

Alcohol & Christmas

Dustin Logan / General

Seasonal / Pr 20:1; Proverbs 23:29–35

Our message will come from two passages this morning. I invite you to turn in your Bibles to [Proverbs 20:1](#) and [Proverbs 23:29-35](#)

Introduction

Harry and his wife were driving down the interstate when a police officer pulled them over and approached the vehicle.

The officer told Harry that he was doing 75 mph in a 55 mph zone and was going to be given a citation. Harry said, “Officer there’s no way I was doing 75! I was only going 65.” The wife said “Come on Harry! You know you were going 80!” He looked at her and turned his head.

Then the officer told Harry, “Sir, one of your brake lights is out in the back. I have to give you a ticket for that too.” “Really?” Harry said. “I didn’t know that was out!” His wife said, “Harry you’ve known that thing has been out for weeks now!” This time Harry gave his wife a very annoyed look.

“One more thing,” the officer said. “I notice you’re not wearing your seat belt.” Harry said, “yea thats because I took it off when you pulled me over.” The wife spoke up, “Harry you never wear your seat belt!” “Woman would you shut up? You’re not helping me here!!!!”

The officer asked the wife, “Ma’am does he always talk to you this way?” “No sir. Only when he’s been drinking!” - Jeff Schreve

It seems like for the past few weeks alcohol has been a subject of so many different conversations.

- When I was helping a guy who was having a drink he was genuinely curious and asked me about my view of alcohol.
- Someone else recently asked me about my perspective as a pastor. “Should those in leadership have liberty to drink alcohol, even if its just a glass of wine to sit down and take the edge off a little?”

After I shared my personal convictions with these individuals I took this subject to the study and learned that Christmas and alcohol actually have a very disturbing correlation. So as we begin our series of weeks preaching on the Christmas holidays, I now realize that this subject is more applicable than I ever imagined. Think about how many times Christmas has been destroyed for families because of alcohol. Families have been ripped apart - kids miss the joy of Christmas - because of the effects of alcohol. Listen to this observation from a recent study released just a couple of weeks ago in November 2022.

“The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States notes that a quarter of the \$49-billion-a-year distilled spirits industry’s profits come from the month between Thanksgiving and the New Year. So strong is the temptation to drink during holiday weekends, that even people who are moderate consumers of alcohol tend to increase their drinking rates.

After the Fourth of July, the period between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day (spiking on Thanksgiving itself, Christmas Eve, and New Year’s Eve) accounts for the most extreme cases of alcohol consumption.”¹

When you consider these statistics and think about your own experiences, it really is no secret that alcohol is a big part of most social activities year round and especially during this season.

Weddings, Engagement parties, birthday parties, Thanksgiving dinners, deer camp, Christmas parties, prom, Homecoming, all have alcohol as a centerpiece.

The truth is, most churches have never heard a pastor preach on this subject. Often when its discussed at church its a youth pastor reminding students about this subject during the week of Homecoming or Prom. In our church we affirm "The Church Covenant" that includes a line where members agree to neither use nor sell alcohol. Since 1886, as a denomination, Southern Baptists have unapologetically upheld the principle of total abstinence from alcohol.

Certainly a case could be presented to argue that a Christian has the liberty to have a drink.

We could take a look at the different words that are translated into the enligsh as "wine" or "strong drink". That study would reveal the different types of wine. For example, there is "yayin" in the Hebrew which referred to a fermented wine, aged, and for the purpose of intoxicating. There is another word which refers to the juice that was freshly pressed from fruit of the vine, another that was diluted with water. 2 parts water 1 part wine to purify the water to make it potable. Sometimes wine was used for medicinal purposes. Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake (1 Tim. 5:23)

We have to look at context when we deal with this subject and today we are considering a passage that forbids intoxication and drunkenness. No one can argue that the Bible allows for drunkenness. Rather, it forbids and condemns it entirely. The behavior of drunkenness is totally contrary to the nature of someone who has been born again.

While there are a series of practical questions one could ask themself before taking a drink, there is also more than enough caution in Scripture and history that bids the Christian to practice total abstinence.

I like what Dr. John McCallum said in one of his writings, "There's not enough alcohol in the Bible to taste it, but there's probably enough to at least get a whiff of it when you flip through the pages." And to that I add, there's enough of it that I've decided I want nothing to do with it.

