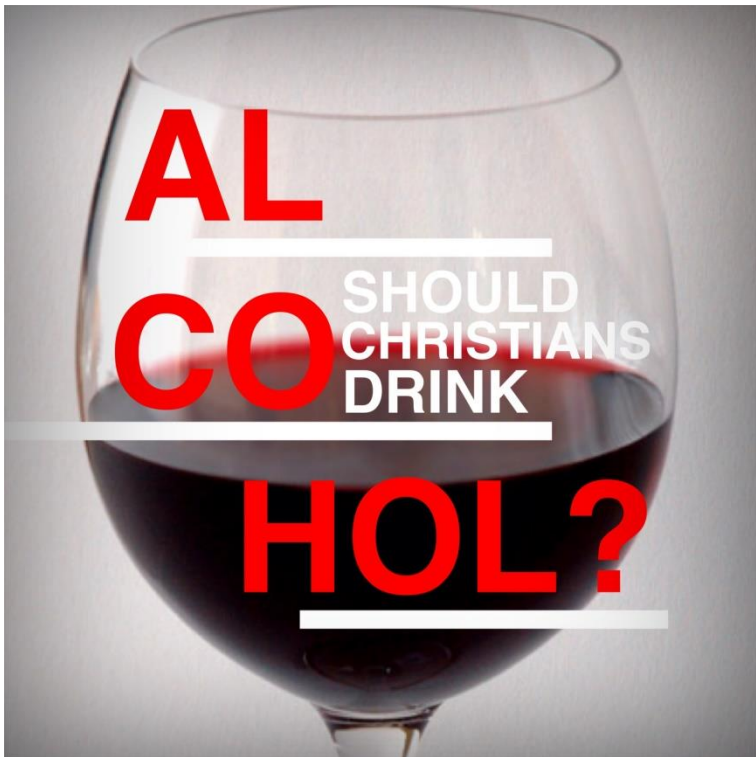


Christians and the Social Consumption of Alcohol



December 2022 Edition

CHRISTIANS AND THE PLEASURE DRIVEN SOCIAL CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

Preface

It is a strange day in which we live, a strange day indeed. It seems odd to me to have to write an exposition regarding Christians drinking liquor for social or pleasure purposes and thinking it is okay. After hearing countless testimonies of believers drinking and their pastors not publicly denouncing the use of liquor under the guise that it is *not* prohibited in the Bible, I decided to publicly address the issue. Taking into account we are in the last days of the Laodicean church period it should come as no surprise, but it still seems ridiculous that anyone walking with God would believe that anything except total abstinence from social drinking is wrong, considering the plethora of scriptural truth and well-known general statistics.

It is sad to see that pastors have become “teachers” more concerned with the social contentment of their congregation than the preaching of the word of God. With the denial of a final scriptural authority our church attending culture nationwide has slipped into the abyss of lukewarm spirituality (in this context, slipped into a bottle of spirits). Frankly speaking, in these days it is hard to distinguish between the so-called good Christian and a goal-oriented purpose driven agnostic.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 plainly describes the characteristics of this self-centered age:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

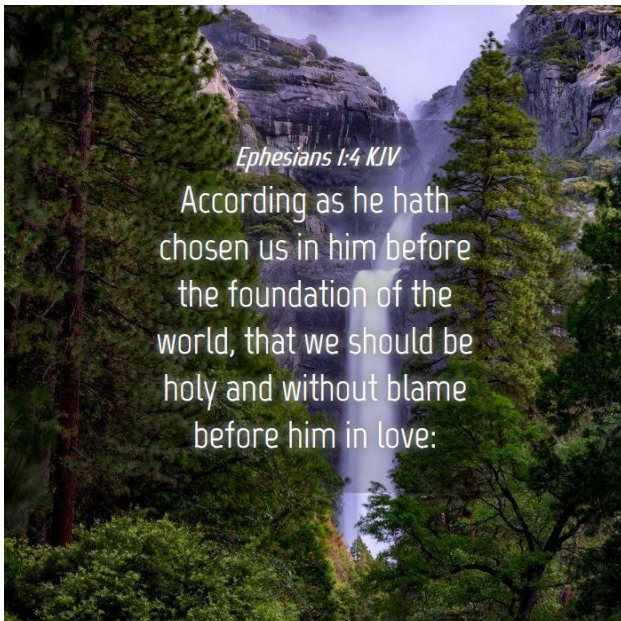
- *The failure to endure sound doctrine*
- *A desire for teachers instead of preachers*
- *A refusal to listen to scriptural truth*
- *A sincere heartfelt belief in fantasy and fiction*

I will be thorough in the following testimony, but certainly do not expect any repentant attitudes to blossom from within the heart of those who “hold fast” to the euphoric pleasure produced from within the bottle of spirits they have come to enjoy. Anyone redeemed from such nonsense would not think of picking up the bottle again without considering the great peril at hand. For us, we have chosen rather to “let go” of liquor and “hold fast” the form of sound words from God’s preserved book.

This pamphlet is for those Bible believing disciples who need to be **encouraged to press forward in their walk with the Lord Jesus Christ**, confident that the righteous decisions they have made to abstain from all manner of evil in these last days of apostasy are sound. After all, the Bible says that believers are to *be holy and without blame before him in love*.

