

better for them that a millstone were hanged about their neck, and that they were drowned in the sea. In other words it is a serious offense in the sight of God that will bring His harshest judgment. Similarly, in Romans 14:21 we are clearly instructed: "it is good neither to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor anything by which thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak". Even if we think we have the liberty under God to do something, we shouldn't do it if we know it is a stumbling block to others! Shall we continue to disregard our accountability for our brother's conscience (1Cor. 10:23-33) and by demanding our so-called rights destroy the life of a Christian brother or little one (Romans 14:15)? GOD FORBID!

**ABSTINENCE** - No one is immune from alcoholism. This is why it should be obvious that the Bible teaches total abstinence. With all the information available about the evil aspects of alcohol and the death and suffering it causes, we can see the truths of 1 Peter 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Parents must teach their children about the evils of alcohol, that they are not to drink and refuse an alcoholic "social drink". Teenagers must reject all peer pressure that makes alcoholic beverage acceptable.

**The Cornerstone Booklet Ministry:** Biblical Answers to Contemporary Issues

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# The CORNERSTONE

BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT

## ALCOHOL



Cornerstone Booklets

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**WINE IS A MOCKER, STRONG DRINK IS RAGING, AND WHOSOEVER IS DECEIVED THEREBY IS NOT WISE. - Proverbs 20:1**

**ALCOHOLISM** - The liquor industry spends millions of dollars annually to advertise alcoholic beverages. Sports and entertainment figures lead us to believe that alcohol is a part of the good life and success. While alcohol has the same qualities as drugs, the liquor industry has successfully removed the stigma of calling alcohol consumption "drug abuse". The public has been convinced that drinking is socially acceptable and in a different category than drug abuse. God gives a strong warning concerning those who call evil good: "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" (Isaiah 5:20). When pressures of life seem overwhelming the "have a drink" concept seems only natural. If we are to "party" or have a celebration, it seems unheard of to exclude alcoholic beverages. Tragically, through peer group pressure many young people become involved in alcohol, drugs and sex at these events known as "party time". Those who encourage others in alcohol consumption with the goal of getting them to lower their moral standards will be judged by God: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness" (Habakkuk 2:15).

Alcohol is a poison to the whole body. It is a chemical that is a narcotic, an anesthetic, and an analgesic. Its' effects are intoxicating, hypnotic, habit-forming and addictive.

Alcoholism is drinking too much, too often and allowing alcohol to have a pre-eminence in our life. The alcoholic enjoys drinking and the feelings and associations that go with it. Whatever disadvantages and disapprovals he may encounter are out-weighed by the pleasure he experiences and he is willing to pay the price for such pleasure: The Bible aptly describes his condition: "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 color 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 not: WHEN SHALL I AWAKE? I WILL SEEK IT YET AGAIN" (Proverbs 23:29-35). Even after all the damage alcohol does to the alcoholic, to his family, friends, finances, job etc., he SEEKS IT YET AGAIN. He is truly in bondage to his sin and needs the freedom of Jesus Christ (John 8:32-36). A NATIONAL PROBLEM - One out of three families have had problems caused by alcohol. Alcoholism is the third largest health problem in our nation and has caused direct damage to one out of every four Americans.

**TRAGIC EFFECTS UPON INDIVIDUALS** - Brain damage, paralysis, heart trouble and cirrhosis are the results of alcohol. Many damaging effects of alcohol are transmitted to the baby in the womb. Alcoholism damages the family. Over 22 million people have an alcoholic parent and suffer emotional as well as physical scars. An estimated 20 billion dollars is spent each year on medical expense related to alcohol. Within us are natural inhibitions against wrong behavior. Alcohol lowers

of three parts water to one part wine. In another Jewish reference around 60 B.C. we read "It is harmful to drink wine alone, or again, to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet and delicious and enhances one's enjoyment" (11 Maccabees 15:39).

