

Is Intoxicating Drink Allowed In Moderation?

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Worship

Introduction:

Since I was in college, I have been aware of a debate regarding the use of intoxicating drink. The debate has not centered on drunkenness. I am not aware of any Christians who claim drunkenness is acceptable. We know **Romans 13:13; I Corinthians 5:11, 6:10; Galatians 5:21; I Peter 4:3** et. al. The debate centers on drinking in moderation. Or as is often stated, "Surely it is not wrong to have one drink at mealtime or after a hard day's work in the privacy of my own home." There are essentially two sides to this discussion. One side says the only lawful use of intoxicating drink is medicinal, while the other proposes intoxicating drink in moderation is allowed for any purpose. For some Christians, this debate is merely an intellectual exercise. Even if they believe in some technical sense that one intoxicating drink is allowed, they understand the dangers of alcohol and would never in any real sense endorse even one drink. These are typically very quick to point out they do not advocate drinking. For others, however, it does become an issue of practice. To our young people it is more than an intellectual exercise. Drinking is often part of fitting in for high school and college students. Many believe and say to themselves, if not consciously, then subconsciously, "If having one drink is lawful, I can go ahead and milk this beer (or this cooler) all night and I will be just like the guys without getting drunk." Many Christians are involved in business and sales where "wining and dining" clients and bosses is the rule of the day. They, too, find this debate to apply to practice. After all, if one drink is lawful, they can participate in what seems to be an essential to modern salesmanship and business practice and not be hindered by what their associates believe is a fanatic moral stance. Finally, there are those who, having come out of the world, have found that nothing ends a day of hard work like a cold beer. They have lived the commercial that said, "It doesn't get any better than this." Now that they are children of God, they want to purify their lives, but if they can be pure without giving up their daily beer, then why not? If, in fact, God's Word does allow drinking alcohol in moderation, then we can at best appeal to someone's judgment not to be involved in these practices because of influence. But we must not bind where God has not bound and we cannot really tell them, in any legitimate way, to quit drinking.

So we must ask ourselves, "What does God allow?" We know how to answer this question. **II Timothy 3:16-17** says God's Word equips us for every good work. Does God's Word equip us to drink intoxicants in moderation? I am like you, wanting my life to be run by the principles and guidelines of God's revealed Word. I do not want to bind where the Scripture does not and I do not want to loose what the Scripture does not. This morning I hope we can all approach this topic with fresh eyes and ears.

Discussion:

- I. Modern assumptions that cloud the Bible issue.
 - A. "Wine is wine is wine and all of it is intoxicating."
 1. If I asked you to go to the store and buy me some cider, what would you purchase? Because you know me, you would purchase unfermented apple cider. However, if I was a drinker and you knew I was going to a BYOB New Year's Eve party, you would run by a package store and pick up some hard cider. Here is a word that we use today which can mean either intoxicating or non-intoxicating drink. We determine which is meant based on the context of the statement.
 2. In our modern day, the words "wine" and "cider" are different. "Cider" refers to either intoxicating or non-intoxicating juice depending on the context, but, for us, "wine" always refers to an intoxicating drink. Was it that way in the Bible? No.
 3. No doubt in places the term "wine" referred to intoxicating, alcoholic drink, e.g. **Genesis 9:20; 19:32; Proverbs 23:29-31**. On the other hand, notice some other places where "wine" could not possibly have referred to intoxicating, alcoholic drink. **Isaiah 16:10** spoke of "wine" being treaded out in the presses. It is not possible for what is treaded out in the presses to be fermented and intoxicating. Likewise **Jeremiah 40:10-12** referred to gathering in the wine along with the summer fruits. In other words, this was the juice in the grape when brought in from the field. It could not possibly be fermented, alcoholic, intoxicating drink. **Jeremiah 48:33** spoke again of wine being in the wine presses. Again, this was the juice as it was pressed out of the grapes and therefore must not have been alcoholic or intoxicating. Understand clearly what this demonstrates. As we strive to see what God has equipped us to do in scripture, it is not enough to find a place where "wine" is consumed with approval. It must be a place where we know it is intoxicating wine and it is consumed with approval.
 - B. "Ancient people of the Bible days did not know how to keep juice from fermenting."
 1. Some will grudgingly concede the prior point that in the Bible, "wine" is a generic term used to refer to juice from a grape whether fermented or not. So, if it is freshly squeezed it is non-fermented. But if it was squeezed a week ago, the ancients had no way of keeping it from fermenting and therefore it must be intoxicating and alcoholic. It is not surprising that people feel this way. After all, every generation believes knowledge and wisdom begins with them. But it simply is not true.