TT - What I set out to do in this message is remind you why someone like myself and many others, might practice total abstinence from the use of alcoholic beverages. Now, before we get too far, you need to understand that I'm not mad

at you if you drink alcohol. If you do that's your decision. It doesn't mean that I don't love you or can't fellowship with you. I also don't see it as my responsibility to walk through the church parking lot looking through coolers, sorting through your refrigerator when I'm at your home visiting, or looking through your shopping cart when I see you at the store.

But because I do love you, it is my responsibility to hear your questions and to go to the Bible to share timeless and uncompromising truth even if it's not what is popular in our community and society around us. Solomon writes these words of wisdom after experiencing the difficulties of a life of running from God.

So what truths *do* the Proverbs set forth that caution us about alcohol? I need to make clear, this isn't just a message for the Christian, either. This is a universal truth that can easily be applied to the unbeliever as well as the Christian. Listen, alcohol affects us all the same. Alcohol doesn't intoxicate someone more or less because of their position in Christ. However, it certainly can damage the testimony of a Christian and with that the caution from Paul's writings to the Thessalonians as they were preparing for Jesus' imminent return in 1 Thessalonians 5:22
²² Abstain from all appearance of evil.

TT - 3 truths about alcohol:

1. Alcohol Has Proven Itself to be Deceptive - Proverbs 20:1

¹ Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging:
And whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Solomon deals with two ways alcohol has proven to deceive:
Think about the word deceive. This word is used 73 times in the KJV and not once is it in a positive light. We are warned to guard our hearts from being deceived, there are negative examples of consequences in Scripture of those who had been deceived, and even that Satan is known as the Deceiver. That is enough for me to choose to stay away from anything that could deceive me.

a. It has often led to bad decisions

The Proverbs are a series of wise sayings for those who will embrace them. The person who wants to live wisely and honorably. Many are applicable to both the Christian and the non-Christian. When he says, Wine is a mocker means that it is the complete opposite of everything wise that Solomon has suggested. You can want to make wise choices and good decisions but when you give yourself to alcohol you're setting yourself up for poor decision making.

Jeff Schreve told about two friends that were talking about drinking habits. The one said, well when I drink I drink a certain type of alcohol so that way people can't smell it on my breath.

Man, if I was you I'd want people to smell it on my breath." Why's that?" So that way they know you're drinking and not just stupid"

When people drink, they have often made decisions where afterwards they say, I can't believe I did that...I'll never do that again...

Noah - Genesis 9:20-21

Genesis 9:20–21

²⁰ And Noah began *to be* an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: ²¹ And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

Lot - Genesis 19:30-38

The two daughters of lot plotted to get him drunk and they did. They engaged in a physical relationship with him to ensure that they would have children.

Genesis 19:30–38

³⁰ And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. ³¹ And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: ³² Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. ³³ And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. ³⁴ And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may

preserve seed of our father. ³⁵ And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. ³⁶ Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. ³⁷ And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day. ³⁸ And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

Romans 13:13

¹³ Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

b. It has often led to sinful behavior

Think about how many irreversible decisions have been made when alcohol was in the mix. It often leads to irrational behavior. The text warns us that strong drink is a brawler.

Brawler - most fights that adults get involved in are mixed with alcohol; It's not uncommon to watch a western and the common theme at the saloon is a fight that turns into a brawl.

Alcohol seems to fuel immoral behavior, yelling and cursing, and unhealthy environments.

2. Alcohol Comes With a Great Price - Prov 23:29-35

Alcohol can ruin your life.

Ephesians 5:18 CSB

¹⁸ And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit:

That may be one reason Solomon advised leaders to abstain from it completely!

Proverbs 31:4–7

⁴ *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine;*

Nor for princes strong drink:

⁵ Lest they drink, and forget the law,

And pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

⁶ Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish,

And wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.

⁷ Let him drink, and forget his poverty,

And remember his misery no more.

Always promises a good time. Any advertisement you see is attractive to the eye. Athletes are now the poster promoters for your alcohol companies. They entice you to drink like the pros. The picture that is presented in reality is anything but pretty.

Over 14.5 million people aged 12 and over struggle with an alcohol use disorder in the United States

Over 60% of Americans admitted to having drunk alcohol in the past year, though most would not say they had an alcohol problem
alcohol plays a role in 40% of all *violent crimes* in the US.

