

Worldliness of Alcohol

- Insights on Idolatry
- Sinful Problems of Alcohol
- No Middle Ground
- Social Drinking

Continuing our thoughts on the subject of Worldliness,
The title of the lesson is "**Worldliness of Alcohol**"

Consider if you will,

I. Some Introductory Thoughts...

A. Alcohol is a Drug

- It is Defined as, "a colorless, volatile, flammable liquid, with the chemical formula of **C₂H₅OH**, that serves as the intoxicating agent in liquors, and is a poison, that is voluntarily introduced into the body". [Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary].

Dr. Don Smith, retired Botany professor for the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas – would sometimes teach a special session on the fermentation process of oats and barley in his Plant Biology class. He explained that the process of fermentation produces toxicity or poison, which is why one experiences euphoria feelings after consuming alcoholic beverages – because their own body has been poisoned; hence the term intoxication!

To accurately study this subject, its necessary to understand the,

B. Biblical Language

"Wine" in Scripture, does not always denote a fermented drink or alcohol.

- [Isa.65:8](#) says "Thus saith the LORD, as the new **WINE** is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a **BLESSING** is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all." ...Obviously, juice in the cluster is a blessing and NOT fermented.
- In contrast, [Prov.20:1](#) mentions "**WINE** is a **MOCKER**, strong drink is **RAGING**, and whosoever is DECEIVED thereby, is **NOT Wise**."
...Which is obviously speaking of the fermented wine, and is clearly **CONDEMNED**.

When one honestly considers the,

C. Biblical Stance on Alcohol

...we'll learn that Alcohol consumption, is consistently **CONDEMNED**.

- The Bible says, "Who hath **WOE** (or deep anguish)? who hath **SORROW** (or intense grief)? who hath **CONTENTIONS** (or strife\quarreling)? who hath **BABBLING** (or complaints)? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?
³⁰ they that tarry long at the **WINE** (which Indicates a habitual pattern of drinking, suggesting addiction); they that **Go to SEEK** mixed **WINE** (which involves an ancient practice to enhance flavor and potency).

³¹ **Look NOT** (which implies a prohibition and strong warning)...

thou upon the **WINE**, when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

³² At the last it **BITETH** like a serpent (which speaks of the hidden danger of alcohol),

and **STINGETH** like an adder (which speaks of the deadly consequences, and deceptive nature of alcohol)

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 (symbolizing instability & lack of control), or **AS** he that lieth upon the top of a mast (which Implies extreme instability and danger).

³⁵ They have **STRICKEN** me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick;

they have **BEATEN** me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake?

I will **SEEK** it, yet **AGAIN** (which speaks of the **ADDICTIVE** cycle associated with alcohol)." ([Prov.23:29-35](#))

Clearly, this passage confirms the condemnation, deceptive, addictive and deadly consequences, of this poisonous drug.

Speaking to the priest and prophets of Judah,
Isaiah confirmed long ago, that those who consume alcohol,

- “...have **ERRED** through wine, and through strong drink, are **Out of the WAY** (or gone astray); 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** (or in spiritual insight of God’s revelation), they **STUMBLE in judgment** (referring to legal & moral discernment).
⁸ For **ALL** tables, are **FULL** of **VOMIT** (which symbolizes moral filth and impurity) And (are FULL of) **FILTHINESS** (meaning, unclean metaphorically), so that there is **No place CLEAN.**” ([Isa.28:7-8](#))

When we think of things that are unclean, it should remind us of idolatry.

So, let’s consider some,

II. Biblical Insights on Idolatry

We’ll begin with,

A. Defining Idolatry

...which occurs whenever something, whether a physical object, relationship, ambition, or desire, becomes more important to us than God, or the things that belong unto God.

B. Modern-Day Idolatry

...is less about carved statues (like in the Old Testament days) and more about the priorities, attachments, and affections, that draw us away from God. **Examples might include:**

- **Material Possessions:** which is obsession with wealth or possessions (read [Matt.6:24](#)).
- **Relationships:** which is favoring a person, above God (read [Matt.10:37](#); [Lk.14:26](#)).
- **Earthly Ambition:** which is placing anything over or above godly values (read [Phil.3:18-19](#)).

The consumption of Alcohol, includes the sin of idolatry, because of...

Self Desire: which Idolizes one’s own pleasure, opinions, comfort, and self, **OVER or ABOVE God.**

- “For people will be **Lovers of SELF** (which is idolatry), **Lovers of MONEY** (which is Idolatry), proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good,⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, **Lovers of PLEASURE**, rather than **Lovers of God** (which is idolatry), (that’s [2Tim.3:2-4](#)). ...“For where your **TREASURE** is, there your **HEART** will be also.” ([Matt.6:21](#))

Idolatry includes,

C. Unclean Hearts

...because Idolatry corrupts the heart, turning it away from God and defiling it.