Pastor Thomas E. Gang

Senior Pastor – First Baptist Church of Jackson



Well Known Social Statistics - Consumption and Use of Alcohol


Alcohol is a gateway that leads to other vices burdens & social problems:

- Alcohol is directly associated with immoral conduct, drunkenness, dirty or foul-language, illegal drugs, pornography, fornication, adultery, gambling, cheating, lying, striking, brawling, lawless behavior, general incontinence, foolish behavior, and uncleanness
- It leads to the use of other legal and illegal mind-altering substances such as barbiturates, marijuana, cocaine, hallucinogens, methamphetamines, heroin, etc.
- Increase in personal property damage
- Major cause of adult and teenage injuries and fatalities
- Promotes and influences teenage sexual activity and aids in the increase of teenage pregnancies
- Increased auto insurance premiums
- Increased healthcare costs
- Increased medical insurance premiums
- Increase in criminal activity – theft, rape, robbery, assault, prostitution, etc.
- Promotes violence and sexual abuse toward women and children
- Increased public cost for social services
- Increased public cost for law enforcement
- Innumerable cases of alcoholism
- Increase in various types of mental illnesses
- Ruined lives and families through divorce, neglect, slothfulness, abuse – also leading to generational abuses and addictions
- Large profits for retailers and distributors allowing them to sell more and more thus keeping the dispensing and consumption wheels turning – \$\$
- Large tax revenues for national, state, and local governments – \$\$ (*Habakkuk 2:12 - Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!*)

The simple definition of drunkenness is *an altered state of consciousness in which you will not or cannot maintain self-control*. Even under the best-case scenario, if a “Christian drinker” is one of the miniscule few who does not get drunk or fall into the these listed immoral conducts, the vast majority of the population does! Just look at the previous list and consider exactly what the “Christian drinker” is a *willing* part of.

Even if a “Christian drinker” is totally opposed to the above destructive things, those negatives still exist because of the purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages which they help fund. Frankly, all these things should cause even the lost godless world, with any sense of patriotism or care for community, to reconsider their purchase and consumption of alcohol and to stop drinking, period. Therefore, it goes without saying that every born-again blood-bought saint of God should abstain!

A faithful believer who walks with Jesus Christ and fears God will abstain from the social consumption of alcohol based solely upon the above stated facts.



*Abstain from all
appearance of evil.*

1 Thessalonians 5:22 (KJV)

What Does the Bible Say?

Abstaining from the consumption of fermented liquor

There are **“all sorts of wine”** listed in the Bible – (*Nehemiah 5:18 - Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people*). Non-fermented grape juice is called wine, new wine, blood of the grape, sweet wine, cluster, and the cup. Fermented liquor is also called wine, new wine, strong drink, liquor, etc. You had better pay attention in order to know which is which – not all “wine” is liquor, not all “wine” can intoxicate. Like modern day hooch, fermented liquor in Bible times varied in strength and alcohol content. Therefore, not every occurrence of wine refers to fermented liquor, no matter what the original Greek or Hebrew supposedly *means*. The word wine simply comes from the word vine. (The word baptism does not always mean water; likewise, wine does not always mean liquor). It is also important that not every use of wine in the Bible was for pleasure – it was also used for medicinal purposes.

Related terms used in the Bible are:

- Wine – 231x’s in 212 verses
- New wine – 22x’s in 18 verses
- Sweet wine – 3x’s in 3 verses
- Good wine – 2x’s in 1 verse
- Vinegar – 13x’s in 11 verses
- Gall – 14x’s in 14 verses
- Strong drink – 22x’s in 19 verses
- Beer – 2x’s in 2 verses (it means a well of water – beer is water with fermentation added)
- Mixed wine – 1x in 1 verse (like today, some weaken the strength of liquor in order to drink more over an extended time period, so they don’t puke out too soon and to disguise the powerful and bitter taste of hard liquor).
- Poison and venom – 1x in 1 verse
- Blood of the grape – 2x in 2 verses
- Fruit of the vine – 3x’s in 3 verses
- Cluster – 5x’s in 5 verses
- The cup – 37x’s in 33 verses
- Liquor – 3x’s in 3 verses

A reading of every single verse is necessary in order to gain God's full perspective on this matter.

After doing so, the case for total abstinence of social or pleasure drinking will be settled once and for all in the heart of a God-fearing Bible believer (*Job 28:28 - And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding*). This is not my opinion. Below are some important key biblical references in forming the solid case for total abstinence.

- 1- Genesis 2:17 (*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*) – Many Bible believers think it is possible that the tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) was a grape vine tree. It has been and is still considered by many modern horticulturalists to be a tree. The Scriptures clearly refer to the vine as a tree (*Numbers 6:4 - All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk; Ezekiel 15:2, 6 - Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem*). If this is true, it explains many scriptural types concerning wine and blood used throughout the Bible. For a child of God this certainly places it in the “shall not eat” or abstinence category, at the very least, from the beginning.
- 2- Genesis 9:20-26 – This is the first mention of wine in the Bible. It concerns the sin of Noah and his sons. This preacher of righteousness has his judgment impaired after consuming alcohol; trouble is the result. Here in this text alcohol is associated with drunkenness, nakedness, immorality, a tale teller, shame, a curse, generational sin, servanthood, sibling rivalry, family division, and death. When under the influence of alcohol, we learn that the best of men become as the worst.
- 3- Genesis 19:30-38 – This reference concerns the sin of Lot with his daughters. He was called a just and righteous man in 2 Peter 2:7-8 (*And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds*).