2. A study of history has demonstrated that men of antiquity knew how to keep wine unfermented. Consider the following:
 - a. "If you wish to have must (i.e., grape juice) all year put grape juice in an amphora and seal the cork with pitch: sink it in a fishpond. After 30 days take it out. It will be grape juice for a whole year." (*De Agri Cultura CXX*, Marcus Porcius Cato the elder who lived from 234-149 B.C.; quoted from Sipping Saints by Rick Lanning and also The Bible, The Saint, and The Liquor Industry by Jim McGuiggan). Thus juice could be kept from fermenting if sealed and kept below a certain temperature which immobilizes the yeast from fermenting. Interestingly, the Bible speaks of storing wine in cellars which by their very nature would perform this cooling operation (**I Chronicles 27:27**).
 - b. Pliny who lived from AD 61-113 said, "The most useful wine has all its force or strength broken by the filter." And Plutarch who lived from AD 46-120 said, "Wine is rendered old or feeble in strength when it is frequently filtered. The strength or spirit being thus excluded, the wine neither inflames the brain nor infests the mind and the passions, and is much more pleasant to drink" (From the same sources as above). This filtering referred to a process by which the yeast would be removed and thus not allow fermentation. The Bible speaks of this very thing. In **Isaiah 25:6**, God claims He will host a feast in which He will provide "refined" wine. According to Strong's Enhanced Lexicon, that translates the Hebrew word "zaqaq" which refers to purifying or straining. In other words, in Isaiah's day, they knew they could filter wine.
 - c. Have you ever heard someone who argues vehemently against consuming alcohol claim it is lawful to cook with alcohol? Of course you have. Why? Because the alcohol cooks out. Alcohol has a lower boiling point than water. When boiled, the alcohol in fermented wine will cook out just as it cooks out of the vanilla you add to your cake recipes. Virgil who lived from 70 to 19 BC wrote, "Meanwhile his spouse, ... over the fire boils down the liquor of the luscious must, and skims with leaves the tide of the trembling cauldron" (quoted from The Bible, The Saint, and The Liquor Industry, p 45). After the wine was boiled down it became pasty and thick like honey. It was a concentrate and to be drunk it had to be mixed with water.
3. The ancients were not as simple or ignorant as we may think. They knew full well how to keep juice unfermented. And if it fermented, they knew how to remove the alcohol and make it non-intoxicating. They did this by procedures even referred to in the Bible. Thus, we cannot assume that the word "wine" in the Bible refers to alcohol or intoxicating drink, no matter how old it is.

II. Since we are striving to find equipping from the Bible to perform what might be the good work of drinking alcohol in moderation, it stands to reason that we must find some Bible verses that demonstrate a moderate consumption of intoxicating drink with God's approval, either by command, approved example or necessary inference. How does the Bible present consuming intoxicating drink? I have found 21 passages that clearly speak of drinking intoxicating wine. They can be classed in two categories: negative and positive.

A. Passages that are negative.

1. **Genesis 9:21; 19:32; Numbers 6:3; I Samuel 1:14; 25:36; Psalm 60:3; 75:8; 78:65; Proverbs 20:1; 23:30; 31:4; Isaiah 5:11, 22; 24:9; 28:1; 56:12; Jeremiah 23:9; 51:7; Joel 1:5; Ephesians 5:18.**
2. We do not have time to read all 20 of these passages during this sermon. I encourage you to look them up on your own time and see if I am not correct. These passages link intoxicating wine with sin, judgment, loss of control and folly. Perhaps the strongest of these is **Proverbs 20:1**, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler ..." More on that verse in a few moments.

