

Should Christians Drink Alcohol?

Evangelist Dea Warford
February 28, 2014

Word: "If my meat (**alcohol?**) makes my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh (**drink no alcohol**) while the world stands, lest I make my brother to stumble." (1 Cor. 8:13).

Wisdom: The following is just my opinion (as everything else I write is just my opinion). If you disagree with my opinions; let's agree to disagree! But, I do feel that I have ample scriptural basis to justify my feelings on the matter. And, I can write with some firsthand knowledge and experience: not because I drink, because I do not drink alcoholic beverages. But, having been raised in the household of an alcoholic father, I have many observations of the power and effects of drinking. I also buried 2 close relatives who died of alcoholism. So, I feel I can write with some authority on the subject.

First, we must honestly face the fact that Jesus drank wine and it contained alcohol because without refrigeration, grape juice ferments within a week or two and sugars become alcohol (Lu. 7:33, 4, Matt. 11:19). Grape juice is grape juice and wine is fermented grape juice and always has been. If Jesus just drank grape juice the Bible would have said so!

But, in ancient days, you had no refrigeration, so you had water, milk (which spoils rapidly without refrigeration), and wine to drink (except at grape harvest time). Wine in moderation was permitted. However, this is a now a very different age. We have many choices of what to drink.

I am convinced, if Jesus had come to America to die for our sins in this 21st century, He would have (like most evangelical American preachers), chosen not to drink at all! Bible days were different times. Many of the things they did in the Bible, Christians NEVER do today! We don't do an eye for an eye, for instance. We don't practice polygamy. We don't sell all our properties and give all our money to the church to distribute it as people have need (Acts 4:34, 35). Neither do we require our women to wear shawls in church (1 Cor. 11:3-10). Just because they did it in the Bible days isn't proof of license to do it today.

There are reasons why we don't do the above in today's church, and there are reasons why so many Christians don't touch alcohol. Some argue, "But many Christians in Europe still drink". Yes, that's true, but Europe is hardly an example to us of highly developed Christianity. There are European nations that have never had a national revival. Some of the deadest churches in the World are in Europe. Much modern theological "reasoning" came out of Europe (i.e.: German Rationalism in the 18th century) and even today many tight controls on the church are in place across Europe. Christians "fled" Europe to come to America for good reason! I wouldn't hold up Europe as the standard of how Christians ought to live.

Why do we evangelical leaders in America teach abstinence? Are we puritanical & legalistic; or is there good scriptural foundation for abstinence? There is!

Following are six good reasons why I and other Christians abstain from drinking:

- **Alcohol is one of the most destructive forces in America:**

Drinkers correctly argue that a glass of wine is good for your health. Yes, but you can take supplements of resveratrol (the most important antioxidant in wine) for cheaper than drinking wine! And, cocoa and peanuts are both high in resveratrol. So, that argument holds little water! Alcohol kills! (It's "*the wine of violence*." Prov. 4:17). I've buried alcoholics under 40 years of age! Half of our traffic deaths are caused by alcohol. Divorce, abuse, poverty, sin, and untimely death all result from it.

My dad was an alcoholic. I saw what it did to him, to mom, and to our family's finances. Even as a backslidden

teenager, I hated alcohol and determined I would never drink. Then, when I became a preacher, I saw even greater reasons not to *ever* drink alcohol.

How many times tormented people have come into my prayer line for deliverance, explaining, "My dad was an alcoholic." Living in the home of an alcoholic brings not only sadness, and often tragedy, but can scar one for a lifetime.

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate; and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." (II Cor. 6:17).

If ever there was an unclean thing, it's alcohol in America. Why would anybody want to be a partaker of something so destructive? Some rationalize their drinking: "I can handle my alcohol. I don't drink to excess." Not today, maybe, but . . .

- **Alcohol is very addicting:**

"All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." (1 Cor. 6:12).

