

CHRISTIANS AND ALCOHOL

Is it permissible and appropriate for a Christian to drink alcohol? There are certainly great dangers to the partaking of alcohol when you indulge to an excess to intoxication. However, if alcohol is consumed responsibly and in moderation, then we have the Christian liberty to do so, according to our own conscience. Let us consider the treatment of alcohol in the word of God.

Permissible Consumption of Alcohol

It is scripturally improper to take the extreme position that all consumption of alcohol is sin. Jesus drank fermented wine in his ministry and certainly Jesus never committed a sin. Jesus then commanded us to partake of fermented wine in the Lord's Supper as a church ordinance until his second coming. Therefore, the consumption of alcohol is not a sin, but as we will show later, only when consumed to an excess where our senses are impaired does it rise to the level of sin. Jesus drank wine and we are commanded to drink wine in the Lord's Supper as well.

- Jesus Christ drank wine
 - *"9) When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom...11) This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."* (John 2:9-11)
 - Jesus' very first public miracle was turning water into wine at a wedding feast. It is reasonable to presume that Jesus partook of this wine during this week-long marriage feast. It would have been an offense to the wedded couple for a guest to not partake of wine at their marriage feast. A marriage feast was a time of joy and celebration and that celebration was made with the drinking of wine.
 - Certainly, Jesus never sinned and would never have gotten intoxicated, but it is conspicuous that Jesus' very first public miracle was turning water into fermented alcohol. That should make it clear that Jesus is not against wine or alcohol.
 - *"He riseth from supper"* (John 13:4)
 - Jesus ate supper with the disciples on the night before his crucifixion when he instituted the Lord's Supper. Part of a common Jewish supper would have been wine and bread. At this time, they were observing the Passover and beginning the feast of unleavened bread, but it was customary many times with Jewish supper for Jesus and apostles to have wine with their supper.
 - It was just as common in 1st century Judea to drink wine for supper as it is common for us to drink sweet tea or Coke with our supper. Jesus drank wine very often during his earthly ministry, but certainly in moderation. Therefore, it is permissible for the Christian to follow the example of Jesus Christ in drinking alcohol in moderation, if we see fit to do so.
- Wine in the Lord's Supper
 - *"27) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it... 29) But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."* (Matt. 26:27-29)
 - Jesus used fermented wine in the Passover feast and instituted the Lord's Supper with that wine. It is evident the consumption of alcohol is not a sin because Jesus Christ commanded the church to observe the Lord's Supper and to drink wine during that ordinance until his second coming.

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- Jesus even speaks figuratively of drinking wine with his apostles new in his Father's kingdom. If Jesus speaks figuratively to the apostles of drinking wine anew in his Father's kingdom, it is evident that Jesus drank wine with them (in moderation) during his earthly ministry as well.
- *"21) For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken."* (1 Cor. 11:21)
 - It is clear that the early church used fermented wine in the Lord's Supper because some in the Corinth Church abused the communion wine and became drunk on the wine. You cannot become intoxicated from unfermented grape juice.

There are other examples in scripture where the drinking of wine or strong drink is addressed or commended. Some of those instances for medicinal use are outdated now with our advancement in modern medicine, but they were used as a sedative or pain killer in Bible times.

- For medicinal purposes for your stomach
 - *"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."* (1 Tim. 5:23)
 - The Apostle Paul instructed the minister Timothy to drink a "little wine" (not "a lot" of wine) to help his stomach problems and his apparent chronic infirmities. They did not have Tums or other medicines to help with stomach problems that we have today, and the best remedy for stomach problems in Bible times was the responsible consumption of wine.
 - Wine is still known today to have a very good medicinal benefit on your stomach and digestion. It could still be advisable for Christians today with intestinal or digestion problems to have a glass of wine to help with their stomach issues.
- For medicinal purposes as a sedative or pain killer
 - *"6) Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts."* (Prov. 31:6-7)
 - During Old Testament times, they did not have medicine such as morphine to administer to those people who were about to die. Therefore, God gave instruction to give strong drink (stronger than just regular wine) to those who are about to die to ease their suffering in their last days or hours, similar to how we would administer morphine to those about to die today to ease their pain.
 - With our medical advances today, I do not think it is beneficial or prudent to give strong drink to those who are about to die. Instead, we should use modern medicine to alleviate suffering during one's last days.
 - *"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."* (Prov. 31:6-7)
 - During Old Testament times, they also did not have anti-depressant medication to help those who are dealing with anxiety or "heavy hearts". Wine could be used during this time to minorly dull the senses to forget their poverty and their misery, similar to how an anti-depressant would dull the senses minorly today to allow someone to function in society.
 - This verse is not an excuse to get drunk when your heart is heavy, or you feel miserable. Drunkenness is always a sin. In this context, I don't think wine is an appropriate remedy for a heavy heart today.