B. Passages that are positive.

1. Only one passage clearly mentions consuming intoxicating drink in a remotely positive light—**Proverbs 31:6-7**. Lemuel's mother tells him to let the man who is perishing and whose life is bitter to drink to forget his trouble and sorrow.
2. Thus the one who is dying and in great pain, as the term for "bitter" is defined by Strong's Enhanced Lexicon, can consume intoxicating drink in order to forget the trauma he is experiencing. At most we have a positive view of alcohol for medicinal use, used as a painkiller here, just as morphine is used today. We would all say it is lawful to give morphine to the man who is dying and whose heart is bitter, that is, in pain. Would we take that to mean that a little morphine with our supper, taken in moderation is scriptural?

C. Considering the above, I find us hard pressed to come up with a command, approved example or necessary inference authorizing the consumption of intoxicating drinks even in moderation. This alone, for a people who demand Jesus' authority for all we do in word or deed (**Colossians 3:17**), ought to be enough to cause us to refrain from intoxicating drink and to teach others to do so.

III. Bible words and principles, their meanings and how they apply to our question.

- A. **Ephesians 5:18** says, “And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.” One may ask, “What part does this passage play? By your own admission, Edwin, no Christians argue that a man can be drunk.” This passage and two others (**Luke 12:45**; **I Thessalonians 5:7**) do not refer to what we commonly think of as drunkenness.
1. In each of these passages a form of the Greek verb “methusko” is used. That term is in turn a special form of the verb “methuo.” “Methuo” means to be filled, and in context of intoxicating wine indicates being drunk. W.E. Vine points out that “methusko” is the inceptive form of “methuo.” Vine goes on to add, this inceptive verb is “marking the process of the state expressed in No. 1 [methuo]” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p 343.).
 2. Webster’s Dictionary defines “inceptive” as “expressing the beginning of the action indicated by the underlying verb, ...”
 3. Abbot-Smith’s Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament claims “methusko” is “causal of [methuo]” (T&T Clark, Edinburgh, Scotland. 1973, p 282.).
 4. Bullinger’s A Critical Lexicon and Concordance To the English and Greek New Testament says “methusko” means “to grow drunk (*marking the beginning of No. 1 [methuo]*)” (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids. 1978. P 238.).
 5. Thus **Ephesians 5:18**; **Luke 12:45** and **I Thessalonians 5:7** do not condemn the final state of drunkenness, but the process by which people become drunk even at its inception or beginning. Also note, this is purely grammatical and says nothing about whether the process was completed or intended to be completed. It condemns the process from beginning to end. Why? Because, according to **Ephesians 5:18** this process leads to excess, also translated “riot” in **Titus 1:6** and **I Peter 4:4**. Beginning this process is forbidden because it leads to greater sin. In contrast, we are to be filled with the Spirit. Filled with the Spirit means to be guided by the Spirit through the Word. Therefore, to the extent you have continued in the process of getting drunk you are hindering your ability to be filled with the Spirit. With each drink you become more filled with the drink and less with the Spirit.
- B. In addition to Paul’s command to abstain from even the beginning of the process of getting drunk, there is the positive command to all Christians to be sober found in **I Thessalonians 5:6-8**; **I Peter 1:13, 5:8**.
1. According to Strong’s Enhanced Lexicon “sober” translates the Greek word “nepho” and defines it “(1) to be sober, to be calm and collected in spirit (2) to be temperate, dispassionate and circumspect.”
 2. W.E. Vine says it “signifies to be free from the influence of intoxicants” (p 1067).
 3. G. Abbot-Smith says of “nepho”: “*to be sober, abstain from wine; metaph., of moral alertness, ...*”(p 302-3).
 4. Bullinger defines it “to be sober, temperate, abstinent, *esp. in respect to wine. ...*” (p 713).
 5. Regarding soberness, I would like to share with you the advice of the Channing L. Bete Co. to teenagers in a pamphlet entitled What Every Teenager Should Know About Alcohol. Be aware, pp 4-5 of this pamphlet claim you will do one of three things with alcohol: 1) Not use it, 2) Use it safely or 3) Abuse it. This pamphlet supports drinking in moderation as safe drinking. Page 6 of this pamphlet tells teenagers, “It takes 1 hour for the alcohol from one drink (12 oz. of beer, 5 oz. of wine, a 1 ½ oz. ‘shot’ of 80 proof whiskey or mixed drink) to leave the body. So a 150-180 lb. person could consume 1 drink per hour and still stay relatively sober” (emphasis mine – ELC). In other words, compared to the guy who has drunk two or three drinks in that same hour I could be considered sober. However, if I am only relatively sober, then I am also relatively intoxicated. That is, in comparison to the one who did not drink any that hour, I can be considered drunk. So, if God’s command were to stay relatively sober, we might be allowed to have one drink per hour. But that wasn’t God’s command. His command was to be sober, period.
- C. There are three passages in **Proverbs** that help us in this discussion.
1. **Proverbs 20:1** says, “Wine is a mocker and strong drink a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.” Many people focus on the latter half of this verse and think anything less than intoxication is not spoken against. But three things are addressed in this verse: wine, strong drink and intoxication. All of them are condemned. Wine is a mocker, that is, it is arrogant, puffed up and scoffing. Yet, some view this verse as saying we can drink a little bit of the mocker. Strong drink is raging or a brawler. That is, strong drink makes a loud, raging, thundering, clamorous noise. According to **Ephesians 4:31** we are to put clamoring away from us, but in **Proverbs 20:1** we are allowed to drink a little of it? Some of our brethren practice with this verse what they condemn the Baptists for doing with **Mark 16:16**. That is, using the last half of the verse to deny the first half.
 2. Amazingly enough, **Proverbs 23:29-35** is used to justify the moderate drink. We all know this passage says the one who lingers long over wine has woe and is therefore condemned. But the proverbialist also defines a second man who has woe: the one who tastes the mixed wine (according

