

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

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Introduction:

Our subject is two-fold, dealing first with alcohol (which is a drug! But, it's legal), and then with illegal drugs (or controlled substances, narcotics).

The word "drug" is generic. Think of all the things that are sold that are peculiar to a "drug store" (like tooth-paste or shampoos or combs). But we are talking about narcotic drugs. (Narcotic = from the Gr., Narkotikos = that which numbs, stiffens, stupefies, deadens, and therefore relieves pain) Alcohol is one of those drugs, the most common!

"It's okay to drink as long as I don't do drugs" is a foolish statement. Alcohol is one of oldest drugs around!

I. Alcohol (the legal drug)

A. In the first half of this lesson, the issue before us: Does the Christian have the right to socially consume alcoholic beverages? Does God authorize the Christian to support (even moderately!) the liquor industry?

1. The pro-drinker needs clear evidence of two things: (1) God's approval, and (2) of intoxicating drink for human consumption, in the same passage. There are passages about each, but not of both together!
2. Wine doesn't make itself. Grapes left alone rot, not turn into wine. Wine is made by wine-makers! Wineries represent a man-made art. Remember, grapes don't turn into wine!
3. Alcoholic beverages have a dangerous drug that has mind-stealing powers: ethyl alcohol, the intoxicating agent in beer, wine and whisky. It is depressant drug; it is addictive, mind-altering, personality-changing, judgment stealing, and is damaging to the body. It immediately, upon entering the body, affects the part of the brain that operates our inhibitions, diminishing them. It takes away sobriety! Only the liver can burn it up. It is as effective as marijuana.
 - a. toxin = poisonous substance. Intoxication = an abnormal state that is essentially a poisoning. (Remember, the body is the temple of the spirit within it that God gave).
 - b. sclerosis = hardening of the liver, an effect of ingesting alcohol into the body.

- B. Eng. Word “wine” / Gr. Word “oinos” (In the Bible there are 13 different words used for “wine”). “Wine” is a generic word for both unfermented and fermented grape-juice. The word “wine” settles nothing as to the inebriating, or non-inebriating state. The word “wine” in our English versions of the Bible emphatically does not mean exclusively “alcoholic beverage”!
1. It can signify the grape itself, as also the juice of the grape or fermented wine (which without distillation cannot exceed 14% alcoholic content).
 - a. Aristotle’s statement: “The word “wine” (oinos) is ambiguous and different wines behave in different ways”.
 - b. Neh. 5:18, “Now that which was prepared for one day was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine ...”.
 2. It can signify the grape itself.
 - a. Deut. 28:39, ASV, “Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress them, but thou shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather [the grapes]; for the worm shall eat them”. But we don’t gather liquids, nor do worms eat wine. So most English versions supply the phrase, “the grapes”. But note the Septuagint Version: “Thou shalt plant a vineyard, and dress it, and shalt not drink the wine, neither shalt thou delight thyself with it (the wine-BHR), because the worm shall devour it (the wine-BHR)”. Here the word is Oinos (Heb., Yayin) = “wine”, which is gathered and which worms eat! Here “wine” stands for grapes!
 3. It can signify fresh, unfermented grape-juice that was commonly drunk in ancient times.
 - a. Gen. 40:11, “and Pharaoh's cup was in my (chief butler’s) hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand”.
 - b. Gen. 49:11, Heb. parallelism, “He hath washed his garments in wine, And his vesture in the blood of grapes”. “Wine” parallel to “blood of grapes”; that is, grape-juice.
 - c. Isa. 65:8, “Thus saith Jehovah, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it...”
 - d. Isa. 16:10, “ no treader shall tread out wine in the presses...”.
 - e. Jer. 40:10,12, “gather ye wine and summer fruits”. (Liquids aren’t gathered).

- f. Jer. 48:33, "I have caused wine to cease from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting".
 - g. Joel 3:18, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk".
 - h. Amos 9:14, "they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them". (Not, make wine; but, drink of the vineyards).
4. It can signify fermented grape-juice.
- a. Prov. 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; And whosoever erreth thereby is not wise."
 - b. Prov. 23:31, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, When it sparkleth in the cup, When it goeth down smoothly: 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, And stingeth like an adder. 33 Thine eyes shall behold strange things, And thy heart shall utter perverse things. 34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. 35 They have stricken me, [shalt thou say], and I was not hurt; They have beaten me, and I felt it not: When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again".

