

DON'T DRINK RESPONSIBLY

**DEVELOPING AN INFORMED,
CHRISTIAN CONVICTION**

BY: DR. JOSH FRANKLIN

Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is a brawler,
and anyone who is deceived by it is not wise.

– Proverbs 20:1

Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188.

Scripture marked Phillips is taken from the New Testament in Modern English, Revised Edition by J.B. Phillips, © J.B. Phillips, 1958, 1960, 1972. Used by permission from Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked MSG are taken from the Message. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Scripture quotations marked AMP are taken from the Amplified Bible. Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

© Copyright 2015, 2022 by Josh Franklin

All Rights Reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the author or publisher.

ISBN: 978-1-935256-51-9

Ledge Press
PO Box 1652
Boone, NC 28607
ledgepressnc@gmail.com

Cover design by Carolina Reprographics, 533 Pylon Dr., Ste D, Raleigh, NC 27606.

Contents

Foreword by Dr. Johnny Hunt.....	1
Introduction.....	5
Chapter 1: Alcohol and Statistics	11
Chapter 2: The Effects of Alcohol	19
Chapter 3: Today's Alcoholic Beverages In Light of Scripture	25
Chapter 4: Christians Should NOT Commend Alcohol to Others	33
Chapter 5: The Right Way to Get Drunk.....	39
Conclusion	53
Appendixes	
1) What about Charles Spurgeon?.....	55
2) Books for Further Study.....	57
About the Author	59
Endnotes	61

Foreword

I have often told my wife that if I die before her it is my sincere prayer that Jesus would so work in my life that the one word she could place on my epithet would be that of others. I really desire to live my life where Jesus is first and then my focus and attention is on others. I realize this takes nothing short than death to self where Jesus and His life through me becomes the priority and passion of daily living. I wish I could say that that is a reality every day but the truth is often times I enthrone self and find myself in deep need of repentance before the day ends. However, may the overwhelming joy of my life be expressed in living for others.

With that being said I am grateful to Josh Franklin for writing this book ***Don't Drink Responsibly***. Soon after I was converted the Lord captured my heart as a new believer and one holding a Bible in my hand for the first time to speak deeply into my life out of the Gospel of Luke where John the Baptist said he would drink neither wine or strong drink but that he desired to be strong in the sight of the Lord.

I have desired to be an example and a model of a believer to those who are around me and certainly to those who are coming behind me. I have desired to

live conventionally in such a way that I would not allow anything that could damage my witness, damage my walk, damage my words or the work that the Lord has called me to and I am of the personal conviction that alcohol has the strong potential of doing that in my life.

I want to beware as well as warn others of the dangers of alcohol. I saw it first hand in tearing my own family apart with my mother and father only to follow in father's footsteps for approximately 9 years of abusing alcohol. One of the dangers that it seems we have not spoken much of is that of addiction. Many start out in drinking sensing that they are doing well as long as it is in moderation but I have found that alcohol is one substance that always seems to want more of us. Adrian Rogers use to always mention the fact that one generation does in moderation the next does in excess.

I am sorry to say but it seems like that is already in the happening and making stages of the generation in which we live.

It is my prayer that we would realize that alcohol based on Proverbs 23 can become a major snare, net and trap in our lives. If indeed the Christian life is about Jesus first and then others I pray that we would enjoin Paul and do nothing that would cause a weaker brother to stumble and certainly nothing that would hurt our own witness to those we hope to reach.

As for me and my house I believe the key word in going forward on the issue of alcohol is wisdom. Is it wise for me as a Christian and better yet a spiritual leader to drink alcohol, I think not. I would encourage you to read this book, to bow your knees and to allow Jesus to speak deeply into your heart in the forming of a testimony that will outlast you.

May God bless you as you give thoughtful consideration to your own consumption as well as your own convictions and even your own conversation and walking conduct before others in this great matter.

Dr. Johnny Hunt

*Senior Vice President of Evangelism and
Leadership at the North American Mission Board,
Former President of the Southern
Baptist Convention*

Introduction

I love sports. Since I was a kid, I have primarily loved college and professional basketball and football. I remember the first sporting event I ever attended – a college football game. A friend of mine had an extra ticket, and I thought it would be worthwhile. It was a lot of fun. It took us a long time to park because there were so many fans. Fifty thousand fans packed in to watch a great game, and cheer for their teams. Something began to concern me.

Alcohol.

It was everywhere! We walked through a sea of tailgaters who were drinking. We walked through the concessions and it was everywhere. Many, many fans had alcohol in their hands. Advertisements were plastered everywhere for different types of beer.

When I watched sports on television, I noticed how raucous the crowds were. They were fun to watch. They had wild antics and went hoarse through their constant yells and cheers. I used to watch those fans and think, “Man, that’s passion!”

After the game, my wife asked how it went. “The game was great,” I said. “But, I now know what I used to think was fan-dimorphism and passion for the game is simply alcohol.”

During the game, I watched as right beside me, two sixty-year-old men stopped hollering at the officials and started yelling at each other. One threatened to beat the other one up, and I thought, “You two are making fools of yourselves.”

I still love sports, and I know there are some sober fans who still go support their teams. My concern is that alcohol dominates sports.

+++

I was doing pre-marital counseling with a couple who were both believers. They seemed as though they wanted to bring their marriage under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It was refreshing to have them listen to what God’s Word has to say about their marriage. Each spoke with conviction about what they perceived the Biblical commands for them were. Something began to concern me.

Alcohol.

The husband-to-be told me about how his mother and father wanted alcohol served at the wedding rehearsal dinner. I asked what their convictions

were about this. They both told me they did not want alcohol served at the wedding. As Christians, they told me, they did not want to cause other people to stumble. I told them to be firm with the parents and it should close the issue.

Another pre-marital session later, they said the mother and father were not budging. Their reasoning was, "If we are paying for the dinner, we get to decide if we want it or not." And they wanted it. I told the husband-to-be to simply put his foot down, but when I went to the rehearsal dinner there it was. Out of ten tables, I was sitting at the only table that did not have alcohol as the beverage of choice. Another couple of folks sat at the table as well.

I still believe this young couple when they told me that they want to live under the Lordship of Christ. My concern is that alcohol dominates our weddings. At numerous weddings I have seen families raise their glasses, even with small children watching the festivities. Why are we fighting so hard to hold on to a substance, even when our children say they do not want it at the wedding?

+++

Some Christian brothers and sisters have shifted their convictions on social drinking as alcohol has become more and more acceptable and prevalent in our society.

