

Dear church family:

It is a strange day in which we live, a strange day indeed. It is bizarre to think that we need to speak to Christians regarding drinking liquor for social or pleasure purposes and thinking it is acceptable to God. After hearing countless testimonies of believers drinking and their pastors not publicly denouncing the use of liquor under the guise that it is *not* prohibited in the Bible, I have decided to follow the example of the few pastors that are willing to publically address the issue for the sake of God's church which He purchased with His own blood.

Taking into account we are in the last days of the Laodicean church period it should come as no surprise, but it still seems ridiculous that anyone walking with God would believe that anything except total abstinence from social drinking is wrong, considering the plethora of scriptural truth and well-known general statistics. It is sad to see that pastors have become "teachers" more concerned with the social contentment of their congregation than the preaching of the word of God. With the denial of a final scriptural authority our church-attending culture nationwide has slipped into the abyss of lukewarm spirituality (in this context, slipped into a bottle of spirits). Frankly speaking, in these days it is hard to distinguish between the so-called good Christian and a goal oriented purpose driven agnostic.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 plainly describes the characteristics of this self-centered age:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

- *The failure to endure sound doctrine*
- *A desire for teachers instead of preachers*
- *A refusal to listen to scriptural truth*
- *A sincere heartfelt belief in fantasy and fiction*

I will be thorough in the following testimony, but certainly do not expect any repentant attitudes to blossom from within the heart of those who "hold fast" to the euphoric pleasure produced from within the bottle of spirits they have come to enjoy. Anyone redeemed from such nonsense would not think of picking up the bottle again without considering the great peril at hand. For us, we have chosen rather to "let go" of liquor and "hold fast" the form of sound words from God's preserved book.

This report is for those Bible believing disciples who need to be encouraged to press forward in their walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, confident that the righteous decisions they have made to abstain from all manner of evil in these last days of apostasy are sound. After all, the Bible says that believers are to *be holy and without blame before him in love*.

In Christ alone,
Pastor Doug

Christians and the pleasure-driven social consumption of alcohol

By Pastor Doug Kilchenman

What are the well-known social statistics concerning the use and consumption of alcohol?

Answer: Alcohol is a *gateway* that leads to other vices, burdens and social problems:

- Alcohol is directly associated with immoral conduct, drunkenness, dirty or foul-language, illegal drugs, pornography, fornication, adultery, gambling, cheating, lying, striking, brawling, lawless behavior, general incontinence, foolish behavior, and uncleanness
- It leads to the use of other legal and illegal mind altering substances such as barbiturates, marijuana, cocaine, hallucinogens, methamphetamines, heroin, etc.
- Increase in personal property damage
- Major cause of adult and teenage injuries and fatalities
- Promotes and influences teenage sexual activity and aids in the increase of teenage pregnancies
- Increased auto insurance premiums
- Increased healthcare costs
- Increased medical insurance premiums
- Increase in criminal activity - theft, rape, robbery, assault, prostitution, etc.
- Promotes violence and sexual abuse toward women and children
- Increased public cost for social services
- Increased public cost for law enforcement
- Innumerable cases of alcoholism
- Increase in various types of mental illnesses
- Ruined lives and families through divorce, neglect, slothfulness, abuse - also leading to generational abuses and addictions
- Large profits for retailers and distributors allowing them to sell more and more thus keeping the dispensing and consumption wheels turning - \$\$
- Large tax revenues for national, state, and local governments - \$\$ – see Hab. 2:12

The simple definition of drunkenness is *an altered state of consciousness in which you will not or cannot maintain self-control*. Even under the best case scenario, if a "Christian drinker" is one of the miniscule few who does not get drunk or fall into the above listed immoral conducts, the vast majority of the population does! Just look at the above list and consider exactly what the "Christian drinker" is a *willing* part of.

