

BOTTOMS UP??

What Proverbs teaches about DRINKING.

It's a controversial subject. "Is drinking wrong?" "Is it okay to drink as long as I don't get drunk?"
"Didn't they drink in the Bible?" "Isn't a glass of wine a day good for you?"
"Don't drink, smoke or chew or date girls who do!"

As we've been reading the Proverbs, numerous verses deal with drink. We're compelled to examine this issue – and folks want an *honest* approach. The Bible does have a lot to say on this subject, and Proverbs in particular gives us some great insight. Let's explore God's advice to us!

I'm imagining a significant group of people. Almost all have tasted alcohol. Many have been drunk. Some have battled addiction. Some occasionally get drunk. Some currently drink socially. Some drink occasionally. Some don't touch the stuff.

Who is this group? OUR CHURCH
Needed: GOD'S PERSPECTIVE.

Issue #1: The Bible connects alcohol to CELEBRATION

- > Wine is DELIGHTFUL and PLEASING. (Song of Solomon 1:2; 4:10)
- > Wine is a way to celebrate GOD'S FAVOR. (Ecclesiastes 8:15)
- > Wine is made BY GOD for man's GLADNESS. (Psalm 104:14-15)
- > Wine is symbolic of PROSPERITY and PLENTY. (Jeremiah 13:2)
- > Wine symbolizes WISDOM'S GIFTS. (Prov. 9:5)



Issue #2: Beer & Wine are USEFUL & COMFORTING

- > 1 Timothy 5:23
- > Prov. 31: 6-7 (used as we might use MORPHINE or XANAX?)

Issue #3: Jesus PROVIDED alcoholic beverages for a PARTY.

- > John 2:1-11 (Q: What is the significance of v.10?)

** Considering these issues, it's hard to understand the vehement attitude some take against drinking.
Why would God want us to miss out?*

"Beer is proof that God
Loves us and wants us
To be happy"
-- Benjamin Franklin



BUT ON THE OTHER HAND ...

A PROVERBIAL LOOK AT DRINKING ALCOHOL

Prov. 23:29-35

* Result of “lingering on wine:”

- woe
- sorrow → PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE
- strife
- complaints – not just against you, but *by* you (no *satisfaction*)

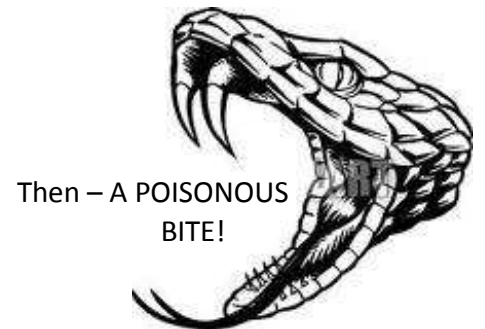
- needless bruises
- bloodshot eyes → PHYSICAL DAMAGE

* It's TRICKY: 1st – it LOOKS & TASTES good.



* It Attacks Your Senses By:

- > CONFUSING (v.33)
- > DEADENING (v.34, 35a)
- > ADDICTING (v.35b)



Then – A POISONOUS BITE!

→ Consider. What is the only **imperative** in this passage? Significance?

Prov. 23:20-21

* Even if you don't indulge ... don't JOIN with those who do!

Q: What does this mean for the “designated driver” of the group?

* What is the destiny for drunkards? POVERTY (see also 21:17)

Prov. 20:1

* Interesting metaphors! To what are wine and beer compared? MOCKER and BRAWLER.

→ What do they do? LEAD ASTRAY

→ What is their power? They remove our INHIBITIONS and lead to VIOLENCE.

-- *mocking* – saying things not normally said; **embarrassing** and **regrettable** behavior.

-- *brawling* – acting like one would never normally act

Confused yet? The problem (in a nutshell): 9:5 vs. 20:1 -- which is wise?

Other Considerations:

* Romans 14 (1 Cor. 8:9-13) -- If something is technically NOT A SIN it can still be WRONG!
> ill: The pastor that brought the beer to the party. What was he thinking!?!

* Consider how "drinking" has changed in 2,000 + years? *There is no parallel to our easy access to beer, wine, or vodka every day of the week and from every 7-11 or supermarket. Being a drunkard was not an easy habit; addiction was unlikely for all but the richest and most powerful (which fits in with the warning in Proverbs to kings). Addiction is a much greater problem in our day due to so many factors: easy access and abundance of alcohol, marketing, social institutions, etc. Also, the dangers of drunkenness are heightened in an era with automobiles, etc. – non-issues in Biblical days.*

Our Conclusions:

- (1) Drunkenness is CONDEMNED! (Eph. 5:18)
- (2) There are GOOD & BAD aspects of wine.
- (3) Drinking alcohol is VERY DANGEROUS.
- (4) Moderate consumption is NOT CONDEMNED
– except within the context of certain *persons* and certain *times*.
- (5) In light of the times, even moderate drinking by a Christian is NOT A GOOD IDEA.
(Bailey's opinion)



If any think to consume alcohol today, my counsel would therefore be not to do so, but if you do, do so privately and with heavy restrictions upon yourself, based on your own temperament and physiology -- not because the Bible has changed, but because social factors have changed in ways that the Bible's writers could not have envisioned. If their warnings within their social context are that strong, how much more so would they be in an era of cheap and plentiful alcohol?

This is not to say that consumption of alcohol is now a ticket to perdition. However, it is a behavior that needs to be carefully considered in light of innumerable other factors!

Study the Scriptures. Open your heart to God's will. Obey your conscience. Live by faith.