to the KJV it is the one who searches it out). In other words, the man who has woe is the one who even looks for some of this intoxicating stuff in order to drink it. Then to drive the point home, the Proverbialist says don't even look at wine. I am consistently amazed, that some brethren read **Proverbs 23:29-30** and come to the conclusion that it is right to drink a little of this intoxicating wine. When Solomon wrote these words, he came to the conclusion that you shouldn't even look at it.

3. Finally, **Proverbs 31:4-5** says it is not for kings to drink wine. Notice, this passage doesn't say it is not for kings to get drunk. It says they should not drink it. Why? Because if you drink wine or strong drink, you might forget what is decreed. That is exactly what alcohol does, it affects our judgment, willpower, attention and inhibitions. I remind you that we are in the same position as this king. We are a royal priesthood (**I Peter 2:9**), reigning with Christ. It is not for us to drink intoxicants, lest we forget what is decreed. Lest one wants to claim he is only drinking a little and it is not affecting him. Allow me to share with you a chart taken from *Listen Magazine*, reprinted in a booklet called Sipping Saints by Rick Lanning. We all know that .10 BAC (blood alcohol content) is legally drunk and you will be arrested if caught drinking at that point. For a man who weighs 220 pounds it will take on average 5 12oz cans of beer to become legally drunk. However, at .01 BAC, the alcohol in that beer already affects the Frontal Lobe of the brain which causes "Removal of inhibitions, Loss of self-control, Weakening of willpower, Feeling of well-being, False confidence, Impaired judgment, Loquaciousness, Dulling of attention." Do you know how many 12oz cans of beer it takes to get a 220lb man to .01 BAC? Only ½ of a can. Perhaps, considering this list, we understand why Lemuel's mother said not to drink it at all. It affects our ability to remember and follow what was decreed before we even finish one drink.

Conclusion:

We began by demonstrating that the Scripture equips us for all good work (**II Timothy 3:16-17**). Considering all that we have seen from the Scripture, could you honestly go home this afternoon, sit down, eat lunch and drink a beer in Jesus' name (**Colossians 3:17**)? I hope you could not. And I hope that every drinker to whom you teach the gospel, you will also teach they must quit drinking. Not only quit drinking to excess, but quit drinking intoxicating drinks period.