Ray Johnson suggests that there is abundant evidence to suggest that the wine was mixed with water; not because they were so strong with alcohol as to require dilution, but because, being rich syrups, they needed water to prepare them for drinking. The quantity of water was regulated by the richness of the wine and the time of year.

According to the Lardner's Cyclopeda, four elements are required for fermentation to take place.: (1) There must be sugar matter and gluten yeast (2) The temperature should not be below 50 degrees nor above 70 or 75 degrees (3) The juice must be of a certain consistency. Thick syrup will not undergo vinous fermentation (4) The quantity of yeast or ferment must also be well regulated. Fermentation then is not a natural process of nature, but something that must be controlled and produced by man. A French Chemist once said: "Nature never forms spirituous liquors: she rots the grape upon the branch; but it is art which converts the juice into (alcoholic) wine." (Quoted from Smith's Dictionary of the Bible)

Why was Jesus called a "winebibber" (Matt. 11:1 8-19). John the Baptist was under the strict requirements of the Nazarite vow and practice austere abstinence and peculiar habits. He was said to have a demon by the enemies of Christ. When they saw how Jesus mingled socially with even those despised of men they charged him with being a "winebibber". It was guilt by association. The Lord Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19: 1 0). His mission was to those who realized they were spiritually sick and needed a Savior (Matt. 9:12). Jesus' enemies, who accused him of being a "winebibber" were outraged because he uncovered their self-righteousness and pride. On two other occasions they said Jesus had a devil (Jn. 1:20; 8:48). Their only concern was somehow to discredit the perfect sinless ministry of the Son of God and cover up their own guilt and conviction. An excellent book recommended for your study concerning fermented and unfermented wine in the Bible: Bible Wines: Laws of Fermentation, by William Patton (Sane Press, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma).

**"WOE UNTO HIM THAT GIVETH HIS NEIGHBOR DRINK" - Habakkuk 2:15**

Those involved in the manufacture, distribution or sale of alcohol must acknowledge their accountability to God. God warns of those who for monetary gain bring destruction to the lives of others: "So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof" (Prov. 1:19). His counsel is to "walk not in the way with them" (Prov. 1: 1 5). Who is responsible for the death of an innocent driver on the highway, who was killed because he was hit by a drunk driver? The person who made the alcohol? The person who distributed the alcohol? The person who sold the alcohol? The person who drunk the alcohol? Will God hold innocent those who are greedy for gain even at the expense of the destruction of life? (Prov. 28:8).

**"WOE TO THAT MAN BY WHOM THE OFFENSE COMES" - Matthew 18:7** What parents do in moderation, children do in excess. What mature Christians do in moderation, new Christians do in excess. It is hard to justify social drinking when you consider the teachings of the Bible in Matthew 18 and Romans 14. Jesus warned that if adults offend children and put a stumbling block in their pathway; it is

