

Let us walk properly,...not in drunkenness...but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts...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.

The Bible (*Romans 13:13-14; John 3:16*)

BIBLICAL REASONS FOR AVOIDING ALCOHOL ABUSE

DRUNKENNESS IS CONDEMNED IN THE BIBLE

Isaiah 5:11 "Woe to those who rise early in the morning, That they may follow intoxicating drink; Who continue until night, till wine inflames them!"

Proverbs 23:20 "Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat."

Romans 13:13 "Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy."

Galatians 5:19-21 "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Ephesians 5:18 "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit."

DRUNKARDS ARE REJECTED BY GOD

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.

Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

THE BIBLE WARNS AGAINST STRONG DRINK

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

Isaiah 5:11 "Woe to those who rise early in the morning, That they may follow intoxicating drink; Who continue until night, till wine inflames them!"

Proverbs 23:29-31 "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."

CARELESS CHRISTIANS CAUSE OTHERS TO STUMBLE

Romans 14:21 "It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak."

CHRISTIANS HAVE A DISTINCTIVE LIFE-STYLE

Philippians 2:15 "that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

2 Corinthians 6:17 "Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

1 John 2:15 "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"

Romans 12:2 "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."

1 Peter 2:5-9 "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

ALCOHOL IS ADDICTIVE

1 Corinthians 6:12 "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

Ephesians 5:8 "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light."

Proverbs 23:35 "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?"

IT HARMS OUR BODIES WHICH ARE THE LORD'S

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 "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. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."

(Source: *Alcohol Concern*)

NB: These statistics relate to England, but the problems are not significantly different in Scotland. The Bible does not condemn alcohol, but it does encourage a responsible attitude. These statistics ought to have a sobering effect!

In the NHS:

- One in 6 People attending accident emergency departments for treatment have alcohol-related injuries or problems, rising to 8 out of 10 at peak times (*HEA 1998*).
- Around half of seriously injured patients admitted via casualty and needing to stay in hospital have an alcohol-related injury (*Dyehous 1995*).
- 15% (1 in 7) of acute hospital admissions are misusing alcohol (*Cannings 1999*).
- There were 72,500 hospital admissions in a 12 month period with a diagnosis of mental and behavioral disorders due to alcohol, including 31,300 admissions for alcohol dependence syndrome (*DH 1999*).

In 11% of cases, alcohol consumption is the main cause of men's high blood pressure (*Vandongen 1994*).

Needing help:

- 65% of suicide attempts are linked with excessive drinking (*DH 1993*).
- One in 25 adults are dependent on alcohol (*DH 1999*).
- 1.7 million men and 0.6 million women drink at very risky levels - 50 units a week for men, and 35 units a week for women (*ONS 2000*).
- Among 16 to 24 year olds, 38% of men and 21% of women regularly drink twice the recommended safe levels of alcohol (*ONS 2000*).
- 10,000 people a day are attending alcohol services for help with their alcohol problem - of these 66% are men, 36% are unemployed, and 18% are either homeless or in temporary accommodation (*Alcohol Concern 1997*). The majority (85%) have problems solely with alcohol and do not use any illegal drugs.

In the family:

- Between 60% and 70% of men who assault their partners do so under the influence of alcohol (*Jacobs 1998*).
- 920,000 children are currently living in a home where one or both parents misuse alcohol; 6.2% of adults grew up in a family where one or both of their parents drank excessively (*NACOA 2000*).
- 23% of child neglect cases identified via helpline calls involve parental alcohol misuse; parental alcohol misuse was also reported in 13% of calls about emotional abuse, 10% of calls about physical abuse, and 5% of calls about sexual abuse (*NSPCC 1997*).
- Heavy drinking by parents was identified as a factor in over 50% of child protection case conferences (*Davidson 1994*).

Risky sex and teenage pregnancy:

- More than one in 5 men (20%) and 1 in 6 women (16%) admit to having unsafe sex after drinking too much (*Durex 1999*).
- After drinking alcohol, one in seven 16 to 24 year olds have had unprotected sex, while 1 in 5 had sex they later regretted, and 1 in 10 have been unable to remember if they had sex the night before. 40% believe they are more likely to have casual sex after drinking (*HEA 1998*).
- 40% of 13 and 14 year olds were "drunk or stoned" when they experienced first sexual intercourse (*Wight 2000*).

In violent circumstances:

- 13,000 violent incidents take place in or near licensed premises each week (*Home Office 1999*).
- In 41 % of contact crime, including assaults and muggings, the offender has been drinking (*British Crime Survey 1996*).
- 125,000 facial injuries a year are sustained in violent circumstances - in 61 % of cases either assailant or victim has been drinking (*Home Office 1999*).

In (and out of) school:

- 20% of pupils excluded from school were suspended for drinking alcohol at school. 16% of excluded pupils drank alcohol every day compared with 3% of non-excluded pupils, and 20% of excluded pupils drank alcohol 3 to 4 times a week, compared to 3% of non-excluded pupils (*Youth Justice Board 2000*).
- Among 11 to 15 year olds who drink, mean weekly consumption rose from 5.3 units in 1990 to 9.9 units in 1998 (*ONS 1999*).

Excluded from society:

- 50% of the rough sleeper population are alcohol reliant (*Rough Sleepers Unit 1999*).
- Over half of male prisoners (58% of remand and 63% of sentenced prisoners) and over one third of female prisoners (36% of remand and 39% of sentenced prisoners) engaged in hazardous drinking in the year prior to going to prison (*ONS 1999*).

In the workplace:

- Workers who misuse alcohol are 2 to 3 times more likely to be involved in industrial accidents (*UN 1993*).
- 46% of UK firms report problems of alcohol misuse among employees (*1PD 1999*).
- Alcohol-related problems cost British industry an estimated 2 billion per year due to absenteeism and poor work performance (*Maynard 1992*).

Accidents on and off the roads:

- Alcohol is a factor in 20% to 30% of all accidents (*Honkanen 1993*).
- Heavy drinking is associated with 15% of drownings (*ROSPA 1998*) and is involved in 39% of deaths in fires (*Tether 1986*).
- In 1997, one in 7 traffic deaths were alcohol-related - 550 people died in drink-drive accidents, and 2,940 people were seriously injured (*DETR 1999*).
- 37% of pedestrians killed on the roads have drunk over the legal limit for drink-driving (*DETR 1999*).

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