

I'm Just Being "Sociable"

Does the Bible say that social drinking is okay?

"...We have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles...drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties... In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead." (1 Pet. 4:3-5) Do you go to *drinking parties*?

But almost everyone does it. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2)

Alcohol is extremely anti-social. Is it sociable to bully someone into drinking your poison? Is it sociable to drink this venom that causes abuse to innocent families?

But...

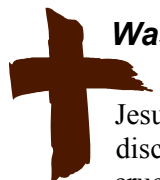
Didn't Jesus turn water into wine?

Jesus and His disciples were invited to a wedding (John 2:1-11). During this wedding, the grape juice ran out, so Jesus changed about 600 litres (130 gallons) of water into fresh grape juice.

In the original Greek, these verses use the word *oinos* (οἶνος), meaning either alcohol or fresh grape juice. "It can mean either one." (*Word Meanings in the New Testament*, Ralph Earle, 1986, on 1 Tim. 5:23)



But, "Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in...drunkenness... But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." (Rom. 13:13-14) Surely Jesus did not make any provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts. Surely what He made was grape juice.



Wasn't wine used at the Lord's Supper?

Jesus ate the Passover feast with His disciples on the night before He was crucified (Matt. 26:20-29). By His death Jesus fulfilled the Passover Feast of Exodus 12:3-20. Replacing the Passover, Jesus told us to keep the Lord's Supper to remember His death for our sins.

Both the Passover and the Lord's Supper use bread, symbolising Christ's body broken on the cross. Leaven (yeast), makes bread rise, and was not used for these feasts since it often is a symbol of corruption.

Christ's death was foreshadowed by the death of a spotless Passover lamb (1 Pet. 1:18-19). However, Jesus used grape juice to symbolise the blood of His new contract with us. Because Jesus has no sin (Heb. 4:14-15), non-alcoholic (uncorrupted) grape juice symbolises His blood. Leaven is used to make wine ferment (become alcoholic). No leaven was in the house during the Passover week (Ex. 12:15). Thus, Jesus certainly didn't use alcoholic wine for the Lord's Supper.



Besides, Jesus called the juice the "fruit of the vine." Josephus (a Jewish historian of the first century AD) used the same phrase referring to grapes freshly squeezed into a cup (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 2.5.2). To assume

that the "fruit of the vine" refers to alcohol is contrary to early usage of the phrase.

It may be true that the Passover was six months after the grape harvest. However, it was common at that time to preserve grape juice from fermentation by various methods such as boiling, storing in airtight wineskins, adding preservatives like sulphur, and filtering any yeast that would cause fermentation. Similar methods are still used preserving milk by UHT treatment, etc. Fruit juice and other products are kept in sealed bottles for long periods. There are many preservatives now in use.



Alcohol was not used at the Lord's Supper; therefore these verses can't be used to justify drinking alcohol.

Didn't Paul advise using wine?

Paul wrote to Timothy, "...Use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities." (1 Tim. 5:23)

Again, the word for wine is *oinos* (οἶνος), thus there is no direct indication of its alcoholic content. However, a Greek writer, Athenaeus (AD 280), expressed words similar to Paul's, "Take glucose ... being very good for the stomach." (*Deipnosophistae* 2.45) The health benefits of non-alcoholic grape juice, rich with glucose, are well known today.



Paul never recommended alcohol. To the contrary, an "...overseer must be...not a drinker..." (1 Tim. 3:2-3, *Literal Translation of the Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., 1985)

I Only Had One Drink...

Alcohol kills your brain cells. The body can't replace dead brain cells. Do you want a moderately dead brain? Dr. Jean Lennane, director of drug and alcohol services at Rozelle Hospital, Sydney, says it is not only heavy drinkers who are being affected but also social drinkers who seem normal. (*Alcohol: The National Hangover*, 1992)

"...Drunkenness...and the like...those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God... And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (Gal. 5:21-24)



"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him..." (1 Cor. 3:16-17)

This would apply to everything that defiles, including alcohol, smoking, and other drugs.

Do Not Look!

Does the Bible teach total abstinence, or "moderation?"

"Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise." (Prov. 20:1)

"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly; At the last it bites

like a serpent, And stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, And your heart will utter perverse things. 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: '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?'" (Prov. 23:29-35)



Do you even *look* at the wine?

"...The day of the Lord so comes as a thief... Let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober (*nepho*)..." (1 Thess. 5:2, 6-8) *Nepho* (νηφω) "to be free from the influence of intoxicants." (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*)

God is not a killjoy. He is warning us for our own sakes!

Read These Bible Verses:

Gen. 9:20-27; 19:30-36; Lev. 10:8-11; Num. 6:2-4; Deut. 32:32-33; Jud. 13:2-14; 1Sam. 1:11; Prov. 23:20-21; 31:4-7; Is. 5:11-12, 22; 28:7-8; 56:10-12; 65:8; Jer. 35; Ezek. 44:21; Dan. 1:8-17; 5; Hos. 4:11, 18; Hab. 2:5; Luke 1:13-15; 11:4; 12:45-47; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2Cor. 7:1; Tit. 1:7.



Unless otherwise stated, all Bible quotations are from the New King James Version.

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TELL IT LIKE IT IS.

Alcohol

What the Bible Says

"Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor..." (Hab. 2:15)

"...Drunkenness...and the like...those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God... And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (Gal. 5:21-24)

