

ALCOHOL

We are to assume nothing in this study: we must discover what the Bible says regarding the use of intoxicating beverages.

1. The destructive nature of alcohol.

1.1. The danger to pregnant women.

A new animal study shows alcohol consumption by pregnant or nursing mothers hinders brain development in the fetuses and newborns, possibly lowering intelligence or causing mental retardation.

"Drinking alcohol, particularly in the first three months of pregnancy, affected formation of brain proteins and ribonucleic acids in laboratory rats. Decreased formation of those vital elements may cause mental retardation common to infants with fatal alcohol syndrome," said Dr. Arun Rawat, a University of Toledo biochemist.

It is projected that somewhere around 20% of kids in various mental retardation centers may be victims of fetal alcohol syndrome.

Virtually all alcohol consumed by the mother, therefore, is being cycled through the developing fetus. The fetus does not remove alcohol--that is the responsibility of the mother's liver.

Consequently, the fetus is bathing in the intrauterine environment of alcohol. The higher and longer the concentration, the greater damage to the fetus. *Chattanooga News-Free Press*, 4/19/82.

1.2. The damage to productivity.

"The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the death rate from alcohol poisoning in the U.S.S.R. is 88 times that in America.

"Drinking is blamed for more than half of all fatal accidents in Russia. Leading American demographer, Murray Feshbach of Georgetown University's Center for Population Research, declares that alcoholism is close to being the number one enemy of life expectancy behind the Iron Curtain. As one bit of supporting evidence, he quotes V. Strazdins, chief narcotics expert of the Latvian Ministry of Health:

"In 1980, the sale of alcoholic beverages was 80% up from 1970 . . . In 1980, each inhabitant spent an average 226 rubles on alcoholic beverages, as much as the average inhabitant paid for cloth, clothing, underwear and socks and stockings, taken together . . .

"It is especially alarming that those who die are predominantly men in the most productive years of their working lives." *U.S. News & World Report*, 12/19/83

1.3. The destruction of our families.

A study of 4,400 boys and girls of Maryland public schools revealed a progression of substance abuse which led to the use of heroin and other drugs by a minority of those surveyed, alcohol being by far the most widely abused substance.

The survey asked the students about their use of cigarettes, liquor, marijuana, amphetamines, barbiturates, cocaine, hallucinogens and heroin, and found alcohol the most widely used substance.

"A solid majority of Americans view alcohol abuse as at least a potential problem affecting family life. From a list of 11 items, Americans say the most harmful to family life are alcohol abuse (named by 60%) and drug abuse (named by 59 percent).

Alcohol and drug abuse are viewed as 'most harmful' by all groups and in all regions of the nation.

"As many as one-fifth to one-fourth of the population report that liquor has been a cause of trouble in their homes. The percentage was far lower in the mid-seventies.

"And as many as one person in seven (14 percent) believe that alcohol and drug abuse are (from a list of 14 items) one of the three most important problems facing their families." George H. Gallup, Jr., "Fragmented Families: Alcoholism's Spreading Blight," *Christianity Today*, September 18, 1981, p.27.

"Alcohol and/or drug abuse is cited by one person in four (23 percent) as one of the three reasons most responsible for the high divorce rate in this country. Among persons with only a grade school background the figure soars to 39 percent, making the category of alcohol and/or drug abuse the problem cited second most often after 'people are too young when they marry.'" George H. Gallup, Jr., "Fragmented Families: Alcoholism's Spreading Blight," *Christianity Today*, September 18, 1981, p. 27.

2. The world's view of alcoholism.

Xenophon (c. 400 B.C.) quotes Socrates:

"If, my friends, when a war was coming upon us, we should wish to choose a man by whose exertions we might ourselves be preserved, and might gain mastery over our enemies, should we select one whom we knew to be unable to resist gluttony, or wine, or sensuality? Or if, at the close of life, we should wish to commit to any one the guardianship of our sons, or the care of our unmarried daughters, or the preservation of our property, should we think an intemperate man worthy of confidence for such purposes? Should we trust to an intemperate slave our herds, our granaries, or the superintendence of our agriculture?"

"Is it not the duty of every man to consider that temperance is the foundation of every virtue, and to establish the observance of it in his mind before all things? Who that is a slave to pleasure is not in an ill condition both as to body and mind? It appears to me, by Juno, that a freeman ought to pray that he may never meet with such a character, and that he who is a slave to pleasure should pray to the gods that he may find well-disposed masters; for by such means only can a man of that sort be saved."

