’t drink it. What part of this don’t we understand?

This study has revealed that wine is a mocking, raging, and deceiving drink (Prov. 20:1) because of the potential harm it can do to your life. The Bible says that those who drink wine open themselves up to poverty, sorrow, hurt, misery, contentions, babbling, sexual sin, unwholesome language, perverted judgment, and addiction (Prov. 23:21, 29, 35; 31:5). And this is not an exhaustive list! Don’t tell me God says you can drink socially as a Christian and have God’s approval. You may have the devil’s approval but not God’s approval! God’s anger is compared to liquor. Revelation 14:10, “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.” Alcohol consumption is not something that God looks upon with favor. The Bible gives so many warnings about drinking alcohol that only a fool would dare drink it (“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes” - Prov. 12:15). It is foolish to take that first drink and continue to drink in light of all the warnings related to alcoholic beverage. Every mother will heed these warnings and teach her son about the danger of drink.

Proverbs 31:1

"The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him."

The message and burden of this mother was to share with her son about the dangers of alcohol. It was her burden that her son would steer clear of the devil’s drink and realize the dangers of taking that first drink and what can potentially follow. The dangers are too real to overlook. A burdened mother will share with her children the miseries, heartaches, and tragedies that come from drinking liquor or alcoholic beverage.

Proverbs 31:4

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink."

Luke 1:15 says that John the Baptist “shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be

filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.” Let me tell you what you should do as parents with all the beer and booze in your home. You should take it and pour it down the drain and get it out of your house. You say, “Oh Pastor, a little booze will never hurt us? Surely it can’t do us any harm? You tell that to the mom and dad who are weeping over a child who has just been killed by a drunkard in an automobile accident. You tell that to the mom who is in tears over her son because he has become addicted to the bar life of wine, women, and song. You tell that to the millions of alcoholics that took their first drink never intending to become drunkards. You tell that to a burdened godly mother who knows the potential evils and pitfalls that drinking alcohol brings into a child’s life. You tell that to God who could not make Himself any clearer on the danger of drinking alcohol and the matter of drinking socially.

Did you know that it is not only wrong for you to drink yourself, but it is also a sin to give your neighbor drink? God says in Habakkuk 2:15, “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth the bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!” This alone would throw social drinking right out the window. We should never set somebody else up to sin and cause them to commit moral failure (Rom. 14:21; 1 Cor. 8:13).

The Dwelling Place of God

In the Old Testament the priests were forbidden to drink alcoholic beverage when doing the service of God. This is because alcoholic wine could keep them from doing their service correctly. Furthermore, alcoholic wine was never to be associated with the work and presence of God. The tabernacle was God’s dwelling place and no alcohol was to be associated with His holy dwelling place.

Leviticus 10:9-10 says:

“Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.”

The Bible teaches that the New Testament Church is a royal priesthood. 1 Peter 2:5, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” The obvious parallel is this. If Old Testament priests under the law were forbidden to consume alcoholic beverages then why would New Testament priests lower the standard of God, who are living under grace (Rom. 6:14), and whose bodies are the very dwelling places of God? Every believer should make the distinction between the holy and unholy (abstinence or drinking) today and avoid consuming alcohol since his body is the tabernacle or holy dwelling place of God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

Pastor David Moss said:

“If God did not want any alcohol in the system of an Old Testament priest when he entered the Tabernacle, He surely does not appreciate any alcohol being poured into the very tabernacle (human body) where He is presently dwelling on earth.”

The United States consumes 60 percent of the world's illicit drugs (alcohol is a legal drug), and drug users spend \$150 billion in the United States just on cocaine! Alcohol is an intoxicant, which means that when you drink it, you are putting toxins into your body. How many would take water and mix Drano, or some other household cleaner with the water, and then proceed to drink it? Who ever heard of a Drano cocktail? Surely no one in their right mind would mix toxins with water and drink them. And yet when people imbibe ethyl alcohol (ethyl is C₂H₅OH – a substance used in colognes, cleaning solutions, gasoline, and rocket fuel) they are knowingly putting a toxic substance into their bodies in small quantities. God's children should know better than to abuse their bodies which is the holy dwelling place of God.

The point is this. Our bodies belong to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:22) and should be used for holy purposes (2 Cor. 7:1) that honor God and

which allow Him to have control. When other things own and control our bodies we desecrate God's personal temple that He wants to control and which is to be used for His own holy purposes. *When we are controlled by something else our bodies cannot be holy or separated ("set apart") unto God, as His own personal temple, where He alone resides and has preeminence or control.* This is why we are not to be brought under the authority of anything else (1 Cor. 6:12) such as alcohol. This is why we are to yield our bodies to God as His stewards (Rom. 6:11-14; 12:1-2).