We see that after drinking he committed a most heinous sexual sin with his own daughters and spawned races of people who would be the sworn enemy of God's chosen people throughout human history, even to this very day.

- 4- Genesis 27:25 (*And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank*) – Isaac's ability to make a righteous judgment was certainly impaired due to the consumption of alcohol.
- 5- Genesis 40:11 (*And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand*) – This clearly demonstrates that a cupbearer or wine-taster was not always consuming alcoholic beverages. Here he took the grapes and crushed them in Pharaoh's cup. What did Pharaoh have in the cup? Grape-juice!
- 6- Leviticus 10:9 (*Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations*) – This verse forbids and threatens death to anyone who has consumed wine or strong drink and then enters into the tabernacle. No wine or strong drink was allowed inside the tabernacle. The NT believer is called a tabernacle in 2 Cor. 5:1, 4 and 2 Peter 1:13-14.
- 7- Numbers 6:3 (*He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried*) – The Nazarite was one of God's consecrated people. He was forbidden to consume wine or strong drink. He was not even permitted to eat grapes from which the wine would come (see #1). Total abstinence was his duty. NT believers are called to be sanctified or set apart from this world and unto God. Is it really that much different today? (Although I do like grapes and raisins ☺).
- 8- Deuteronomy 21:20-21 (*And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear*) – This text deals with a stubborn and rebellious son who is a drunkard. His penalty under the law was death.

If that seems too harsh a penalty, then could it be our toleration has made our reasoning ability impaired? Frankly, I am thankful we don't obey this today in the NT time of grace, but if you don't like this OT law then, please, I urge you to take it up with God himself.

- 9- Deuteronomy 29:2-6 (*And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the LORD your God*) – Here God's people were commanded to abstain from strong drink because it lessens their ability to know and practically walk daily with God. Is it really any different for the believer today?
- 10- Deuteronomy 32:3-4, 15, 18, 31-33, 37 – False religion is contrasted with the true – their rock verses our Rock. Note that the wine of false religion is of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is gall and bitter, it is poisonous and cruel. Fermented liquor goes hand-in-hand with false religion.
- 11- Judges 13:7, 14 (*But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe*) – Fermented alcohol was forbidden to consume when the child of a miraculous birth was dwelling inside a pregnant woman. Every believer has the spirit of God/Jesus Christ dwelling inside them. We are also referred to as his bride! Think about it for a few years.
- 12- 1 Samuel 1:14-16 (*And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto*) – In this text Eli accuses Hannah of being drunk; she

denies it and explains that she is instead very sorrowful for the lack of childbirth. Could it be that Eli was used to seeing women drunk at the temple? His sons were often drunk. Israel was in terrible spiritual condition at this time in history, so it is certainly feasible. Also, notice another very important point, Hannah equates drinking with the very work of the devil. Throughout church history believers always equate drinking with the work of the devil. Even lost men call booze “spirits.”

- 13- 2 Samuel 11:13 (*And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house*) – King David, in his lust for Uriah’s wife Bathsheba, made an attempt to get him drunk so he would be sexually aroused and go into his wife. He did this to cover up the fact that he had made her pregnant in an adulterous affair. David knew full well the effects of alcohol and assumed Uriah would fall under its power. This is the testimony alcohol has whether a person is drunken or just slightly impaired.
- 14- 2 Samuel 13:28-29 (*Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled*) – Absalom hated his brother Amnon. He planned a way to kill him. Alcohol was included in Amnon’s ultimate death. Amnon was not wise for being impaired, it cost him his life. Alcohol makes you easy prey for enemy forces. I have seen this happen firsthand at times in my past lost life. Alcohol has cost many men and women, boys and girls their lives too.
- 15- Esther 1:5-17 – Lost people cannot have a party without booze. They would not even consider getting together without liquor. Alcohol and mind impairing substances are the center of most every festivity. Flirting and fornication are usually present, and any lost person understands this to be a solid fact by experience. Bad choices and chaos are always the result. Why should a Christian be exposed to such a thing? What good can come of it?
- 16- Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived. He wrote thousands of proverbs and songs for the Lord. His wisdom exceeded the wisdom of all the children of the East, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

We should heed the words of a man such as this. Please read carefully...

- *Proverbs 9:2, 5 - She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table... Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.*
- *Proverbs 20:1 - Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*
- *Proverbs 21:17 - He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.*
- *Proverbs 23:29-32 - Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*
- *Proverbs 31:4 - It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:*

- 17- *Proverbs 4:17 (For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence)* – Any amount of consumed alcohol promotes violent behavior. In the past, many fistfights I have been in were due to drinking in places where others had been liquored up.
- 18- *Proverbs 26:11 (As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly)* – Any redeemed drunkard or substance abuser knows full well not to return to that evil lifestyle. He knows the risks that are taken when returning. Foolish Christians that have never been trapped by this type of sin should wise up and beware not to consume the regurgitation of utter ruin.
- 19- *Proverbs 31:6 (Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts)* – The Bible is careful not to make a direct statement to forbid alcohol because it has medicinal purposes.
- 20- *Ecclesiastes 2:3 (I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life)* – While writing from the perspective of a man relying on a philosophical relationship to the world and separated from God, Solomon equates wine to folly and observes it to see if it be of any good to men. I think we all know the answer to that!