## ALCOHOLIC WINE AND THE BIBLE

Two types of wine are discussed in the Bible. The one causes intoxication, violence and woes (Prov. 4:17, 23:29-30), the other is the occasion of comfort and peace (Gen. 27:28; Deut. 7:13; 11:14; Is. 65:8; Joel 3:18). The one is the cause of irreligion and of self-destruction ((Is. 28:7; 56:12; Hab. 2:5; Prov. 23:31) and the other the devout offering of piety on the altar of God (Num. 18:12; Neh. 10:37,39; 13:5,13), the one the symbol of divine wrath (Gal. 5:19,20; 1 Cor. 6:9,10) and the other the symbol of spiritual blessings (John 2:1-12). "Can it be that these blessings and curses refer to the same beverage, and that an intoxicating liquor? Does the Lord's trumpet give a questionable or an unquestionable sound? (i Cor. 14:8). Can the same thing, in the same state, be both bad and good; a symbol of divine wrath, and a symbol of mercy (James 3:11,12) Certainly not! 'My final conclusion is this: whenever the scriptures speak of wine as a comfort, a blessing, or a libation to God, and rank it with such articles as grain and oil they mean, and they can only mean the wines that contained no alcohol that could have harmful effect; that wherever they denounce it, and connect it with drunkenness and reveling, they can mean only alcoholic or intoxicating wine" (Quoted from Wine and the Bible by Ray Johnson) Did Jesus turn water into alcoholic wine (John 2:1 -1 1)? "To argue that the "good wine" which the miracle of Jesus produced was hard liquor is utterly ridiculous! It is far more likely to believe that it was closer to the sweet grape juice that was so highly prized and which took special processes of prevention to preserve. This "good" or "best" wine was usually served at the beginning, while older and more fermented wine would be brought out at the end, when people would be less likely to notice the difference. It is fascinating to notice that the governing official at this wedding immediately recognized the good quality of the wine which Jesus made from the water in the waterpots" (Quoted from David Hocking's book Moral Catastrophe). Furthermore, the National Council on Alcoholism has reported that just two ounces of alcohol per day puts the unborn baby at risk in the mother's womb. "Tell me, please, how could Jesus not know this? How could He, knowing that even two ounces of alcohol would risk the lives of unborn children, turn water into fermented wine and see it served to an expectant mother, had she been in attendance at the wedding of Cana? NO! A thousand times no! Drinking of any alcoholic beverage is absolutely contrary to the character and teaching of Jesus. It is not in keeping with His sinless, perfect life. It is not a standard He would set for true followers" (Quoted from David Wilkerson's book "Sipping Saints") Does the Bible ever encourage the use of strong drink or wine for medicinal purposes? Yes in the case of someone ready to perish (Prov. 31:6,7) and in Timothy's case when he was experiencing stomach problems (i Tim. 5:23). Was the wine in ancient times diluted with water? The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia (Vol. 12, p. 533) states that in the rabbinic period "wine is to be distinguished from strong drink: the former diluted with water; the latter is undiluted". In the Talmud, which contains the oral traditions of Judaism from about 2000 B.C. to A.D. 200, there are several tractates in which the mixture of water and wine is discussed. One tractate (Shabbath 77a) states that wine that does not carry three parts of water is not wine. In a most important reference (Pesahim 108b) it is stated that the four cups every Jew was to drink during the Passover ritual were to be mixed in a ratio

these restraints and we violate our moral standards. Alcohol is linked to 60% of violent crimes, 30% of all suicides and 80% of fire and drowning accidents. Suicide rates of alcoholics are 30 times greater than the norm. Among those going through the heartache of divorce 50 to 60% listed alcohol as a major contributing factor.

**TRAGIC EFFECTS UPON OUR NATION** - Drunk drivers claim another life every 22 minutes. The cost to our nation is \$50 billion per year. Drunk driving kills more young people than any other cause. Among America's work force, 10% have a drinking problem that restricts their ability to do their job, resulting in 20 billion dollars lost production each year. Law enforcement spends four and a half billion dollars a year on alcohol related crimes. Alcohol costs society \$35 billion dollars more per year than the taxes it produces.

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ALCOHOL** - Drunkenness is always treated as a sin in the Bible and if continually practiced with no repentance will result in eternal damnation (1Cor. 6:9,10 and Galatians 5:19-21). Intoxicating drink is forbidden (Prov. 23:29-35). Those who try to justify alcohol consumption will be mocked by it and are said to be not wise: "Wine a mocker, strong drink raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). Those who drink are warned of the poverty that will come to their life: "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags" (Prov. 23:21). Alcohol consumption is the world's imitation substitute for the true joy a person can experience when they are properly related to God and filled with God's spirit (Acts 2:15,16; Eph. 5:18).

