

Twenty Reasons Why a Christian Should Not Drink Alcoholic Beverages

Proverbs 23:29-35

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Beer, wine, spirits—alcoholic beverages of every class—are just about everywhere: grocery, pharmacy, restaurant, ballpark, office party, gas station, in many homes, and the list goes on.
2. Portrayals of drinking, alcohol product placements, and alcohol advertising are widespread; television, film, music and music video, radio, billboard, magazine, newspapers, etc.
3. Drinking alcoholic beverages of every kind and in every quantity is commonplace. It is a common feature of social gatherings and business functions (“cash bar” at Fall Conference).
 - A. I grew up in a household where drinking alcohol was the norm.
 - B. I wish I had a dollar for every can of beer my mother and father sent me to the fridge to fetch for them; I would be a rich man!
 - C. I grew up thinking that drinking alcohol was normal; I never gave it a second thought; to me it was as much a rite of passage as going on your first date or getting your driver’s license.
 - D. I would like to have all the money I spent on alcoholic beverages during my youth.
 - E. I’m very thankful that God in His great providence allowed me to survive my “alcohol years”; without His loving care I surely would have been killed or killed someone else.
 - F. When I preach about the dangers of alcoholic beverages I, unfortunately, speak with much experience (**Isa. 5:22**: “Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink...”).
 - G. Due to my intimate and thorough knowledge I don’t have much patience with those who seek to justify and rationalize drinking alcohol with thin and specious arguments.
4. Due to its wide prevalence and acceptance in society; if you as a Christian reject alcohol many will think it strange you do not drink alcoholic beverages (1 Pet. 4:3-4).
 - A. They will criticize you as a “goody two shoes.”
 - B. They will do everything possible to get you to join in with them, or at least get you to voice approval for their drinking.
 - C. I’m here to tell you, especially the young people, don’t cave to the peer pressure!
 - D. Remember what Mattie Ross said to Rooster Cogburn in the movie *True Grit* when Rooster offered her a drink of whiskey? “I would not put a thief in my mouth to steal my brains!”
5. **3** Let’s look at some Scriptures that tell us why we shouldn’t drink alcohol.

II. DISCUSSION:

1. **4** Makes one a fool: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1).
 - A. Alcohol lowers one’s inhibitions; inhibitions act like a governor on our behavior.
 - B. Inhibitions are what keeps us from doing things we know are either stupid or wrong.
 - (1) Drinking alcohol causes the release of a chemical in our brain called dopamine.
 - (2) The more dopamine released by your brain makes you feel “good.”

(3) The problem with feeling “good” is that while drinking alcohol too much dopamine is released and you feel so “good” you can’t tell the difference between a good decision and a bad decision.

(4) Just a few out of character actions people do when they are drinking alcohol are:

- ☛ Risky sexual behavior,

From Wikipedia: “Beer goggles’ is a slang term for the phenomenon in which consumption of alcohol lowers sexual inhibitions to the point that very little or no discretion is used when approaching or choosing sexual partners. The term is often humorously applied when an individual is observed making, and later regretting, advances towards a partner who would be deemed unattractive or inappropriate when sober. The ‘beer goggles’ are considered to have distorted the “wearer’s’ vision, making unattractive people appear beautiful, or at least passably attractive.”

- ☛ Criminal behavior,

- ☛ Fighting and other violent behavior (Danny Britt),

- ☛ Absurd and inappropriate comments to friends, family, co-workers, etc.,

- ☛ Impaired motor function (e.g., blurred vision, staggering, loss of coordination),

- ☛ Other inappropriate behaviors (e.g., lampshade on head).

(5) Doubt this? Recall David’s dealings with Uriah?

(a) Why did David get Uriah to drink alcohol? 2 Sam. 11:13

(b) David knew if he lowered Uriah’s inhibitions with alcohol he had a chance to get Uriah to do something he normally would not do!

2. **5** Leads to poverty: “He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich” (Prov. 21:17). “For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty...” (Prov. 23:21).

A. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) excessive alcohol consumption costs the U.S. \$223.5 billion per year (2006).

B. Costs:

(1) Losses in workplace productivity (72%),

(2) Health care expenses (11%),

(3) Law enforcement and criminal justice expenses (9%),

(4) Motor vehicle crash costs (6%).

C. Costs on a more personal basis:

(1) A 12-pack of beer will cost you about \$10.

(2) A typical DUI arrest will cost you between \$5,000 and \$12,000:

(a) Court costs: \$500-\$1,500

(b) Lawyer fees: \$2,000-\$5,000

(c) Driver’s license reinstatement: \$250-\$500

(d) Increased insurance premiums: \$3,000-\$4,500 over three years

(e) Substance abuse counseling: \$1,200-\$2,000

(f) Loss of income (i.e., due to community service time): \$1,000-\$4,000

D. Then there are costs that can’t be measured in terms of dollars:

(1) A DUI will certainly cost you your reputation...how much is that worth to you?!

- (2) A DUI may cost you your job.
- (3) Alcohol may cost you your family.
- (4) Alcohol may cost you your freedom (i.e., jail time due to a DUI or other crime).
- (5) Alcohol may very well cost you your life or the life of someone you love.

E. You think words of the wise man don't apply to you?! If you do you're a fool!

3. **6** Produces woe: (also sorrow, contentions, babbling, wounds, redness of eyes; Prov. 23:29-30).

A. Question: "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?" (Prov. 23:29).

B. Answer: "Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine." (Prov. 23:30)

- (1) Did you ever see someone drunk? That is an appropriate description!
- (2) Plus, you get the bonus of a "hang-over" the next day!
- (3) This is why I finally quit drinking! The physical effects are really unpleasant when you're honest about it! I finally said, "Why am I doing this to myself?!"

C. Given these effects it's no wonder the Scripture says, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly" (Prov. 23:31). Why?

- (1) Alcohol is deceptive! It looks good!
- (2) But its effects are bad! **Prov. 23:32-35a**:

*"32 At the last it bites like a serpent,
And stings like a viper.*

*33 Your eyes will see strange things,
And your heart will utter perverse things.*

*34 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:*

*35 "They have struck me, but I was not hurt;
They have beaten me, but I did not feel it."*

- (3) Further, it is habit forming! **Prov. 23:35b**: "When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?"

D. So what is the gist of the wise man's advice concerning alcohol use? Stay far away from it—don't even look at it! Don't start down a road that will lead you to destruction!

4. **7** Bites and stings: "At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper." (Prov. 23:32).

A. Its effects are horrifyingly painful! It can literally kill you in a number of ways: Auto accident, other accidents (falls), acute alcohol poisoning, destroy your liver, etc.

B. It also inflicts mental anguish:

- (1) Mental anguish my mother inflicted on me with her drinking.
- (2) Mental anguish I inflicted upon myself with all the stupid things I did while drinking (I still think of some of them from time-to-time and it makes me mentally "cringe" at my stupidity!)
- (3) Do you want to carry around such mental "baggage" for the rest of your life?!

5. **8** Fills the mind with impure and perverse thoughts: "Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things." (Prov. 23:33).