- 21- Ecclesiastes 10:17 (*Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!*) – This text reveals that even the land is blessed when the leaders abstain from drunkenness. Therefore, only total abstinence is the ultimate safeguard.
- 22- Isaiah 5:11-12 (*Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands*) – Here it keeps the vile person awake at night to dwell in darkness and inflames their soul. It also prevents them from knowing God.
- 23- Isaiah 5:20-22 (*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink*) – These passages stand alone and says it all. Woe, woe, woe! It describes our present day perfectly. Directly connected to the deception of interchanging right with wrong is the consumption of fermented liquor!
- 24- Isaiah 28:1 (*Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!*) – It causes beauty to fade. Indeed! Most life-long drinkers over 40 or 50 tend to look much older.
- 25- Isaiah 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*) – It causes error in vision and judgment. Of course, it does!
- 26- Daniel 1:8 (*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself*) – Daniel, the man of God, a man that nothing vile is said about in the entire Bible, refuses to drink the fermented liquor “wine” of the Babylonians. A wise man purposes in his heart not only to abstain from drinking fermented liquor but avoids consuming the steady diet of those who desire to ultimately change his identity.

27- Jeremiah 10:3a (*For the customs of the people are vain*) – While the context is not alcohol, the customs of people are still vain. Drinking is purely selfish and centers on self-gratification only. Unfortunately, from my lost past I understand that it is the “custom” of the world to consume alcohol socially for pleasure.

I have never ever seen any good come out of it. Where I come from, the proverbial, “Let’s sit down and have a beer together” routinely ends with a fistfight – circa 1970-80’s in my old downtown Canton neighborhood. God’s people have always been warned about the customs of this world and of alcohol and its consumption. Believers throughout the centuries were fully aware of such things. The Scriptures are clear, God’s people are better off totally abstaining from fermented liquor of any kind.

28- Jeremiah 35:5-14 – Here the prophet uses the Rechabites as examples to rebuke wayward Israel. We see that any parent who truly loves their child and who truly cares about their child’s future, health, and safety, will teach them to refuse the consumption of alcohol. Therefore, all wise parents should not let liquor pass through their lips either. Children of any age will follow the example of their “social drinking only” Christian parents, especially when it comes to sin and wrongdoing; it gives them plausible deniability and allows them to personally justify future poorer behavior.

29- Nahum 1:10 (*For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry*) – Concerning the judgment of this Gentile city, the Bible records their drunkenness will be part of their undoing and destruction. This is still true today. For cities and their drunken inhabitant’s, decline always follows where booze is prevalent. These are often disputed facts, but the proof is always in the clear and obvious results. Argue all you want, just look around.

30- Habakkuk 2:15 (*Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!*) – When a lost or saved person drinks alcohol, it comes naturally to compel others to do the same. It makes them feel better about their sin. It also allows the one offering drink to impose his will upon another (I.E., a man with a maid when her inhibitions are impaired). **How could a professing believer justify any type of drinking in light of this passage?**

- 31- Matthew 24:48-51 – The Lord’s imminent return is the hope and prayer of all Christians. According to this passage and 1 John 3:1-3 these truths should have a purifying effect on every Christian. All who claim to be looking forward to that day are warned to abstain from consuming fermented liquor.
- 32- Matthew 26:27 (*And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it*) – Nowhere in the scripture does it say Jesus drank fermented liquor, absolutely nowhere! That is a fable made up by those who want to justify drinking booze. I urge you to sincerely pray and ask God every day to give you an answer concerning this matter of total abstinence. He will respond to you. You may not like his answer!
- 33- Luke 1:15 (*For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb*) – A “Baptist” preacher like John, filled with the Holy Spirit, great in the sight of the Lord, did not consume alcohol. It is sad that many so-called preachers justify social drinking just to “have a beer” with other worldly people. What a foolish mistake, gain friends – chump God.
- 34- Luke 7:33 (*For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil*) – The world accuses those that totally abstain from drinking liquor for the purpose of honoring God, of being a devil spoiling their fun. Sadly, many drinkers still accuse us of this today!
- 35- 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*). If you are a Christian, drinking will leave you unprepared for the Lord’s return. So, why drink at all? The pleasures of sin are enjoyable for a season, but the day shall pass, and you will be ashamed.
- 36- Romans 13:13-14 (*Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*) – As if the verse number is not ominous enough (13:13) ...social drinking is absolutely nothing more than a provision for the flesh. It must be put off in order to please God.

- 37- Romans 14:21 (*It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak*) – This is straight forward and to the point. Why would you drink causing others to stumble, be offended, or made weak? You will have to reject what the Bible says in order to justify the mere purchase and consumption of alcohol, even in moderation. Total abstinence is right.
- 38- Romans 16:17 (*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*) – Believers that do not drink, and do not do so because of what the Bible says, have a responsibility to avoid close personal fellowship with those so-called Christians that do drink. Thus, saith the Lord.
- 39- 1 Corinthians 8:12 (*But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ*) – This entire chapter is dedicated to avoiding those things that cause a weaker brother to stumble. Any believer familiar with this chapter knows full well it applies to a host of things that can hurt a weaker brother or sister. Paul set a proper pattern to follow – to totally abstain from something that causes the weaker in the faith to fail. This is an open rebuke to all self-centered so-called Christians who think it is okay to drink booze of any kind. Any believer that causes his brother to stumble should be ashamed of themselves. I cannot even imagine what would have become of me or my wife if the Christian men around me, when I was just a new believer, drank fermented liquor for social reasons. I can tell you firsthand that I would have ended up back in our old lifestyle and never became a productive citizen, a decent husband and father of three children, or a preacher of God's word, entrusted with the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Jackson, the most beautiful church body I have ever had the pleasure of serving.