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God even commends enjoying the fruit of your labor in celebration by the drinking of wine to celebrate a good harvest. This enjoying of wine should always be consumed in moderation, but it is the gift of God to enjoy the fruit of your labor and to thank God for a good vineyard harvest.

- God permits us to enjoy the fruit of your labor by drinking wine
 - *“Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.”* (Eccl. 9:7)
 - At this time, many Jews were farmers and got their drink (their wine) from the vineyards they personally had planted. It was not wrong for the farmer to enjoy some fermented wine from their vineyards and to enjoy the fruit of their labor (short of intoxication).
 - Actually, God says it is a great blessing to have a good crop in your vineyard and to eat with joy and a merry heart and enjoy the blessing of God by blessing your vineyard with a good harvest, enjoying the fruit of your labor.
 - Similar references to eating, drinking and enjoying the fruit of our labor, it is the gift of God to thank God for his blessing upon their bountiful harvest.
 - *“I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”* (Song of Sol. 5:1)
 - *“And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.”* (Eccl. 3:13)
 - *“Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.”* (Eccl. 8:15)
 - *“There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.”* (Eccl. 2:24)

Caution Against the Bad Effects and Dangers of Drinking Alcohol

The scriptures also make it clear that there are very dangerous, perilous effects when one is given to wine or allows themselves to become intoxicated. These cautions should be heeded in the consumption of any alcohol, so we do not endanger ourselves or others by foolish decisions.

- *“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”* (Prov. 20:1)
 - Wine and strong drink can make someone act and rage like a fool. People can become angry very quickly when their senses are impaired by alcohol and can get into rages or fights that they normally would not engage in.
 - Anyone who is “deceived” (to be enraptured, to go astray) by wine or strong drink is not wise. The scripture does not say it is explicitly wrong to consume alcohol, but it is wrong to be “deceived” by alcohol, or to be intoxicated.
 - That is why we must be very sensitive in the consumption of alcohol because it can be a very fine and narrow line between appropriate enjoyment of wine, and then being deceived by the wine and beginning to rage.

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- *“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.”* (Prov. 31:4-5)
 - Those in positions of leadership, such as kings here, should not give themselves to strong drink. Kings need to not have their senses impaired because their decisions affect their entire nation. If their mind is impaired by being drunk, then they can forget the law and pervert the judgment of the afflicted.
 - Therefore, it is not advisable for anyone in positions of leadership to drink when they are performing their duties. No one should “drink on the job” because their senses could become impaired to make foolish or even sinful decisions.
- *“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.”* (Rom. 14:21)
 - It is not good to drink wine to the degree that it causes you to “stumble” or to be “made weak”. If you consume alcohol to the degree that you begin to stumble or are made weak, you have gone beyond your boundary of permissible Christian liberty.
 - As a general rule, this scripture teaches it is not good to consume anything that makes you stumble or makes you weak, alcohol included. This is a very good practical admonition for us to consider in other areas as well.
- *“Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.”* (Hosea 4:11)
 - Wine can “take away thy heart”. We can become confused and make bad decisions (whoredom in the immediate context) when our mind is clouded or influenced by excess alcohol.

Drunkenness or Intoxication is a Sin and is Forbidden

While the Christian is allowed liberty to partake of alcohol in moderation, the scripture unequivocally condemns drunkenness as a sin. When our senses are impaired, and we are no longer in total control of our mental and physical capacities that is sin. Drunkenness is not determined by a certain blood alcohol level. Drunkenness is when we are no longer in full control of our mind and body to operate normally, and then we can be a great danger to ourselves and others. Also, when we lose control of our mind and body, our drunkenness will usually lead to more sins as well.