Is Intoxicating Drink Allowed In Moderation? Answering Objections¹

Introduction:

I am well aware of some objections that may be raised against my sermon regarding intoxicating drink. No matter how many objections I answer, someone may always come up with one more. However, I thought it might be easier for you as a possible questioner and for me as the questioned to answer as many of the objections in a short paper to accompany my sermon. Hopefully, this will alleviate some possibly time consuming interviews and answer any questions you have. Of course, do not take this to mean I am unwilling to talk personally with you about any questions. I am more than willing to defend my stance and give an open, honest hearing to yours, if you disagree with me.

Discussion:

- I. "Jesus drank wine to the extent that he was accused of being a drunkard."
 - A. In **Matthew 11:16-19** and in **Luke 7:31-34**, the Word recounts Jesus' statement about the difference between Him and John the Baptist. John didn't eat or drink and Jesus did.
 - B. Does this prove Jesus drank intoxicating wine? Not in the least. That fact that people accused Jesus of being a drunkard does not mean He had drunk intoxicating wine, anymore than the accusation against the apostles in **Acts 2:13** means they had drunk any intoxicating wine.
 - C. Rather, Jesus' point is these people are looking for and dreaming up reasons not to believe and follow the truth. If a man is ascetic as John, they will claim he is a nut. If a man has a good time at a meal, they will claim he is immoral. In either case, they have justified why they don't listen. But the whole point is they conjured up an illegitimate excuse not to listen. Their illegitimate excuse does not provide a legitimate authority for having a little of the mocker wine at any time.

- II. "Jesus turned water into wine in Cana for those who were already drunk on wine."
 - A. Who is unaware that Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine at a wedding feast (**John 2:1-12**)? Some are absolutely convinced that Jesus provided intoxicating wine to guests who were already drunk with wine. Others, while conceding that Jesus could not have given the guests intoxicating wine, claim the natural wine they had already drunk must have been intoxicating because they were "well drunk." Neither position is correct.
 - B. Our heads can be sent spinning by trying to read all that the scholars say on this passage. If you have done any study, you know the scholars disagree. But, of course, scholars disagree on **Acts 2:38** as well, don't they? Despite this disagreement, with a small amount of common sense and a comparison between the thoughts of this passage and other Biblical concepts, I believe we can make sense of what has happened here.
 - C. First, as demonstrated in the sermon, the mention of wine does not equal intoxicating wine. This alone demonstrates the error of claiming Jesus gave intoxicating drink to people at this wedding feast. But even beyond that, are we to believe that Jesus gave more intoxicating wine to those already drunk? If so, in what way could you limit this passage to authorize only moderate drinking? After all, if Jesus could give intoxicating wine to those already drunk, why couldn't we? And why couldn't we be the ones to whom He gave it? Are we to truly believe Jesus manifested His own glory by furthering drunkenness?
 - D. Second, if Jesus is at a wedding feast where people are already drunk on intoxicating wine and they want more, Jesus is sinning. **Proverbs 23:20-21** says one is not to even be with heavy drinkers of wine. And of course, we are aware that drinking parties are condemned in **I Peter 4:3**. Despite this, are we to believe our Lord and Savior performed His first miracle and manifested His glory by working a miracle at a drinking party?
 - E. Neither of the positions on this passage that condone drinking in moderation measure up to the context of the Bible as a whole. Thus we learn, though the scholars disagree, this word for "well drunk" doesn't mean intoxicated unless in reference to a drink which intoxicates. In this passage, it simply means to have drunk a great deal of the drink on hand. Further, we also learn this passage does not equip us to drink intoxicating drinks in moderation.

¹ These are additional notes to answer objections many raise when discussing intoxicating drink.

