

Is Social drinking Biblical?

Social drinking has become a line drawn in the sand between what some Christians view as radicalism and realism. To some degree it is. However, a question must be raised. In an abnormal and dysfunctional society, shouldn't much of what Christians practice be viewed as radical?

Why a Christian would continue to raise the question about a *right* to use alcohol is beyond me. Alcohol is a mind altering drug that is categorized as a depressant. That alone should end the argument. Why would anyone (let alone a Christian) want to use a drug that takes away physical coordination, reduces mental capabilities proportionately to the amount consumed, destabilizes inhibitions and moral restraints causing a person loss of control and, on the top of all that, it is addictive with a history of destroying lives, marriages and families?

Alcohol is our society's first instance of the legalization of a drug. It was not legalized because it was harmless, but because it was impossible to enforce the laws against it. What has the decision to give up on the fight against the use of alcohol cost our society? The answer to that question is almost impossible to determine. Consider the number of families and succeeding generations that have been destroyed by alcohol use. Nine out of ten accidental deaths and suicides are alcohol related, including most vehicle accidental deaths.

We could give you statistics that would stagger your mind, but we won't. These statistic are a matter of historical and sociological history. The evidence is very real.

Is there such a thing as sin in moderation?

What is normal?

Abstention from the use of alcohol in this society is touted as abnormal and radical. How do we determine what normal is? Is normalcy determined by majority rule within a society? Is normalcy determined by what is commonly accepted and practiced within a society?

Originally, normalcy meant the highest standard for something. Today that definition has been reduced to what is common or acceptable because *everyone is doing it*. **As Christians, we should realize there is only one absolute standard for normalcy, the Word of God.** Scripturally *normal* is synonymous with holiness. Both terms described the highest standard.

The Priesthood Of The Believer

In 1 Peter 2:5-9, God describes all believers as a "holy priesthood," a "royal priesthood" and "an holy nation, a peculiar people." "Holy" signifies a people distinctively set apart from the world, and its practices, for God's peculiar service.

"Priesthood" distinguishes all believers as a representative people. Believers are intended to represent God to this world in character and actions.

A "holy priesthood" has divinely ordained limitations upon it (see Lev. 10:8-10). "Wine or strong drink" (*any drink fortified with added alcohol or another drug*) defiled the consecration of the priest. In fact, it was such a serious offense to God that He gave a death warning against it ("lest ye die").

According to verse 10, the use of wine or strong drink would hinder a priest from being able to distinguish between the "holy and unholy" and "between the clean and the unclean." God did not request moderation. He demanded abstention.

To function as a Priest before God, the believer constantly requires sharp senses and astute spiritual discernment. Spiritual discernment is the minute by minute necessity for the survival of personal holiness in a world that is constantly bombarding us with choices that could effect us, our families and many others for the rest of their lives, perhaps for eternity. Wine or strong drink could result in our being "deceived." That person is not "wise."

God's condemnation of the use of alcohol is consistent throughout Scripture. In Jeremiah 35:5-8 the Rechabites were a family of priests who had vowed to maintain the sanctity of their priesthood when others had defiled themselves with wine.

Habakkuk 2:15 states; "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also." God's curse ("woe") was upon anyone who gave someone alcohol for a beverage.

In Isaiah 28:1-8, the use of alcohol by the children of Israel brought God's curse upon them. It is clear that in the O.T., the use of alcohol by anyone (especially the priesthood) was absolutely forbidden. Today all believers are priests before God.

Did Jesus Create Alcoholic Wine at the Marriage Feast ?

The answer to this question is NO!!! Unequivocally, NO! If He did, He broke the law that He came to fulfill and we cannot be saved. Our salvation is absolutely dependent upon the sinlessness of Jesus Christ (see 2 Cor. 5:21).

The word “wine” in the N. T. is translated from the Greek word OINOS. Only the context can determine if it refers to fermented or unfermented wine. The marriage feast of a devout Jew was a holy celebration and would not be defiled with lewdness or drunkenness. According to John 2:1, it was the third day of the feast which frequently went on for seven days. If alcoholic wine was used, drunkenness would have been rampant by this time.

The custom of the day was to take wine and dilute it three to one and sometimes five to one as the celebration went on and the supply of wine began to run out. In verse 10, the wine that Jesus created was as the undiluted, or fresh juice. Fresh squeezed grape juice has no effectual alcohol content.

Didn't Jesus Drink Wine at the Last Supper?

Yes He did, but the question is not if He drank wine. The question is, was the wine He drank alcoholic? The last supper was the celebration of the Jewish Passover Feast. *The necessity to purge out of their households all forms of leaven or fermentation is detailed in Exodus 12:15-19.*

In Exodus 34:25 God details, “Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven.” In Matthew 26:29, the “cup” was called the “fruit of the vine.” It is not OINOS (the generic term for wine), but is a group of three Greek words, which was a phrase for “freshly squeezed grape juice,” unfermented.

Jesus drank “wine,” but the wine He drank was “new wine” or the “fruit of the vine.” It was freshly squeezed grape juice.

Didn't Paul Tell Timothy To Drink Wine?

Again, the Greek word translated “wine” is again *oinos* and does not presume an alcohol content. The quality of water in the Mid-East was always questionable. Timothy apparently had some type of stomach ailment that was aggravated by the water. So Paul encourages Timothy to (literally), “Drink not water only.” *The idea was the common practice of mixing grape juice with the water.*

It should not be concluded that the “wine” Timothy was instructed to mix with the water was alcoholic. In fact, it would be a contradiction against interpretation of Jewish practice to drink alcoholic wine. To insure extreme care in this area, wine (grape juice) was watered down as much as five parts water to one part wine.

Also, he was to do so for medicinal reasons, “for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” Even in this type of use, wine was not encouraged as a beverage.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1).

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Should Christians Drink Alcohol?



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