- *“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”* (Eph. 5:18)
 - Why is drunkenness wrong? Because when we are intoxicated, we are not in control of our mental faculties and capacities, and we will be led into more sin; we are told to be sober/temperate, so we can make decisions that honor God.
 - The sin comes when we partake of wine to “excess”. Wine can be consumed in “moderation” but any excess to intoxication is sin and can lead to many other sins as well.
 - Our mind and body need to be “filled with the Spirit”. The Holy Spirit should influence and dictate our actions to glorify God. However, if our mind and bodies are being influenced by a foreign substance (such as wine, but also any foreign drug, narcotic, etc), then we are being given to the flesh instead of our bodies being fully given over to the control of the Holy Spirit.

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- We want God and the Holy Spirit to control our actions, not a foreign substance that clouds our judgment. When we consume wine in excess, it will control our bodies and actions instead of our actions being controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit.
- *“19) Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these... 21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* (Gal. 5:19-21)
 - Drunkenness is listed as a work of the flesh. Those who get drunk perpetually are those who are indulging in the world and in sin.
 - The Christian is called to come out from among the world and out from among the works of the flesh and to instead manifest the fruit of the Spirit. The Christian does not need to act like the world and engage in the works of the flesh like drunkenness, but to come out from among the world and be ye separate (2 Cor. 6:17).
- *“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.”* (1 Cor. 5:11)
 - We should not have close fellowship with one who is a drunkard. Those who are drunkards and live in bars are typically going to invite others to come and drink with them. If we go to a bar, there are many other sins that could occur there, and it is not prudent for a Christian to keep close fellowship with a drunkard.
 - We need to exhort the drunkard to repent of their sin, but we do not need to indulge them in their sin by keeping company or fellowship with them in their sin.
- *“2) A bishop then must be blameless... sober... 3) Not given to wine, no striker... 8) Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;”* (1 Tim. 3:1-8)
 - In the qualifications for leaders in the church, both bishops and deacons (which should be the standard for moral living for all members of the church) should not be “given to much wine”. There is not a prohibition against drinking wine, but bishops and deacons should not be given to “much wine”.
 - Just as with kings in Prov. 31:4-5, those in positions of leadership in the church cannot have their judgment clouded by alcohol in excess to the level of drunkenness to make ungodly decisions in the church.
- *“9) Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators... 10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”* (1 Cor. 6:9-10)
 - People who perpetually engage in drunkenness are forfeiting their right to the kingdom of God. Children of God can get drunk, but the church would need to deal with that if it is a perpetual sin. Even though children of God can engage in the sin of drunkenness, it is grouped with actions that are indicative of the world, not of the kingdom of God. Thus, the child of God should forsake drunkenness and all these other works of the flesh.
- *“21) For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 30) For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”* (1 Cor. 11:21,30)

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- God condemned the Corinth church for getting drunk on communion wine. God was so displeased with their abuse of the Lord's Supper that it appears that many of the church who abused the wine were sick. It even appears that God might have even slain ("many sleep") those who were getting drunk on communion wine. God takes drunkenness very seriously.

Woe unto them who are Drunk

The Bible consistently pronounces "woe" on them who are drunk.