(1) Note that nothing is said here about "excess" in drinking this wine!
 - c. Hab. 2:5, "Yea, moreover, wine is treacherous, a haughty man, that keepeth not at home; who enlargeth his desire as Sheol, and he is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all peoples".

C. Let us comment briefly on some pertinent passages:

- 1. Prov. 31:6,7, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, And wine unto the bitter in soul: 7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, And remember his misery no more".

Is this an order to give a person strong drink, not only to the dying, but also to the troubled in spirit, so that they can be "bombed out", and not feel their pain? No; we just read in Hab. 2:5 that such wine is treacherous, and is as death, etc. So, let us look also at the previous two verses (4, 5) of this Proverb: "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; Nor for princes [to say], Where is strong drink? 5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, And pervert the justice [due] to any that is afflicted". Strong drink is condemned!

Apparently, then, “give” here means “leave, or let”, those who use it, use it. It is not a command to send the bitter in spirit to the saloon! Note some example of this type of language:

- a. Eccl.11:9, “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment”.
 - b. Isa. 50:11, “Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that gird yourselves about with firebrands; walk ye in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow”.
 - c. Matt. 23:32, “Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers”.
 - d. Eph. 4:26, “Be ye angry, and sin not”.
2. Jn. 2:9,10, (At the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus turns the water into wine), “And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom, 10 and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when [men] have drunk freely, [then] that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now”.
- a. Remember, our English word wine, in our day and time, carries with it a connotation that must not necessarily be forced into the Greek word used here, oinos! Don’t assume that Jesus made an intoxicating beverage comparable to our well-known wines of today! What would take a lot of time naturally, as the falling rain is absorbed by the earth and then flows through the grape-vine to make grapes, from which juice is squeezed, Jesus miraculously made that juice in a moment!
 - b. “drunk freely” = half-drunk?? If Jesus made intoxicating wine (some 150 gallons of it!), then he made something and shared it with the half-drunk people at the feast and caused them to be even drunker! He would have then promoted drunkenness; yet, according to Gal. 5:21, drunkenness is a work of the flesh which will cause eternal damnation.
 - c. “good wine” = means more alcoholic content? Such a claim simply shows the prejudice of the person making it. In N. T. days it meant pure, fresh, sweet. So testify writers of those times!
3. Lk. 5:37-39, “And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the new wine will burst the skins, and itself will be spilled, and the skins will

perish. 38 But new wine must be put into fresh wine-skins. 39 And no man having drunk old [wine] desireth new; for he saith, The old is good” .

- a. Jesus could have meant that fresh grape-juice was put in new wineskins for preservation, and not in old ones which, contaminated from previous use, could then start fermentation and the carbolic acid produced would split the old skins (as possibly it would even new skins). Note Job 32:19, “Behold, my breast is as wine which hath no vent; Like new wine-skins it is ready to burst” .
 - b. Or, if Jesus had in mind new wine that had begun to ferment, then the new wineskin would expand and allow for the fermentation to continue.
 - c. He is not saying that “old wine” had alcoholic content while the new was just grape-juice, and that that made it better. He could be saying that the general view of the public then was (and it can be proven by testimonies) that old wine (boiled juice made into syrup and later cut with water was considered better (in flavor and mellowness) than the new wine, or freshly squeezed grape-juice. As it was appropriate to choose the better tasting of the two kinds of wine (neither one being fermented), it was appropriate for his disciples not to fast at that time.
 - d. Jesus’ point is the inappropriateness of certain things to illustrate the inappropriateness of his disciples fasting at that time.
4. Rom. 14:21, “It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor [to do anything] whereby thy brother stumbleth” .
 - a. Some assume that the “wine” here is intoxicating and that it may be drunk providing no one is “offended” by it. They assume what they can’t prove it and build an argument on it!
 - b. The context and associated passages (1 Cor. 8 and 10) would indicate that the “meat” and the “wine” here mentioned were such as were used in sacrifices to pagan gods. The “wines” were poured out in offerings to the gods. Whether it was non-fermented or fermented “wine” is beyond the point. Both the meat and the “wine” here treated were of the things that Paul calls “clean, good” within themselves, but could be used in ways to cause others to sin. Did Paul, saying “clean and good”, have in mind the destructive products of the brewery and winery?
 5. Eph. 5:18, “And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit” . Here obviously the word “wine” has reference to the

intoxicating kind; it causes drunkenness, a work of the flesh. Such is the result of touching the “mockers”, the “brawlers”. (Prov. 20:1)

