

Discussion on Drinking

✚ **What if I just like to have a couple drinks? What's so wrong with that?**

Throughout the Bible we are reminded of several key messages: 1) Obey the Word of God, 2) Submit to your authorities, 3) Obey the law of the land. Each of these messages is supported by various Scripture in the Old and New Testament that counters the argument of social drinking. It's a tough pill to swallow, especially when different cultures have different laws, different schools have dry and wet campus policies, etc. But the overwhelming fact is that we are to honor God with our lifestyle, and doing things that are in contrast to His Word or the law spoken by His appointed leaders does not honor Him.

Galatians 5:19-21 (NIV) – “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery.... I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Matthew 24:42-51 (The Message) – “You have no idea what day your Master will show up...Who here qualifies for the job overseeing the kitchen? A person the Master can depend on to feed the workers on time each day. Someone the Master can drop in on unannounced and always find him doing his job...It won't be long before the Master will put this person in charge of the whole operation. But if that person only looks out for himself, and the minute the Master is away does what he pleases – abusing the help and throwing drunken parties for his friends – the Master is going to show up when he least expects it and make hash of him. He'll end up in the dump with the hypocrites, out in the cold shivering, teeth chattering.”

Luke 21:34-36 (NIV) – “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

Ephesians 5:15-18 (The Message) – “So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times! Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants. Don't drink too much wine. That cheapens your life. Drink the Spirit of God – huge draughts of him. Sing hymns instead of drinking songs! Sing songs from your heart to Christ. Sing praises over everything, any excuse for a song to God the Father in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ.”

✚ **I'm 21 – I have a right to drink, don't I?**

God speaks very clearly throughout Scripture about not fulfilling the desires of the heart with things other than communion with Him. He also speaks on using restraint in order to bear witness to those around you.

Romans 14:19-23 (NIV) – “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fail. So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.”

1 Corinthians 8:9-13 (NIV) – “Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, who won't be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fail.”

✚ **I really want to quit drinking, and have no desire to get drunk, but I continually find myself slipping back into sin. How do I overcome that?**

The Scriptures encourage us in this matter in several ways, not just in the sin of drinking, but in all sins. Sometimes the struggle may be a testing of your faith – God may be letting Satan tempt you in order that you may stand firm in your convictions and deepen your walk with Him.

Romans 7:14-25 (The Message) – “I can anticipate the response coming: ‘I know that all God’s commands are spiritual, but I’m not. Isn’t this also your experience?’ Yes. I’m full of myself – after all, I’ve spent a long time in sin’s prison. What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can’t be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God’s command is necessary. But I need something *more!* For if I know the law but still can’t keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don’t have what it takes. I can will it, but I can’t do it. I decide to do good, but I don’t really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions...don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.... I’ve tried everything and nothing helps. I’m at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life on contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.”

James 1:2-4 (NIV) – “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

✚ **It’s impossible to stop when everyone around me is doing it. What’s wrong with drinking in college? God pardons all of our sins anyway. I can just sin and beg forgiveness later, right?**

God does pardon our sins, if we specifically repent and ask for forgiveness. Scriptures warn us, however, that we will still be judged on the day of judgement, according to how faithful we were to Him during our time on earth. Also, when you are living in open rebellion to God by taking part in recognized sin, Scriptures promise us that the devil will use this to develop a stronghold on our heart, tearing us farther from our Lord.

Proverbs 20:1 (NIV) – “Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”

Proverbs 23:17-21 (NIV) – “Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off. Listen my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path. Do not join those who drink too much wine...for drunkards...become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.”

Proverbs 29-35 (The Message) – “Who are the people who are always crying the blues? Who do you know who reeks of self-pity? Who keeps getting beat up for no reason at all? Whose eyes are bleary and blood-shot? It’s those who spend the night with a bottle, for whom drinking is serious business. Don’t judge wine by its label, or its bouquet, or its full-bodied flavor. Judge it rather by the hangover it leaves you with – the splitting headache, the queasy stomach. Do you really prefer seeing double, with your speech all slurred, reeling and seasick, drunk as a sailor?”

Romans 12:2 (NIV) – “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

✚ **Suggested Reading:**

Inside Out – by Larry Crabb

The Journey of Desire – by John Elderedge

Wild at Heart – by John Elderedge

The Fight – by John White

Alcoholism (IVP Booklet) – by Kathleen Ross

Temptation (IVP Booklet) – by Tom Eisenman

Who You Are When No One’s Looking – by Bill Hybels

Who Gives a R.I.P. About Sin – by Dr. Norm Wakefield

Steering Clear – by Earl Wilson

Changing for Good – by Raymond Causey