- III. "Elders are not to be given to wine and deacons are not to be given to much wine."
- A. Because the qualifications for elders and deacons mention a restriction on being given to wine in **I Timothy 3:3, 8** and **Titus 1:7**, some suggest having wine in moderation is allowed. This argument is formed in a couple of ways.
 - 1. Some simply argue that a restriction is placed on being given to wine, not drinking wine. Therefore, drinking wine, so long as you are not given to it, is lawful.
 - 2. Others make a more sophisticated argument by noting the distinction between what is said about the elders and what is said about the deacons. The elders are not to be given to wine at all. But the deacons are not to be given to much wine. The claim is that somehow, since Paul used different phrases regarding quantity, drinking in small quantities is authorized.
 - B. On the first hand, what makes us so sure this refers to intoxicating wine? Understanding that the use of the term "wine" does not necessitate intoxicating drink must cause us to stop and consider that perhaps another point is being made; one which is actually deeper than just "the man can't be a drunk." **Ecclesiastes 10:16-19** claims that a king should know the appropriate time to eat and drink, for strength and not just to be filled. That is, the king is not to be governed by his stomach, for that brings destruction. Yes, I know this passage says "drunkenness" but notice it links the drunkenness with eating, not drinking. Nobody eats to be intoxicated. The message is like the oft repeated cliché, "Eat to live, don't live to eat." In all honesty, we must give consideration to this possibility. Elders and deacons must be men who are not governed by their stomachs, but have control over fleshly desires.
 - C. On the other hand, if, in fact, these passages do refer to intoxicating wine, there is still no equipping for moderate drinking. One must admit that because a thing is restricted from a particular group does not necessarily mean it is restricted for all. Consider that Nazarites were not even allowed to touch grapes (**Numbers 6:4**). But that restriction did not apply to all Jews. However, just because a restriction is mentioned for a particular group does not mean others are not also restricted from the same thing. In this list, the elders and deacons are restricted from polygamy, contentiousness, brawling, striking and the love of money. Are these things authorized for other Christians?
 - D. Additionally, the fact that an extreme is condemned in one passage does not mean moderation is permitted. These passages also claim the men are not to be given to or greedy for filthy lucre. Does that then authorize the elder, deacon or any other Christian to seek filthy lucre in moderation?
 - E. Finally, isn't this objection the same approach to scripture that Jesus condemned in the Sermon on the Mount? The Pharisees had honed in on extremes that were condemned, such as murder and adultery, believing that condemnation of the extremes provided authority for the things that led to those actions. A person could still hate or lust, just as long as he avoided the extreme of murder and adultery (**Matthew 5:21-28**).
- IV. "**Romans 14** says drinking wine is a matter of Christian liberty like that of eating meats."
- A. In **Romans 14:21**, Paul says, "It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles." Some therefore claim drinking intoxicating wine in moderation is obviously lawful just like eating meats. Often, the person who brings up this verse will also be proud to claim the he is the "big" brother whose understanding is true and strong. Because of his spirituality, he will not drink or encourage others to drink because so many have conscience against it. But at the same time, he will not judge the drinker. Are we to believe such spirituality is commendable? I do not.
 - B. From what verse in **Romans 14** would you discern Paul to be speaking of intoxicating wine? One replies, "Well it is obviously intoxicating because no one has a problem with drinking something that doesn't intoxicate." Are you sure? Someone had a problem with eating meats and that had nothing to do with intoxication. Perhaps someone regarded the fact that even our Lord was considered a drunkard for drinking non-intoxicating wines and thinks that is a good reason to be leery of drinking them. Intoxicating drink is not mentioned nor does Romans 14 support it in even the most moderate of amounts.