6. 1 Tim. 3:8, “Deacons in like manner [must be] grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre”.
 - a. The pro-drinker is often heard to argue that this passage proves that it is all right to be given to a little wine (to be a social-drinker), as long as he is not given to much wine.
 - b. The context will not permit this. There is no contrasting of quantities of wine consumed. Paul had just said that the deacon must be grave or sober. “Given to much wine” is the opposite of gravity and soberness. Any amount of alcohol consumed diminishes soberness.
 7. 1 Tim. 5:23, “Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities”.
 - a. Not “drink”, but “use” a little wine. Obviously the medicinal use of wine is here referred. The medicinal use of wine is also seen in Lk. 10:34, where most likely the wine was fermented and thus could serve as an antiseptic.
 - b. Timothy was to no longer drink only water, but because of his stomach problems he was to use some “wine”. We do not know if the wine here is fermented or not. Unfermented wine (grape-juice) would be very nutritional and otherwise beneficial to his health, as opposed to the unfit water available for drinking. Would “wine” (poisoned grape-juice), with its ethyl alcohol, been so beneficial to his stomach? Perhaps so, but it was still a prescription, not a social beverage!
 - c. The medicinal use of wine no more supports social drinking than the medicinal use of heroin supports the drug traffic!
 8. See Matt. 11:19, “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon. 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!”
 - a. Was this a true representation of John and Jesus, or a misrepresentation? Where is the solace in this passage for the pro-drinker?
- D. The “moderation argument” (or, the “excess theory”). This argument is popular, even among some brethren, due to the fact that alcoholic beverages are socially acceptable in our society today, and for a long time have been

legalized. (Warnings of health hazards are mandatory on cigarette packages; why not on wine, beer and whiskey bottles? Answer: alcoholic drinking is too widespread and popular!)

1. It has been argued that since Paul condemned drunkenness, he approved of moderation in drinking alcoholic beverages. As the worldly-wise liquor industry says, "Drink responsibly". Sounds good, doesn't it. But it is not Scriptural! And, it's a contradiction of terms! One's response is deadened by the ethyl alcohol!
2. The social-drinker has to do the proving that Jesus used and condoned alcoholic wine for general consumption. The onus (burden of proof) is on him to prove that Jesus made and shared an alcoholic wine at the feast of Cana (Jn. 2). But that can't be proven; Jesus' conduct cannot be used to defend social drinking. The pro-drinker is the one who must deal with the morality question here, not I. I contend that Jesus miraculously made some 150 gallons of grape-juice and gave it for the consumption of those who had already fully drunk of the same which man had prepared. Jesus would not have violated Hab. 2:15, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink ...".
3. The pro-drinker argues that since Paul said, "not given to much wine" (1 Tim. 3:8), that it is all right to drink in moderation modern-day wines (many of 20 % alcoholic content!).
 - a. Let's try that argument on these passages:
 - (1) 1 Tim. 3:8, "not greedy of filthy lucre". Is it all right to be greedy of clean lucre (money, monetary gain)?
 - (2) Prov. 23:22, "despise not thy mother when she is old". Is it all right to despise her when she is young?
 - (3) Eccl.7:17, "Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?". Is it all right to be a little wicked?
 - (4) 1 Pet. 4:4, "wherein they think strange that ye run not with [them] into the same excess of riot". Is it all right to run into riot if not in excess?
4. Whether with little ("moderation") or much ingesting of alcohol, that much poison is put into the body. "But alcohol is used as a vehicle for disease-combating drugs". Yes, for reasons of conveyance and preservation. But in such an arrangement there is a trade-off between the

damage of the low percentage of alcohol and the benefits of the disease-combating drug.