Back in those days my dear Christian friend, Randy, was in a wrestling match with the evil spirits of liquor... he would have never made it surrounded by worldly compromisers. I pray to God that the lukewarm self-centered so-called Christians I know will wake up and remember their first love.

- 40- 1 Corinthians 6:10-12 (*Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be*

brought under the power of any) – Why would any believer drink alcohol when God saved your soul and washed you clean? Why put on such filthy rags? If a Christian does drink, liquor will bring them under its power – either through drunkenness, impairment, poor testimony, poor friendships with unfaithful Christians, or simply by excuse making, minimization and justification.

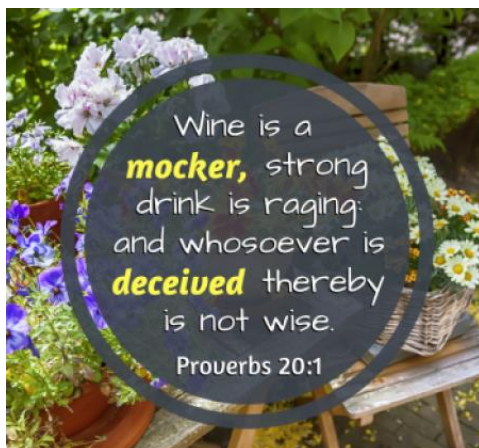
- 41- 1 Corinthians 10:16, 21, 25 (*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?; Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.; Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake*) – Pagan religions used blood and fermented liquor in their satanic worship services (in some cases strong alcohol to impair their followers). Many believers were saved out of that terrible past. God makes the overall point that his *communion cup* is the opposite. Therefore, it is the blood of the grape which is a type of the shed blood of Christ. If it were hard liquor, it would violate God's established ordinance and make it the *cup of devils* – also see Deuteronomy 32:33-37.
- 42- 1 Corinthians 10:23 (*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not*) – Same as the last listed scripture... while it is true that we live in the age of grace, and that there is no law against drinking in our nation or locale, it is still not expedient to consume alcohol for a believer. It does not spiritually edify anyone, especially the drinker. Don't ask yourself, "What is wrong with drinking?" We can justify anything if we have it in our heart to do it. Rather ask, "*What is right with it?*"
- 43- Galatians 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*) – Why behave like those that are lost and hell bound?
- 44- Ephesians 5:18 (*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit*) – Believers are admonished not to get drunk. Again, even if a believer does not drink to get drunk, it is only a matter of time before he does. If any think otherwise they are a deceived fool.

- 45- 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7 (*Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre*) – Pastors are specifically told to abstain from drinking wine.
- 46- 1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 2:3 (*Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things*) – Deacons and church members are blameless when avoiding the consumption of alcohol. Total abstinence is the only true safeguard for blamelessness. The “Christian” drinker says, *“It says not given to much wine... It means you can drink so long as it is not enough to make you drunk.”* They are reading into the Bible things it does not say to feel better about wrongdoing. The context of those Scriptures tells the Bible believer that Christians do not give themselves over to such things. They were not prevented from the use of wine, since it had many purposes in that day, but so as not to hurt their testimony, *“not given to much wine.”* When a person walking with God reads those statements, that justification of wine never enters their mind. Even as a very young believer I never thought it meant you could drink as long as it was not much. Especially after being redeemed from that lifestyle, I never thought the Bible justified drinking liquor. The addition of *much* is in context with the word *likewise* found in both verses and an explanation of 1 Timothy 3:3a and 5:23 where a *little wine* for medicinal purposes is the same as *not much*. Those who wish to justify its consumption will use the addition of the word *much* to approve of poor behavior.
- 47- 1 Thess. 5:22 (*Abstain from all appearance of evil*) – Many Christians say, *“I think it is wrong to get drunk, but I can still drink as long as I stay sober.”* Talk is so cheap. It will only be a matter of time before you drink too much and get drunk (impaired) – for sure. No one can say otherwise, if they do they prove that liquor is a gateway to other foul sins – lying! Considering the fact that you have to buy it in public (unless you really get serious and manufacture it yourself, which testifies how great your terrible obsession has become), what does that say to those you purchase it from? Or what if another brother or lost person sees you buy it?

When my son, Samuel, was 12 years old purchasing pop and candy in our neighborhood Circle K store, he witnessed a regular attendee at our local church purchase a case of beer. It really messed Sammy up as he kept asking me why? After confronting the born-again saint, he was embarrassed, but not remorseful. He never apologized to me or my son, ultimately ending his attendance under the guise that we are too restrictive to his liberty in Christ.

What about your personal testimony? Do not be deceived, you are not walking with God while doing such things.