Galen (c. A.D. 103-200)

"Does not wine act like a tyrant, forbidding the mind to think as carefully and to act as correctly as it formerly did, and was it not for this reason that Plato tells us to avoid it as an enemy? For if it once gets into the body, it prevents the steersman from handling the ship's rudder properly, and the soldiers from keeping order in the ranks; it makes judges vacillate when they ought to be just; it makes presidents rule badly and impose unsound ordinances. Plato considers, in fact, that wine fills the whole body, and especially the head, with hot fumes, thus causing immoderate motion in the appetitive and irascible parts of the mind, and hasty judgment in the rational part."

Thomas A. Edison (1847-1931): "I have better use for my brain than to poison it with alcohol. To put alcohol in the human brain is like putting sand in the bearings of an engine."

Chaucer (1340-1400) "The Pardoner's Tale" (from *The Canterbury Tales*):

For drunkenness is very sepulture
Of manne's wit and his discretion.

Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), *Gnomologia*: "Wine hath drowned more men than the sea."

Samuel Butler (1612-1680), *Satire on Drunkenness*:

Tis pity Wine, which Nature meant
To Man in kindness to present,
Should (like the Cyder-tree in Eden,
Which only grew to be forbidden)
No sooner come to be enjoy'd
But th'Owner's fatally destroy'd;
And Man himself with Wine possest
More savage than the wildest Beast,
Supplies his loss of Wit and Sense
With Barbarousness and Insolence;
Believes himself, the less he's able,
The more heroic and formidable;
Lays by his Reason in his Bowls,
As Turks are said to do their Souls,
Until it has so often been
Shut out of its Lodging and let in,
At length it never can attain
To find the right Way back again;
And that which Nature did intend
T'enlarge his Life, perverts t' its End.
So Noah, when he had anchor'd safe on
The mountain's Top, his lofty Haven,
And all the Passengers he bore

Were on the New World set ashore,
He made it then his chief Design
To plant and propagate a Vine
Which since has overwhelm'd and drown'd
Far greater Numbers, on dry Ground,
Of wretched Mankind, one by one,
Than all the Flood before had done.

Soame Jenyns (18thc.), humorous poem:

Ever let my lovely pupils fear
To chill their mantling blood with cold small beer;
Destruction lurks within the poisonous dose,
A fatal fever or a pimpled nose.

Is drunkenness a sin? Can you prove it?

Is social drinking a sin? Can you prove it?

Do alcoholic beverages have a place in the life of the believer?

Let us first deal with the issue of drunkenness; then with the issue of social drinking.

2.1. Is alcoholism a disease?

"The alcoholic drinks to escape anxiety:

"It calms my nerves.'

"It helps me unwind after a hard day.'

"My problems get to me--a drink helps me cope.'

"He also drinks in an effort to gain control over himself and his environment. The liquor industry capitalizes on this need by showing he-man models, athletes, successful men, and trendy women surrounded by admiring males.

"Studies indicate about 2 percent of alcoholics are on skid row. Most are in offices, factories, homes--and behind the wheels of cars." John Kolenburg with Kay Oliver Lewis, "Helping the Alcoholic in Your Church," *Moody Monthly*, November 1981, p. 11.

"Both medical doctors and insurance companies accept alcoholism as a disease because it is predictable, progressive, and treatable. The disease concept of alcoholism helps both the alcoholic and his or her family to seek treatment.

"Just as no one knows why some people become diabetics, so no one knows why some can drink with control and others become alcoholics. A diabetic doesn't choose diabetes, nor does the drinker choose alcoholism.

"But he continues choosing to drink until he becomes compulsive. At this point the disease grips him.

"Views of alcoholism go toward two extremes. Those who claim alcoholism is strictly a disease deny that the alcoholic is responsible.

"Just as the diabetic has a responsibility to take his medication and obey dietary restrictions, so the alcoholic has the responsibility to avoid a drink. All the blame cannot be put on the disease.

"Some take the opposite extreme: Alcoholism is strictly a moral problem, a black-and-white case of sin. The alcoholic bears all the responsibility. But this view does not reckon with the physiology of chemical addiction, the psychology of advertising, or the pull of peer pressure.

"I believe alcoholism is both a disease and a moral problem. The alcoholic has full responsibility to avoid the next drink, to rectify past mistakes, to confess to God and to others.