For instance, evangelicals within the reformed community have lifted their glass as a badge of Christian liberty. John MacArthur has strongly denounced this emphasis in the movement:

If everything you know about Christian living came from blogs and websites in the... Reformed community, you might have the impression that beer is the principal symbol of Christian liberty. For some who self-identify as “Young, Restless, and Reformed,” it seems beer is a more popular topic for study and discussion than the doctrine of predestination... It’s clear that beer-loving passion is a prominent badge of identity for many in the YRR movement... Cast a disapproving eye...and you are likely to be swarmed by restless reformers denouncing legalism and wanting to debate whether it’s a “sin” to drink wine...¹

The Southern Baptist Convention, the denomination to which I belong, has seen a shift as well. LifeWay Research has reported that “one third of Baptists admit to drinking alcohol.”² Evan Lenow, an ethics professor and author was quoted as saying

I believe we are seeing a change from total abstinence to a trend of acceptance of alcohol among Southern Baptists...The emphasis has moved from warnings about alcohol to highlighting Christian freedom.³

I was also shocked to hear that Moody Bible Institute, founded by D.L. Moody, reversed its' 127-year-old ban on alcohol consumption. Christine Gorz, vice president of Marketing and Communications at Moody Bible Institute wrote, "Moody's leadership wants to require no more and no less of employees than what Scripture requires of believers. Employees of Moody are expected to adhere to all biblical absolutes, but for behaviors that Scripture does not expressly prohibit, Moody leaves these matters to the employee's biblically-informed conscience."⁴ Is the Bible really that silent on alcohol? Is it really a matter of "interpretation?"

+++

This topic is personal to me because of my father, who became a believer when he was 33 years old. Before his decision to follow Jesus Christ, his life was influenced greatly by alcohol. I was born when he was 40 years old, so I only knew the man who taught me to pray, to read the Bible and to serve the Lord with my whole heart. He told me as I was a child how Jesus had delivered him from the bondage of alcohol addiction. So, I praise the Lord that I was raised in a Christian home without the presence of alcohol around me.

However, when I was a teenager, my church's pastor shared his conviction that social drinking was all right, and the Bible does not warn against it. My

mother later explained to me how that comment impacted my father, though he had not touched alcohol in decades. Our Christian influence is important and impactful.

In view of these concerns among the Christian community, Micah 2:11 comes to mind, “Suppose a prophet full of lies would say to you, ‘I’ll preach to you the joys of wine and alcohol!’ That’s just the kind of prophet you would like!”⁵ I know that some have not considered the evidence against social drinking. **My concern is that our Christian lights appear to be growing dimmer.**

Romans 12:2 says, “Don’t be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God.” The Phillips paraphrase says, “Don’t let the world squeeze you into its mold...”

My prayer is that you would not build your convictions about alcohol from the culture around us but allow the Word of God to guide you toward an informed, Christian conviction that advocates abstinence, not moderation. Thank you for picking up this book and taking the time to read its contents.

1

Alcohol and Statistics

I believe today's cultural revolution among Christians in favor of beverage alcohol is due to the advertisements that have impacted their psyche and lowered their defenses on the issue. Claire McCarthy, MD, Senior Faculty Editor for Harvard Health Publishing warns:

If we only paid attention to ads, it might seem as though alcohol — a beer or glass of wine, a shot of fiery liquor or sophisticated cocktail — merely served as a way to bring people together and make them happy. Drink responsibly, the ads wink, without ever explaining the toll that frequent or excessive alcohol use exacts, particularly at certain stages in life.⁶

The beer and alcohol advertisements tell us, "Please Drink Responsibly" after pushing their liquor on our society. They say, "Moderation is the answer" to the alcohol problems that plague us. However, I agree with Adrian Rogers, who said, "***Moderation is not the cure for the liquor problem. Moderation is the cause of the liquor problem. Becoming***

an alcoholic does not begin with the last drink, it always begins with the first.” The answer for today’s society is not moderation, but abstinence: **“Don’t Drink Responsibly!”**

The old revival preacher Vance Havner used to say, “I’m tired of hearing alcoholism called a disease. It’s the only disease we’re spending millions of dollars each year to spread!” David Jernigan, executive director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University, and associate professor at the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health gave these alarming trends⁷ based upon Nielson Media Research:

- Alcohol companies spend close to \$2 billion every year advertising in the United States.
- Youth Exposure rose by 38% from 2001 to 2007.
- By the time a typical teenager is 18 years old, he has seen 100,000 beer commercials!⁸

Adrian Rogers recounts something that happened to him when he was faced with the advertisements in his town:

I had an artist to paint for me a sign that I put on our parking lot. And, he showed a picture of a man in an alley with a beer bottle in his hand by a garbage can, with a big rat running past. This man was passed out, holding that beer bottle in his hand, and underneath I

put these words: **“The finished product of the brewer’s art.”** At that time there was a particular brand of beer that had for their byline: “The finest product of the brewer’s art.” I just changed it a little bit and said, “The finished product of the brewer’s art.” Well, one day I got a telephone call from Mr. Brewer himself and he said, “Mr. Rogers, I need to see you.” I said, “I’ll meet you in my office in five minutes.” And, I knew what he wanted to talk about, but I acted like I didn’t. I said, “What do you want to talk about?” “Well,” he said, “it’s that sign of yours out there.” I said, “What about it?” He said, “I believe it discriminates against my product.” I said, ***“Mister, I want you to know that your product is brewed with tears, thickened with blood, and flavored with death. And, if I were you I’d get on my knees right now and ask God to have mercy on me.”*** Well, he wasn’t expecting that. I think he wanted an apology.

“Well,” he said, “if you want to talk that way about it,” he said, “I believe that discriminates against my product and is grounds for a lawsuit.” I said, “Wonderful, sue. I’d like to see this picture on the front page of the newspaper.” I said, “You know, you’ve got a lot of nerve. You’re constantly bombarding our young people, constantly. You’re painting

the most beautiful scenes that the artist can imagine, and you're coming by means of radio, by means of television, by means of newspaper, by means of billboards and everything else telling these kids to drink that stuff. And, you only show half the picture, and I put one measly sign on a parking lot of a church and you got your hackles up." I said, "I'll make a deal, you take your signs down, I'll take my down."⁹

Rogers has illustrated the courage needed by all of us who are Christians in society today. It might be different if there weren't so much advertising in favor of the liquor industry. Rogers said, "They don't want to show the finished product. They don't want to show the drunkard in the gutter, covered with his own vomit and flies. They don't want to show the broken homes. They don't want to show the wrecked automobiles. They don't want to show the wills that have been snapped, and the marriages that have been broken. They don't want to show the serpents bite. All they want to show is the glass that sparkles."¹⁰ Our young people, and young believers, need to know the truth, and we must have the courage to address this issue in light of the Scriptures.

Alcohol and Young People

- Alcohol is the most commonly used substance among young people in the U.S.¹¹

A 2019 study¹² found

- 24.6 percent of 14- to 15-year-olds reported having at least 1 drink.
- 7 million young people ages 12 to 20 reported that they drank alcohol beyond “just a few sips” in the past month.
- 90 percent of all alcoholic drinks consumed by young people are consumed through binge drinking.
- 4.2 million young people reported binge drinking at least once in the past month.
- 825,000 young people reported binge drinking on 5 or more days over the past month.