Even if a "Christian drinker" is totally opposed to the above destructive things, those negatives still exist because of the purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages which they help fund. Frankly, all these things should cause even the lost godless world, with any sense of patriotism or care for community, to reconsider their purchase and consumption of alcohol and to stop drinking, period. Therefore it goes without saying that every born again blood-bought saint of God should abstain!

A faithful believer who walks with Jesus Christ and fears God will abstain from the social consumption of alcohol based solely upon the above stated facts - *Abstain from all appearance of evil - 1 Thess. 5:22.*

What does the Bible say about abstaining from the consumption of fermented liquor?

Answer: A whole lot and each reference is of particular interest concerning this subject...

There are "*all sorts of wine*" listed in the Bible - see Nehemiah 5:18. Non-fermented grape juice is called wine, new wine, blood of the grape, sweet wine, cluster, and the cup. Fermented liquor is also called wine, new wine, strong drink, liquor, etc. You had better pay attention in order to know which is which - not all "wine" is liquor, not all "wine" can intoxicate. Like modern day variations, fermented liquor in Bible times varied in strength and alcohol content. Therefore, not every occurrence of wine refers to fermented liquor, no matter what the original Greek or Hebrew supposedly *means*. The word wine simply comes from the word vine. (The word baptism does not always mean water; likewise wine does not always mean liquor). It is also important that not every use of wine in the Bible was for pleasure - it was also used for medicinal purposes.

Related terms used in the Bible are:

Wine - 231x's in 212 verses

New wine - 22x's in 18 verses

Sweet wine - 3x's in 3 verses

Good wine - 2x's in 1 verse

Vinegar - 13x's in 11 verses

Gall - 14x's in 14 verses

Strong drink - 22x's in 19 verses

Beer - 2x's in 2 verses (it means a well of water - beer is water with fermentation added)

Mixed wine - 1x in 1 verse (like today, some weaken the strength of liquor in order to drink more over an extended time period so they don't puke out too soon and to disguise the powerful and bitter taste of hard liquor).

Poison and venom - 1x in 1 verse

Blood of the grape - 1x in 1 verse

Fruit of the vine - 3x's in 3 verses

Cluster - 5x's in 5 verses

The cup - 37x's in 33 verses

A reading of every single verse is necessary in order to gain God's full perspective on this matter. After doing so, the case for total abstinence of social or pleasure drinking will be settled once and for all in the heart of a God fearing Bible believer - Job 28:28. This is not my opinion. Look up and read all the above references and see for yourself. Below are some important key biblical references in forming the solid case for total abstinence.

1- Genesis 2:17 - many Bible believers think it is possible that the tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) was a grape vine tree. It has been and is still considered by many modern horticulturalists to be a tree. The Scriptures clearly refer to the vine as a tree - see Numbers 6:4 and Ezekiel 15:2, 6. If this is true, it explains many scriptural types concerning wine and blood used throughout the Bible. For a child of God this certainly places it in the "shall not eat" or abstinence category, at the very least, from the beginning.

2- Genesis 9:20-26 - this is the first mention of wine in the Bible. It concerns the sin of Noah and his sons. This preacher of righteousness has his judgment impaired after consuming alcohol; trouble is the result. Here in this text alcohol is associated with drunkenness, nakedness, immorality, a tale-teller, shame, a curse, generational sin, servant-hood, sibling rivalry, family division, and death. When under the influence of alcohol we learn that the best of men become as the worst.

3- Genesis 19:30-38 - this reference concerns the sin of Lot with his daughters. He was called a just and righteous man in 2 Peter 2:7-8. We see that after drinking he committed a most heinous sexual sin with his own daughters and spawned races of people who would be the sworn enemy of God's chosen people throughout human history, even to this very day.

4- Genesis 27:25 - Isaac's ability to make a righteous judgment was certainly impaired due to the consumption of alcohol.

5- Genesis 40:11 - this clearly demonstrates that a cup-bearer or wine-taster was not always consuming alcoholic beverages. Here he took the grapes and crushed them in Pharaoh's cup. What did Pharaoh have in the cup? Grape-juice!