"Anyone who drinks runs the risk of alcoholism. Those who abstain can avoid the possibility." John Kolenburg with Kay Oliver Lewis, "Helping the Alcoholic in Your Home," *Moody Monthly*, November 1981, p. 15.

"The dominant theory in the field of alcoholism is the disease concept. It emerged in various forms before World War II, when in 1933 the repeal of Prohibition made social drinking legal and socially respectable. The disease concept borrows from various disciplines.

"To some, the theory that alcoholism is a disease points to the fact that there are people who seem able to drink liquor moderately over a lifetime, whereas there are others who drink and become uncontrollably addicted. To others, the theory provides a ray of hope that medical science will discover some cure for alcoholism, perhaps a medicine or pill, that will allow the alcoholic to drink moderately without continually craving more. To still others, this concept merely points out the damaging results physically of heavy drinking. In short, the disease theory is not well defined, but it must be reckoned with because it dominates the field of alcoholism treatment and research in the U.S.

"The American Association for the Cure of Inebriates declared drunkenness a disease in the nineteenth century. The American Medical Association voted approval of the disease concept of alcoholism in the 1950s. One of the primary goals of many alcoholism groups, including the federal government's National Institute for Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse, is to advance the concept that alcoholism is a disease.

"In this case, applying the term disease is somewhat arbitrary, because the definition of disease has widened in recent years. According to the American Medical Association, it is 'a deviation from a state of health.' E. M. Jellinek, in his influential book, *The Disease Concept of Alcoholism*, says of the disease label: 'A disease is what

the medical profession recognizes as such." Russ Pulliam, "Alcoholism: Sin or Sickness?" *Christianity Today*, September 18, 1981, p.23.

2.2. How does addiction develop?

Not everyone who drinks--not even every drunk--is an alcoholic. The drinker can choose to quit drinking. The alcoholic cannot. The drinker enjoys his drink, but it's not important. For the alcoholic, drinking is essential.

Most alcoholics began as normal drinkers, gradually coming to the point of no return: the point of compulsion. Unlike the drinker, the alcoholic cannot drink less. Once he has the first drink, he drinks excessively. He likes how the alcohol affects him.

Before the victim realizes what is happening, alcohol becomes an obsession. Life becomes a series of opportunities to obtain liquor so he can cope with life.

The World Health Organization defines alcoholics as: "Those excessive drinkers whose dependence on alcohol has attained such a degree that it shows a noticeable mental disturbance or an interference with their bodily or mental health, their interpersonal relations and their smooth economic and social functioning."

Alcoholism begins with occasional relief drinking until the drinker constantly needs its relief. Soon, he urgently wants his first drink, then feels guilt. He can't discuss the problem.

"Memory blackouts begin, then increase infrequency. Men often develop various degrees of aggressive behavior; some women act sensual.

"Before long, the alcoholic develops work and money problems. He denies he has a problem by blaming others and rationalizing his drinking.

"Entering the crucial phase, the alcoholic avoids calories, he feels warm and full, and therefore neglects proper food. Malnutrition sets in.

"His descent accelerates, and physical deterioration becomes more pronounced. Then he begins drinking with inferiors, has undefinable fears, and vague spiritual desires.

"He's hit his bottom and will stay at the bottom until he admits his defeat and need for help." John Kolenburg with Kay Oliver Lewis, "Helping the Alcoholic in Your Home," *Moody Monthly*, November 1981, p. 16.

2.3. The biblical view of alcohol addiction:

Proverbs 23:20-35: progress of addiction:

20 Do not mix with winebibbers,

Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;

21 For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,

And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.
22 Listen to your father who begot you,
And do not despise your mother when she is old.
23 Buy the truth, and do not sell it,
Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.

29 Who has woe?
Who has sorrow?
Who has contentions?
Who has complaints?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?

30 Those who linger long at the wine,
Those who go in search of mixed wine.
31 Do not look on the wine when it is red,
When it sparkles in the cup,
When it swirls around smoothly;

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.
When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?"

2.4. Moderation vs. abstinence in churches

"Research shows that people from religious backgrounds where drinking was forbidden are more likely to become problem drinkers once they experiment with alcohol than those who come from a background where alcohol was acceptable in moderation and only its abuse condemned.