Other statistics to consider:

- The average age teen boys try alcohol is age 11, for teen girls it's 13.¹³
- 4,000,000 Americans under 18 years of age are alcoholics!¹⁴
- 90% of high school seniors say they've drunk alcohol sometime in their lives.¹⁵
- 67% say they've used alcohol within the last month.¹⁶
- 38% say they've had 5 or more drinks in a row within the last two weeks.¹⁷
- 36% of American 4th graders (9 and 10 yr. olds) say they have been pressured by their peers to drink alcohol!¹⁸
- 25% of all alcohol consumed in America is by those under the legal drinking age of 21.¹⁹

Alcohol-Related Costs to Society

- 1 person in every 9 who drink will become an alcoholic.²⁰
- Alcohol abuse cost the United States \$223.5 billion in 2006. This amounts to about \$1.90 per drink, or about \$746 per person.²¹
- 2/3rds of all violent crimes are committed by perpetrators using alcohol.²²
- Alcohol-related deaths outnumber deaths from drug use 4 to 1.²³

Some say, “Look how much tax revenue alcohol brings into our society.” Norman Geisler researched how much alcohol costs our society²⁴:

1. Special services \$7 billion a year.
2. Medical services \$19 billion a year.
3. Loss of future earnings by death is \$37 billion a year.
4. Alcohol related illness is \$86 billion a year.
5. Fetal alcohol syndrome is \$1 billion a year.
6. Loss of earnings of crime victims \$10 billion a year.
7. Crashes, fires, and crime is \$24 billion a year.

The total cost to our society is over \$184 billion each year. The total tax revenue from alcohol is only \$18 billion! So, for every dollar that is brought into society through alcohol sales, it costs that society eight dollars to clean up the mess that alcohol creates!

J. Vernon McGee agrees, “I am not impressed when the news media lets us know the tremendous amount of taxes that comes from the liquor industry. What they forget to tell is the cost of the hospitals, the mental institutions and the accidents—the people who have been maimed for life—as a result of drinking drivers. That kind of cost is not reported. I understand that any derogatory news is suppressed because one of the biggest advertisers is the booze industry.”²⁵ Today there are more than 40 million problem drinkers in America. Alcohol is the number one drug problem among teenagers. One in three American families suspects that one or more family members have a drinking problem.

Perhaps this is why some, even non-believers, choose to stay away from this intoxicant. There is simply too much sorrow and heartache connected to it. Avoiding this devastating drug is simply the wise thing to do.²⁶

2

The Effects of Alcohol

How drunk is drunk? Several factors go into determining the expected Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). OHS Health and Safety Services Incorporated found that your sex, health, state of mind and body weight all vary expectations. However, generally speaking, if someone who is 129 lbs. or less drinks one 12 oz. beer, one 4oz. wine or one ¼ oz. of 80-Proof Liquor, they will have a BAC of .05% - .08% (This BAC would be achieved with two drinks if over 129 lbs.). Notice these effects²⁷:

Decreased Coordination (BAC of .01% - .05%)

Effect: Some-to-great loss of judgment and coordination, thinking dulled, changes in mood and behavior. A BAC of .02% at many U.S. companies will require that an employee be relieved of duty for 24 hours and at .04 they will be fired.

Definitely Impaired (BAC of .05% - .08%) – *everyone has reached this point after their 1st or 2nd drink.*

Effect: Walking, speech, and hand movements clumsy. Blurred, split, or tunnel vision may occur. Chance of accident is greatly increased by up to 300% or more.

Very Seriously Affected (BAC of .08% and over)

– *everyone has reached this point after 3 or 4 drinks.*

Effect: Responses greatly slowed. Functioning and judgment very seriously affected. Very high risk of accident. In most U.S. States, you will be arrested if driving a car with a BAC of .08% or higher.

A 2011 study reveals, “The blood-alcohol content (BAC) limit in the U.S. is set at 0.08%, but levels well below this legal limit are associated with car accidents that cause incapacitating injury and death. According to the CDC, close to 30 people in the U.S. die every day in motor vehicle crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver. This is the equivalent of one death every 48 minutes. ‘Buzz kills,’ says David Phillips, PhD a sociologist at University of California, San Diego. ‘No amount of alcohol seems to be safe for driving.’ ...Car accidents are 36.6% more severe even if alcohol was barely detectable in the driver’s bloodstream, the study shows... ‘There is no safe level,’ Phillips says.”²⁸

Proverbs 23:29-35

²⁹ Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?

³⁰ Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine.

³¹ Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly;

³² At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.

³³ Your eyes will see strange things, And your heart will utter perverse things.

³⁴ Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, Or like one who lies at the top of the mast, *saying*:

³⁵ “They have struck me, *but* I was not hurt; They have beaten me, but I did not feel *it*. When shall I awake, that I may seek another *drink*?”

Verse 32 says, “At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper.” James Merritt once said, “It is impossible to be bitten by a snake that you never play with.” Billy Sunday once called liquor “The devil in liquid form.” He also made a comparison between the devil and alcohol, stating: Wine is a deceiver (Prov. 20:1); the devil is “the great deceiver.” The Bible calls the devil “an old serpent,” and wine “bites like a serpent.” Sunday ultimately declared, “The saloon is a liar...it promises happiness and sends misery. It is God’s worst enemy and the devil’s best friend.”

Adrian Rogers once said, “Alcohol has brought to this world unparalleled suffering. As a counselor I know that alcohol will cause a man to lie to his mother. It will cause a man to beat his wife. It will cause a man to deprive his children. It will cause another wise, virtuous woman to forget her marriage vows. It will turn obedient children into rebels against parents, against society and against God.”²⁹

Alcoholic beverages should be avoided for the following effects³⁰, according to Scripture:

1. It slows the thinking process (Prov. 31:4-5).
2. It makes one dizzy (Job. 12:25).
3. It is associated with self-centeredness (Hab. 2:5).
4. It causes sickness (Jer. 25:27).
5. It causes forgetfulness (Prov. 31:6-7).
6. It produces delirious dreams (Prov. 23:33).
7. It results in sleepiness (Gen. 9:20-25).
8. It produces complacency and laziness (Zeph. 1:12).
9. It numbs one’s feelings (Prov. 23:31-35).
10. It leads to poverty (Prov. 21:17).
11. It leads to brokenness (Jer. 23:9).
12. It results in sadness and depression (Isa. 16:9-10).
13. It causes sorrow (Prov. 23:29-30).
14. It produces blackouts (Gen. 19:33-35).
15. It leads to immorality (Joel 3:3).
16. It encourages sexual perversion (Hab. 2:15).
17. It results in guilt (Isa. 24:20).
18. It causes injuries (Prov. 23:35).
19. It can result in insanity (Jer. 51:7).