6- Leviticus 10:9 - this verse forbids and threatens death to anyone who has consumed strong drink and then enters into the tabernacle. No strong drink was allowed inside the tabernacle. The NT believer is called a tabernacle in 2 Cor. 5:1, 4 and 2 Peter 1:13-14.

7- Numbers 6:3 - the Nazarite was one of God's consecrated people. He was forbidden to consume strong drink. He was not even permitted to eat grapes from which the wine would come (see #1 above). Total abstinence was his duty. NT believers are called to be sanctified or set apart from this world and unto God. Is it really that much different today? (Although I do like grapes).

8- Deuteronomy 21:20 - this text deals with a stubborn and rebellious son who is a drunkard. His penalty under the law was death. If that seems too harsh a penalty then could it be our toleration has made our reasoning ability impaired? Frankly, I am thankful we don't obey this today in the NT time of grace, but if you don't like this OT law then, please, I urge you to take it up with God himself.

9- Deuteronomy 29:2-6 - here God's people were commanded to abstain from strong drink because it lessens their ability to know and practically walk daily with God. Is it really any different for the believer today?

10- Deuteronomy 32:3-4, 15, 18, 31-33, 37 - False religion is contrasted with the true - their rock verses our Rock. Note that the wine of false religion is of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is gall and bitter, it is poisonous and cruel. Fermented liquor goes hand-in-hand with false religion.

11- Judges 13:7, 14 - Fermented alcohol was forbidden to consume when the child of a miraculous birth was dwelling inside a pregnant woman. Every believer has the spirit of God/Jesus Christ dwelling inside them. We are also referred to as his bride! Think about it for a few years.

12- 1 Samuel 1:14-16 - in this text Eli accuses Hannah of being drunk, she denies it and explains that she is instead very sorrowful for the lack of childbirth. Could it be that Eli was used to seeing women drunk at the temple? His sons were often drunk. Israel was in terrible spiritual condition at this time in history so it is certainly feasible. Also, notice another very important point, Hannah equates drinking with the very work of the devil. Throughout church history believers always equate drinking with the work of the devil. Even lost men call booze "spirits."

13- 2 Samuel 11:13 - King David, in his lust for Uriah's wife Bathsheba, made an attempt to get him drunk so he would be sexually aroused and go into his wife. He did this to cover up the fact that he had made her pregnant in an adulterous affair. David knew full well the effects of alcohol and assumed Uriah would fall under its power. This is the testimony alcohol has whether a person is drunken or just slightly impaired.

14- 2 Samuel 13:28-29 - Absalom hated his brother Amnon. He planned a way to kill him. Alcohol was included in Amnon's ultimate death. Amnon was not wise for being impaired, it cost him his life. Alcohol makes you easy prey for enemy forces. I have seen this happen first hand at times in my past lost life. Alcohol has cost many men and women, boys and girls their lives too.

15- Esther 1:5-17 - Lost people cannot have a party without booze. They would not even consider getting together without liquor. Alcohol and mind impairing substances are the center of most every festivity. Flirting and fornication are usually present, and any lost person understands this to be a solid fact by experience. Bad choices and chaos are always the result. Why should a Christian be exposed to such a thing? What good can come of it?

16- Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived. He wrote thousands of proverbs and songs for the Lord. His wisdom exceeded the wisdom of all the children of the East, and all the wisdom of Egypt. We should heed the words of a man such as this. Please read carefully...

- *Prov. 9:2, 5 – She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table... Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.*

- *Prov. 20:1– Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*

- *Prov. 21:17 – He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.*

- *Prov. 23:29-32 – Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*

- *Prov. 31:4 – It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:*

17- Prov. 4:17 - Any amount of consumed alcohol promotes violent behavior in most people.

18- Proverbs 26:11 - Any redeemed drunkard or substance abuser knows full well not to return to that evil lifestyle. He knows the risks that are taken when returning. Foolish Christians that have never been trapped by this type of sin should wise up and beware not to consume the regurgitation of utter ruin.