Christ is to be in authority and possess complete ownership and control over our bodies since the body is His temple. We cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). Our bodies are God's home, which He alone wants to control, and use for His holy purposes. God lives within our bodies and because of this we must keep them under His control and use them for His holy purposes. Therefore, we should not allow our lives to become corrupted by another invader, controller, and power such as alcohol, which robs God of His rightful place in our heart and life. We must not use our bodies as garbage cans. They belong to God for His holy purposes. Since our bodies are God's personal dwelling place or house, it only makes common sense that God is to have complete control over His possession or temple – not alcohol.

Since no one knows the actual point when a person crosses the line and becomes drunk it is best not to drink at all. God want His children to remain completely sober and under the control of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). God's Word commands the Christian to remain sober. First Thessalonians 5:7-8 says, "For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." The point is this. Stay sober physically so you can stay sober spiritually and be victorious in your Christian life. Don't play around with drink. Don't invite any stage of drunkenness to take hold upon your life. Be a teetotaler. Abstain totally from alcoholic drink.

Standing by a Purpose True

Daniel 1:8 says that “Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank ...” God honored Daniel because he abstained from drinking wine. God will also honor and bless your life when you refuse to partake of alcoholic beverages. God wants us to be controlled by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and not by the spirits from a bottle.

“Standing by a purpose true,
Heeding God’s command,
Honor them, the faithful few!
All hail to Daniel's band!
Dare to be a Daniel, Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose firm!
Dare to make it known!”

It is important to come to a point of decision on this matter of drinking alcohol beverages. You can't ride the fence on this matter. Too much is at stake. Elijah told the people of his day, “How long halt ye between two opinions?” (1 Kings 18:21). Study all the warning passages and stop trying to find loopholes for alcoholic consumption. Make the right decision and you and your family will never regret it. One of the principles of the Christian life teaches that we must deny ourselves (Luke 9:23) of those things that harm us. We must yield ourselves to God for victory and in so doing say no to those things that lead us astray (Rom. 6:12-13). Determine to do what is right in the eyes of God (John 8:29) and don't be deceived by the subtle advertising of the liquor industry or by those who try and use their Christian liberty as a cloak of maliciousness” (moral depravity or badness) - 1 Pet. 2:16.

Abraham Lincoln once said,
“Liquor may have many defenders, but no defense.”

Many years ago in St. Louis, a lawyer visited a Christian to transact some business. Before the two parted, his client said to him, “I've often wanted to ask you a question, but I've been afraid to do so.” “What do you want to know?” asked the lawyer. The man replied, “I've wondered why you're not a Christian.” The man hung his head,

“I know enough about the Bible to realize that it says no drunkard can enter the kingdom of God; and you know my weakness!” “You’re avoiding my questions,” continued the believer. “Well, truthfully, I can’t recall anyone ever explaining how to become a Christian.” Picking up a Bible, the client read some passages showing that all are under condemnation, but that Christ came to save the lost by dying on the cross for their sins. “By receiving Him as your Substitute and Redeemer,” he said, “you can be forgiven. If you’re willing to receive Jesus, let’s pray together.” The lawyer agreed, and when it was his turn he exclaimed, “O Jesus, I am a slave to drink. One of your servants has shown me how to be saved. O God, forgive my sins and help me overcome the power of this terrible habit in my life.” Right there he was converted. That lawyer was C.I. Scofield, who later edited the reference Bible (Scofield Reference Bible) that bears his name.

Dear friend, Jesus Christ can deliver you from alcohol today. If you will repent of your sin and put your faith in the death and resurrection of Christ He will save you from hell, forgive you of your sin of drunkenness, deliver you from the bondage of alcohol, and give you a brand new start in life.

1 Corinthians 6:10-11 says:

“Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

What a promise! What hope! What assurance! Jesus can forgive you of your sin of alcoholism and deliver you from the power of this habit. If you are caught in the clutches of strong drink, I am happy to tell you that Jesus Christ is the great Liberator. Jesus said that He came “to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives ... to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus is the great Emancipator from sin. If you permit Jesus Christ to set you free then you will be “free indeed” (John 8:36). You will be able to sing these words:

“I’m free from the fear of tomorrow
I’m free from the guilt of the past.
For I’ve traded all my shackles
For a glorious song.
I’m free, praise the Lord, free at last!”