20. It makes one vulnerable to his enemies (2 Sam. 13:28).

Ultimately, **alcohol relaxes your morals.** There are things that sober Christians and non-Christians would never do but gladly engage in them under the influence of King Alcohol. How many boys and girls have lost their virginity because of the effects of King Alcohol? How many homes have suffered domestic violence because of King Alcohol? How many affairs have taken place under the influence of King Alcohol? How many untold tragedies have occurred because of someone's choice to get behind the wheel while being influenced by King Alcohol? Alcohol relaxes your morals, and must be avoided by today's Christian.

3

Today's Alcoholic Beverages In Light of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16 literally says, “All Scripture is God-breathed...” If we believe the Bible is without error, we must also believe that it is consistent with itself. Those who advocate moderate drinking may use a verse like Psalm 104:15, which says that God gives “wine that makes glad the heart of man.” Oftentimes, though, one has to read the entire Bible to bear down on a verse to see what that verse is or is not saying.

For instance, polygamy existed in the Old Testament, even among men such as Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon. Paige Patterson highlights, “God originally intended monogamy. For a while He tolerated polygamy, even working mightily through such men as Solomon and Abraham despite their polygamous marriages. But with the final revelation of God in Christ, polygamy was once again clearly prohibited.”³¹ Many complex issues must have the whole Bible in order to come to a proper conviction.

My desire is to bring the Christian who desires to be honest and unbiased about this issue to four firm convictions:

1. When the Bible uses “wine,” it may be fermented, unfermented or diluted with water.
2. The process of today’s distilled liquor (adding alcohol to beverages) had not been invented yet, so one cannot compare the Bible’s wine to today’s wine or alcoholic beverages, where alcohol is added.
3. In truth, much of what our culture calls wine, the Bible would call strong drink.
4. Today’s alcoholic beverages should be avoided because of Scripture’s universal condemnation of “strong drink.”

The Word “WINE” Used in the Bible

One of the quickest criticisms against tee-totalers, like myself, is, “Hey, Jesus turned water into wine.” They do not take the time to understand that for the Bible, the word wine could mean fermented, intoxicating wine or it could simply refer to grape juice.

WINE – YAYIN (Old Testament)

A general term for every drink made from grape juice (Nehemiah 5:18) – it may be intoxicating or it may not.

In the Old Testament the word “wine” is *yayin*, used 141 times, and it can refer to fermented or unfermented grape juice. *Yayin* could refer to

- Juice still in the cluster or recently squeezed out (non-alcoholic).
- Fresh or unfermented juice (non-alcoholic).
- Boiled juice or juice concentrated to syrup (non-alcoholic).
- Fermented, intoxicating (alcoholic).
- Mixed with drugs to enhance effects or mixed with sugars to increase the alcohol content (alcoholic)³²

For example, Isaiah 16:10 says, “no one treads out wine at the presses.” Greek scholar William Mounce reports, “*yayin* here must refer to grape juice before it has become fermented.”³³

However, Genesis 9:21 and 24 speak of how Noah became drunk on *yayin*.

God commands Aaron’s sons in Leviticus 10:9, “do not drink wine (*yayin*) or intoxicating drink.” Here, God is differentiating between that which would intoxicate and that which would not, that is, wine (*yayin*).

God warns against staying up late and getting “inflamed with wine” in Isaiah 5:11-12.

Four references in the Old Testament – two referring to that which would intoxicate, and two referring to that which would not intoxicate; all using the same word “wine”. Thus, *yayin* can refer to fermented or unfermented wine.

WINE – OINOS (New Testament)

In the New Testament the word “wine” is *oinos*, and Paige Patterson highlights how “wines varied in kind and strength,” and gives four varieties that must “be distinguished, and all of which are described indiscriminately by ‘*oinos*’:

1) Freshly pressed grape juice, which had been stomped out by the, hopefully, clean feet of a local family in their private wine vats, or else crushed in grape presses of stone. In the climate of Palestine, fermentation began within 24 hours, so pure unfermented grape juice was available only for a brief time.

2) The initial, violent, foaming fermentation process lasted about one week. The wine was then transferred to new wineskins for 40 days of further fermentation. The heavier matter, “lees” or “dregs,” would settle to the bottom, and then the wine would be drawn off, providing the daily drink.

3) Sometimes the wine would be left on the lees to ferment still further. This provided a real knock-out punch, one evidently imbibed by only a few since it often turned insipid and unbearable. (Jeremiah 48:11).

4) Wine frequently was diluted with water or herbs or both. On the cross, Jesus was offered such a concoction of cheap, low-grade wine, which He refused. ³⁴

In today's vernacular, we used the word "drink" in a generic sort of way. In order to know if the drink is intoxicating or not, you would have to understand the context. If two 8-year-old girls have been outside playing for a long time, and one says to the other one, "Whew! I need a drink!" No one imagines that girl is referring to something that would intoxicate. However, if two coworkers are known to drink alcohol, and one says to the other, "Hey John, after work, let's stop by the bar on the way home. I'll buy you a drink," one surmises they will be drinking alcohol. In the Bible, the word wine was used generically, sort of like the way we use drink today.

STRONG DRINK – SHEKAR (Old Testament) and SIKERA (New Testament)

Shekar is translated "strong drink" (KJV) or "intoxicating drink" (NKJV) because of its high alcohol content and consequent rapid intoxication of those who drank it.

Jerome in 400 A.D. said, "Shekar is in the Hebrew tongue and means every kind of drink which can intoxicate, whether made from grain or from the juice of apples or when honeycombs are boiled down into a sweet and strange drink and the food of the palm is pressed into liquor." "Strong drink" (KJV) or "Intoxicating drink" (NKJV) is universally condemned in Scripture. Note these verses:

1) Strong drink leads to fighting, and anyone can be deceived by it. Proverbs 20:1 - Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

2) Strong drink is condemned. Isaiah 5:11 - Woe to those who rise early in the morning, That they may follow intoxicating drink...

3) All Israel, in the wilderness, was to avoid strong drink. Deuteronomy 29:6 - You have not drunk wine or strong drink; that you may know that I am the LORD your God.

4) National leaders are to leave wine and strong drink alone. Proverbs 31:4 - It is not for kings to drink wine, Nor for princes intoxicating drink.

5) Religious leaders are to leave strong drink alone. Isaiah 28:7 - But they also have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way; The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, They are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

The only place in Scripture that “strong drink” is recommended is as a narcotic for one who is perishing. Proverbs 31:6 says, “Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish and wine unto those that are of a heavy heart.” Alcoholic beverages can be

used for medicinal purposes only. However, today, our medical community has developed even better drugs to help one who is perishing or in time of physical suffering. As a beverage, strong drink is universally condemned in Scripture.