19- Prov. 31:6 - The Bible is careful not to make a direct statement to forbid alcohol because it has medicinal purposes.

20- Ecclesiastes 2:3 - While writing from the perspective of a man relying on a philosophical relationship to the world and separated from God, Solomon equates wine to folly and observes it to see if it be of any good to men. I think we all know the answer to that!

21- Ecclesiastes 10:17 - this text reveals that even the land is blessed when the leaders abstain from drunkenness. Therefore only total abstinence is the ultimate safeguard.

22- Isaiah 5:11-12 - here it keeps the vile person awake at night to dwell in darkness and inflames their soul.

23- Isaiah 5:20-22 - this passage stands alone and says it all. Woe, woe, woe! It describes our present day perfectly. Directly connected to the deception of interchanging right with wrong is the consumption of liquor!

24- Isaiah 28:1 - it causes beauty to fade. Indeed! Most life-long drinkers over 40 or 50 tend to look much older.

25- Isaiah 28:7 - it causes error in vision and judgment. Of course it does!

26- Daniel 1:8 - Daniel, the man of God, a man that nothing vile is said about in the entire Bible, refuses to drink the fermented liquor "wine" of the Babylonians. A wise man purposes in his heart not only to abstain from drinking fermented liquor, but avoid consuming the steady diet of those who desire to ultimately change your identity.

27- Jeremiah 10:3a - While the context is not alcohol, the customs of people are still vain. Drinking is purely selfish and centers on self-gratification only. Unfortunately, from my lost past I understand that it is the "custom" of the world to consume alcohol socially for pleasure. I have never ever seen any good come out of it. Where I come from, the proverbial, "let's sit down and have a beer together" routine usually ends with problems. God's people have always been warned about the customs of this world and of alcohol and its consumption. Believers throughout the centuries were fully aware of such things. The Scriptures are clear, God's people are better off totally abstaining from fermented liquor of any kind.

28- Jeremiah 35:5-14 - here the prophet uses the Rechabites as examples to rebuke wayward Israel. We see that any parent who truly loves their child and who truly cares about their child's future, health and safety, will teach them to refuse the consumption of alcohol. Therefore, all wise parents should not let liquor pass through their lips either. Children of any age will follow the example of their "social drinking only" Christian parents, especially when it comes to sin and wrongdoing; it gives them plausible deniability and allows them to personally justify future poorer behavior.

29- Nahum 1:10 - concerning the judgment of this Gentile city the Bible records their drunkenness will be part of their undoing and destruction. This is still true today. For cities and their drunken inhabitants decline always follows where booze is prevalent. These are often disputed facts, but the proof is always in the clear and obvious results. Argue all you want, just look around.

30- Habakkuk 2:15 - When a lost or saved person drinks alcohol, it comes natural to compel others to do the same. It makes them feel better about their sin. It also allows the one offering drink to impose his will upon another (I.E. a man with a maid when her inhibitions are impaired). How could a professing believer justify any type of drinking in light of this passage?

31- Matthew 24:48-51 - The Lord's imminent return is the hope and prayer of all Christians. According to this passage and 1 John 3:1-3 these truths should have a purifying effect on every Christian. All who claim to be looking forward to that day are warned to abstain from consuming fermented liquor.

32- Matthew 26:27 - nowhere in the scripture does it say Jesus drank fermented liquor, absolutely nowhere! That is a fable made up by those who want to justify drinking booze. I urge you to sincerely pray and ask God every day to give you an answer concerning this matter of total abstinence. He will respond to you. You may not like His answer!

33- Luke 1:15 - A "Baptist" preacher, filled with the Holy Spirit, great in the sight of the Lord, did not consume alcohol. It is sad that many so-called preachers justify social drinking just to "have a beer" with the members of his congregation. What a foolish mistake, gain friends - chump God.

34- Luke 7:33 - the world accuses those that totally abstain from drinking liquor for the purpose of honoring God, of being a devil. Sadly, many embittered Christians still accuse us of this today!