To ask, "Is it a sin to drink?" is not the point. Baby Christians are always asking, "Can I do this and still get to heaven?" Mature Christians know that it is not a matter of what one can "legally" get by with, but rather its effects on us and others.

I had a friend in Bible College who was previously a mainline heroin addict. He stopped using heroin "cold turkey" 25 times in a year, and 25 times went right back to it. But, he explained to me, "Alcohol, now that's the real drug!" It's cheap, legal, and a slow but sure killer.

There are four basic types of drinkers:

Casual or Social drinkers- This would, of course, be the least destructive of the four, but often leads to worse bondage;

Functional alcoholics- These drinkers can hold down jobs; lead a reasonably successful life (by outward appearances); and likely don't even consider themselves alcoholics. But, many of them drink most every day;

Binge alcoholics- My dad was such. These drinkers will go weeks without touching alcohol and then will take a drink, which leads to another "drunk" until they may lose their job or get too sick to drink (How many times as a child I saw my dad throwing up in the kitchen sink after a long drunk);

Gutter alcoholics- These are those whose addiction has often cost them their family, their livelihood, their health and their ability to live a normal, productive life.

How can a person determine if he will remain just a casual drinker or become an "alcoholic?" He can't and that's the danger that lurks in the bottle! This is the truth taught in Proverbs,

"Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Prov. 20:1). Simply, alcohol has power to deceive ("I can handle this; just one more; I am not too drunk to drive": are examples of how it deceives).

"Look not upon the wine when it is red . . . At the last it bites like an adder." (Prov. 23:31,2).

No one starts out to "be an alcoholic;" he simply finds himself one day at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting! "Neither give place to the devil." (Eph. 4:27) certainly applies here.

"But, if a person never drinks to excess, and truly "controls" his drinking, isn't drinking OK for Him?" you might ask. Well, just remember . . .

"Pride goes before destruction." (Prov. 16:18).

"Because he transgresses by wine, he is a proud man." (Hab. 2:5).

A man who proudly "holds his liquor" is the man "giving place to the devil" and flirting with destruction. Many drinkers are ignoring a basic principle of Christianity . . .

- **Christians are called to be a witness and example to others:**

Every time one drinks, he is saying by that activity, "This is OK for me." The obvious inference others will want to draw from this is that drinking must be OK for them too.

A father was once headed to the bar for a drink. He looked behind him in the snow, and saw that his young son was following behind him; painstakingly stepping in each of the footsteps in the snow that his father had left behind. Realizing the obvious implications, wisely the father turned from the bar, and headed home with his son to be a better example for him.

"But Jesus drank"! Yes, and if you use that for an excuse to drink, you better fast food for 40 days, because He did that also. Jesus lived a wholly unique life, and everything He did had eternal purpose: not all of them clear to us today. But, there surely must be good reason that John the Baptist never touched alcohol:

"John came neither eating nor drinking." (Luke 7:33).

Paul the apostle taught a very important principle of the Christian life:

"That no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." (Rom. 14:13).

In ancient times, it was a common practice to put a stone in the path of an enemy; in hopes that he would stumble on it and hurt himself.

Christians are to love their enemies, and never do anything that would cause anyone to hurt themselves. The fact is that people do watch what we do and often imitate us.

I heard the story of a terrible car accident; wherein a teenage girl and her boyfriend were killed on high school graduation night. Her father, when called to the scene, was horrified to discover that they had been drinking, which most certainly contributed to the accident. He was livid as he cried, "Who would offer alcohol to these underage kids?"

He went home angry and deeply upset and reached for a drink. Opening his cabinet full of alcoholic beverages, he immediately noticed a note that his daughter had left for him. "We took a bottle of your booze. It's graduation! I knew you wouldn't mind."

Every time a father drinks in front of his children, he encourages them to do so as well. Every time a Christian does something, the world is watching. No wonder then that Paul wrote,

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby your brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak." (Rom. 14:21).