The Process of Distillation

The process of distillation, developed by Arab chemists around AD 700 forever altered alcoholic beverages. The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* stated here, “Concentrated alcohol was only known in the Middle Ages when the Arabs invented distillation (“alcohol” is an Arabic word) so what is now called liquor or strong drink (i.e. whiskey, gin, etc.) and the twenty per cent fortified wines were unknown in Bible times.”³⁵

Yale University released a study that said “The normal process of fermenting fruit of the vine does not produce a drink of sufficient alcohol content to bring on drunkenness.” They noted that “there must be a mechanical interference with the process such as the addition of pure alcohol or other mechanical processes of distillation or it will not produce the kind of wine that is common today.”³⁶

The Hebrews would have referred to our wine and beer as strong drink, and everywhere the Bible condemns strong drink. The wine of today is not only fermented but a mechanical process has been added and pure alcohol has been added

to the fermentation process.³⁷ Because of the process of distillation. Today's wine and beer would be considered "strong drink," and should be avoided.

Norman Geisler writes, "Christians ought not to drink wine, beer, or other beverages for they are actually strong drink and forbidden in Scripture. Even ancient pagans did not drink what some Christians drink today." Dr. Robert Teachout, A Semitic scholar who, in 1979, wrote his doctorate on *The Use of Wine in the Old Testament*, stated, "Alcohol is never approved by God in any amount for the obedient Christian." There is simply no defense for the alcohol that is present in our society today.

4

Christians Should NOT Commend Alcohol to Others

Habakkuk 2:15-16 is a clear warning against those who would give alcohol to their friends, or commend it to others. It reads, **“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing him to your bottle, Even to make him drunk, That you may look on his nakedness! You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also--drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the LORD’S right hand will be turned against you, And utter shame will be on your glory.”** The Message Paraphrase reads, **“You thought you were having the time of your life. Wrong! It’s a time of disgrace. All the time you were drinking, you were drinking from the cup of God’s wrath.”** God is certainly condemning alcohol use and distribution to one’s neighbor in this passage.

You may say, “Well, Jesus turned water into wine,” citing John 2, at the wedding in Cana. This was Jesus’ first miracle. However, the Scripture is silent as to if the wine was fermented or not. Was this word wine (oinos) just referring to the fruit of the vine, which we would simply call grape juice?

John 2:9-10 says, “When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, ‘Every man at the beginning sets out **the good wine**, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept **the good wine** until now!’”

The man in charge of the feast called the wine that Jesus made “good wine” (John 2:10), and some have said, “That’s fermented.” However, the wine could have been “good,” not because of its high alcoholic content, but because it was fresh, unfermented grape juice. Pliny and Plutarch, in their writings, suggest that “good wines” are those wines that do not intoxicate because their alcoholic potency has been removed.

Additionally, when the Scripture says the wine was “good,” it did not use the general term for good (that is, *agathos*). It used a word that denoted something that was morally excellent (*kalos*). *Kalos* can also suggest something virtuous or honorable. The Greek language is a very precise language, and the use of *kalos* as opposed to *agathos* should be taken into consideration.

You say, “It says they were ‘well drunk.’” That does not mean they were drunk, that is, inebriated. It means they were filled with drink. Everyone – men, women, boys and girls were all drinking freely. Jesus

turned 120–160 gallons of water into wine. I believe, in light of the entire Scripture's condemnation of intoxicating drinks (or strong drink), how can a believer say that Jesus would offer something alcoholic to an entire group of people? Don't you think Jesus knew Habbakuk 2:15-16, which condemns giving drink to your neighbor? The Living Word (Jesus) would not do that which would contradict the Written Word (The Bible), and the written Word is clear. Bill Bennett asserts, "Would Jesus give an intoxicating drink to those who were drinking freely to induce a state of drunkenness? Absolutely not. What He gave was not intoxicating alcohol but very good tasting grape juice in my judgment." ³⁸

Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary said:

It is true Jesus drank wine, and I am sure I would have had I lived in the first century. However there is no evidence that He ever partook of "strong drink." As Bob Stein has carefully documented, "The term "wine" or oinos in the ancient world, then, did not mean wine as we understand it today but wine mixed with water... To consume the amount of alcohol that is in two martinis by drinking wine containing three parts water to one part wine (a fairly common ancient ratio), one would have to drink over twenty two glasses. In other words, it is possible to

become intoxicated from wine mixed with three parts water, but one's drinking would probably affect the bladder long before it affected the mind." It should also be noted that children would have drunk this diluted mixture of water and wine. It seems clear that there is no one-to-one correspondence with first century wine and twenty first century distilled liquor. Concerning the latter I believe the Lord Jesus would have no part. ³⁹

Even if Scripture were silent on this issue, because of its impact on today's society, I would publicly condemn its use. **Romans 14:21 says, "It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine, nor anything by which your brother stumbles."** It is clear that the first drink endangers many into alcoholism. Research tells us that 1 out of 7 people who drink become alcoholics. J.D. Greear notes about this statistic, "I wouldn't keep a dog in my house that bit 1 out of every 7 people who entered, and I won't play around with a drink that has a solid chance of sabotaging and destroying my life or the life of someone I love!" ⁴⁰ He goes on to argue,

If seven people follow my example and drink socially because I do, and one of them becomes an alcoholic, God holds me responsible. Is that a chance I am willing to take with my children, or in those who look up to me? Would Christian love really put

others in this kind of risk? Every year, 1700 college students die of over-drinking. That's over 4 jumbo jet liners packed with college students. What would the implications be for an airline industry that had that happen in 1 year? The dean of students at Duke says that easily 1/3 of all discipline related issues that come through his office are alcohol related. If you could eliminate 1/3 of the problems on your campus by changing one thing... would you not think soberly about doing that (pun intended)? ⁴¹

Some years ago in Chicago, after a traffic accident, a policeman awakened parents to report the death of their only daughter. He indicated that an empty bottle of liquor was found in the wrecked car. When the father heard this, he went into a rage and said, "When I find the man who sold liquor to these kids, I'll kill him." Later, upon seeking a tonic from his own liquor cabinet he found a note in his daughter's handwriting which read, "**Dad, we are taking along some of your good liquor. I know you won't mind.**"

This story is sad, indeed, but it is a true commentary on the impact our lives have on those around us. On the other hand, I remember hearing the testimony of a godly man in my church, who said, "I stopped drinking alcohol when I began working with boys who were ten years old. I knew that one day, one of them would ask me about alcohol, and I

wanted to be able to tell them, ‘Son, I don’t drink, and you shouldn’t drink either.’” I applaud men who have testimonies like that, even though they may not have been convinced by Scriptures.