- *"29) Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? 30) They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. 31) Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. 32) At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."* (Prov. 23:29-32)
 - These verses present the peril of giving oneself to alcohol. Using alcohol in excess of moderation will cause "woe", "sorrow", "contentions", "babbling", "wounds without a cause" and "redness of eyes".
 - These sorrows do not come upon those who have one drink in moderation but upon those who "tarry long" at the wine and "go to seek" mixed wine.
 - While the fun of drinking might be deceptive and exciting in the moment, the end of drinking and intoxication is like being bit and stung by a serpent or an adder. There is great woe and calamity that is left in the aftermath of one who is given to alcohol in this way.
- *"11) Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! 22) Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:"* (Isaiah 5:11,22)
 - Woe unto them who starting drinking early in the morning and then continue drinking well into the night. Woe unto those who are mighty in drinking and give themselves over to strong drink all the day long. This is describing a drunkard who literally drinks all day long, and all they have is "woe".
- *"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."* (Rev. 17:2)
 - The harlot of Babylon has enticed the kings of the earth to be "drunk with the wine of her fornication". Drunkenness is associated with the great harlot of Babylon and certainly not something the child of God should be engaged in.
 - See also Rev. 17:6, Rev. 18:3, and Jer. 51:7, where the world is drunk on the wine of Babylon and her wickedness.
- *"But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;"* (Luke 12:45)
 - Drunkenness is associated with not being vigilant and watchful for Jesus' second coming because your senses are impaired.
 - We need to be watchful of our surroundings (not drunken to where our senses are dulled) to not be vigilant of the signs of Jesus' second coming.

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- *“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.”* (Luke 21:34)

Drunkenness Will Typically Lead to Other Sins As Well

When we lose control over our mind and body in drunkenness, it will most likely lead to other sins as well that you always regret when you sober up.

- *“30) They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine... 33) Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.”* (Prov. 23:30-33)
 - When you tarry long and seek out wine, that can lead to other sins, such as beholding strange women and being tempted to fornication and saying perverse things.
 - When your mind is affected by alcohol, you make bad, sinful decisions you wouldn't normally make, such as fornication and perverse communications.
- *“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. 22) And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without... 24) And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.”* (Gen. 9:20-24)
 - When Noah got drunk, he took off all his clothes. Then, his son appears to have done some inappropriate action, and when Noah sobered up, he realized what happened. None of this should have ever happened if Noah had not got drunk.
- *“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.”* (Gen. 19:33)
 - When Lot's daughters got him drunk, they laid with him committing incest, and they were impregnated with children from their father. Certainly, Lot would have never committed incest with his daughters if he had not been drunk that night.

Christian Liberty in Drinking Alcohol

Scripture gives the Christian the liberty and ability to partake of alcohol in moderation, but never in excess to intoxication. Alcohol is not evil in itself, just the abuse of that substance to an excess is sin, similar to food and money. Food is not sinful; it's necessary for life, but partaking of food in excess is gluttony and is sin. Money is not sinful; it's necessary to transact business in our lives, but the excess covetousness and love of money is sin. Alcohol is not inherently sinful, but the partaking of alcohol in excess is sinful.

Just because a glutton goes to an all-you-can-eat buffet and commits the sin of gluttony, does not mean that buffets are sinful. No, we can go to that same buffet and enjoy the blessing of that food in moderation. The same is true of alcohol. Alcohol is not inherently sinful or evil, but the abuse of alcohol in excess is sinful and has many detrimental effects.

With that understanding, we need to approach any consumption of alcohol with great trepidation and caution to never indulge to a sinful, excess degree to have our senses impaired. There is great peril in becoming drunk on alcohol, and we need to be aware of that when we partake of alcohol. We also need

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to be mindful of the public stigma associated with alcohol that can injure our public witness or bring a reproach on the church. We need to be cognizant of that and ensure we never do anything (even in exercising our rightful Christian liberty) that will bring reproach on Jesus Christ, our family, or our church.