- [Matt.15:18-19](#) reads, “The things that come out of a person’s mouth, come from the HEART, and these **DEFILE** them. For **OUT of the heart**, **COME Evil thoughts...**”
- “...these men have set up their **IDOLS** in their **HEARTS**, and put before them, that which causes them to stumble into INIQUITY.” ([Ezek.14:3](#) NKJV)
- “Therefore **Put to DEATH** your members which are on the earth: fornication, **UNCLEANNESS**, passion, **Evil DESIRE**, and covetousness (or greed), which is **IDOLATRY.**” ([Col.3:5](#) NKJV)

Idolatry originates in the heart, making it spiritually unclean.
Idolatry, and sin, including the looking and desire of alcohol ([Prov.23:29-35](#)), involves desires of the heart.

- “Whoredom and **WINE** (or fermented Wine), and New **WINE** (referencing early stages of fermentation), **Take AWAY** (or enslave) **the Heart.**” (reads [Hos.4:11](#))

James explained,

- “...every man is **TEMPTED**, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and **ENTICED**.
¹⁵ Then when lust hath CONCEIVED, it bringeth forth **SIN**: and sin, when it is FINISHED, bringeth forth **DEATH**. ¹⁶ **Do NOT Err**, my beloved brethren.” ([Jas.1:13-16](#))

Jesus said,

- “what agreement hath the temple of God, with idols?
for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said,
I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.
¹⁷ Wherefore **COME OUT** from among them, and be ye **SEPARATE**, saith the Lord,
and **Touch NOT** the **UNCLEAN thing**; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ and will be a Father unto you,
and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” ([2Cor.6:16-18](#))
- “...let us **CLEANSE** ourselves, from **All FILTHINESS** of the flesh and spirit,
PERFECTING holiness, in the **FEAR** of God.” ([2Cor.7:1](#))

Notice with me, the...

III. Sinful Problems of Alcohol

...Which includes,

A. The Problem of Intoxication

...which is in Opposition to Godliness

Notice [Eph.5:18](#):

- “Be **NOT** drunk with **WINE**, wherein is excess; **BUT** be filled with the Spirit”

The Greek word for “excess” is **Asotia** (ah-soh-TEE-ah - Strong’s Reference #810).

- Its origin is from a compound of Strong’s #1, the Greek letter “a”, and Strong’s #4982, the greek word “sozo” (SOH-zoh)
- To my understanding, the greek letter “a”, when prefixed to a word, means the opposite of that word. So you have “a”, meaning “**WITHOUT**” and “sozo”, meaning “**SAVE**”, resulting in the meaning of “**UNSAVEDNESS**”.

Keep in mind, that to be “**UNSAVED**” is the equivalent to being fleshly or carnal, which is the very opposite of being filled with the spirit.

- “For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh;
but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.
⁶ For to be carnally minded is DEATH; but to be spiritually minded is LIFE and PEACE.
⁷ Because the carnal mind is Enmity AGAINST God:
for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” ([Rom.8:5-7](#)).

Notice [Eph.5:18](#) again, with the clear implications:

- “be **NOT drunk** with wine” (that is, have nothing to do with intoxications),
- “wherein is **EXCESS**” (that is, wherein is **UNSAVEDNESS** or carnality, which is death – [Rom.8:6](#)),
- “**BUT** be **filled**” (that is, cram, level up, fill to the **FULL**),
- “**WITH** the **Spirit**” (that is, with the Word of God [Col.3:16](#); [1Pet.1:23,22](#)).

IF one is “filled to the **FULL**” with the spirit, there won’t be any room at all, for **ANY** intoxications.

- If one is **INTOXICATED** at all, it is unsavedness, it is carnality, it is **DEATH!** ([Rom.8:6](#)).

The sinful problems of alcohol, has an,

B. Impact on Judgment:

Intoxicants, impair decision-making.

- “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](#)).

The sinful problems of alcohol,

C. Neglects the Responsibility of Sobriety:

The Greek words “**nephaleos**” (nay-FAH-lee-os – Strong’s Reference #1127) and “**nepho**” (NAY-foh – Strong’s Reference #3525) **emphasize mental clarity, and abstinence.**

[1Thess.5:6-8](#) reads,

- “Therefore let us **NOT** sleep, as *do* others; but let us **WATCH** (#1127) and be **SOBER** (#3525).
⁷For they that **SLEEP** (opposite of “watch”) sleep in the night; and they that be **DRUNKEN** (opposite of “sober”) are drunken in the night.
⁸But let us, who are of the day (that is, Christians), Be **SOBER** (#3525), putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” ([1Thess.5:6-8](#))

Notice what the scholars of the past have to say about this word, “Nepho” (Strong’s# 3525):

- It “signifies to be free from the influence of intoxicants. In the N.T., metaphorically, it does not in itself imply watchfulness, but is used in association with it.”
[Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Thomas Nelson Publishers – 1985)]
- “to abstain from wine (keep sober), be discreet, be sober, watch”
[The New **Strong’s** Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (Thomas Nelson Publishers – 1990)]

Like the word wine, the context for Sober, determines the meaning.