- 48- 1 Peter 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*) – It is what lost people drink. It is what I drank when I was lost. It is what most lost people like to drink because of how it makes them feel. The lost world seems to be obsessed with booze and cannot seem to do anything enjoyable without its consumption. Believers are in the world, but not of it.
- 49- Revelation 14:8; 17:2; 18:3 – Here fermented liquor is associated with the murderous rampage of the antichrist. Who wants to be associated with this?
- 50- Revelation 18:13 (*And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men*) – Here it is a part of the lustful merchandise of the antichrist's end-times Babylonian economy. There are enough things to be troubled with. Why add alcohol to the list?



Why Doesn't the Bible Directly and Absolutely Prohibit the Consumption or Use of Alcohol?

For medicinal purposes only

Many argue that because the Bible doesn't directly and absolutely prohibit its use that neither can they. However, we have made the case that it is prohibited except for medical purposes only (see #19, last section).

Only in recent history can a person get a pill or an injection for anything that ails them, and we are all thankful that anesthesiology is a science today with trained professionals administering it. Throughout the centuries when a person needed "medicine," it was herbs, a host of plants, fungus or tree bark, mixed vegetable or mineral oils of varying types, vinegar, or **hard liquor**.

For years people kept and used mineral oil for rashes and skin problems. They would ingest vegetable oils or other types of oils for cramps. They would use light vinegar for skeletal pains, stomach, intestinal and esophageal ailments. Diverse vinegars were used to disinfect or clean things - by the way, **vinegar is old wine**, more or less. Strong alcohol or hard liquor was an important medical antiseptic and anesthetic. This was what you had to work with, and it did okay for many things, so folks kept this type of stuff around and considered it *medicine*.

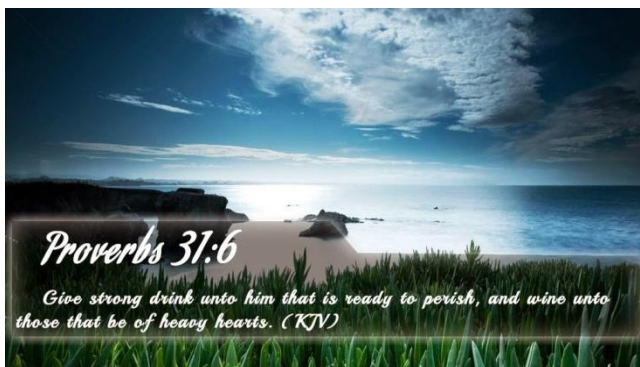
How many TV westerns have you seen where the gunshot cowboy is taken to the local saloon and stretched out over a table or bar with a leather strap between his teeth? Before they cut him open, he drinks a huge anesthetic swig or two (or three) of the same hooch they then poured out as a typical antiseptic upon his open wound before extracting the lead bullet.

When I was a little boy my mother kept a bottle of sour mash whiskey in the cupboard, strictly for medicinal purposes (I assume as much since I never saw her drink it and she was always sober). When my sisters or I had a real bad cold or cough she would give us a blend of hot tea, lemon, honey, and whiskey – she called it a hot-toddy. The tea, lemon, and honey worked against our cold and cough, the sour-mash was to knock us out so we could sleep all night and get strength for the next morning. To this very day most all believers have liquor in their house, but it is not in the same basic form – we find it in a bottle of Nyquil or cough medicine for colds and coughing, and in a bottle of rubbing alcohol for basic antiseptic on cuts and scrapes, etc.

If God totally prohibited the use of wine (old wine – vinegar, or fermented alcohol) or strong drink, there would have been no medicine for his children! No vinegar and no antiseptic. Thousands, perhaps millions, of believers would have died before their time.

Aren't you glad God loves his people and takes care of his own? These things can be used for bad, but we continue to use it for good.

- Proverbs 31:6 - *Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.* Cancer is a wicked disease, what could you give to a Christian in the end stages of such a painful thing? What about a hysterical grief-stricken Christian mother who just lost a beloved child or husband? What about those believers who at times suffered with genuine mental lapses of madness, hysteria, or severe depression? Today and throughout church history these things are real and present medical issues. To the early Christian hard liquor was medicine, nothing else.
- 1 Timothy 5:23 - *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.* It seems, every drunk in America knows this verse. Frankly, there is no evidence that Paul is referring to alcohol when writing to this young pastor. If he had stomach problems, and the ministry certainly gives a pastor occasion for it, vinegar was the go-to choice for centuries. I do not assume this medicine here was hard liquor. Even if it was fermented, a person that wants to justify drinking will see booze as okay everywhere in the Bible (*Proverbs 20:1 - Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise*). This was medicine, not a social drink.



What About When Jesus Changed Water into Wine in John 2?

If it were fermented liquor Jesus was in violation of the OT scriptures

Without exception everyone lost or saved uses this Scripture to justify consuming alcohol. They say, "Jesus turned water into wine." So, let's look at a basic exposition of the marriage in Cana of Galilee:

Verses 1-2- This is not likely the third day of Jesus ministry, but rather the third day of the wedding as weddings at that time usually lasted more than one day. By the way, Jesus Christ and his disciples are still good guests to invite to every wedding!

The third day is significant to us as believers since it is the day Christ arose from the dead defeating sin and death. Everyone who receives Christ as their Saviour will receive a *new life* that also defeats sin and death. At the wedding the bride receives a brand-new identity found in her husband's name. We too, as *Christians*, get a brand-new identity found in our husband's name.

