

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: the christian and alcohol****the christian and alcohol - posted by paps, on: 2013/8/25 15:46**

i have been studying the book of i timothy as a young pastor, what struck me this week is pauls advice to timothy in 1 timothy 5:23

Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

NIV  
is this scripture consistent with other scripture and does legalize the intake of alcohol like many suggest it

**Re: the christian and alcohol - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/8/25 20:51**

Many medicines of this time have either alcohol or certain kind of drug to reduce pain and feel drowsy. There is nothing wrong in consuming them for medical purpose. I always believed even as an unbeliever that consuming alcohols and drugs for pleasure is a degrading act because it causes us to loose our mind. Noah was found naked because of it. Why should someone consume a substance that will cause us to lose our mind when we have the mind of Christ?

**Re: Thoughts on the sweet nectar of man's desire - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2013/8/25 21:28**

Looking to the scripture to determine whether something is "legal" for Christians is the trailhead of a difficult and twisting path. Alcohol is a dangerous poison, and the ruin of millions of unsuspecting users. "Others may get into trouble, but not me..."

Never the less, the verse in Timothy and the other one in Deut. 14:26 suggest that alcohol may be used for both medicinal and recreational purposes.

But wine is a mocker, and strong drink a brawler- the wise know this and carefully choose another path.

Funny how God's word throws a wrench to derail a legalistic presumption...?

**Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2013/8/25 22:39**

There is also the scenario of when Jesus made water into wine after the wine was gone and everyone had well drunk. What I never understood is why was this done. If wine is alcoholic and drinking enough of it will get you drunk why did Jesus make more? The cheap answer is that the wine wasn't alcoholic. Wine is not wine unless it has alcohol in it. It becomes grape juice then.

John

**Re: the christian and alcohol - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/8/25 23:03**

Matthew 11:19

The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

**Re: - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2013/8/25 23:25**

Back when dinosaurs roamed the earth and I was a misplaced Presbyterian in an Assembly of God bible school, one of the esteemed professors held the approved position that Jesus turned the water into Welch's. The denomination at that time held that there were 5 major and unforgivable sins, and alcohol sat on the top of the list with smoking.

(The other 3 were movies, dancing, and cards.)

So we mischievous students threw the Deuteronomy passage at him, and enjoyed watching him squirm and stammer out his explanation. (We were learning to be good little Pharisees...)

The Psalmist coaxes us to seek out wisdom, sweet and wonderful wisdom! Always better than the trap of legalism, wisdom

om deals with the real weaknesses of people, and allows God to draw men through the sweet creative paths to Himself only He knows.

Booze is generally just an obstacle.

**Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/8/25 23:43**

RE: ///Back when dinosaurs roamed the earth and I was a misplaced Presbyterian in an Assembly of God bible school, one of the esteemed professors held the approved position that Jesus turned the water into Welch's. The denomination at that time held that there were 5 major and unforgivable sins, and alcohol sat on the top of the list with smoking.///

My experience was similar among the Baptist, back when dinosaurs roamed the earth in the late 90's and early 2000's, it was alcohol and interracial marriage that set at the top.

**Re: the christian and alcohol - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/8/26 9:10**

What many proponents of alcohol use refuse to acknowledge is the adjective that precedes the word wine as it appears in this scripture: 1 Tim:5:23 "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. " More than little will damn a person - it will cause drunkenness and that is listed in the list of sins that will bar a person from the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:21: "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.")

AND...the arguments for alcohol use can also be said for narcotics. There is place for narcotics and alcohol in the treatment of pain and physical ailments. Beyond the use of little as Timothy teaches will put one at risk for alcoholism or drunkenness.

Yes, I do get upset when so-called Christians will defend its use because of the devastation alcohol brings to weak people. Rom.14:21 tells us "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

**Re: - posted by Solomon101, on: 2013/8/26 11:34**

And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the Lord your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the Lord your God chooses, to set his name there, 25 then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the Lord your God chooses 26 and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household. Deuteronomy 14:24-26 ESV

It's pretty clear that God commanded that at that time in certain circumstances the tithe be transferred to cash. The money was to then be used to buy refreshments to be enjoyed with gratitude and thankfulness in His presence. In this scripture God Himself gave sanction to the use of wine and strong drink in a limited and God honoring fashion.

It is an undeniable fact that -

- Part of John Calvin's salary was paid each year in a great number of casks of alcoholic wine.
- Martin Luther clearly, and frequently, enjoyed mugs of beer or glasses of wine.
- John Wesley also had ministers sometimes partially paid in portions of rum.
- The Puritan pilgrims found one of the primary reasons to get off the Mayflower was that they had run short of beer. One of their first tasks they undertook was to establish a brewery. In fact a great percentage of the cargo brought with the pilgrims was beer for themselves!

