

Should Christians Consume Alcoholic Beverages? – Part 1

Hebrews 5:12-14 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be *(that which is)* the first *(beginning)* principles *(fundamentals)* of the oracles *(utterance)* of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat *(solid food)*. ¹³ For every one that useth milk is unskilful *(inexperienced)* in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But strong meat *(solid food)* belongeth to them that are of full age *mature*, even those who by reason of use have their senses *(perception)* exercised *(trained)* to discern *(distinguish between)* both good and evil.

There is such **confusion** on this subject and **destruction** because of it... Preachers must speak with clarity

Prov 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging & whosoever is deceived *(to be led or go astray)* thereby is not wise.

- wine = (Heb) from a root meaning to effervesce; wine (as fermented) *(has an unknown level of alcohol but certainly much lower than “strong drink”)*.
- strong drink = (Heb) an intoxicant, i.e. intensely alcoholic liquor: (whiskey)

I. **Three places our convictions must come from** (how we distinguish good & evil) We must obey God in all 3

- A. **The clear commands of God’s word.** (This is objective)
- B. **The proper application of Biblical principles.** (This is also objective as far as God is concerned)
 - So we must seek God’s mind, and understanding of His word, and not go by our opinions.
- C. **The personal dealings of God in the heart** (i.e. personal convictions) (This is subjective)
 1. *This is subjective from the stand point of another individual; however, it is not up to our opinion whether or not we obey God in the personal convictions He gives us.*
 2. We should never try to put our personal convictions on others as preachers or simply as believers.
 - a. Objective = true for all people regardless of individual thought or opinions.
 - b. Subjective = perceived or identified by one’s personal thoughts, characteristics or opinions *(God’s dealings, where not spelled out in scripture, can change based on individual needs).*

II. Let’s first address **the clear commands of God’s word** on this subject.

A. **Old Testament** (A few verses)

1. Isa 28:7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.
2. Prov 23:29-35 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. 33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. 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. 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.
3. Isa 5:11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!
4. Isa 5:22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

B. **New Testament**

1. **Gal 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.

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2. Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and **drunkenness**, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.
 3. Rom 13:13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and **drunkenness**, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.
 4. **1 Cor 5:9-11** I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: ¹⁰ Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a **drunkard**, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.
 5. **1 Cor 6:10** Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor **drunkards**, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
 6. **Eph 5:18** And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
 7. Pet 4:3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:
 8. 1 Tim 3:8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine.
- The Bible is **clear in its condemnation** of **intoxication** as well as **condemnation of any use of “strong drink”**.
 - I’m aware of OT verses that seem to speak of wine in a positive light; however...
 - Strong drink is **never** spoken of in a positive light in scripture.
 - Drunkenness is **always** condemned.
 - Under grace drunkenness is even **more strongly** condemned as sin.
 - I also understand that, even in NT teaching, it is the excess of wine, not the consumption of wine that is condemned. (*We will discuss this more later, as well as why I still believe that a proper application of Biblical principles can only lead one to the conclusion that all Christians, in our time and culture, should abstain from any and all consumption of alcohol*).
 - *There are some strong arguments for some of this “wine” being grape juice (the word translated wine means grape juice, either fermented or not) or watered-down wine (it is suggested by many that small amounts of wine were often mixed with water to purify it); but I won’t tread there since I cannot prove this.*

III. Now let’s address **the proper application of Biblical principles** on this and related subjects.

- A. **Subject 1: Hanging out in a drinking establishment** (for entertainment or even for witnessing) The biblical principles are very clear as applies to discerning “good & evil” here.
 1. Prov 23:19-20 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. 20 Be not among winebibbers... (*Those who become tipsy from wine; [tipsy, in our terminology “catching a buzz”]*)
 - a. This verse tells us not to even be among those who are tipsy.
 2. Prov 4:14-15 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. 15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.
 3. Prov 13:20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

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4. 2 Cor 6:17-18 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.
 5. Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.
 - a. Fellowship = association with or participation in.
 6. **Share my town team basketball testimony**
 7. Additional notes to go along with some things I said in the message regarding the popular teaching that Christians should “hang out in bars in order to win souls” follows on the next page.
- IV. **Biblically we have determined that the following to is sin:** 1). **intoxication** 2). **any use of whiskey**
3). **hanging out in bars**

Additional notes

The teaching that Jesus “hung around with publicans and sinners and so we should do the same” as a justification for Christians to hang out in the bars in order to reach the lost, is a misrepresentation of scripture as well as an assault on the character and actions of Jesus. What they claim Jesus did is inaccurate, and (therefore) we never see it “duplicated” in the ministry of Paul or the early church. The statement that he was a “friend of publicans and sinners” was a statement made by the religious leaders who, in the same breath, accused Him of drunkenness and gluttony (*“they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. Matthew 11:19*). We certainly cannot determine Jesus actions based on the accusations of the Pharisees, who also accused Him of casting out devils by the powers of Satan and implied He was an illegitimate child. We must determine His actions based on what the Gospel writers actually tell us in their own words. Their words show that **He certainly was a friend of sinners**, but not in the way some preachers suggest. The publicans and sinners came to Him to hear Him preach and He received them. He healed them and they were accepted by Him and He ate with them. Always when He was with them it was, or became, a preaching, healing, or miracle working event; it was never a scenario where Jesus was “hanging out with them as one of the guys”, in hopes of building a relationship with them that he may eventually win them to God as is, sadly, a common teaching today. This teaching is inconsistent with what He inspired Paul to write when giving instruction to the churches on godly living. (*See 2 Cor 6:17-18 and Eph 5:11 above for some examples*)

There is nothing in the Gospels to indicate, that if Christ came in the flesh today, “He would hang out in the bars and be one of the guys”, as many who understand little of the holiness of Christ suggest. They apparently think that Jesus would be almost unrecognizable and indistinguishable from those in the bar room. Though they do not suggest he commit sin, they seem to suggest that He would be hanging around with them and be comfortable with them in their sin, as they drink, dance and gyrate in a sexy fashion to ungodly music, flirt with other’s spouses and make sexual innuendos to one another. They also apparently would be comfortable with Jesus being there while this kind of behavior continued. How misguided and sacrilegious! Sadly, many Christians ARE comfortable in that setting, but that should not be the case. The scenario these teachers suggests does not sound like the scenario in the early church: (*Acts 5:11-13 And great fear came upon ... as many as heard these things. ¹³ And of the rest durst no man join himself to them...*)

I contend that if Christ came in the flesh today and if He entered a bar, it would not be to “hang out and be one of the guys”, it would be to preach and to convict and convert men and women by His holy presence and words. To teach anything contrary is to buy into (sincerely or otherwise) the spirit of lukewarmness and

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compromise that is so prevalent in the modern church, and adapt to the carnal nature that moves us to look for a “religious” excuses for compromising of the holy standards of God’s word.

Unless we are able to have the impact that Jesus would have if He entered a bar, I suggest (and Bible principles support this) that we stay away from the bar scene and abandon the idea that this is where we should try to reach souls. The Bible teaches us that we should “Be not deceived: evil communications (*companionship; fellowship*) corrupt (*to shrivel or wither, i.e. to spoil; to ruin, especially by immoral influences*), good manners (*morals; character*) (1 Corinthians 15:33). If we attempt to win sinners to Christ by hanging out in the bars and being a friend to them, we will likely not pull them up, but rather they will probably pull us down.

(Part 2 to follow, next week)