- A. Remember “beer goggles”? A man who was a regular drinker said, “I’ve never been to bed with an ugly woman, but I’ve woke up with a few.”
 - B. I don’t mean to be crass, but that’s the truth! Alcohol lowers your inhibitions so you think and do some really stupid and bad things!
 - C. You will think about things that are opposite of what a Christian should be thinking about!
Phil. 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”
 - D. Remember Mattie Ross: “I would not put a thief in my mouth to steal my brains!”
 - E. How about you? Are you willing to put a thief in your mouth that will steal your brains?!
6. **9** Brings danger and insecurity: “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” (Prov. 23:34).
- A. Alcohol use is the single biggest cause of accidents in the home (e.g., falls, fires, etc.).
 - B. Alcohol use is by far the single most important factor in many traffic accidents in the U.S.
 - (1) Over 50% of all fatal crashes involving two or more cars involve alcohol.
 - (2) Over 65% of fatal single car crashes involve alcohol.
 - (3) Over 36% of all adult pedestrian accidents involve alcohol.
 - C. Very importantly you don’t have to be at or above the “legal limit” for blood alcohol to have a greatly increased risk of having an accident.
 - D. Are you prepared to kill, injure, or maim yourself, your loved ones or even a total stranger? If so, go ahead and drink...and become a fool!
7. **10** Makes one insensible and is habit-forming: “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. 23:35).
- A. Would you intentionally engage in something that made you unaware of danger? Unaware of someone seeking to do you harm?
 - B. A Christian should reject anything that causes him/her to be enslaved to a “bad habit”: **I Cor. 10:23:** “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.”
 - C. Can anyone honestly say that using alcohol is something that “edifies”?
8. **11** Woe is to them that drink: “Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them!” (Isa. 5:11).
- A. “Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink” (Isa. 5:22).
 - B. Woe was pronounced to the drunkards of Ephraim, who were overcome with wine, to be cast down and trodden under feet (Isa. 28:1-3).
 - C. “Woe” is translated “destruction” in the NLT: What can happen if one plays with fire?!
9. **12** Alcohol is the companion of carnal living: “And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die” (Isa. 22:13).
- A. Such is the attitude of iniquity (Isa. 22:14).

- B. Such an attitude, such a lifestyle is a “carnal” lifestyle; the “*carnal mind is enmity against God*” (Rom. 8:7).
- C. Only a fool would engage in something that makes him/her an enemy of God!
10. **13** Causes one to err and stumble: “...they also have erred through wine, and through intoxicating drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, they are swallowed up by wine, they are out of the way through intoxicating drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.” (Isa. 28:7).
- A. It never ceases to amaze me that so many will justify and rationalize drinking alcohol when the Bible paints such an accurate and ugly picture of its effects.
- B. Christians are to “*hunger and thirst for righteousness*” (Matt. 5:6); to “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*” (Matt. 6:33).
- C. Where does alcohol fit into hungering and thirsting for righteousness? How do alcoholic beverages help me “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*”?
11. **14** Brings foolish optimism and vain hope: “‘Come,’ one says, ‘I will bring wine, and we will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink; tomorrow will be as today, and much more abundant.’” (Isa. 56:12).
- A. The song (*Christ the Solid Rock*) rightly says our “hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”
- B. The “hope” brought on by alcohol is only a mirage; it is a product of faulty thinking brought on by the “buzz” alcohol gives us.
- C. We need to be sure to hold on to our true hope, because it is “*an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast*” (Heb. 6:20).
12. **15** Alcohol is joined with immorality and enslavement of the heart: “*Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart.*” (Hosea 4:11).
- A. Like I’ve already said, a Christian should reject anything that causes him/her to be enslaved to a “bad habit”: **1 Cor. 10:23**: “*All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.*”
- B. I’ve known many a man who, after drinking, was immediately on the prowl for some “action”; I think you know what I mean by “action.”
- C. In 1 Corinthians 6:18 Paul very bluntly says we are to “*Flee fornication*”; does alcohol help us do that?
13. **16** Brings shame: “*Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, pressing him to your bottle, even to make him drunk, that you may look on his nakedness! I 6 You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also — drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the LORD’s right hand will be turned against you, and utter shame will be on your glory.*” (Hab. 2:15-16).
- A. Nobody wants to bring shame on themselves, their parents, their family, the church.
- B. If we avoid alcohol, we’ve certainly not given Satan a tool to lead us into shame!
- C. Why would you use alcohol and give the devil the edge?! 1 Pet. 5:8
14. **17** We are to walk honestly: “*Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying*” (Rom. 13:13).
- A. Alcohol use does not promote honesty (explain).