I could list many more examples both Biblically and historically. However, the topic is so emotionally charged for many they can not discuss it. Much less are they able to see anything beyond their own preconceived, and often prejudicial, leanings. They are just so emotionally wound up in it. In addition it is virtually impossible for Christians who have staked out a position on a topic to ever change it. That would mean admitting we were wrong. The religious pride is then injured. Very

few are ever mature enough to do that.

In the final analysis alcohol is treated the same in scripture as food and sex. Proverbs in particular gives some insight in this area. It goes like this-

1. Food is from God. Used as He intended it is a great blessing to be enjoyed. Used outside His parameters it is called gluttony and a sin.
2. Sex is from God. It was His idea (gasp!). Used as he intended (one man and one woman for life within the marriage covenant) it is a tremendous blessing. Used outside of His parameters it is fornication, adultery, Sodomy, etc. and a sin.
3. Wine/alcohol is from God. Used as He intended (to gladden the heart of man and be received with thankfulness in His presence) it is a great blessing. Used outside of His parameters it can become drunkenness which He calls a sin.

If the answer a person embraces to avoid drunkenness is to never partake of any alcohol then they must also refuse all food for fear of gluttony or all sex for fear of fornication. They are treated the same in scripture.

However, if each is used within the God given parameters in scripture then they are blessings from His hand to be enjoyed responsibly in His presence.

Psalm 104:14-16 seems to articulate that balance well-

14. You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart.

It specifically says that one of the reasons that God brings forth plant life from the earth is to create wine to gladden the heart of man.

Seems simple enough.

**Re: - posted by reformer, on: 2013/9/15 11:38**

Wine has its medicinal purposes but anything that is abused can be a problem. I see plenty of christians smoking, yet that is not in the bible...its obviously not good for you. Its humorous that christians frown so much against alcohol yet excuse or pass on judgements on other things. A person is judged so harshly if he drinks wine, but one doesn't consider proverbs 6:16-19 that is black and white.

Drinking alcohol can destroy lives and can be very dangerous. Some people have very addictive personalities and easily can stumble.

We put wine in some of our sauces for food. Mostly its just cooking wine which is completely different, but have used wine in marinara.

**Re: the christian and alcohol - posted by narrowpath, on: 2013/9/15 15:00**

1 Timothy 3:8

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

Titus 2:3

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

Why do some people always need either a "Thou shalt" or "thou shalt not" as in the OT ruling alcohol, tithing, dress code, sex, etc.

How much alcohol can I drink before I sin?

How long does a skirt need to be?  
How much jewelery can I wear?  
How much chocolate is allowed?  
How much overweight is tolerated by God?  
How many bible chapters do I have to read every day?  
Can I drive a luxury car?

The revivalist Blumhardt taught that sex was only to be used for procreation, causing much guilt and confusion.

They did not have clean water in the old days, and adding some alcohol was a sensible thing if done in moderation.  
When Jesus drank wine then why do we rebuke others for doing the same?  
Grape juice does not last long before it goes off in the Mediterranean latitudes.

We can put a legalistic yoke on people by making up rules where the bible is silent or just gives sensible advice.  
Why can we not use alcohol in temperance - not much and not given to it.  
At the same time be considerate to the weak and do not tempt them, being ready to forgo the liberty we have. That is walking in the Spirit.  
Master alcohol and be not slave to it.

When I have the Spirit, I will do what Jesus would do.

1 Corinthians 2:15  
But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

**Re: the christian and alcohol - posted by narrowpath, on: 2013/9/15 15:00**

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**Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2013/9/16 20:19**

I agree with the sentiment that asking the question of legality tends to expose either a wrong heart, or a misunderstanding of the grace, love, and nature of God. To ask, "Is it legal?" is basically the same as to ask, "Can I get away with this action without putting my trip to heaven at risk?" Or, it is to think that it is by my actions that I obtain or lose right standing with God. It is simply the wrong question.

The right question would be, "Am I, by drinking alcohol, putting an occasion of stumbling in front of a brother or risking the offense of one who, barring my actions, would have come to Christ?" It is to ask if my desire to exercise my freedom in Christ would be damaging to someone else. Paul dealt with this question when he said, "1Co 8:8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.  
1Co 8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.  
1Co 8:10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;  
1Co 8:11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?  
1Co 8:12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.  
1Co 8:13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

The issue is not the legality of the issue, but the love of Christ. We are not justified by law, but by grace. Yet grace teaches us to walk in the Spirit, crucify the flesh with its lusts, and walk in the love of God toward those around us.