5

The Right Way to Get Drunk

In conclusion, I want to offer hope for the person who has found temporary relief at the end of a bottle. People who have never given their lives to Jesus Christ experience great heartache. God wants them to experience His peace, His joy, His acceptance, and His comfort. Instead, people use alcohol to substitute for the joy they can find in Jesus. Psalm 4:7-8 reads, **“You, O Lord, have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”**

What are some of the reasons people commonly give for drinking? Listen to this:

We drank for happiness and became unhappy;

We drank for joy and became miserable;

***We drank for sociability and became
argumentative;***

***We drank for sophistication and we became
obnoxious;***

We drank for friendship and became enemies;

***We drank for sleep and became awoken without
rest;***

We drank for strength and felt weak;

***We drank for relaxation and got the shakes;
We drank for bravery and became afraid;
We drank for confidence and became doubtful;
We drank to make conversation easier and
slurred our speech;
We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling
like we'd been to hell;
We drank to forget and were forever haunted;
We drank for freedom and became slaves;
We drank to erase problems and saw them
multiply;
We drank to cope with life and invented death.⁴²***

They may go to bars and drink with friends because they think it will bring them companionship, but it is not the kind of fellowship that is universally offered to one who is brought into the family of God – loved by God and loved by man. Honestly, just let that person stop drinking with his friends, and he will soon find out that his “friends” do not want to spend time with him anymore. A person who is not saved does not have a drinking problem – they have a heart problem. Jesus offers His forgiveness and acceptance. Romans 14:17 says, “The kingdom of God is... righteousness (being right with God), peace (the peace of God), and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Perhaps you have found this book, and you have never turned from your sins and placed your faith in what Jesus did on the Cross. Perhaps you are just not certain that you are saved. Salvation means being

rescued from your sin. In order to be rescued from your sins, you must understand a few Bible facts:

1. God Loves You. - “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

2. Your Sin Separated You From a Loving God. - “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.” (Isaiah 59:1-2)

3. God Sent Jesus To Take Care of the Sin Barrier Between You and Him. - “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

4. We Respond To God by Receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. - “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)

Once you believe these four facts, you must make a few decisions:

1. You are a hopeless sinner, and you need Jesus.

– “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

2. You must be willing to turn completely from the sins that have held you captive.

- “I tell you, No; but unless you repent (change your mind for the better and heartily amend your ways, with abhorrence of your past sins), you will all likewise perish and be lost eternally.” (Luke 13:3, AMP)

3. You must believe that Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, actually died for you on the cross and rose from the grave.

– “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9-10)

4. Through prayer, you must invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life, making Him Lord.

“Dear God, I know that You loved me, and I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me. You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust you. By faith I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Save me, Lord Jesus. Thank You for doing it. I receive it by faith like

a child, and that settles it. Now begin to make me the person You want me to be, and help me, Lord Jesus, never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen.”

You may have read this and said, “I did not do this,” then, my friend, today is the day that you can come to Christ for the first time. You can read this again, pray that prayer and Jesus will save you from your sin! You, too, will be a child of God! The prayer does not save you, but praying a prayer like this one, from your heart to God, is the way Jesus will enter your life and you will be completely changed! Do it today! Make your salvation sure!

The Power of Life Change

Jesus Christ can give anyone the power to overcome any addiction, including alcohol. I read a story⁴³ one time about a man who was a drunk. Alcohol had devastated his life and family. He lived in the gutter and in the filth of the bar life. His children were hungry. Soon they came and repossessed what little furniture the poor family had. There they were, living in a hollowed-out house without food or furniture. The bank was threatening to come and take away the home because they were behind on the payments.

Then, something wonderful happened. In the gracious providence of God, the man heard the gospel and was gloriously saved. He gave his heart

to God. He got his old job back, the furniture was returned and the mortgage payments were caught up. The family had food, and the dirty children were cleaned up and dressed nicely. One day an old friend of the converted man came and taunted him about his new-found faith. He asked if the new Christian believed the miracles of the Bible. The man answered that he did. He then asked if he believed that Jesus turned water into wine. The man answered that he did. Then the old drinking buddy asked, "How can you believe in stuff like that?"

The new Christian smiled brightly and said, "I am no theologian, and cannot explain all the mysteries of the Bible. But I know that..."

***"Jesus turned my beer into furniture;
He turned my whiskey into house
payments;
He turned my drunkenness into well fed
children;
and, that is good enough for me!"***

This story shows the truth found in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Remember that no one is too bad to be saved, and no one is too good that they need not be saved. God loves us just the way we are, but He loves us too much to leave us the way we are. God alone has the power to change the heart of

anyone who will come to Him in repentance and faith. Praise the Lord for the power of the Cross and the power of the Gospel!

Former President George W. Bush writes about his decision to quit drinking in his memoir *Decision Points*. After his wife Laura asked him a soul-searching question, “Can you remember the last day you didn’t have a drink,” George would reflect on his own, “Did I want to spend time at home with our girls or stay out drinking? Would I rather read in bed with Laura or drink bourbon by myself after the family had gone to sleep? Could I continue to grow closer to the Almighty, or was alcohol becoming my god?”⁴⁴

At the age of 40, George Bush decided to quit drinking, which he says was one of the toughest decisions he ever made. He acknowledges, “There’s no way to know where my life would have headed if I hadn’t made the decision to quit drinking. But I am certain that I would not be recording these thoughts as a former governor of Texas and president of the United States.”⁴⁵

How did George completely quit drinking, which had become so pervasive in his life all the way to the age of 40? Bush relied on the power of God, stating, “I knew I could count on the grace of God to help me change.”⁴⁶ Bush gave his life to Jesus Christ after a family visit from Billy Graham, where he answered many questions of faith for the whole family. Bush

recounts, “Billy’s message had overpowered the booze.”⁴⁷ He would ultimately claim,

I could not have quit drinking without faith. I also don’t think my faith would be as strong if I hadn’t quit drinking. I believe God helped open my eyes, which were closing because of booze. For that reason, I’ve always felt a special connection to the words of “Amazing Grace,” my favorite hymn: “I once was lost, but now am found / was blind, but now I see.”⁴⁸

Jesus Christ, through the grand story of redemption, can give anyone the power to overcome any addiction, including alcohol.

The Fullness of the Spirit

Christians who have never known the infilling of the Spirit can do so today. Peter, on the day of Pentecost (recorded in Acts 2) stood up and told the people who were watching, “These men and women are not drunk as you suppose, but they are filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:12-13). He said, “You think we’re drunk. And we are. We’re just not drunk as you suppose. We are full of the Holy Spirit.”