- *“8) But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. 9) But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. 10) For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; 11) And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12) But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. 13) Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.” (1 Cor. 8:9-13)*
 - There was a significant division in the early church over the liberty to eat meat sacrificed to idols. Some Christians who were coming from a pagan background, believed it was sinful to eat any meat that was previously offered to a pagan god. Some other Christians properly understood that the meat is not inherently sinful, but we have the right to eat that meat if we properly pray over it and thank God for it and ask God to bless it.
 - Some Christians were being very legalistic and trying to make a matter of Christian liberty into a sin. Paul says, you have the right to eat or not eat, according to your own conscience, but the most important perspective in this topic is not whether we have the right to eat, but if our decision (our exercising of Christian liberty) will cause our brother to stumble or be made weak.
 - Therefore, we need to be aware of the possibility of our partaking of alcohol (particularly in a public place) could “become a stumbling block to them that are weak”. We do not want to exercise our Christian liberty so unapologetically that we cause a weaker brother to stumble and fall through our actions.
 - If through our knowledge and exercising Christian liberty, if the weaker brother is emboldened to sin, then we have sinned against them and we have even sinned against Christ (v.11-12).
 - Therefore, Paul’s personal conviction is that if any meat I eat makes my brother offended or if there is any possibility that I can be a stumbling block to him, then I will choose to forgo my Christian liberty and not partake of any meat to make sure my weaker brother is not offended (v.13).
 - We all have to determine our own conscience and degree of exercising Christian liberty that we are comfortable with. However, the lens through which we must view all these topics of Christian liberty (especially consumption of alcohol) is to not be an offense or a stumbling block to the weaker brother. It might be prudent to forego our Christian liberty to partake of alcohol (especially in public places), to protect our weaker brothers and sisters in Christ from offense or stumbling.
- *“2) For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3) Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him... 5) One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6) He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks... 13) Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. 14) I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean*

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of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15) But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died... 19) Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. 20) For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 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. 22) Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23) And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” (Rom. 14:2-23)

- One who is weaker in the faith and believes you cannot exercise Christian liberty, should not look judgmentally on the brother who feels comfortable exercising their rightful liberty. But also, the stronger brother should not look down on the weaker brother because their conscience makes them more restrictive.
 - The more restrictive brother is not more holy than the less restrictive brother. No, they are each exercising their Christian liberty according to their own conscience, and we should not look judgmentally or haughtily upon others who have different convictions of conscience in these areas of Christian liberty.
 - Instead, we need to all individually be “fully persuaded in our own minds” as to our conviction because we answer to God for our convictions (v.5-6).
 - We always need to view these topics of Christian liberty through this lens to ensure “that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (v.13). Even if I have the right to engage in something, I should be willing to lovingly forsake my Christian liberty if I think there is any possibility of being a stumbling block to the weaker brother that could cause him to fall into sin.
 - Particularly, in the discussion of alcohol, there is great peril if alcohol is not consumed in a responsible way. Therefore, if I know someone has a family history of alcoholism or an addictive personality or is predisposed to addiction in some other way, I would want to forsake my Christian liberty to drink in moderation in front of them to ensure I don’t cause the weaker brother to be emboldened to abuse alcohol in excess due to their lack of knowledge, wisdom, and maturity.
- *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” (Gal. 5:13)*
 - Scripture makes it clear that we have the ability to partake of alcohol in moderation in the realm of Christian liberty. However, we should never use any area of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh.
 - It is very easy, if we are not careful, to allow the consumption of alcohol to get out of control and for us to become drunk. Therefore, we cannot allow our liberty to be uncontrolled to where it becomes an occasion to the flesh and rise to the level of sin where our senses are impaired.

All things are Lawful, but not all things are Expedient

In the discussion of Christian liberty, it is true that something may be lawful and permissible, but it also might not be expedient or edifying. This is another important consideration in exercising Christian liberty: what are the pros and cons? What are the benefits, and what are the dangers? If the dangers outweigh the benefits, that is most likely something that we should forego. Mature Christians have to be able to make these decisions and forego Christian liberty if the dangers are high. There is not a lot of benefit to

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alcohol consumption other than short-term personal enjoyment and minor medicinal benefits. Those short-term benefits can easily be far outweighed by the perils and dangers of drunkenness. Therefore, just because you “can” do something, doesn’t always mean you “should” do something. Just because something is lawful, does not mean that it is expedient or edifying. We must consider these points as we exercise our Christian liberty.

- *“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”* (1 Cor. 6:12)
 - There are many things that are not explicitly forbidden as sin in the word of God that we have the right to “lawfully” partake in. However, just because something is lawful, does not mean that it is “expedient”.
 - Certainly, we should not be “brought under the power of any”. It is very easy to lose control of the situation and drink too much and then be brought under the power of alcohol. Therefore, we have to weigh that danger as we engage in something that is “lawful”, but it might not be “expedient”.