"At a conference at the University of Georgia for people involved in the treatment of abusers of alcohol and other drugs, it was reported that while an estimated 95 percent of the Jewish population occasionally drink alcoholic beverages, only 5 percent ever have problems controlling its use. Other religious groups, including Episcopalians and Presbyterians, were also mentioned. While these groups represented a relatively high percent of alcohol users, the percentage of those who became habitual abusers was low. The situation was different for the Baptist community. There the use of alcohol has traditionally been forbidden. Though only 48 percent used alcohol at all, an alarming 18 percent of those got into trouble. Their reason was probably guilt: Baptists and others from similar backgrounds were more likely to get into difficulty simply because they suffered more guilt when they used alcohol." Roy E. Hatfield, "Closet Alcoholics in the Church: A Conflict Between Values and Behavior," *Christianity Today*, September 18, 1981, p. 28.

Why does this happen?

Alcoholism: conflict: values Vs. behavior

"Vernon E. Johnson, well-known author of *I'll Quit Tomorrow* and other articles on alcoholism, states that 'the most startling observation has been that alcoholism cannot exist unless there is a conflict between the values and the behavior of the drinker.'

"The Christian who is attempting to ignore the restraints of his background teachings and his own moral code fits this description. Alcohol serves rather well for a time as a lubricant to ease problems and conflicts at work and at home. His or her drinking progresses, bringing about an adjustment to a lifestyle in total conflict with the individual's deep-seated convictions." Roy E. Hatfield, "Closet Alcoholics in the Church: A Conflict Between Values and Behavior," *Christianity Today*, September 18, 1981, p. 28.

3. The church's view of alcohol.

3.1. The negative side.

The church, as with many other social issues that have been discovered inside the church, has been in denial for too long. If the church is made up of people who have been saved out of the world by God's grace alone, apart from any personal merit, then why are we so quick to deny that we have all of the problems in the church that we see outside the church?

"Church should be a place where an alcoholic can admit problems and find help. But too often it isn't.

"I deal frequently with church members--even pastors--who desperately try to hide their drinking problem lest they be banished from the fellowship. I would like to assure them that their worries are groundless, that a trusted brother or sister in Christ would encourage the drinker in his climb toward recovery. But I can't. When the news leaks out to the church body, the reaction too often is devastating.

"Surprisingly, Michelle called me and really wanted help. We worked together in counseling and recovery, guiding her back to fellowship with God. Today she's learning to deal with pressure without using alcohol.

"But she received no support from her church. The pastor seldom contacted her after the traumatic confrontation. Not one elder spoke with her. Not one family invited her home. No one called.

A few women told her, 'We're praying for you.' But Michelle was abandoned to work out her problems alone." John Kolenburg with Kay Oliver Lewis, "Helping the Alcoholic in Your Church," *Moody Monthly*, November 1981, pp. 10-11.

It is time for the church to end its denial and start being the hospital God designed it to be.

3.2. The positive side.

There is not much of a positive side to drinking within the conservative church. Among main-line and liberal churches, moderate alcohol consumption is tolerated.

See item 4.1 and 4.2 below.

4. The biblical teachings regarding drinking.

4.1. The nature of drinking among God's people.

4.1.1. The words used.

Yayin: --this is the usual word for "wine" and is found 141 times in Masoretic text. Used (e.g., Gen. 9:24) metonymously for intoxication.

Hemer: so called from its fermenting. Word means foaming.

Deut. 32:14.

Tirosh: from a root word (*yaresh*) meaning to take hold of (due to the fact that, in intoxicating, it takes possession of the brain). This word also used to refer to the juice while still within the grape on the vine (Isaiah 65:8). *Tirosh* came to refer to wine that was not fully fermented, yet still containing intoxicating properties.

Shekhar: Translated strong drink; appears to mean intoxicating drink of any kind, including wine (cf. Numbers 28:7). This term did not refer only to distilled spirits; its primary reference was to fermented drink.

There are several words & compounds of words referring to mixed or sweet wine; such wine being made artificially more potent due to admixing older, more highly fermented wine to new wine, or by adding honey or similar additives to increase the sugar content and thereby make the wine stronger, or by boiling it down in volume, or by adding opiates or other strong drugs to the wine.

4.1.2. Some references from the Bible.

In Old Testament, wine was drunk undiluted, and naturally fermented.

In New Testament, wine was highly diluted with water. (Probably three to one.)

Unlikely that any wine mentioned in Bible was unfermented since fermentation began in that warm climate almost immediately upon pressing the grapes.

Genesis 9:20-21

20 And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard.

21 Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and he became uncovered in his tent.