5. But, we are told: "In excess it is condemned". Anything in excess is condemned, even honey, (Prov. 25:27, "It is not good to eat much honey"). Moderation is only in consideration of what is good. Nothing unlawful can be rightly done in moderation. In Prov. 20:1 ("Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; And whosoever erreth thereby is not wise") there is no exception made for moderation!
 6. "Moderate, responsible drinking" = equals moderate removal of discrimination, sobriety, and justifies the selling (operating bars) and manufacturing (breweries, wineries) of the product (for moderate use, of course)! All alcoholics started with the first drink.
- E. Social Drinking and the apostle Peter 1 Pet. 4:3, "For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries".
1. Winebibbings = literally, wine plus bubbling up; that is, plentiful supply
 2. revellings = Gr., komos. Thayer: "drinking parties, indulging in revelry"
 3. carousings = Gr., potos (think of the English word, "potable"). Thayer: "a drinking, carousing". "Drinking bouts", says Marshall's Interlinear.
 4. This is the TV picture of the "good life": Bright lights, music, handsome men and beautiful women, a gala setting, and beer or wine in their glasses. "The man of sophistication": well dressed, handsome, and with his glass of liquor in hand (and in the past, with a lit cigarette in the other hand!).
 5. Peter says that we Christians left all that behind; we no longer walk in such activities!
- F. Some closing observations:
1. Most churches (and even many churches of Christ!) use modern-day wines in the Lord's Supper, arguing that "fresh wine (or, grape-juice) couldn't be kept long, and that grapes weren't available out of season in New Testament times". False! The evidence is abundant that grape-juice was boiled into syrup, or semi-solids, (and also dried into raisins), later to be dissolved with water into liquid form, that it was bottled in skins, and that bunches of grapes were hung up and kept for great lengths of time.

2. "Where is the Scripture that says that drinking today's wines in moderation is sin?" Well, where are the Scriptures that in so many words condemn X-Rated movies, gambling, pornography, polygamy and concubinage, wife-swapping, live-ins, domestic partner, etc.? Now, just who is demanding a passage that condemns something in specific terms?
3. "Will one beer send you to hell?", a question prejudicially framed. One beer what? Per hour? Per day? Per lifetime? I answer with a question: Will 10? 100? 500? If 100 will, will 99 not? On what basis do YOU set YOUR number? One beer won't maintain the liquor industry, but if millions of persons take the "one beer" route, the industry will be kept busy! The issue is one of attitude toward intoxicating beverages: are you promoting the imbibing of them, or opposing it? A bad attitude will certainly send any soul to hell. An attitude of wanting to put bad habits and customs behind so as to produce in one's life the "fruit of the spirit" (Gal. 5:22,23) is what is necessary to stay out of hell!
4. It is hard to keep up with the statistics on alcoholism in our country! The soaring costs of loss of life in alcohol-related accidents (often of innocent people who were sober), of suicides, of loss of man-hours of work, of extended drug treatments, of loss of income for the family and of other related sufferings, run into astronomical amounts of dollars! I will not try to introduce such figures into this lesson.

II. **Drugs** (the illegal type) ("Controlled, by prescription, substances") (Much of what has been said about alcohol, the legal drug, applies also to the illegal drugs. So, this section will be briefer).

A. Remember: every passage on sober, sobriety, soberness, grave, self-control, is a condemnation of both legal and illicit drugs! The popular illegal drugs to a greater or lesser degree alter the mind! Numb! Deaden the feeling! Transport to fantasy land! Herein is their popularity.

1. Truth is reality. A lie (pseudo) is fantasy, dream, wishful thinking, pretension, imagination, deception. Reality and responsibility go hand in hand; a lie and irresponsibility go hand in hand.
2. The choice is everyone's, and everyone daily makes the choice. But the choice, not the person, determines the consequences. We choose Truth or Pseudo, but Truth and Pseudo choose the consequences.
 - a. Jer. 6:19, "I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts".
 - b. Jer. 17:10, " (God gives to man)...according to the fruit of his doings."

c. Gal. 6:7, "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

3. Reasons for youths drinking:

1. To prove their "maturity", their social entrance into adulthood. Don't adults drink?
2. To get high = escape their problems (not confront and conquer them).
3. To conform, to respond to peer pressure, to appear "normal": "everyone everywhere is doing it"

a. But Christians are leaders (light, salt), not followers! WE turn on the light; WE do the preserving!

4. "Recreational drugs" = really a euphemism for damage to the brain, nervous system, body, and soul. They produce an endless cycle: Euphoria to depression, to more "crack" to get from depression to euphoria, ad infinitum.