- *“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.”* (1 Cor. 10:23)
 - This is a very similar verse, but Paul uses a little more precise language here. Some things might be “lawful” but many of them “edify not”.
 - Our attitude shouldn’t be “I can do it, so I will do it”. No, the proper question for all of our actions should be “how does this edify me and others?” I believe there is very little edification in the consumption of alcohol. We might get a short-term personal enjoyment out of it, but that is easily outweighed by the danger of excess and drunkenness.
 - If the lens through which we weigh all our actions is “does this edify (build up) me and others?”, I don’t think there are many good things and building up that the consumption of alcohol has on me or others.
 - Therefore, just because it is lawful, doesn’t mean we should do it just because we can. We need to ask, “how does this edify myself and others?” We need to weigh these questions of edification as we consider how we exercise our Christian liberty.

Abstain from All Appearance of Evil

Another very important consideration in consuming alcohol in accordance with your Christian liberty is our responsibility to abstain from all appearance of evil and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. We don’t want to do anything that would stain our good name, or impugn the name of Jesus Christ, our family, or the church. Therefore, as we exercise our Christian liberty, we must be very cognizant of the effects and opinions of others when we consume alcohol in public places, to not be a stumbling block to others but also not to soil our Christian witness.

- *“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”* (1 Thess. 5:22)
 - It isn’t prudent for a Christian to be regularly attending places where sin is the most prevalent business. It isn’t prudent for a Christian to go to a bar (where the sin of drunkenness is their main business), even if they are going to just drink water or a Coke. Even if you abstain from drinking alcohol in that setting, if someone sees you with a dark beverage in your cup, they most likely won’t know you ordered a Coca-Cola. While it is

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permissible to have a drink in moderation in public, it is not prudent to have that drink in a bar when the sin of drunkenness is their main business.

- Yes, Jesus partook of wine in a public place at a marriage in joy, celebration, and feasting. However, I don't think Jesus frequented the local taverns in Galilee. Actually, Jesus consistently brought people out of that kind of a lifestyle, not putting himself in a place that would impugn his ministry.
- Others shouldn't be judgmental of your actions in that way, but it's a reality we have to consider. If there is a possibility that someone can have a negative view of me, my family, or my church by the places I go or things I do, it is prudent to forgo my liberty for the benefit of others. We need to do our best to abstain from all appearance of evil.

- *"Neither give place to the devil."* (Eph. 4:27)
 - We never need to put ourselves in a situation where sin will be the most likely outcome. The best way to never get drunk is not to drink at all. Especially if you have an addictive personality or a family history of alcoholism or a proclivity to addiction, it is not prudent for you to drink alcohol at all.
 - We have the Christian liberty to partake of alcohol in moderation, however we never need to give place to the devil and put ourselves in bad situations where sin can be the most likely outcome.

- *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."* (James 1:27)
 - To the best of our ability, we need to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world". It is true that we cannot totally remove ourselves from interactions with the world because *"then must ye needs go out of the world"* (1 Cor. 5:10). We are "in the world but not of the world". We should still do our very best to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.
 - *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."* (2 Cor. 6:17)
 - There should be a distinction between ourselves and the world. We don't need to look like the world and act like the world, but we need to come out from among the world and be ye separate. The world engages in drunkenness; we shouldn't.
 - *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"* (Rom. 12:2)
 - Your mind cannot be renewed if your mind is clouded or impaired by intoxication from alcohol. We need to keep our mind clear and focused on the Lord, not impaired by alcohol in any way.

Conclusion

The scriptures permit the Christian to exercise their Christian liberty in the consumption of alcohol in moderation. However, there are great dangers and sins to consuming alcohol in excess in drunkenness. We need to be cognizant of the possibility of being a stumbling block to other weaker Christians and never to put ourselves in a position to bring reproach on our good name, our family, our church, and ultimately to bring reproach on Jesus Christ. The consumption of alcohol is lawful under Christian liberty, but we need to evaluate how expedient and edifying that is to ourselves or to others. We must all determine the liberty of conscience we feel comfortable exercising in this area of Christian liberty. Finally, we must all be fully persuaded in our own mind as to the conviction of our conscience because ultimately, we all individually stand or fall before our own Master, Jesus Christ.