It was the wine that provided the environment that caused Noah to lower his moral defenses.

Genesis 19:32-33:

32 "Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father."

33 So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

Wicked people will use alcohol to entrap the righteous in sin; the wine caused Lot to lower his moral defenses to such a point that he was unaware of the approach of sin, and, when it came, he was unable to defend himself against it.

Genesis 27:25: Jacob brought Isaac wine along with the meat; the wine may have been the reason that Isaac was so unable to identify his son as being Jacob.

Genesis 27:28: An abundance of grain and new wine was a blessing from God.

Exodus 29:40: Wine (in Numbers 28:7 "strong drink" *shekhar*) was used as a libation before the Lord; it was poured out about the altar.

Leviticus 10:9 Aaronic priests were forbidden to drink wine or strong drink when they came to the tent of meeting. The purpose is found in verse 10: "that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,"

Numbers 6:3 Nazirite was forbidden any fruit of the vine during the days of his vow. This was to symbolize the holiness in which he had vowed to walk. Numbers 6:20--after the completion of the vow, the Nazirite could drink wine.

Numbers 18:8-19: The offerings and sacrifices of Israel were not all consumed by sacrifice; that which remained, including the libation offering that was not poured out, belonged to the sons of Levi.

Deuteronomy 29:6: Israel did not drink wine or strong drink during their 40 years of wandering, in order that "you may know that I am the LORD your God." In other words, they did not eat what their own hands prepared, but what God had miraculously provided: manna, quail, and water from the rock.

Judges 9:13 Abimelech, the son of Gideon, tells a parable in which he refers to wine as that "which cheers God and men."

Judges 13:14 "She should not eat anything that comes from the vine nor drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; let her observe all that I commanded."

Manoah's wife forbidden wine while Samson was in the womb: the fetus is affected by that which the mother eats or drinks.

1 Sam. 1:14

The intensity of Hannah's prayer made Eli think that she was drunk. It was a disgrace for someone to be intoxicated.

1 Sam. 25:36-37

The main characteristic of Nabal ("fool") seen in the story of Nabal and Abigail is that he was a drunkard.

2 Sam. 13:28: And Absalom commanded his servants, saying, " See now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then put him to death. Do not fear; have not I myself commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant."

Esther 1:10ff.

King Ahasuerus placed himself in a dilemma with his wife, Queen Vashti, due to his drunken demands.

Proverbs 3:9-10, God's blessing would produce vats filled with new wine. New wine was wine at its first fermentation, having only the slightest alcoholic content.

Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise."

Proverbs 21:17, lovers of pleasure are known for their love of wine.

4.1.3. The problems equated with drinking for the Christian.

"Research shows that people from religious backgrounds where drinking was forbidden are more likely to become problem drinkers once they experiment with alcohol than those who come from a background where alcohol was acceptable in moderation and only its abuse condemned.

"At a conference at the University of Georgia for people involved in the treatment of abusers of alcohol and other drugs, it was reported that while an estimated 95 percent of the Jewish population occasionally drink alcoholic beverages, only 5 percent ever have problems controlling its use. Other religious groups, including Episcopalians and Presbyterians, were also mentioned. While these groups represented a relatively high percent of alcohol users, the percentage of those who became habitual abusers was low. The situation was different for the Baptist community. There the use of alcohol has traditionally been forbidden. Though only 48 percent used alcohol at all, an alarming 18 percent of those got into trouble. Their reason was probably guilt: Baptists and others from similar backgrounds were more likely to get into difficulty simply because they suffered more guilt when they used alcohol." Roy E. Hatfield, "Closet Alcoholics in the Church: A Conflict Between Values and Behavior," *Christianity Today*, September 18, 1981, p. 28.

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"The Christian who is attempting to ignore the restraints of his background teachings and his own moral code fits this description. Alcohol serves rather well for a time as a lubricant to ease problems and conflicts at work and at home. His or her drinking progresses, bringing about an adjustment to a lifestyle in total conflict with the individual's deep-seated convictions." Roy E. Hatfield, "Closet Alcoholics in the Church: A Conflict Between Values and Behavior," *Christianity Today*, September 18, 1981, p. 28.

4.2. The beneficial uses of wine.

1 Timothy 5:23: Timothy is instructed by Paul to take a little wine for the sake of his recurring stomach ailments. Knowing the condition of public water supplies, and the fact that Jews watered their wine, the instruction is not necessarily a free access to alcoholic beverages.