The pleasures of sin only last for a season and afterwards they yield great destruction in a man's life (Heb. 11:25, Prov. 23:17,18). Beer commercials never advertise the end of sin (breakup of the family, the destruction to one's health, the loss of one's job, the car accident that takes life etc.). They only advertise the beginning of sin (the party where everyone is having a "good time") But the Bible warns: "...be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). "...the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and Proverbs 14:12 "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

Those who desire to be leaders among men are prohibited from the consumption of wine: kings, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: {5} Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted" (Prov. 31:4,5), priests (Lev. 10:9), Nazarites (Num. 6:3,20), prophets and priests (Isa. 28:7), elders and deacons (i Tim. 3:3,8, Titus 1:7), and in any situation where it causes someone to stumble (Rom. 14:21).

**ALCOHOLISM IS NOT A DISEASE** - God warns "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). Anyone seeking freedom from alcohol addiction must call alcoholism by its' right name - sin. If we try to cover it, make excuses for it, rationalize it; (i John 1:8 Gen. 3:8-13) we will remain in its' grip (Romans 6:19,20) and continue to suffer the devastation of sin's destruction. The key for any sinner to have God's forgiveness and to enter into God's victory that He has provided through His Son (Romans 7:25; 6:22,23) the Lord Jesus Christ is to make a genuine confession of sin (i John 1:9). To confess your sins is to say the same thing about it that God says. God calls it sin! What do you call it? Calling alcoholism a disease is socially acceptable and removes the shame and reproach that brings us to a point of repentance (Romans 6:21; Eph. 5:12). Alcoholism is a result of a choice made by an individual who is

responsible for his behavior and accountable to God (Romans 2:6). No person willingly invites a cold or flu virus into his life. These viruses come in as unwelcome guests against the will of the individual. Furthermore, God never condemns anyone to damnation because they have a flu virus. We experience the wrath of God's judgment because of the responsible moral choices we make in life. For this reason there is an eternal judgment for the sin of alcoholism (1 Cor. 6:9,10). Anyone reading this booklet that truly wants to be delivered from the shackles of alcohol addiction should read the parable of the prodigal son who found freedom from his bondage (Luke 15:11-32). Please notice in this account that his first step to freedom was to acknowledge "I have sinned..." (Luke 15:18)

**GOD'S CURE FOR ALCOHOLISM** - (It is recommended highly that you look up all verses in this section to understand fully God's way of deliverance). The secular world has many programs to somehow cope with alcoholism, usually based upon self-determination and human effort. Sin problems in our life must be conquered in God's way or else the last state of a man will be worse than the first (2 Peter 2:18-22, Matthew 12:43,- 45). Jesus clearly stated that without His help we will never be able to live above the power of sin (John 15:1-7). We must look outside of ourselves to the cross of Calvary for help (John 3:14-21) to overcome the power of sin.

**First**, we need to recognize the spiritual nature of the problem. Drunkenness is a sin. Sin can only be overcome permanently and completely with spiritual weapons (2 Cor. 10:4,5). Ultimately, the battle to regain one's freedom is not against the bottle, but against the wicked one, Satan himself (Eph. 6:12, Col. 1:13, 2 Cor. 4:4, John 8:42-44). Satan can only be defeated in the name and through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:11, Acts 8:5-25, Matt. 12:25-30, Luke 10:17-20).

**Secondly**, we must repent of our sin as mentioned previously. Until we call alcoholism by its' right name and humbly come before God for his forgiveness and cleansing we are fighting a losing battle (James 4:1-12, Luke 18:9-14, Acts 2:37-47). God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). The Bible speaks of two kinds of repentance. "For Godly sorrow worketh to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death..." (1 Cor. 7:10) A person may be sorry for what his alcoholic problem has done to himself, his family and others. But "Godly sorrow" realizes his sin against God. Psalms 51, written by King David, clearly shows us "Godly sorrow". He says "against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight".. Ps. 51:4 David cries out, "Have mercy upon me... blot out my transgressions... wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. (Ps. 51:1,2)

