

Morality: Choosing God
Lesson 9 – Drinking/Drugs are a Sin

1. If you want to kill your children spiritually, neglect teaching them about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.
 - 1.1. Alcohol is the third leading cause of death in America. There are at least 11 million alcoholics, plus another 20 million who run a high risk of becoming alcoholics in the U.S.
 - 1.1.1. There are over 3.3 million problem drinkers among youth in the 14-17 age range. Among high school seniors, 93% of males and 87% of females have experimented with alcohol.
 - 1.1.2. Drunkenness is sinful. The New Testament clearly states that the drunkard cannot enter the kingdom of God (**1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21**).
 - 1.1.3. Rulers were warned against strong drink because it distorted their ability to think and judge clearly (**Prov. 31:4-5**).
 - 1.1.4. The evidence indicates that there is no safe level of drinking alcoholic beverages. Only a small amount of alcohol will impair the higher functions of the brain, reducing the sense of caution, and judgment of a person.
 - 1.1.5. Drugs (cocaine, heroin, marijuana, etc.) have been proven to have at least the same, if not a more dangerous, effect on people.
 - 1.2. The first time drinking is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis, chapter 9. Noah, a righteous man, became drunk and lay naked in his tent. This good man had his sense of right and wrong dulled by the evil effects of drinking. In Genesis 19, we read of another righteous man, Lot, who was overcome by the evil effects of alcohol. While drunk, he had sexual relations with his own daughters! Again, a good man lost his sense of right and wrong when under the influence of alcohol. The writer of Proverbs warned: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (**Proverbs 20:1**).
 - 1.2.1. Some people try to support their sinful habit of drinking by going to the Bible. They point out that some passages in the Bible speak of drinking wine as a good thing (**Genesis 14:18; Amos 9:14; Zechariah 10:7, etc**). But there are also many other passages, which condemn the drinking of wine (**Genesis 9:20,21; 19:30-35; Leviticus 10:8-10; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4,5; Daniel 1:8; Isaiah 5:22; 28:7; Habakkuk 2:15**). How can the drinking of wine be both commended and condemned? Does the Bible contradict itself? If it does, then it cannot be the Word of God!

- 1.2.2. The Bible does not contradict itself. The Bible is the Word of God. A correct understanding of the word "wine" in the Bible depends upon the meaning of the words that are translated "wine" in our English Bible. The Old Testament was first written in the Hebrew language. There are eleven different Hebrew words that are all translated "wine." The New Testament was first written in Greek. There are two different Greek words that are translated "wine" in our English New Testament.
- 1.2.3. "Jesus drank wine," people tell us. "He even turned water into wine. How can you claim that drinking alcoholic beverages is wrong?" Whole books have been written to answer this question, but here is a brief reply.
- 1.2.4. To equate modern alcoholic beverages with first-century wine is a serious error. Modern beverages are fortified with alcohol, enabling the manufacturer to increase the alcoholic content to as much as 90% (such as in 180-proof vodka).
- 1.2.4.1. First-century wine, dependent as it was on natural fermentation, never had an alcoholic content greater than 10%. When the Lord was in attendance at the wedding feast of Cana, the host's supply of "wine" failed (John 2:1ff). Christ commanded that six stone waterpots, each with a twenty to thirty gallon capacity, be filled. The servants filled them "to the brim."
- 1.2.4.2. Underline this last phrase, for it shows that there was no possibility of anyone adding some foreign substance so as to feign the appearance of wine. Moreover, the "taste" test clearly identified the newly manufactured liquid as wine indeed (9-10).
- 1.2.5. Many folks, upon reading this context, automatically assume that the wine mentioned here was an intoxicating spirit. Doubtless this assumption is made due to the fact that when we hear the term "wine" in our modern culture that is what we ordinarily think of. In the Bible, however, "wine" is a generic term and it can denote either fresh juice or a fermented beverage; the context must determine which. Underline the word "wine" in **John 2:9** and in your margin write: See **Isaiah 16:10**; **Joel 2:24**. Isaiah speaks of the "wine in the presses" and Joel writes about the presses that overflow with wine. Obviously, the wine is what we would call grape juice. In biblical language, therefore, wine need not be an intoxicant.
- 1.2.6. The claim is sometimes made, though, that in Bible times there was no method for preserving grape juice in an unfermented state.

Therefore, “wine” must have had some alcoholic content. That is not true. The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary cites ancient skills for the preservation of grape juice all year long. In your margin you may wish to write this note: (**See ZPBD, p. 895**).

- 1.2.6.1. It is known, from ancient sources, that there were ways of preserving juice, thus preventing fermentation. The ancient Roman statesman, Cato, said: “If you wish to have must [grape-juice] all year, put grape-juice in an amphora and seal the cork with pitch; sink it in a fishpond. After 30 days take it out. It will be grape-juice for a whole year”
- 1.2.7. Concentrated alcohol was only known in the Middle Ages when the Arabs invented distillation ('alcohol' is an Arabic word) so what is now called liquor or strong drink (i.e., whiskey, gin, etc.) and the twenty per cent fortified wines were unknown in Bible times. Beer was brewed by various methods, but its alcoholic content was light.
 - 1.2.7.1. The strength of natural wines is limited by two factors. The percentage of alcohol will be half of the percentage of the sugar in the juice.
 - 1.2.7.2. And if the alcoholic content is much above 10 or 11 percent, the yeast cells are killed and fermentation ceases. Probably ancient wines were 7-10 percent.
 - 1.2.7.3. To avoid the sin of drunkenness, mingling of wine with water was practiced. This dilution was specified by the Rabbis in NT times for the wine customary at Passover”
- 1.2.8. First-century wine was always diluted with water. The proportion varied from 1 part wine to 1 part water (1:1) to as thin as 1:20, with a common dilution being 1:6.
 - 1.2.8.1. This means that first-century wine was never stronger than 6% alcohol, and often was only 2% or less. One would have to drink large amounts to get drunk on a 2% mix.
 - 1.2.8.2. This question is quite appropriate: “Would Jesus Christ have provided some 120 to 180 gallons of alcoholic beverage for a wedding feast?” No one with any degree of respect for New Testament morality would suggest such (**1 Corinthians 5:11; Galatians 5:21**).
 - 1.2.8.3. Try this experiment – take an eyedropper and put 1,000 drops of water in a glass. Add 4-5 drops of ink. When alcohol reaches that same concentration you are about to lose control and fall into a coma.
 - 1.2.8.4. Another drop or two your heart is affected. The center in

your brain that regulates breathing becomes sedated.

1.2.9. The consumption of alcohol violates every biblical passage which views the body as the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (**1 Cor. 6:19**), as an instrument of righteousness (**Rom. 6:12-13**), and as a living sacrifice unto God (**Rom. 12:1**). No devout Christian can bow his head and offer thanks to his Creator before drinking alcohol.

1.2.9.1. It is the clear teaching of Scripture that Christians are not to just acknowledge a higher standard, but to live to the higher standard. It is a standard of purity and holiness. The standard is convincingly set forth throughout the Word of God.

1.2.9.2. **1 Peter 1:13-16** - Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

1.2.9.3. **Eph. 5:1** - Therefore be imitators of God as dear children

1.2.9.3.1. These are sobering words: they link us uniquely to God obviously bare serious, Biblical significance. Simply explained, God's call is that Christians are to be different. Distinguishable from the popular culture in how they think and conduct themselves

Matt. 5:16 - Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.