The Greek word “Nepho” can be used in two different instances, which is the reason the scholars of the past give two different potential meanings of the word: “Sober-mindedness or watchfulness” and “be free from the influence of intoxications”.

Instead of an either or definition, I am convinced that the word has a dual application, as one can’t be “sober-minded”, without “be(ing) free from the influence of intoxications”.

From the context of [1Thess.5:6-8](#), God makes a clear **CONTRAST** between sober and drunkenness. Bible students know, that not one Bible passage can be found, **BETWEEN** God's way and the way of the world, as being **ACCEPTABLE** unto God.

...Because,

IV. There is No Middle Ground

Consider these few Bible passages.

- Jesus said, "I **KNOW** thy works, that thou art **NEITHER** cold **NOR** hot: I would thou wert cold **OR** hot. So then because thou art **LUKEWARM**, and **NEITHER** cold **NOR** hot, I will spue thee **OUT** of my mouth" ([Rev.3:15-16](#))
- Elijah said, "How long halt ye, between **TWO** opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." ([1Kings 18:21](#))
- Jesus said, "He that is **NOT** With Me, is **AGAINST** Me; and he that **Gathereth** NOT With Me, scattereth abroad." ([Matt.12:30](#))
- "NO man can serve **TWO** masters: for either he will **HATE** the one, and **LOVE** the other; or else he will **HOLD** to the one, and **DESPISE** the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." ([Matt.6:24](#))
- "A **DOUBLE** minded man, is **UNSTABLE** in all his ways." ([Jas.1:8](#))
- "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the **FRIENDSHIP** of the world, is **ENMITY** with God? whosoever therefore will be a **FRIEND** of the world, is the **ENEMY** of God." ([Jas.4:4](#))
- "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." ([Lk.9:62](#))

The Bible says in no uncertain terms, that the drunkard shall **NOT** inherit the kingdom of Heaven.

Notice the passage:

- "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are **THESE**; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 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" ([Gal.5:19-21](#)).

...Notice the phrase "and **SUCH** like" ([verse 21](#)),

So anything closely related to drunkenness, "shall NOT inherit the kingdom of God".

You can be sure, that no "work(s) of the flesh", can be done in moderation.

Such an idea or suggestion, is like trying to sin just a little bit, and it just can't be done.

There is no middle ground or fence straddling.

Either a person is faithful to God (meaning, spiritually alive) or they are not (and therefore, spiritually dead);

Either a person is sober, or they are not – It is that simple!

- "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned" ([Prov.6:27](#))?

...That's just another way of asking if a man can consume alcohol in moderation and not commit sin. The obvious answer is NO!

One can't be a little bit sober, or a little bit intoxicated, and be pleasing unto God.

One has to be **ENTIRELY** sober, to avoid being intoxicated.

One has to be entirely faithful, to avoid participating in sin, and to avoid being an ENEMY of God.

The definition of the word **SOBER** (Strong's #3525) should be enough evidence to convince anyone, that God condemns ANY consumption of the alcoholic or fermented beverage.

Sober (Strong's # 3525) means:

- To be **FREE** from the influence of intoxicants – To **ABSTAIN** from wine,
- That leaves **ZERO** room for sipping, **ANY amount**, of **ANY alcoholic beverage**.

In fact, to be under the influence of any substance, whether it is alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, or abusing doctor prescribed medication, is to be **CARNALLY minded**, because such is the very **OPPOSITE** of:

- “Living **SOBERLY** and righteously and godly in this present world” ([Titus 2:12](#)).

Christians are to

- “hold fast that which is **GOOD**” ([1Thess.5:21](#));
- “**ABSTAIN** from **ALL appearance** (or forms) of **EVIL**” ([1Thess.5:22](#));
- “**ABHOR** that which is **EVIL**, “**CLEAVE** to that which is **GOOD**” ([Rom.12:9](#));
- “**OVERCOME** evil with **GOOD**” ([Rom.12:21](#)).

Christians don't OVERCOME evil, with a MODERATION of evil!

The title of the lesson is “*Worldliness of Alcohol*”.

We've considered some “Biblical Insights on Idolatry”, “The sinful problems of alcohol”, and “There is No middle ground”. Now let's consider,

V. Social Drinking

...which is popular in our society, and sadly even among some brethren.

Many fail to realize the,

A. Scriptural Condemnation

...of social drinking.