Did anybody reading this article watch the movie "Brokeback Mountain" about two homosexual men and their love (what a joke!) affair? What Christian would want to put his tacit approval on such entertainment? What person of integrity would want to give any money to "Brokeback Mountain" producers enabling them to make

more movies like that to corrupt America? In the same way; why would any Christian want to do anything that might encourage others to drink?

Eating meat is both legal and moral. Yet, Paul, the great Christian said:

"If my meat (alcohol?) makes my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh (drink no alcohol?) while the world stands, lest I make my brother to stumble." (1 Cor. 8:13).

Paul exemplified the true Christian's heart; love. If we love people, we will not want to do anything that could cause them to fall into sin or turn from Christianity (1 Cor. 13).

I know that there are many Christians who drink a little alcohol for special occasions and always drink with self-control and are very careful to be a good example of moderation to their family and others. I am not judging Christians for whom this is their practice. I am just saying that in my interpretation of the Scriptures and in my personal experience, total abstinence is preferred: and especially because of the American way of life (making alcohol so central to how many things we do.)

"A merry heart doeth good, like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones." Proverbs 17:22

- **The very purpose of Christianity suggests abstinence:**

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." (1 Cor. 10:4).

Christianity is a call to serve others; not indulge the flesh.

"Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31).

Does drinking bring God glory? Or does it instead dishonor Him and His purpose in you?

"I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." (1 Cor. 10:33).

Soul winners must be unselfish, as their work requires much self-sacrifice. Drinking can be one of the most selfish things anyone can do. What possible good reason could there be to drink?

Social? Jesus warned us not to backslide in the last days: to "drink with the drunken." (Matt. 24:49).

Concerned for your health? Drink grape juice or take a supplement of resveratrol or eat more peanuts!

You enjoy drinking? Isn't it just self-indulgence, when there are so many reasons not to drink, yet you do it nevertheless? Jesus warned against letting "drunkenness and the cares of this life" cause one to be unprepared for His coming (Luke 21:34-36).

"Self-control" is the fruit of the spirit. Alcohol contends for control of you! (Gal. 5:16, 17, 23, 24).

You may be able to drink a little and stay in control (awhile!) and remain a dedicated Christian, but there are many who can't! My dad was like a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. When he was sober, he was a good father and a wonderful person to be around; even going to church and serving the Lord at times. But when he drank, he could be horrible to be around (and serving the Lord was out of the equation). If you drank in front of my father or offered him a drink, you were truly jeopardizing his soul!

Jesus said,

"You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 6:16).

Is drinking a "good work" which makes men turn their face toward the Father or is it more a work that turns one toward darkness and sin?

"Be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18).

Wine is called "spirits" (for good reason!). But, this is not the spirit we are to be filled with!!!

"(John the Baptist was) **great in the sight of the Lord . . . filled with the Holy Spirit.**" (Luke 1:15).
Do you think it was purely coincidental that the angel said about John,

"He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink" in the same verse?

Are you interested in what God thinks of you? Are you interested in obeying His Biblical command to be a Christian who is "filled with the Holy Spirit?" I submit to you that full of "spirits" and the "Holy Spirit" are incompatible! You can't be "filled" with both at the same time! You must choose one!

- **Drunkards do not make it to heaven:**

What constitutes a drunkard? This is of course very debatable. I argue it could be any alcoholic whose life is controlled by sin: the sin of drunkenness (whether that is just weekend binges, or a daily affair). If you ask a policeman who he would consider as "drunk," he would probably say somebody with a blood alcohol content of .08 percent! But, the only important standard for Christians to go by would be God's standard. You must discover this standard for yourself according to your own conscience. But, one thing is for sure:

"Be not deceived . . . drunkards . . . shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6:9, 10).