B. A general list of illicit drugs:

1. Cocaine - extracted from coca leaves, with its derivatives: rock (from appearance: chips of stone), and crack (from the sound it makes in the pipe when smoked). Rock cocaine is highly addictive and deadly!
 - a. It produces euphoria, followed by devastating depression that in turn creates the need to smoke it again! The addictive cycle. And to finance the growing cycle? Stealing, which often ends in unintended murder.
 - b. Long-term effects: Depression, suicide, homicide. It destroys the body and mind.
2. Marijuana (Mary Jane) - from dried leaves and flowering tops of the cannabis sativa plant, smoked in pipes or cigarettes.
 - a. Harmful to the brain, lungs, heart, reproductive system and motor skills. "Stoned", or "Spaced out" = out of touch with surroundings; so, out of touch with reality! This is the opposite of God's command for us to always be sober. Saying No to marijuana usually is a No to the entire drug culture! Or, its use is the door to the drug culture.
3. Stimulants ("uppers", in the morning; "speed") and depressants ("downers", at night) = drugs that contain chemicals that stimulate the central nervous system.

- a. These are Pep Pills (or amphetamines). They push past the normal limits of endurance.
 - b. Effects: Exhilaration, euphoria, and hyperaction that often results in accidents / death (specially among athletes).
4. Depressants are sedatives prescribed for anxiety, tension, insomnia muscle spasms, and irritability, but they have intoxicating effects.
- a. Examples: Barbiturates, Valium. The effect is much like that of alcohol: slurred speech, weak and rapid pulse, shallow breathing, and with over-dose, coma and death.
 - b. "Date rape" drugs fall into this category.
5. Narcotics - (from the Greek word, to numb, deaden), for relief of severe pain.
- a. Example: Heroin. From opium poppies. Smoked, inhaled, injection ("mainlining"). It is highly addictive and has severe withdrawal symptoms. To support the addiction, the addicts often engage in crime (robbery), prostitution, and even murder.
6. Hallucinogens - Chemically manufactured drugs.
- a. Example: LSD, a powerful hallucinogen, was made popular in the "rebellious sixties". It gives a disoriented sense of direction, distance and time (hallucination). "Bad trips" can result in loss of control and even suicide.
7. Inhalants (not illegal, but whose purposes are abused) = chemicals made to glue, polish, paint and fuel things, but which can cause a "high" (mind alteration) if breathed in concentration (not in well-ventilated areas).
- a. Examples: Lighter fluid, glue, paint thinner, hair spray, vegetable cooking spray, felt tip marking pens, etc.
 - b. Effects: from light-headedness to relaxation and then to depression and even coma. End result: hospital, prison, death.
 - c. "Sniffing" damages the brain, liver and kidneys, throat and lungs. It is addictive.

C. Conclusion:

1. Christians obey the laws of the land. They have no trouble with "substance abuse".

- a. Rom. 13:1,2, "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the [powers] that be are ordained of God. 2 Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment".
2. Our bodies are not to be abused, but used to the glory of God.
 - a. 1 Cor. 6:19,20, "Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; 20 for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body"
3. Addiction in anything is wrong.
 - a. 1 Cor. 6:12, "All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any".
4. Cast your cares upon the Lord - no anxieties! The true "tranquilizer," the substance that can't be abused!
 - a. Phil. 4:6,7, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus".
 - b. 1 Pet. 5:7, "casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you".
5. Father and Mothers: be parents, not pals. KNOW your children's friends, their music, their movie watching, their expenditures, their use of time, their schoolwork. Lead them, not let them! Lead them, not leave them! Neither "quality time" nor "floor time", but be parents at ALL times! Teach them to work, to help others, to have creative hobbies, to lead orderly lives!
6. Humanism, with its preaching of "self-esteem", has turned children into spoiled, selfish brats. Teach a child to love, to give, to think and do for others and he will get all of the esteem that he can stand! And, he will enjoy what he is doing that brings that esteem and appreciation.
7. "DARE to say No". Why? Who said so? What motivation is that? That is a man-made solution that isn't working. Only fearing God will solve the problem. The bottom line: not, "Dare to say no!", but Eccl. 12:13,14.

- a. Eccl. 12:13, 14, “[This is] the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole [duty] of man. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”.
 - b. That slogan is an appeal to pride; it is a poor substitute for conviction and commitment to truth, to God! Rather, be like the young man of Ezek. 18; he saw and considered!!!!
 - (1) Ezek. 18:14,28, “Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins, which he hath done, and feareth, and doeth not such like Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die”.
8. Here is the reason to shun illegal drugs and all sin:
- a. Gal. 6:7,8, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life”.

The way of the cross, to heaven; the way of drugs, to hell.