Ephesians 5:18 says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” Here, the fullness of the Spirit is shown in connection with alcohol. The way the Holy Spirit

influences believers resembles the way alcohol influences those who drink it. The Holy Spirit is contrasted with wine. He provided a different (beneficial) kind of control and true joy. The analogy is that as wine frees people from their inhibitions and causes them to act spontaneously, so too the Spirit frees believers to act spontaneously for God.⁴⁹ John Stott once said,

We can indeed agree that in both drunkenness and the fullness of the Spirit two strong influences are at work within us, alcohol in the bloodstream and the Holy Spirit in our hearts. But, whereas excessive alcohol leads to unrestrained and irrational morals, transforming the drunkard into an animal, the fullness of the Spirit leads to restrained and rational moral behavior, transforming the Christian into the image of Christ... one makes us like beasts, the other like Christ.⁵⁰

Ephesians 5:18, in the Phillips Translation reads, “don’t get stimulus from wine... but let the Spirit stimulate your souls.” Christians can experience untold joy, freedom, happiness, boldness and strength when they understand the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Bill Bright urges: “Every Christian not only has the prerogative of being filled with the Holy Spirit, but is also admonished to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Therefore if a Christian is not filled he is disobedient

to the command of God, Who commanded us to be filled, and is sinning against Him. Further, since God commands us in His Word to be filled with the Spirit, we may be certain that He has the power to fill us the very moment we invite Him to do so.”⁵¹ Assuming you already have the Holy Spirit through the new birth, you must meet the following conditions.

First, desire to be filled (Matthew 5:6; John 7:37).

Being filled begins with desire. “Does this describe you? Are you thirsty – maybe a little desperate – for a closer walk with God? Do you ever find yourself crying out with the psalmist, ‘My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?’ (Psalm 42:2). Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit controls you, you will have a hunger and a thirst to know God and grow in Him. Out of this acute, life-defining thirst comes the Spirit-controlled life.”⁵²

Second, denounce all the known sin in your life.

David Jeremiah explains:

Confession of sin is critical, but denunciation is a step beyond confession. I might confess to a problem with impure thoughts, but what good does that do if I go out and buy a Playboy magazine this afternoon? Paul explained it like this: ‘Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates the body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for

God' (2 Cor. 7: 1, NIV). When we come to be filled with the Spirit, we have to cleanse our hearts through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have to say, 'God, if there is any sin in my life, if there's something I'm doing that isn't pleasing to You, put Your finger on it. Show me what it is, and Lord, I will denounce it. I will confess it, and I will turn from it.' You can't be filled with the Holy Spirit while you're harboring your own little pet sins. Maybe it's a place to which you go, a relationship in which you're involved, the types of entertainment you indulge in, or a habit you've clung to for years - something that you know violates God's standards. You will never be filled with the Spirit of God until you denounce it, confess it, and forsake it. The Holy Spirit isn't just a title, that's who He is, and He doesn't enjoy living in an unclean environment. If there is known, unconfessed sin in your life, the Holy Spirit will not take control. The very fact of your sin is evidence that He isn't in control.⁵³

Third, die to self (2 Cor. 4: 10). To be filled with the Spirit is to yield to His control. It is to take self off the throne of your heart and enthrone Jesus. Southern Baptist missionary Bertha Smith recounts a prayer meeting where a fellow missionary to the Chinese was not filled with the Spirit, with others all around him having already experienced this blessing. He

was discouraged and kept crying out, “Lord, crucify me! Lord, crucify me! I do not want anything to do with my old self any longer!” Bertha went up to him and told him, “Brother, the Lord is not going to do that for you! Had he been going to crucify you, he would have done so long ago! In fact, he did crucify you in his Son. He will not force you over your will to accept that. The Lord never does anything for you over your will and choice. He has been waiting ever since you were saved for you to take that position for yourself. He is still waiting until you, by an act of your will, assign that old self to the position of death where the Lord already sees you!” The man argued with her, and kept crying and begging God to crucify him. The rest of the group kept praying for him, until he surprised everyone by finally yelling out, “Lord, I lay this stinking carcass down!”⁵⁴ Romans 12:1-2 are absolute keys to the Spirit-controlled life, and tells us to present ourselves as “living sacrifices.”

Fourth, depend fully upon the Holy Spirit. A better word is surrender. Surrender is just the opposite of rededication of life or what we call commitment. When we commit to the Lord, we name the terms of our commitment. When we surrender, we let Him set the terms. Just suppose Jesus was standing before you and asked you to demonstrate your commitment on a blank sheet of paper He would hand to you. He would not ask you to list on the paper the things you would commit and then sign your name at the bottom. He would just ask you to sign your name at

the bottom, and He would fill in over your signature what He would expect and require.

In summary, the requirements are:

- 1) I want to be filled – desire
- 2) I want to get rid of the sin in my life – denounce
- 3) I want to give control of myself to God – die
- 4) I surrender absolutely to the Holy Spirit – dependence

What is normally identified as the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22-23, I have termed “the by-product of a Spirit-filled life,” and that is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” I cannot imagine a Christian needing any other substance in their body if they were fully controlled and filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit-filled life is the life Jesus intended every believer to live, which is a life of thrilling excitement and enjoyment!

Conclusion

I have argued against drinking alcohol as a beverage, and I stand against the liquor industry with every fiber of my being. However, I know that there are those who disagree with me. They may feel they have Scriptures to support their moderate drinking. **I do not have the right, nor does any other Christian, to look down my nose in a judgmental manner toward someone who is struggling to be free, or for one reason or another, does not feel the Scriptures condemn their practice.** In fact, the Scriptures speak strongly against pride and self-righteousness as well.

Alcohol does not send a person to hell. It is not a top-tier doctrine for our faith and practice as believers. I do not look down on those individuals who have taken an honest, unbiased look at the issues surrounding alcohol, and hold a different view.

However, I plead with you Christian, be salt and light to the world around. Stop fighting for your right to be socially acceptable. Let's show the world that we do not need their liquor to have a good time. Let's show our kids and young people that they do not need this substance to enjoy their life. Let's give them examples of courage to pattern their lives by. You

do not need to speak out against the liquor industry every day or every week, but when it comes up, have the strength to speak out! Here are settled facts in my heart:

1) Jesus did not turn water into intoxicating wine.

2) The Bible universally condemns “strong drink”.

3) The overwhelming majority of alcoholic beverages advertised should be classified as “strong drink.”

4) The Bible universally condemns the use of these intoxicating drinks as beverages.

5) Alcohol is a poor substitute for the peace that God offers through Jesus, and a poor substitute for the Spirit-filled life!

6) No Christian should be silent on this issue!

Appendix One: *What about Charles Spurgeon?*

Many of the Evangelicals (and even some Southern Baptists) will use the great preacher Charles Spurgeon (AD 1834-1892) to justify their own use of social drinking. It is true that early in his ministry, Spurgeon was not against social drinking. Biographer Arnold Dallimore states, "During a considerable portion of his life Spurgeon used alcoholic drinks as a beverage. In his day pure drinking water was difficult to obtain, and in order to avoid contamination most people used beer and ale at their meals."⁵⁵ In later years, however, his biographers note that his convictions changed. Spurgeon's two sons were against beverage alcohol, as were several of the students in his college. Perhaps the Holy Spirit used them to help Spurgeon see the value of total abstinence.