35- Luke 21:34 - Likewise in Luke the same is true as in Mt. 24. If you are a Christian, drinking will leave you unprepared for the Lord's return. So, why drink at all? The pleasures of sin are enjoyable for a season, but the day shall pass and you will be ashamed.

36- Romans 13:13-14 - as if the verse number is not ominous enough (13:13)... social drinking is absolutely nothing more than a provision for the flesh. It must be put off in order to please God.

37- Romans 14:21 - This is straight forward and to the point. Why would you drink causing others to stumble, be offended, or made weak? You will have to reject what the Bible says in order to justify the mere consumption of alcohol, even in moderation. Total abstinence is right.

38- Romans 16:17 - believers that do not drink, and do not do so because of what the Bible says, have a responsibility to avoid fellowship with those so-called Christians that do drink. Thus saith the Lord.

39- 1 Cor. 8:12 - this entire chapter is dedicated to avoiding those things that cause a weaker brother to stumble. Any believer familiar with this chapter knows full well it applies to a host of things that can hurt a weaker brother or sister. Paul set a proper pattern to follow – to totally abstain from something that causes the weaker in the faith to fail. This is an open rebuke to all self-centered so-called Christians who think it is okay to drink booze of any kind. Any believer that causes his brother to stumble should be ashamed of themselves. I cannot even imagine what would have become of me if the Christian men around me, when I was just a new believer, drank liquor for social reasons. I can tell you firsthand that I might have ended up back in my old lifestyle and never became a productive citizen, a decent husband and father of four children, or a preacher of God's word, entrusted with the pastorate of the Bible Baptist Church of Dover – God's beautiful church in Tuscarawas County.

I pray to God that the lukewarm self-centered so-called Christians I know will wake up and remember their first love.

40- 1 Cor. 6:10-12 - Why would any believer drink alcohol when God saved your soul and washed you clean? Why put on such filthy rags? If a Christian does drink, liquor will bring them under its power - either through drunkenness, impairment, poor testimony, poor friendships with unfaithful Christians, or simply by excuse making, minimization and justification.

41- 1 Cor. 10:16, 21, 25 - pagan religions used blood and fermented liquor in their satanic worship services (alcohol to impair their followers). Many believers were saved out of that terrible past. God makes the overall point that his *communion cup* is the opposite. Therefore, it is the blood of the grape which is a type of the shed blood of Christ. If it were hard liquor it would violate God's established ordinance and make it the cup of devils - also see Deut. 32:33-37.

42- 1 Cor. 10:23 - same as the last listed scripture... while it is true that we live in the age of grace, and that there is no law against drinking in our nation or locale, it is still not expedient to consume alcohol for a believer. It does not spiritually edify anyone, especially the drinker. Don't ask yourself, "What is wrong with drinking?" We can justify anything if we have it in our heart to do it. Rather ask, "What is right with it?"

43- Galatians 5:21 - Why behave like those that are lost and hell bound?

44- Ephesians 5:18 - Believers are admonished not to get drunk. Again, even if a believer does not drink to get drunk, it is only a matter of time before he does. If any think otherwise they are a deceived fool.

45- 1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7 - pastors are specifically told to abstain from drinking wine.

46- 1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 2:3 - deacons and church members are blameless when avoiding the consumption of alcohol. Total abstinence is the only true safeguard for blamelessness. The "Christian drinker" says, *"It says not given to much wine... It means you can drink so long as it is not enough to make you drunk."* They are reading into the Bible things it does not say to feel better about wrong-doing. The entire context of those Scriptures tells the Bible believer that any good Christian does not give themselves over to such things. They were not being prevented from the use of wine, since it had many purposes in that day and age, but so as not to hurt their testimony, *"not given to much wine."* Let me say humbly that I know this firsthand - when a person walking with God reads those statements, the heathen's application of the wine never enters their mind. Even as a very young believer I never thought it meant you could drink as long as it was not much. Especially after being redeemed from that lifestyle, I personally never ever thought the Bible justified drinking liquor. After reading all the verses in the Bible, only those who wish to justify its consumption will use this passage to approve of their behavior.