Proverbs 31:6, 7:

"Give strong to him who is perishing,
And wine to those who are bitter of heart.
Let him drink and forget his poverty,
And remember his misery no more."

Mark 15:23: Jesus was offered wine on the Cross to ease His suffering.

4.3. The destructive uses of wine.

Genesis 9:20-24:

And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him."

Genesis 19:32, 33:

32 "Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father."
33 So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

The two sons born by this incest were Moab and Ben-ammi, heads of two nations which were, throughout Old Testament history, enemies of Israel.

4.4. The restrictions on the use of wine.

4.4.1. Israel was forbidden wine or strong drink so that they might know that the LORD was their God.

Deuteronomy 29:5, 6:

5 "And I [God] have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet.
6 "You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or similar drink; that you may know that I am the LORD your God."

4.4.2. Levitical priesthood forbidden wine or strong drink when they enter the tabernacle to teach between the clean and unclean, the holy and the profane. Wine dulls the ability to discern.

Leviticus 10:8-11:

8 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying:

- 9 "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations,
- 10 that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,
- 11 and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses."

How does this apply to Christians whose bodies are the temple of God, and who are a nation of priests?

4.4.3. Elders are commanded not to be "beside the wine": 1 Timothy 3:3.

4.4.4. Deacons are not be men who "go towards the wine": 1 Timothy 3:8.

5. The biblical principles regarding drinking.

5.1. Alcohol takes away understanding.

Hosea 4:11, Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart.

Proverbs 20:1:

Wine is a mocker,
Intoxicating drink arouses brawling,
And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

5.2. We are to be above reproach.

Titus 2:6-8:

- 6 Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded,
7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,
8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.
1 Timothy 3:3: "[A bishop is one who is] not given to wine"

5.3. We may cause others to stumble.

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

5.4. It is not wise.

Proverbs 20:1:

Wine is a mocker,
Intoxicating drink arouses brawling,
And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

Ephesians 5:15-18:

- 15 see then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,
16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit."

5.5. Wine causes problems.

Proverbs 23:29, 30:

"Who has woe?
Who has sorrow?
Who has contentions?
Who has complaints?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?
Those who linger long at the wine,
Those who go in search of mixed wine."

Hosea 4:11: "Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart."

5.6. We are not to be associated with drinkers.

Proverbs 23:20, 21:

- 20 Do not mix with winebibbers,
Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;
21 For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,
And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.

5.7. A commitment to serve the Lord requires total abstinence.

Leviticus 10:9-11:

- 9 "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations,
10 "that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,
11 "and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.

To discern between the holy and unholy, the clean and unclean, the levitical priest had to be stone sober; we, not only the temples of God but also a royal priesthood, can accept no less a responsibility.

Numbers 6:2, 3: Nazirites were forbidden any fruit of the vine.

Proverbs 31:4, 5:

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
It is not for kings to drink wine,
Nor for princes intoxicating drink;
Lest they drink and forget the law,
And pervert the justice of all the afflicted."

5.8. We are not to partake of wine when it is at a certain stage of fermentation.

Proverbs 23:31:

Do not look on the wine when it is red,
When it sparkles in the cup,
When it swirls around smoothly."

5.9. We are not to associate with believers who are drinkers or occasions which promote it.

1 Corinthians 6:9, 10:

9 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.

1 Peter 4:1-4:

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for
he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will
of God.
3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles -- when we walked
in licentiousness, 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.

5.10. When drinking becomes a habit of life, it reveals an unsaved condition.

Galatians 5:19-21:

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness,
licentiousness,
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.

5.11. Being drunk is the opposite of being filled with the Spirit and they are mutually exclusive.

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

5.12. Wine is no longer needed as a medicine.

1 Timothy 5:23: No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

It is clear that the Bible forbids drunkenness: this is sufficient for us to avoid that state.

5.13. But what about social drinking?

What is your motivation for being a social drinker?

Can you "say grace" with a clear conscience before drinking?

Are your mental capacities completely unimpaired?

Is the drink providing a state of being that God is to provide (e.g., rest, peace, contentment, deliverance)?

Can you be Spirit-filled after even one drink?