The Bible does not teach that a Christian should never drink alcohol. It is simply not there. However, it is very clear that we should not be given to much wine, that we should not be gluttonous (wherein is excess), and that we should consider the burdens and weaknesses of our brothers and sisters as much more important than our own desires.

To a certain extent it is cultural. I challenge you to, in America, find an unbeliever and ask them what they think of a Christian who goes to church on Sunday, claims to know Christ, yet keeps a 6-pack in the refrigerator. In almost every case I have found the unbeliever to say that this person is a hypocrite. In our culture, I think to totally abstain should be the rule of the day for believers. However, I am aware of some other cultures where this is not the case, and believers have the occasional drink and see it as perfectly normal.

Where is your heart on the matter? Are you trusting in the grace of God for your righteousness, and are you walking in the Spirit. Has the love of God been shed abroad in your heart? Will you sacrifice your life for the sake of your brother or sister? Do you desire to drink because, "I like it and I have a right"????? I think that puts it in perspective. Use not your freedom as an occasion unto the flesh, but by love serve one another.

**Re: the christian and alcohol - posted by Koheleth, on: 2013/10/1 20:46**

Quote:  
-----i have been studying the book of i timothy as a young pastor, what struck me this week is pauls advice to timothy in 1 timothy 5:23  
Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.  
NIV  
is this scripture consistent with other scripture and does legalize the intake of alcohol like many suggest it  
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Alcohol is not "illegal" but it does legitimize the intake of alcohol. Whenever your stomach is causing you problems and you are frequently ill, you can consider using "a little wine". Otherwise, there is no good reason to drink wine (or beer or liquor). I know of no professing Christian who uses this verse to justify their alcohol consumption to actually follow the verse.

A side point on your wording above: Timothy was clearly "young" (it doesn't hint at his actual age), but nowhere does it indicate he was a pastor. That is just a tradition of men started by "pastors" who write the Bible commentaries.

**Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/10/1 21:41**

Hi Koheleth

I do not drink,

Koheleth wrote : ///Whenever your stomach is causing you problems and you are frequently ill, you can consider using "a little wine". Otherwise, there is no good reason to drink wine (or beer or liquor).///

The Bible tells us that Jesus drank alcoholic wine.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/10/1 23:49**

We, as Christians, walk according to the Holy Spirit abiding within, and not by a letter. The letter says all things are permissible - and this is to include tobacco, alcohol, pork, coffee, chocolate, etc. But we do not walk obsequiously according to the letter, as the nation of Hebrews did in the OT. We have the Holy Spirit to steer our personal boxcars upon the broad rail of the law. He shows us personally and instantly what is expedient for our walks, and what is not. Our consciences bear witness to His influence.

The permissibility of alcohol has nothing to do with theology but everything to do with the witness of the Holy Spirit. As soon as we try to cookie-cut either the permissibility or prohibition of alcohol (or anything else purposefully left nebulous by God), we suddenly enter into the realm of Phariseeism. The reason for this is God's disdain of man's usurpation of Holy Spirit guidance with groupthink rules. If the Holy Spirit bears down on your conscience that you are not to take a drink, this is His personal instruction to you - notwithstanding the generalized New Covenant allowance of all things being permitted. Another brother or sister may be allowed to take that drink, but for you it is not expedient.

It takes great maturity to at last see this truth - and then to resign oneself to it without exacting judgment toward others. Our natural inclination is to subconsciously legislate, legislate, legislate what other believers can or cannot do. This is legalism 101 and it kills both growth and grace. Very often a young believer will have already heard from the Holy Spirit on a given topic, yet being too immature to heed (or even recognize) the instruction, he instead goes to a venerated teacher, leader, preacher, book for guidance. What they are usually doing is looking for a law: they need a point-blank commandment. Babies need to be spoonfed; adults, however, are able to moderate the food they ingest.

Everyone has heard from God on this topic, leading either to allowance or disallowance. If you are permitted, see that you

ur alcohol consumption does not pose an occasion to stumble another brother. For all things are legal to everyone in Christ, but all things certainly do not edify!

**Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/10/1 23:54**

Hi PW,

very well understood and very well articulated.

**Re: - posted by Koheleth, on: 2013/10/2 12:25**

Quote:

-----The Bible tells us that Jesus drank alcoholic wine.  
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He probably did imbibe relatively minor amounts. But he did not drink only wine. Stopping with the woman at the well is a good illustration. We must be aware that he drank water, something definitely less expensive and generally more available. Finally, the fact that Jesus drank wine in his culture does not mean there is a single good reason for a Christian to drink wine in our culture. Drinking wine is never done for the benefit of others. Paul says that "love for one's neighbor fulfills the Law". Drinking wine (in North America or Europe) can never be an act of love toward one's neighbor, neither is it a necessity.