47- 1 Thess. 5:22 - Many Christians say, *"I think it is wrong to get drunk, but I can still drink as long as I stay sober."* Talk is so cheap. It will only be a matter of time before you drink too much and get drunk (impaired) - for sure. No one can say otherwise, if they do they prove that liquor is a gateway to other foul sins - lying! Considering the fact that you have to buy it in public (unless you really get serious and manufacture it yourself, which testifies how great your terrible obsession has become), what does that say to those you purchase it from? Or what if another brother or lost person sees you buy it? What about your personal testimony? Do not be deceived, you are not walking with God while doing such things.

48- 1 Peter 4:3 - it is what lost people drink. It is what I drank when I was lost. It is what most lost people like to drink because of how it makes them feel. Believers are in the world but not of it.

49- Revelation 14:8; 17:2; 18:3 - here liquor is associated with the murderous rampage of the antichrist. Who wants to be associated with this?

50- Revelation 18:13 - here it is a part of the lustful merchandise of the antichrist's end-times Babylonian economy. There are enough things to be troubled with. Why add this to the list?

These are just 50+ biblical things to consider!

Why doesn't the Bible directly and absolutely prohibit the consumption or use of alcohol?

Answer: For medicinal purposes only:

Only in recent history can a person get a pill or an injection for anything that ails them, and we are all thankful that anesthesiology is a science today with trained professionals administering it.

Throughout the centuries when a person needed "medicine," it was herbs, a host of plants, fungus or tree bark, mixed vegetable or mineral oils of varying types, vinegar, or hard liquor.

For years people kept and used mineral oil for rashes and skin problems. They would ingest vegetable oils or other types of oils for cramps. They would use light vinegar for skeletal pains, stomach, intestinal and esophageal ailments. Diverse vinegars were used to disinfect or clean things – by the way, vinegar is old wine. Strong alcohol or hard liquor was an important medical antiseptic and anesthetic. This was what you had to work with and it did okay for many things, so folks kept this type of stuff around and considered it *medicine*.

How many TV westerns have you seen where the gunshot cowboy is taken to the local saloon and stretched out over a table or bar with a leather strap between his teeth? Before they cut him open he drinks a huge anesthetic swig or two (or three) of the same hooch they then poured out as antiseptic upon his open wound before extracting the lead bullet.

To this very day most all believers have liquor in their house, but it is not in the same basic form - we find it in a bottle of Nyquil or cough medicine for colds and coughing, and in a bottle of rubbing alcohol for basic antiseptic on cuts and scrapes, etc.

If God totally prohibited the use of wine (old wine - vinegar, or fermented alcohol) or strong drink, there would have been no medicine for His children! No vinegar and no antiseptic. Thousands, perhaps millions of believers would have died. Aren't you glad God loves his people and takes care of his own? These things can be used for bad, but we continue to use it for good.

- Proverbs 31:6 – *Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.* Cancer is a wicked disease, what could you give to a Christian in the end stages of such a painful thing? What about a *hysterical* grief stricken Christian mother who just lost a beloved child or husband? What about those believers who at times suffered with genuine mental lapses of madness, hysteria or severe depression? Today and throughout church history these things are real and present medical issues. To the early Christian hard liquor was medicine, nothing else.

- 1Timothy 5:23 – *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.* Every drunk in America knows this verse. Frankly, there is no evidence that Paul is referring to alcohol when writing to this young pastor. If he had stomach problems, and the ministry certainly gives a pastor occasion for it, vinegar was the go-to choice for centuries. I do not assume this medicine here was hard liquor. Even if it was liquor, a person that wants to justify drinking will see booze as okay everywhere in the Bible - see Proverbs 20:1. This was medicine, not a social drink.

What about when Jesus changed water into wine in John 2?