Verses 3-5- This wedding has run out of wine as it draws to a close. Mary approaches Jesus knowing full well he can remedy the problem. Jesus calls her "woman" to fend off later religious fairytales that she was equal to Christ. He clearly reveals that there is a time schedule planned for his earthly mission. Jesus is referring to his DEATH, where his blood will be shed. Mary (the woman) speaks words of wisdom that should be heeded by every man, woman, boy and girl ... *whatsoever he saith unto you, do.*

Verse 6- A lot can be said about the use of these water pots at their wedding but notice that their size and number is given. This is very interesting. A firkin is about 9 gallons, each pot contained 2-3 firkins apiece, and there were six water pots. If we average each at 2.5 firkins apiece that would come out to 135 gallons of wine!

If the wine was fermented liquor, that would be enough to get your whole neighborhood totally smashed. It is naïve to think many guests present would not get stone drunk.

Verses 7-10- Jesus gave the order to fill the pots to the top with water. After that was obeyed, he turned them into wine.

This was no ordinary wine; it was wine *created supernaturally* by Jesus Christ himself. It would have been the best wine you ever tasted, as testified by the wedding coordinator. It was obviously near the end of the wedding since the best was saved for *last*.

Verse 11- There are seven miracles detailed in John's gospel, this is the first one. In the OT the first public miracle was water turned to blood, here water is turned to wine, a type of blood in scripture.

These miracles were done so that you would believe Jesus Christ was the Son of God and that by believing a person could be saved – John 2:11; 20:30-31 (*This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him; And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*).

Therefore, we see that this miracle manifested Jesus' glory and testified of our common salvation. Consider the following: It centered on events at *wedding*; it was the *third day*; there was a *dry and thirsty* crowd present; *empty* pots needed *filled*; we are instructed to do *whatsoever Jesus says*; water in scripture is *equated to the word of God*; *the word of God was made flesh*; water is turned into a type of *blood*; it is a *miracle*; it caused great *joy*.

Do you really think that Jesus turned water to fermented liquor? If he did, he was in violation of the OT (Habakkuk 2:15 - *Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!*) and distorted the very purpose of the miracle. The truth is, who would want to serve their guests mere *water* at a wedding? Only a cheapskate! Christians that totally abstain from fermented liquor served their guests flavored drinks, punch, and non-fermented wine-like juices at all the weddings I have ever attended. We served non-alcoholic beverages at our children's weddings. These were joyful events. Why would we want to ruin it with booze? This was not liquor; it was wine that was out of this world!

What About the Use of Fermented Wine During Communion?

Jesus did not drink or offer fermented liquor to his disciples; he drank of the fruit of the vine which is grape juice...

Therefore, grape-juice is the element offered during the observance of every communion ordinance in a God-honoring, biblical church service.

Even though not every biblical occurrence of the word “wine” is describing fermented liquor, just to be absolutely clear, God took extra care in the scriptural record concerning the ordinance of communion. There are NO references to the word “wine” in any of the Scriptures detailing the last supper and/or the establishment of communion, **NOT ONE TIME** – see Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:12-31; Luke 22:7-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 21; 11:25-28. Only the term “fruit of the vine” (which is fresh squeezed grape-juice – Genesis 40:11) or the word “cup” is used. If fermented liquor was being consumed Jesus would have been in violation of the OT Scriptures (Habakkuk 2:15). In addition, he would have been offering the “cup of devils” to commemorate his own blood sacrifice – Deuteronomy 32:33-37; 1 Corinthians 10:21.



What About a Missionary in Spain, Germany, or Ireland Where Social Drinking is Crucial Part of the Culture?

The Bible is true, and must be obeyed, no matter where you live

Since the Garden of Eden people have always tried to change what the Bible says to justify wrong or inappropriate behavior – Genesis 3:1-6. Is Spain, Germany, or Ireland really our standard for social behavior? Is any country, including America our standard for pleasure or social behavior? In order to penetrate a culture, there are certainly things a good missionary will have to do or personally change, ministry methods will have to be re-evaluated, but violating the Bible is not one of them. If a drinking Spaniard, German, or Irishman gets saved just preach the Bible to them; disciple them, love them, be patient with them no doubt, but let the Holy Spirit of God sort out the details in their heart and mind just like he does with you, me, and every believer everywhere. Should believers in the desert justify sprinkling for baptisms instead of full immersion just because there is a limited water supply? God will provide a way to obey his words! This is true today in the Sudan; I heard it directly from a missionary that was there - what an incredible testimony that was!

There will be difficulties, there will be hardships, things will get shaken and stirred up (besides the wines they mix), but perhaps that is exactly what that particular culture needs, don't you think? After traveling around the world and witnessing other cultures, I have learned that culture and Bible don't mix anywhere, so what else is new? Talk about troubles with culture, talk about a hard field to reach, try being a missionary here in Jackson Township, Ohio!