In 1863, John Gough, an advocate for total abstinence, publicly criticized Spurgeon's use of beverage alcohol. However, in 1871, after noticing Spurgeon's change, Gough publicly praised him, "I am glad to be able to say that I know he is at present, and has been for some time, a total abstainer."⁵⁶

Spurgeon also allowed Gough to come and give a lecture at his church against alcohol and in favor of abstinence.⁵⁷ Several similar meetings were held at Metropolitan Tabernacle as well.

“In 1882 Spurgeon would boldly declare, ‘Next to the preaching of the Gospel, the most necessary thing to be done in England is to induce our people to become abstainers’.” Biographer Lewis Drummond reported “Obviously he had become a strong advocate for abstinence.”⁵⁸

March 19, 1884, Spurgeon wrote a letter to the temperance society in which he wrote, “I hope they will be full of spirit against evil spirits, stout against stout, and hale against ale.”⁵⁹

The next time someone uses Spurgeon as their example (or excuse) to drink alcohol, inform them of the rest of his story. God led Spurgeon toward a firm stance against beverage alcohol, and He can lead you as well.

Appendix Two: Books for Further Study

Brumbelow, David, *Ancient Wine & The Bible: The Case for Abstinence* (Carrollton, Georgia: Free Church Press), 2011.

Lumpkins, Peter, *Alcohol Today: Abstinence in an Age of Indulgence* (Garland, TX: Hannibal Books), 2009.

Reynolds, Stephen, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol* (L.L. Reynolds Foundation), 2003.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR. JOSH FRANKLIN has been serving in local church ministry since 2002, and is Senior Pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Virginia (www.mvbcnow.org). Josh began His journey with Christ in 1995, surrendering to Him as Lord and trusting Him as Savior.

Josh holds three earned degrees, including the Doctorate of Ministry and the Master of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. Josh has written five books, including ***Starting Strong***.

Josh's passion is to empower Christians everywhere to have minds full of the Word of God and hearts full of the Spirit of God. He and His lovely wife Lydia, along with their three sons, Josiah, Caleb, and Levi reside in Virginia. For more information and to access other tools for discipleship, go to [**www.joshfranklin.org**](http://www.joshfranklin.org).

Endnotes:

1. John MacArthur, "Beer, Bohemianism and True Christian Liberty" www.gty.org, published August 9, 2011.
2. As quoted in Bob Allen, "Survey says teetotalers slowly losing ground in Protestant churches," www.baptistnews.com, November 27, 2018.
3. *Ibid.*
4. "Moody Bible Will No Longer Ban Alcohol, Tobacco For Employees" www.christianpost.com, September 20, 2013.
5. New Living Translation
6. Claire McCarthy, "Alcohol harms the brain in the teen years – before and after that, too," January 15, 2021. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/alcohol-harms-the-brain-in-teen-years-before-and-after-that-too-2021011521758>
7. David Jernigan, "Intoxicating Brands: Alcohol Advertising and Youth," www.multinationalmonitor.org, JULY/AUGUST 2008, VOL 30 No. 1
8. Megan Hutchinson, *I Want to Talk With My Teen about Addictions* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2006), 27.

9. Adrian Rogers, *The Adrian Rogers Legacy Collection – Sermons*, (North Palm Beach, FL: Adrian Rogers Foundation, 2011), under: “The Anatomy of a Sin”.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Cited in “Underage Drinking,” www.cdc.gov.
12. Cited in “Underage Drinking,” www.niaaa.nih.gov.
13. Harvard Health Publications. “Teenage Drinking.” Help Guide. Accessed February 22, 2014, http://www.helpguide.org/harvard/alcohol_teens.htm, as quoted on www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-teens-and-alcohol#fn3.
14. Megan Hutchinson, 26.
15. As cited in *Josh McDowell’s Handbook on Counseling Youth* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 391.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse* (NCASA)
20. Susan Brink, *U.S. News & World Report* (May 7, 2001)
21. Center for Disease Control, “Alcohol and Public Health,” www.cdc.gov/alcohol/data-stats.htm, last updated: March 24, 2014
22. James Glassman, “Next Target: liquor companies?” *U.S. News & World Report* (July 7, 1997), 57.
23. *Associated Baptist Press*, January 20, 2000.

24. Norman Geisler, "To Drink or Not to Drink?"
25. J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary: Proverbs*, vol. 20 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 170.
26. Daniel Akin, sermon, "The Case of Alcohol Abstinence"
27. As taken from "Liquid Devil" by David Stewart, www.jesus-is-savior.com.
28. Reported June 21, 2011 by WebMD Health News. Reviewed by Laura J. Martin, MD. The new study appeared in *Addiction*.
29. Adrian Rogers, "The Battle of the Bottle, pt. 1".
30. From Norman Geisler, "To Drink or Not to Drink?"
31. Paige Patterson, "Concerning Alcoholic Beverages," www.bpnews.net, published July 7, 2006.
32. As taken from "Liquid Devil" by David Stewart, www.jesus-is-savior.com.
33. William Mounce, *Mounce's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 791.
34. Paige Patterson, "Concerning Alcoholic Beverages," www.bpnews.net, published July 7, 2006.
35. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Bruce K. Waltke, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 376.
36. As quoted by Johnny Hunt, "Should Christians Drink?"
37. *Ibid.*

38. Bill Bennett, "Moderation – The Cure of Cause of Alcoholism?"
39. Daniel Akin, "The Case of Alcohol Abstinence"
40. J.D. Greear, "Christians and Drinking Alcohol," www.jdgreear.com, November 2, 2010.
41. *Ibid.*
42. As quoted by Johnny Hunt, "Should Christians Drink?"
43. Source unknown.
44. George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2010), 1-2.
45. *Ibid.*, 34.
46. *Ibid.*, 2.
47. *Ibid.*, 33.
48. *Ibid.*, 34.
49. Larry Richards, *Every Name of God in the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 213.
50. John Stott, *Baptism & Fullness: The Work of the Holy Spirit Today* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1971), 57.
51. Bill Bright, *The Coming Revival* (Orlando, FL: New Life Publications, 1995), 195-196.
52. David Jeremiah, *God in You* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1998), 100.
53. Jeremiah, *Ibid.*, 101-102.
54. Bertha Smith, *How the Spirit Filled My Life* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1973), 59-60.
55. Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon: A Biography* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1984, 1985), 182.
56. *Ibid.*, 183.

57. *Ibid.*

58. As quoted by David Brumbelow, *Ancient Wine & The Bible: The Case for Abstinence* (Carrollton, Georgia: Free Church Press, 2011), 255.

59. *Ibid.*