Answer: If it were fermented liquor Jesus was in violation of the OT scriptures:

A basic exposition of the marriage in Cana of Galilee:

Verses 1-2- This is not likely the third day of Jesus ministry, but rather the third day of the wedding as weddings at that time usually lasted more than one day. By the way, Jesus Christ and his disciples are still good guests to invite to every wedding!

The third day is significant to us as believers since it is the day Christ arose from the dead defeating sin and death. Everyone who receives Christ as their Saviour will receive a *new life* that also defeats sin and death. At the wedding the bride receives a brand new identity found in her husband's name. We too, as *Christians*, get a brand new identity found in our husband's name.

Verses 3-5- This wedding has run out of wine as it draws to a close. Mary approaches Jesus knowing full well he can remedy the problem. Jesus calls her "woman" to fend off later Roman Catholic fairytales that she was equal to Christ. He clearly reveals that there is a time schedule planned for his earthly mission. Jesus is referring to his DEATH, where his blood will be shed. Mary (the woman) speaks words of wisdom that should be heeded by every man, woman, boy and girl ... *whatsoever he saith unto you, do.*

Verse 6- A lot can be said about the use of these water pots at their wedding, but notice that their size and number is given. This is very interesting. A firkin is about 9 gallons, each pot contained 2-3 firkins apiece, and there were six water pots. If we average each at 2.5 firkins apiece that would come out to 135 gallons of wine!

If the wine was hard liquor, that would be enough to get your whole neighborhood totally smashed. It is naïve to think many guests present would not get stone drunk.

Verses 7-10- Jesus gave the order to fill the pots to the top with water. After that was obeyed he turned them into wine. This was no ordinary wine, it was wine *created supernaturally* by Jesus Christ himself. It would have been the best wine you ever tasted, as testified by the wedding coordinator. It was obviously near the end of the wedding since the best was saved for *last*.

Verse 11- There are seven miracles detailed in John's gospel, this is the first one. In the OT the first public miracle was water turned to blood, here water is turned to wine, a type of blood in scripture. These miracles were done so that you would believe Jesus Christ was the Son of God and that by believing a person could be saved - John 2:11; 20:30-31.

Therefore, we see that this miracle manifested Jesus' glory and testified of our common salvation. Consider the following: It centered on events at *wedding*; it was the *third day*; there was a *dry and thirsty* crowd present; *empty* pots needed *filled*; we are instructed to do *whatsoever Jesus says*; water in scripture is *equated to the word of God*; *the word of God was made flesh*; water is turned into *blood*; it is a *miracle*; it caused great *joy*.

Do you really think that Jesus turned water to fermented liquor? If he did, he was in violation of the OT and distorted the very purpose of the miracle. The truth is, who would want to serve their guests mere *water* at a wedding? Only a cheapskate! Christians that totally abstain from fermented liquor served their guests flavored drinks, punch, and non-fermented wine-like juices at all the weddings I have ever attended. We served non-alcoholic beverages at our wedding. It

was a joyful event, why would we want to ruin it with booze? This was not liquor; it was wine that was out of this world!

What about the use of fermented wine during a communion service?

Answer: Jesus did not drink or offer fermented liquor to his disciples; he drank of the fruit of the vine, which is grape-juice...

Therefore, grape-juice is the element offered during the observance of every communion ordinance in a God-honoring, biblical church service.

Even though not every biblical occurrence of the word "wine" is describing fermented liquor, just to be absolutely clear, God took extra care in the scriptural record concerning the ordinance of communion. There are NO references to the word "wine" in any of the Scriptures detailing the last supper and/or the establishment of communion, NOT ONE TIME - see Mt. 26:26-30; Mk. 12:14-31; Lk. 22:7-20; 1 Cor. 10:16, 21; 11:25-28. Only the term "fruit of the vine" (which is fresh squeezed grape-juice - Genesis 40:11) or the word "cup" is used. If fermented liquor was being consumed Jesus would have been in violation of the OT Scriptures. In addition, he would have been offering the "cup of devils" to commemorate his own blood sacrifice - Deut. 32:33-37; 1 Cor. 10:21.