The NCADD stats further reveal that alcohol is a factor in *37% of sexual assaults and rape cases, 15% of robberies, 28% of aggravated assaults, and 25.5% of simple assaults.*²

1. Suffering - Proverbs 23:29 "Who hath woe?"
2. Sorrow - Proverbs 23:29 "who hath sorrow?"
3. Strife - Proverbs 23:29 "who hath contentions?" Contentions
4. Slurring - Proverbs 23:29 "who hath babbling?"
5. Scars - Proverbs 23:29 "Who hath wounds without cause?" Wounds without cause - can't explain where the bruises and wounds came from
6. Soreness - Proverbs 23:29 "Who hath redness of eyes?"
7. Sickness - Proverbs 23:29 "who hath babbling?" booze is a poison and makes people sick - common experience is vomiting
8. Sex - Proverbs 23:33 "Thine eyes shall behold strange women,"
9. Stagger - Proverbs 23:34 "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."

10. Stupor - Proverbs 23:35 "They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; They have beaten me, and I felt it not:"

11. Seeking - Proverbs 23:35 "When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

We could go around the room and share about the various ways that alcohol has caused great harm in each of our families and friends lives.

Amber

Dad

Uncle Ben

Rachel Henley

Eric Justice

Parents enabling their kids with alcohol

Hospitals right now

Unexpected pregnancies

Some will argue that moderation must be the answer to keep all those bad things from happening. I agree with Dr. Rogers that "Moderation is not the cure for the liquor problem. Moderation is the cause of the liquor problem. Becoming an alcoholic does not begin with the last drink, it always begins with the first. Just leave it alone."

Adrian Rogers told about a man who entertained people with a rattlesnake with 14 rattlers on it. Would place it under a glass for people to walk by and observe. They would ew and aw. They gave their tip money and it paid well. It seemed worth it for sure. The man's young boy was in the house when the dad went outside. The snake managed to get passed the glass and struck the observing boy on the cheek. The dad heard the scream and ran to check on his boy. Instantly knowing what happened the dad cried out and chopped the snake into pieces. Without enough time to get the boy to the hospital and not having any medicine to reverse the venom, the dad took his knife and cut a chunk out of the boys cheek where he had been struck. The helpless dad tried to suck the venom out of the wound but as we he watched his sons face swell 3X the normal size and his eyes roll back, he saw his boy die without a remedy. The entertainer learned that day that while there were many days it paid for a good time, it cost him dearly. Listen, alcohol may promise a good time. It might seem make the Christmas party more lively. It might be that you can drink and you can handle it. You can get away

with driving after going out. All that may be true, but you can't control how your drinking could influence your family and it could cost you an irreversible payment.

Romans 14:14

¹⁴ I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

Romans 14:21

²¹ *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.

3. Christmas is about the Forgiveness of Jesus

1 Cor. 6:11 reminds us that those who drink can be saved from the bondage of it.

1 Corinthians 6:11

¹¹ And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Galatians 6:1

¹ Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Would you let the satisfying work of Jesus fill your heart today, instead of filling your belly with the empty promises of alcohol?

I was sharing with a man this week that there is nothing that is beyond the forgiveness of Jesus. If you are look

Closing:

I want to close with a list of questions that Dr. John McCallum offers for a means of wise evaluation:

Have you ever known...

A man to lose his job because he drank too little?

A doctor to advise his patient, “Your chances to survive this surgery would be better if you were a drinker”?

An employer seeking a person for a responsible position to say, “Give me a drinker every time”?

A wife to explain, “My husband would be the best man in the world if he would only drink more”?

A husband to say, “My wife would be a better mother to our children if she spent more time in bars”?

A defendant in a courtroom to seek acquittal with the plea, “If I had been drunk I never would have done it”?

An insurance company to offer reduced premiums to drinkers?

A police chief to advocate more consumption of alcohol as a means of reducing crime?

Or a Christian to say, “I’d be a better person and a more convincing witness for Jesus if I just drank more alcohol”?

The best Christmas gift you can give your family is an alcohol-free, Christ-centered Christmas.

— As a pastor or church leader, would I demand abstinence for church membership? No, I would not. Would I demand it for leadership? Absolutely! The principle of [Proverbs 31:4-5](#) is appropriately applied here, “It is not for Kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.”

Dustin Logan

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Morning Worship

¹ - <https://alcohol.org/statistics-information/holiday-binge-drinking/>

² <https://www.nationaltasc.org/alcohol-related-crimes-offenses/>