Contrary to popular belief, the **ATMOSPHERE** of consuming alcoholic beverages is to be **AVOIDED**, by **NOT participating** in the various **STAGES** leading to and including the excess or overflow of intoxicating or fermented wine. Notice the context of [First Peter 4:1-8](#),

- “Forasmuch then as **Christ** hath suffered **FOR** us, **IN** the flesh, **ARM** yourselves likewise, with the **SAME mind**: for he that hath **SUFFERED** in the flesh, hath **CEASED** from sin,” (That is, Christians no longer engage in fleshly, carnal, sinful activities.)
“That he **NO** longer should **LIVE** the rest of his time **IN** the flesh, **TO** the lusts of men, **BUT** to the will of God. 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**:

Wherein they think it strange that ye run **NOT** with them, to the **SAME** excess of **RIOT**, speaking **EVIL** of you: **WHO** shall give account to him that is **READY** to judge the quick and the dead. For this **CAUSE** was the **GOSPEL** preached also to them that are” (spiritually) “dead, that they **MIGHT** be judged, according to men in the flesh, but **LIVE** according to God in the spirit. But the **END** of all things is at hand: be ye therefore **SOBER**, and watch unto prayer. And above all things, have **FERVENT** charity among yourselves: for charity” (that is, love) “shall **COVER** the multitude of sins”.

There are three words here in 1Pet.4:3, that I would like to call to your attention.

Excess of Wine

- The Greek Word: **Oinophlugia** (oy-noh-floo-GEE-ah)
- Strong's Reference #3632
- It's Meaning: To bubble up, **overflow**, drunkenness, wine-bibbing.
Referenced in Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Hendrickson Publishers - 2007).

Revellings

- The Greek Word: **Komos** (KOH-mos)
- Strong's Reference #2970
- It's Meaning: A revel, carousal. Generally refers to feasts and **drinking parties**, that last late into the night, indulging in revelry.
Defined in Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Hendrickson Publishers - 2007).

Banquetings

- The Greek Word: **Potos** (POH-tos)
- Strong's Reference #4224
- It's Meaning: **A drinking** or carousing.
Explained in Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Hendrickson Publishers - 2007).

Biblical scripture, clearly condemns all stages of intoxication, including Social Drinking.

People make all kinds of,

B. Excuses on this Subject

Although It's common in our society, for people to wrestle with this topic, Scripture offers clear guidance, to help us navigate these challenges.

According to some, supposedly Jesus turned water into fermented or alcoholic Wine ([Jn.2:1-11](#)).

- In this context, Jesus had 6 jars, each holding 20 to 30 gallons, filled with wine.
- 120 to 180 gallons of alcoholic wine, would make a large number of people intoxicated.

IF Jesus supplied alcoholic WINE to the wedding guests at Cana, then

- He would have contributed to them being UNWISE ([Prov.20:1](#));
- He would have contributed to their "look(ing) ...upon the wine, when it is red" ([Prov.23:31](#)), opposing the wisdom of Solomon. AND Since Jesus is "greater than Soloman" ([Matt.12:42](#)), He would have known the wisdom of sobriety.

One can easily conclude that IF Jesus made fermented WINE,

He would have been guilty of sin, under the Old Testament Law.

BUT, since Jesus is sinless ([Heb.4:15](#)) and the very Son of God ([1Cor.1:9](#)),

it is very clear, Jesus made WINE which was **NOT fermented** – WINE that was **NOT intoxicating**.

The "good wine" from the context of [John 2:1-11](#), had to do with the QUALITY of taste due to its freshness, NOT the potency or percentage of alcohol. The miracle of Jesus, that "manifested forth His glory", was to bypass the time that it takes for the grape cluster to grow and ripen, so, its liquid or juice, can then be squeezed out.

Some interpret the miracle of Jesus at Cana ([John 2:1-11](#)) as an endorsement of fermented wine consumption. However, the overall Biblical evidence on this subject, including the context and the use of 'good wine' suggest it was fresh, non-fermented grape juice, reflecting the purity of His miracle, rather than intoxication.

VI. IN-CLOSING

Concerning the “Worldliness of Alcohol”, May God help us to,

- "Put all these things away" ([Eph.5:6-7](#)).
- “**Do NOT** love the world, **OR** the things in the WORLD.
If anyone **LOVES** the world, the **LOVE** of the Father is **NOT** in him.” ([1Jn.2:15-16](#))

Referencing the sword of the spirit, the Word of God ([Eph.6:17](#)), All are instructed to,

- “**WALK** by the Spirit, and you will **NOT** gratify the DESIRES of the flesh.” ([Gal.5:16](#))

The lesson is yours.

If you have a spiritual **NEED**,
The Lord **INVITES**, and we await to assist.

COME, Believing (Heb.11:6), Repenting (Lk.13:3), Confessing (Acts 8:37) , and Be Baptized INTO Christ (Gal.3:26-27)
--

...While **TOGETHER** we stand and sing.