Being different by total abstinence of drinking liquor will open doors for you with lost people, not close them! Just recently bro Jay had an open-door opportunity to witness to a man at length, no door like this one would have existed if he did not refuse an offered beer. I get sick and tired of hearing about Christians being "culturally relevant" while leaving the Bible at the back door. This lame argument has always been around:

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Eccl. 1:9

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Eccl. 1:14

Cave into culture for the sake of reaching them? Baloney, these are simply *carnal* and *cowardly* Christians that are afraid to have the lost world mad at them or think poorly of them. Maybe they are actually embarrassed of God, who knows? Jesus did not fit in, they killed him, remember? In this world we will have tribulation, but we can be of good cheer because Jesus has overcome the world!

These things I have spoken unto you,
that in me ye might have peace.
In the world ye shall have tribulation:
but be of good cheer;
I have overcome the world.

John 16:33



What About Our Liberty in Christ...Are We not Set Free by Jesus' Blood Atonement?

We have liberty to do what is *right*

I hear this issue a lot in Christian circles when trying to justify the social consumption of alcohol. While it is certainly true that we are no longer bound by any law to please God and are living moment by moment under his grace (*Romans 8:2 - For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death*), we do not abuse this freedom as an occasion to sin or participate in any questionable behavior (*Romans 6:1-2 - What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*).

The liberty we have assures us the freedom to do what is *right* without the checks and balances of any law; it does not give us license to do anything we desire (John 8:34; Romans 6:12-18).

Our liberty is not to exercise our carnal desires, but rather to serve God and others liberally:

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. Galatians 5:13

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. 1 Peter 2:16

Our new life in Christ is a living testimony to the grace of God. We are a testimony to the people in our sphere of influence, whether it is for good or bad. The Bible clearly says that *none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself*. As I have already stated, as Christians, we are to avoid things that could cause a weaker believer to stumble in their faith. We are even told to avoid things that *appear* wrong although they may not be (*Romans 14:16 - Let not then your good be evil spoken of; 1 Thessalonians 5:22 - Abstain from all appearance of evil*). Please consider this extraordinary fact: because our activities and behavior affect those around us, and especially our local church and ministry, our business in a sense becomes the business of every member of our local church!

I was taught early on in my Christian life by my pastors and discipler to ask myself the following questions as it pertains to any controversial activities:

- Am I submitting to the power of something that should not be controlling my life?
- Am I edifying others in this process?
- Can I ask God to bless this activity with a clear conscience?
- Would it cause anyone saved or lost to stumble?
- Would it be a cause for an unsaved person to reject the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour?
- Does my conscience question or condemn me for it?
- If the Lord returned at this moment, would I be ashamed?

Because of these things the issue of liberty to consume alcohol socially is a moot point. (What will happen when the government legalizes marijuana and other narcotics?)

I have these same folks tell me that drinking helps to calm them down after a stressful day or that it takes the edge off things when life gets demanding, or that it helps them sleep better at night. They say that they have the liberty to help themselves overcome these problems. Oh really? Tell that to the little kid or recovering alcoholic from church that sees you purchasing your liquor. (Maybe you should sneak out of town and purchase it under the cover of darkness). How about slipping out of bed and reading your Bible until you nod off? It works every single time, just try it! When life gets tough, I have something that is more effective than booze or any sleeping agent; try getting down on your knees with your face against the floor and pray, casting all your care upon God.

The liberty God gives us is not questionable. Therefore, if our behavior is questionable, it is not from God—James 1:15-17 says, *“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”*

James 4:17 says, *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”*

Why Are Christians Today Making this Issue of Social Drinking a Public Topic of Discussion?

Pride and addiction to pleasure; lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God...

While I certainly do not advocate, in any way shape or form, the pleasure driven or social consumption of fermented liquor, why make it a public matter? If a Christian really wants to disobey God and drink booze, why can't they keep it private and to themselves? Why do they persist in arguing it's biblically OK?

The only reasonable explanation is that they are self-centered and self-consumed – pride. Many drinking Christians I know are bitter or prideful people, or do not like being told what to do. Others simply have one foot in the world and one foot in the Bible. Even others simply love to feed their faces and lust for pleasures. Take note, every so-called Christian that behaves this way has deep seated spiritual problems. I say this with confidence only because they are in clear violation of Scripture, and I counsel them at times.

Sadly, these spiritual problems will sooner or later be evidenced in their life, home, church, and job. They will tend to do ultra-Christian-like things to appear a-okay. However, it is sinful human nature to flaunt in the open that which is wrong, it is nothing more than an attempt to exercise a rebellious spirit and minimize the wrong. We should truly feel sorry for these Christians because of the pain they will experience and cause. We can take no pleasure when the fruit of their poor choices are finally exposed.

Galatians 6:7-8 - Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Conclusion

If you are attending a church where the pastor or leaders openly advocate or do not openly condemn the consumption of fermented liquor for pleasure or social purposes under the guise that this issue of total abstinence is not in the Bible as long as you don't get drunk, you should seriously and prayerfully reconsider your membership in such a church. They are either deceived, dishonest, or both. Error begets error – there are most definitely other areas of blunder they are steeped in. The Bible says in Ephesians 5:11 **...And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.**

Pay close attention to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Isaiah 5:20-22

Ponder the words of the apostle Paul:

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11

We will all do well to heed the words from the wisest man that ever lived:

**Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging:
and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise**
Proverbs 20:1

**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God, and keep his commandments:
for this is the whole duty of man.
For God shall bring every work into judgment,
with every secret thing,
whether it be good, or whether it be evil.**
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14



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