**Third**, we must understand the danger of contact with the spirit world. Most secular programs allow for belief in some supernatural being and encourage their clients to seek out help from this 'god', if it helps them overcome their problem. This is very dangerous! There are many who delve into the spiritual world only to end up in deception and occult bondage by the supernatural signs and wonders of Satan (2 Thess. 2:8-12, Deut. 13:1-5, 1 Tim. 4:1-3). We must seek to know the true God only through the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6, 1 Tim. 2:5). The word translated sorcery in the English Bible is the Greek word "pharmakeia". We get the English word pharmacy from it. The abusive use of drugs and alcohol open a person up to witchcraft and occultic powers (Rev. 9:21, 21:8, 18:23).

**Fourth**, we must understand the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31). Faith in a god is not enough to bring a person to salvation (Acts 10:2ff, 23ff;

James 2:19, John 14:1-3). It is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that brings salvation and deliverance from sin (1 Tim. 2:5; John 14:6; Romans 10:1-13, 1 Corinthians 15:1-22). Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh -DEITY! (Rom. 1:4, John 10:22-38, Col. 1:15,2:9 John 1:1-3,14, 8:57,58; Heb. 1:10). It is highly recommended that you request our booklet on His deity to gain complete understanding of its' importance to your deliverance. Jesus Christ was unlike any other man that has ever lived. He demonstrated that He had power and authority over the forces of nature (Mark 4:35-41), power to bring the dead back to life (Luke 7:11-17) --even after 4 days (John 11:39), power over the worst kinds of occultic bondage (demons) (Mark 5:1-20), and power to heal the worst kinds of disease and sickness (John 9:32-34; 3:1,2). He lived a perfect life without sin (1 Peter 1:19; John 8:29; Heb. 4:15). He had no sin of His own that would cause him to die (Romans 6:23). Jesus Christ did not die because the Romans soldiers nailed him to the cross. He died because he willingly bore in His body the sins of the whole world (John 10:17,18; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:4,5; 2 Cor. 5:21). By His death He made forgiveness of our sins possible and by his resurrection he defeated the power of sin, death, hell and Satan (Col. 1:13,14; 2:9-14; Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 Cor. 15:1-10,54-58).

**Fifth**, you must personally believe and receive what the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for you (Acts 16:31; John 1:12; Romans 10:10,13) as your personal Savior. When you pray confessing and repenting of your sins and acknowledging Him as your Savior, He will enter your life by the power of His Spirit and you will be born again (John 3). With Christ living in you, you will have new freedom over sin (Rom. chapters 6 and 8). As you read His word and allow Him to continue to reveal Himself to you, you will discover that you are more than a conqueror of sin (Rom. 8:37; 12:1,2). The power of the indwelling Christ in you will give you power and authority over Satan in the world and indwelling sin (Romans 6:11-13,14; 1 John 4:4). You can be delivered out of Satan's kingdom of darkness into God's kingdom of light, life, freedom, joy and peace (Co. 1:13; John 10:10; Gal. 5:22,23).

**Sixth**, you cannot remain neutral toward the claims of Christ. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). "He that is not with me is against me..." (Matt. 12:30). Jesus Christ the Lord of creation and Savior of the world must either be worshipped and obeyed or rejected and disobeyed. No one is standing at a fork in the road trying to decide whether they will follow Christ or not. As long as you continue on in your own stubborn self will, continuing to be the boss of your own life you have rejected Christ as Lord of your life.

Oh how he waits for you to open the door of your heart so that he can cleanse your heart from sin and empower you to be delivered (Revelation 3:20). On judgment day there will be no excuses to justify not recognizing and following Christ (Romans 1:20; 2:14,15). You will stand condemned in your sins, unless you stand before God in the righteousness that Christ has provided for you (Romans 8:1,2; John 5:24). Invite Him into your life today and drink of the fountain of the water of life. Listen to His invitations: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. {38} He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38). "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. {29} Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28-29).