6. But what are we to do?

6.1. Parental responsibility.

- Parents must pay heed to their own drinking habits;
- Parents must set the proper example of pursuing higher and more lasting values than those embodied in drug dependency;
- Parents must be aware of their children's drinking habits;
- And, above all, parents must talk to their children about drinking and the potential dangers. George H. Gallup, Jr., "Fragmented Families: Alcoholism's Spreading Blight," *Christianity Today*, September 18, 1981, p. 27.

6.2. Spousal responsibility.

- Try to remain calm, unemotional, and factually honest in speaking about your spouse's behavior and its day-to-day consequences.
- Realize you are not the reason for his problem.
- Do not lie for him or in any other way cover up.

- If the wife threatens to leave, she must have a fully implemented plan in place and she must carry through.
- Let the person with the problem know that you are reading and learning about alcohol and other drug abuse as well as attending an appropriate support group.
- Discuss the situation in your home with someone you trust.
- Establish and maintain a healthy atmosphere in the home, and try to include the alcohol/drug abuser in family life.
- Do not attempt to punish, threaten, bribe, or preach.
- Do not be a martyr to co-dependency.
- Do not make excuses for the alcoholic or shield them from the realistic consequences of his behavior. In other words, don't rescue him from the full pain of his addiction.
- Do not hide or dump bottles, throw out drugs, he can easily get more.
- Do not argue with him when he is impaired or high.
- Do not feel guilty or responsible for another's behavior. Keep the focus on him and his alcohol addiction even when he might try to hand you the problem.
- Do not shame him.
 - "Don't you love me?" This communicates a lack of understanding, intensifies the guilt, and further isolates him.
 - "Why don't you be a man?" This intensifies the feeling of inadequacy and focuses on the willpower which has been already lost.
 - "Promise me you won't drink again!" He'll make promises, but he will not keep them. These failures will only further dishearten you and reinforce his feelings of guilt and self contempt.

6.3. Instructions for pastors and other counselors regarding alcohol usage.

- Encourage parents to discuss drinking problems with their children;
- Attend a good workshop on alcohol abuse;

- Speak openly about the subject from the pulpit and in counseling;
- Establish a team program with parents so the church and family can reinforce one another;
- Stress religious reasons for abstinence or moderation.
- Do not make decisions for the family (you don't have to live with the results). Simply be an interpreter of what is happening and let the non-addicted members of the family choose.

6.4. Children of Alcoholics.

Because of their childhood, adult children of alcoholics are prone to marry alcoholics or other severely troubled people because, for one reason they're willing to accept unacceptable behavior. Many, have become addicted to domestic turmoil.

Children of alcoholics have been robbed of their childhood, since they so often have been the only sober person in the house and have therefore had to parent the parents as well as other siblings.

The statistics on adult children of alcoholics cannot be accurately determined since the numbers are growing faster than the demographers can track.

General characteristics of children of alcoholics.

- Adult children of alcoholics often can only guess at what is normal behavior.
- They have difficulty following a project from beginning to end.
- They lie when it would be just as easy to tell the truth.
- They judge themselves without mercy.
- They have difficulty having fun.
- They take themselves very seriously.
- They have difficulty with intimate relationships.
- They overreact to changes over which they have no control.
- They consider themselves (and often are) control freaks.

- They constantly seek approval and affirmation.
- They feel that they are different from other people.
- They are super-responsible or super-irresponsible.
- They are extremely loyal, even in the face of evidence that the loyalty is undeserved.
- They tend to lock themselves into a course of action without giving consideration to consequences.

A self questionnaire on alcohol addiction.

- Do you lose time from work due to drinking?
- Is drinking making your home life unhappy?
- Do you drink because you are shy with other people?
- Is drinking affecting your reputation?
- Have you ever felt remorse after drinking?
- Have you gotten into financial difficulties as a result of drinking?
- Do you turn to lower companions and an inferior environment when drinking?
- Does your drinking make you careless of your family's welfare?
- Has your ambition decreased since drinking?
- Do you crave a drink at a definite time daily?
- Do you want a drink the next morning?
- Does drinking cause you to have difficulty in sleeping?
- Has your efficiency decreased since drinking?

- Is drinking jeopardizing your job or business?
- Do you drink to escape from worries or trouble?
- Do you drink alone?
- Have you ever had a complete loss of memory as a result of drinking?
- Has your physician ever treated you for drinking?
- Do you drink to build up your self-confidence?
- Have you ever been to a hospital or institution on account of drinking?

Three "yes" answers may well mean alcoholism. If there are four "yes" answers, alcoholism is almost certain to exist in your life.