What about a missionary in Spain or Germany where social drinking is a crucial part of the culture?

Answer: The Bible is true, and must be obeyed, no matter where you live

Since the Garden of Eden people have always tried to change what the Bible says to justify wrong or inappropriate behavior - see Genesis 3:1-6. Is Spain and Germany really our standard for social behavior? Is any country, including America our standard for pleasure or social behavior? In order to penetrate a culture there are certainly things a good missionary will have to do or personally change, ministry methods will have to be re-evaluated, but violating the Bible is not one of them. If a drinking Spaniard or German gets saved just preach the Bible to them; disciple them, love them, be patient with them no doubt, but let the Holy Spirit of God sort out the details in their heart and mind just like he does with you, me, and every believer everywhere. Should believers in the desert justify sprinkling for baptisms instead of full immersion just because there is a limited water supply? God will provide a way to obey his words! This is true today in the Sudan; I heard it directly from a missionary that was there.

There will be difficulties, there will be hardships, things will get shaken and stirred up (besides the wines they mix), but perhaps that is exactly what that particular culture needs, don't you think? After traveling around the world and witnessing other cultures, I have learned that culture and Bible do not mix anywhere, so what else is new? Talk about troubles with culture, talk about a hard field to reach, try being a missionary here in Tuscarawas County, Ohio! Being different by total abstinence of drinking liquor will open doors for you with lost people, not close them! I get sick and tired of hearing about Christians being "culturally relevant" while leaving the Bible at the back door. This lame argument has always been around:

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Ecc. 1:9

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Ecc. 1:14

Cave in to culture for the sake of reaching them? Baloney, these are simply *carnal* and *cowardly* Christians that are afraid to have the lost world mad at them, or think poorly of them. Maybe they are actually embarrassed of God, who knows? Jesus did not fit in, they killed him, remember? In this world we will have tribulation, but we can be of good cheer because Jesus has overcome the world!

Why are Christians today making this issue of social drinking a *public* topic of discussion?

Answer: Pride and an addiction to pleasure; lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God...

While I certainly do not advocate, in any way shape or form, the pleasure driven or social consumption of hard liquor, why make it a public matter? If a Christian really wants to disobey God and drink booze, why can't they keep it private and to themselves?

The only reasonable explanation is that they are self-centered and self-consumed - pride. Many drinking Christians I know are bitter or prideful people and do not like being told what to do. Others simply have one foot in the world and one foot in the Bible. Even others simply love to feed their faces and lust for pleasures. Take note, every so-called Christian that behaves this way has deep seated spiritual problems. I say this with confidence only because they are in clear violation of Scripture.

Sadly these spiritual problems will sooner or later be evidenced in their life, home, church and job. They will tend to do ultra-Christian-like things to appear ok. However, it is sinful human nature to flaunt in the open that which is wrong, it is nothing more than an attempt to exercise a rebellious spirit and minimize the wrong. We should truly feel sorry for these Christians because of the pain they will experience and cause. We can take no pleasure when the fruit of their poor choices are finally exposed.

Conclusion

If you are attending a church where the pastor or leaders openly advocate the consumption of fermented liquor for pleasure or social purposes under the guise that this issue of total abstinence is not in the Bible as long as you don't get drunk; you should seriously and prayerfully reconsider your membership in such a church. They are either deceived, dishonest, or both. Error begets error - there are most definitely other areas of blunder they are steeped in. The Bible says in Ephesians 5:11 *...And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*

Pay close attention to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Isaiah 5:20-22

Ponder the words of the apostle Paul:

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11

We will all do well to heed the words from the wisest man that ever lived:

*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging:
and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.
Proverbs 20:1*

*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God, and keep his commandments:
for this is the whole duty of man.
For God shall bring every work into judgment,
with every secret thing,
whether it be good, or whether it be evil.
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14*