

SOCIAL DRINKING, WHY IT IS WRONG.

Many people in the church seem to think that it is all right to drink alcohol, “as long as they do not get drunk.” This sounds ok but it is deeply flawed and as such it is an illogical argument thus it is a dangerous position to take in light of God’s word.

From the outset I will say that I am not speaking of alcohol contained in some medicines since some will bring that up. I will say though that one can get many medicines now that do not contain alcohol. What I am addressing is the drinking of alcohol either in the home or in a social setting.

What people who advocate the position that it is ok to drink in such settings; fail to see, is the fact that scripture does have a lot to say about this practice; and that it denies that it is the case that social drinking is all right.

First let us consider *Proverbs 23:23: “Buy truth and do not sell it.”* This is an exhortation to find the truth in scripture and never let it go. The word of God is truth and if we really believe that we will not dispute the truths it contains. Further down in that chapter in verses *29-35* we are given some of that truth which portrays alcohol in a totally negative sense. This is the first clue we need to examine.

In scripture the word for wine is *oinos* this word covers the grape from when it is on the vine right through to when it is fermented or used as grape juice. This is important since it gives us a context we can work with. Now we see that when wine is portrayed in a **negative sense** as here it refers to the alcoholic drink, wine and any other kind of strong drink. When portrayed positively or neutrally it refers to the non alcoholic variety of wine such as the kind Jesus made at Cana, or the kind Paul told Timothy to drink for his stomach complaint.

Now look at *Proverbs 23:31* “Do not LOOK upon the wine.....” Now buy truth, well here it is don’t even look upon the wine. This is a command not a suggestion and the implication of that command is simple if we are honest with God’s word, if we are told not to look, then how can we justify the drinking of alcoholic wine and other beverages?

Now we can move to the command that we do not become *intoxicated*. This is a plain command in both the Old and New testaments. In *Galatians 5:21*, drunkenness or intoxication is condemned as “a work of the flesh” and those who practice it will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The counter to this is normally “Well it doesn’t say that I cannot have a few drinks since if I do I will not be drunk or intoxicated.” The problem with that is, whose standard are you applying to intoxication, yours, our cultures or Gods.

God says intoxication is wrong and if persisted in will cost you your soul. How much intoxication is wrong? *All of it at any stage of it from one glass to whatever else one drinks*; Why is this the case? It is so because every drop of alcohol has within it the property of intoxication and since intoxication is a sin then anything having an intoxicant in it is sinful to drink in any setting. It is the same as saying “I’m a little bit pregnant” since you either are pregnant or you are not. So with intoxication you are or are not according to God’s standard and once you drink an intoxicant you are to that degree intoxicated and intoxication is a sin period whether little or lot.

Now some say that Christ made alcoholic wine at Cana in Galilee but did He really? Consider all that the Bible says about alcoholic drinks, can you imagine that in light of all that Christ would do something against His own word? No He would not. Consider on this point *Habakkuk 2:15-16a*: “Woe to you who make your neighbours drink, who mix your venom even to make them

.drunk..... you will be FILLED WITH DISGRACE.” The question you must ask here is this: would Christ really perform a disgraceful miracle and go against what He has said through the prophet here? If He did make alcoholic wine at Cana then He did perform a disgraceful miracle, and if He did so then He is NOT THE SON OF GOD. If He is not the Son of God then we are lost.

Add to these things the fact that we are to dress up the doctrine of God Titus 2:10 by our example. What are we saying about the church Jesus died for when we show ourselves to be no different from the world He called us out of?

These are some things to ponder about the drinking of alcohol at home or in a social setting and I hope you will think about them seriously. Not only is it sinful and sets a very bad example and hurts our influence, it also causes brethren to stumble especially if they themselves are weak in this area of their lives. If this happens the one responsible for making them stumble is criminally responsible before God and if it is a babe in Christ then Christ Himself says it would be better for them to put a millstone round their neck and drown themselves in the depths of the sea. [Matthew 18:6].

There is much more that could be said on this subject, but these few here should be enough to see that any drinking of alcohol is sinful simply because all alcohol has in it an intoxicant and since it does it causes intoxication which is forbidden by God.