- B. Living a lie is hard on one's conscience; always worried about getting "busted"!
- C. Living with a clean conscience before God and man is the way to sound mental health.

15. **18** Alcohol is a work of the flesh: (and such shall not inherit the kingdom of God).

1 Cor. 6:9-10: "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, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

Gal. 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 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."

A. "Well I just drink socially." "I just drink a glass of wine now and then."

B. Well, good for you!

(1) Do you know that most alcoholics only intended to drink just a little here and there?!

(2) You may never become an alcoholic, but what about those that are influenced by your example? **Matt. 18:6**: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

16. **19** Alcohol is a "be not": "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

A. Once again God's word makes it very clear that getting drunk is something a Christian should not do!

B. Oh! I forgot...you are so strong you can drink alcohol and there's not one sliver of danger of you even getting a little bit "tipsy"!

C. It must be nice to be so confident! **1 Cor. 10:12**: "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

17. **20** We are to be sober: "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night" (1 Thess. 5:6-7).

A. The notion that you can even drink one drink and remain "sober" is ludicrous!

B. You can't take even one drink and be 100% sober!

C. Go onto Youtube and search the "effects of alcohol [on driving]."

(1) Motor skills are impaired after only one drink!

(2) Only a fool thinks he can drink any alcohol and not be affected!

(3) Anytime you drink any amount of alcohol and drive you are putting lives in danger.

18. **21** Leads to other sins:

A. Consider:

(1) Noah (Gen. 9:20-26).

(2) Lot (Gen. 19:30-38; firstborn begat Moab; younger begat Ammon).

B. Remember David and Uriah? 2 Sam. 11:13

19. **22** We are to maintain self-control: I Cor. 9:27.

I Cor. 9:24-27: “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

- A. The word for “discipline” in v. 27 is the Greek word *hupopiazō*; it is the term the Greeks used to describe getting a black eye in a fight!
- B. Sounds like Paul was pretty serious about exercising self-control!
- C. Can you imagine Paul, after a long day of preaching, stopping off at the local “watering hole” and throwing back a few Budweisers to “unwind”?!
- D. We know alcohol’s effects are the very opposite of what one who is seeking self-control is looking for!

20. **23** Excess of wine and drinking parties are condemned:

I Pet. 4:3-4: “For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 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.”

- A. This passage condemns three levels of drinking alcohol:
 - (1) “drunkenness”: from *oinoflugia* which properly means “overflowing of wine”; out and out drunk.
 - (2) “revelries”: from *koomos* and means “feasting...a carousing or merrymaking after supper...drinking to the point where everyone is having a “good time.”
 - (3) “drinking parties”: from *potos* which means “gathered together for the purpose of drinking”; i.e., what we might describe as “social drinking.”
- B. Thus, the Bible condemns all forms of drinking alcoholic beverages—from full-fledged drunkenness to social drinking.

III. CONCLUSION: 24

- 1. Drinking alcohol trumps reason, distorts judgment, severs the connection between behavior and consequence, lays waste to marriages, friendships and careers, injures, costs lives and leaves children neglected.
- 2. As one writer observed:

“If alcohol’s a solvent, if it’s used for antifreeze, and mixed in deadly powder to abolish bugs and fleas; if it’s a disinfectant, as experiment confirms, so strong it will immobilize the hardiest of germs; if it will burn off carbon, and will deaden muscle aches, and operate efficiently as fluid for your brakes; if it’s a prime ingredient in making poison gas, and strong enough to eat the spots from copper, tin or brass; if it belongs in varnishes, in lacquer and shellac, and makes shoe polish hold its color, brown or tan or black; if it has heat and energy for laboratory lamps and chafing dishes, backyard grills and torches used in camps; if, used internally, results can be so very rough—then why would any normal person want to drink the stuff?”
- 3. Don’t be deceived! Alcohol is something a Christian should avoid at all cost!

Adapted from an article (*Why We Don’t Drink Alcoholic Beverages*) by John Isaac Edwards.