Drunks go to Hell! If a drinker wants to roll the dice and gamble with his soul, it's his prerogative. But, every time he loses just a little of his self-control, his speech or his balance, he borders on being guilty of a sin unto death! I've met few people who drink and don't, at least at times, get drunk. Can't one just drink and get drunk every now and then on special occasions? Well, by way of analogy, is it OK for a person to commit fornication just on New Year's Eve and Independence Day? There's forgiveness of sins, of course; but Christianity is not just a call to get forgiven of sins, but to get delivered too!

"He shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21).

"That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies (Could alcohol be one enemy?) might serve Him." (Lu. 1:74, 5).

Christianity is a call to serve Him and it is a call to take up a cross, like Christ did.

"He that takes not his cross, and follows after me, is not worthy of me. He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it." (Matt. 10:38, 39).

Sinners try to "get all the gusto they can out of life" and alcoholics find comfort in their bottle. But, true Christians are willing to bear pain and discomfort and criticism from the world and to die to their personal pleasures: especially when such pleasures run cross-current to God's higher purposes in our life. Moses chose . . .

"rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Heb. 11:25).

Is it too difficult an "affliction" to drink Diet Coke instead of booze?

Christ taught us to pray, "Your will be done on earth." (Matt. 6:10). Even if one doesn't want to give up drinking, he should still ask himself, "What is God's will for me personally in the matter?" Just because it may be alright for

someone else, doesn't mean it is God's will for you. He may have unique reasons for requiring a higher standard for you than He does for some others.

Titus 3:11-14 warns,

"The grace of God which brings salvation has appeared to all men, Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, righteously and godly. . . Looking for . . . the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a people, zealous of good works."

As Thomas Paine wrote,

"These are the times that try men's souls."

Do you not agree that these are surely the last days?

"The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober." (1 Pet. 4:7).

If these are the last days, we need to be especially "sober." Thus, another good reason to not drink!

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. 5:8).

If we don't want to be devoured by Satan, then, God clearly exhorts us to "Be sober"! Nine times in the KJV the Scriptures say to "Be sober." Notice, it doesn't say, "Don't drink too much." It says, "Be sober." The best way to stay and "be sober" is not to drink at all! Alcoholics Anonymous calls it "sobriety" for a reason!

- **There are many clear cut Bible warnings of the negatives of booze:**

Jesus himself drinking and turning water into wine, Old Testament saints drinking, or Paul telling Timothy in 1 Tim. 5:23 to "Use a little wine" for his poor health (Let me underscore, he said "a little wine"!) may be used as points to try to argue the biblical legality of drinking. But, these facts do not cancel out the overwhelmingly negative biblical truths revealed about drinking.

Time doesn't allow me to do so, so you might want to find time to read and study the following verses yourself: Prov. 23:29-35, 4:14-17, 21:17, 31:4, Ezek. 44:21, 23, Hab. 2:4, 5, Luke 1:15, 12:45, 21:34, 1 Ti. 3:3, 1 Pet. 4:3, 1 Cor. 5:11, Joel 1:5, Matt. 24:38, 49, 1 Thess. 5:7, Rom. 13:13, Gal. 5:21.

I urge any drinkers (both Christian and non-Christian) reading this today to humbly put your alcohol and your Bible on the floor, kneel, and ask God for His will in the matter and (should you decide to stop) for His delivering power to set you free (especially in light of what recently happened to Whitney Houston)!

My dad got delivered from alcohol and ended up pastoring churches for 15 years before retiring. He's in heaven now. I'm so glad he decided to stop drinking! I hope you decide to do so as well. God may have some special last days plan for you or your children. Is drinking included in that plan?

Thank about it. Pray about it. Look up the above Scriptures. Seriously consider my rationale. Perhaps make copies of this for family or friends or forward on for other's consideration.

My final exhortation today: He's coming soon; be sober!

Prayer: "Father, I give you my body a "living sacrifice." Let it be "holy and acceptable unto you." (Romans 12:1)

Confession: "Whether I eat, or drink, or whatever I do, I will do it all to the glory of God"