- V. "Paul told Timothy he could drink wine in **I Timothy 5:23**."
- A. How this verse can be used to support moderate drinking of intoxicants is beyond me. Are we sure Paul is telling Timothy to drink intoxicating wine? Have you ever heard Paul Harvey delineate the healthful benefits of Welch's non-intoxicating grape juice? It doesn't have to be alcoholic to help the stomach or frequent ailments.
 - B. But, even if this passage does refer to intoxicating wine, it can at the most be used to support the use of alcohol for medicinal purposes, a repeat of the permission found in **Proverbs 31:6-7** for the man in pain. Notice, this is about a physical ailment, not for relaxation or to "distress." If you want to relax or "destress", then take a nice hot "Calgon bath" or have your spouse give you a massage. But don't turn to the mocker.
- VI. "I am only drinking one to help me relax and it doesn't impair my judgment."
- A. The sermon itself dealt clearly enough with the Bible issues of drunkenness and sobriety to demonstrate that this argument is fallacious. But because it is so often made, I want to visit it again and add some more information to what you have already learned.
 - B. The constant plea from the moderate drinker is "I am not getting drunk. I won't get drunk. And what little I am having doesn't impair my judgment." This is basically the same type of argument used to deny **I Corinthians 15:33**, "Bad communications corrupt good morals." Though God has said bad communications corrupt good morals, many today want to claim bad communication doesn't affect them. In like manner, though God said wine is a mocker and it is not for us to drink lest we forget what is decreed, some believe they are an exception to God's rule. Because for them, the small amount they drink doesn't affect them.
 - C. Have you ever heard anyone say, "If you think you are crazy, you aren't. Because crazy people never question their sanity." The fact that one believes his judgment is not impaired when under the influence of a mind-altering narcotic (classed by Canada's Addiction Research Foundation as a sedative/hypnotic drug) holds absolutely no weight. The man or woman who has imbibed this drug is the least qualified to determine his state of judgment.
 - D. I remind you that according to scientific study and testing, alcohol begins working on your brain the moment it is absorbed into the blood stream. Though different organizations might have slightly varying numbers, without one exception, all that I have read claims that even the lowest of BAC levels produces impaired judgment. I remind you of the sermon where I quote from the *Listen Magazine* chart. At .01 BAC, after just half a can of beer for a man who is 220 lbs., alcohol begins to remove your inhibitions. That is, it affects your conscience, that part of you that says you shouldn't do something you know is wrong. At this same level you begin to lose your self-control. As Christians, we are supposed to be increasing our self-control (**II Peter 1:5-8**). Our willpower begins to weaken. We can easily see the danger for our souls if our willpower to overcome sin is weakened even a little. We begin to have a sense of well-being. That, of course, is why we are so convinced what we drink doesn't affect us. The drug itself causes us to believe we are better off than we are. We begin to have a false confidence. In other words, due to the affects of this drug, even after one drink we begin to think more of ourselves than we ought to (**Romans 12:3**). Our judgment is impaired. Of course, that again is why we think our judgment is not impaired. We are not able to assess our own abilities anymore, even after only one drink and even when we don't realize it.
 - E. Additionally, not only is alcohol a drug, it is an addictive drug, which, by the way, is more addictive to teenagers than adults. According to the Connecticut Clearinghouse, a program funded by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, an adult may take 5 to 15 years to become addicted while a teenager will only take six months to two years (www.ctclearinghouse.org; reproducible fact sheet *Why Adolescents Should Not Use Alcohol At All*). The fact that alcohol is an addictive drug, makes it increasingly difficult to support even in moderation. An addictive drug, by its very nature, causes us to become tolerant of the amount we are taking and crave more. Notice what the Addiction Research Foundation says, "Psychological dependence on alcohol may occur with regular use of even relatively moderate daily amounts. It may also occur in people who consume alcohol under only certain conditions, such as before and during social occasions. This form of dependence refers to a craving for alcohol's psychological effects, although not necessarily in amounts that produce serious

intoxication.” What psychological affects is the moderate drinker looking for? Isn’t it obvious? The moderate drinker begins to crave the psychological affects that occur with moderate drinking, the loss of inhibitions, the relaxation, the destressing, the feeling of well-being and the self-confidence.

- F. Considering all of this, can one seriously claim one drink doesn’t hurt? Only if he lives by the world’s standards as represented in the pamphlet, What Every Teenager Should Know About Alcohol, quoted in the sermon. That worldly standard is we only have to stay “relatively sober.” If that is all we must do, then drinking a narcotic that immediately attacks our sobriety is justified as long as someone out there is more drunk than we are. However, that is not the standard. The standard is sobriety, period.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, if you still desire to maintain that drinking a small amount of a narcotic drug is lawful and want to press objections to claim we all have the right and the scriptural authority to drink a can of beer, a glass of wine or a shot of whiskey in the name of Jesus Christ (**Colossians 3:17**) and that we can do so to God’s glory (**I Corinthians 10:31**), please consider carefully and prayerfully why making such a claim is so important to you. If what I have presented is Scriptural, then making that claim can cost people their souls.