



# The Drink that Could Kill You

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In life there are normal, natural desires that spring from the One who gave them to us. The strongest three desires humans have are drink, food, and sex. All of these can be fulfilled in specific ways: sex in marriage, food in moderation, and drinking of the right things. However, it is when these are fulfilled in sinful and harmful ways that men find themselves in pain and heartache. The strongest desire of any human is the drink. The evil inventions of men through the centuries have led men to create the beverage known as alcohol.

A couple may decide to have a glass of wine with their dinner, perhaps some football fans buy the beer to the ballgame, or it may be a father who cannot quit his drinking habits because he is an alcoholic. Alcohol affects every age group. Louis Rushmore said, "Alcohol is the most frequently abused drug in our nation." Many have lost lives, ruined homes, and disrupted others' lives because they began to sip. The Proverbs' writer states four areas pain is experienced as one partakes in this beverage (Proverbs 23:29-34).

*Physical pain* (Proverbs 23:29). There are both short term (Raised blood pressure, trouble concentrating, loss of coordination, mood swings, etc.) and long term (Memory loss, learning troubles, liver problems, stroke, cancer, etc.<sup>1</sup>) effects. Blood Alcoholic Content (BAC) is a measurement of how much alcohol is in the bloodstream of an individual. For a 200-pound person, one drink equals .02 % BAC.<sup>2</sup> A drink is measured as a 12-ounce beer, 5 ounce table wine, or 1.5 ounce 80-proof liquor. There are seven stages<sup>3</sup> of intoxication, all of which increase the danger as the amount is increased.

- Subclinical Intoxication (.01-.05). Judgement and reaction time could be slightly off.
- Euphoria (.03-.12). This is what people refer to as "tipsy." They may be talkative and animated in this stage. They also may have problems with their motor response.
- Excitement (.09-.25). Emotional instability, lack of critical judgement, and delay in reaction time. Speech is impaired too.

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<sup>1</sup><https://americanaddictioncenters.org/alcoholism-treatment/body-effects>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.healthline.com/health/alcohol/blood-alcohol-level-chart#charts>

<sup>3</sup><https://sunrisehouse.com/stop-drinking-alcohol/stages-intoxication/>

- Confusion (.18-.30). The person here has trouble walking and be dizzy. They may black out and do something that could cause pain.
- Stupor (.25-.40). A person at this stage is at risk for alcohol poisoning. They may not be able to walk, may vomit, and may have seizures.
- Coma (.35-.45). Respiration and circulation problems, depression, and motor response issues surround this stage.
- Death (.45+). The risk and chance of death is high.

Concerning the brain, Jeffcoat states:

The brain is composed of three basic sections which are referred to as the cerebrum, cerebellum, and medulla. The cerebrum is the seat of emotions, intelligence, and will. It is the part of the brain which effects personality and ability to act and think correctly. The cerebellum controls consciousness, while the medulla is the center which controls respiration, circulation, and other important processes. The effects of alcohol may be compared to dropping water on a sponge. It soaks in from top, passing through the various sections to the innermost part. Its first effect is to numb the restraining power, the section which informs persons not to do those things which they have learned from years of spiritual, moral, and legal standards that they should not do. With the first section drugged, persons become more confident and less capable. Alcohol then soaks into the second section, which controls reaction, vision, and hearing. With the cerebellum affected, persons become sedated. Eventually, if the alcohol soaks into the third section, which controls the heart and breathing, it may prove fatal. All thinking persons therefore can see the dangers which are inherent in imbibing intoxicating beverages.<sup>4</sup>

Judgement cannot be discerned when wine is in the body (Proverbs 31:4-5).  
The physical pain is NOT worth the limited comfort and pleasure alcohol brings.

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<sup>4</sup>Louis Rushmore quotes Jeffcoat in *Beverage Alcohol* p. 29-30.

*Emotionally* (Proverbs 23:29). One site stated that depression, irritability, anxiety, and social withdrawal all result from an abuse with alcohol. It can also increase the pain of those who struggle with bi-polar disorder.

*Socially* (Proverbs 23:29). Alcohol hurts relationships and society crumbles little by little because of this drink. The Proverbs' writer says that contentions and complaints rise because of it. Anger and fighting result. Not only such, but death can result too. An estimated 140,000 people die every year to alcoholic causes.<sup>5</sup> "In 2021, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities accounted for 13,384 deaths."<sup>6</sup>

*Spiritually* (Proverbs 23:31-34). The person who continues to drink will not stop at this specific sin. Often, other sins follow. The Proverbs writer affirms that one's speech and one's eyes do things they ought not to do when under the influence of this beverage. Alcohol can lead to verbal abuse, sexual abuse, and physical abuse (cf. Romans 13:13). Many would think twice about a certain action if they had not partaken in alcohol. Also, one would be prohibited from obeying certain commands, "sobriety" or "watchfulness."

It is sad that alcoholism has become promoted and accepted throughout the world. Its ads are seen on television, its pictures are observed on billboards, and many are lured in by its "good" effects rather than the harm it causes. It was Jim McGuigan who said, "Alcohol is an addictive drug! It is even more dangerous because it is socially acceptable and legally approved."

Alcohol is a dangerous drug, drink, and depressant that millions of people partake of every year. Filling oneself with alcohol is a violation of God's holy commands. Let us examine why.

### **Definitions.**

Because the Bible was *translated* into English, defining original words is important. Some words that are used today do not mean the same as when the Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Because of the misunderstanding of these words, people have justified social or moderate drinking. The word "wine" is modernly defined by Merriam Webster as, "the

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<sup>5</sup><https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohols-effects-health/alcohol-topics/alcohol-facts-and-statistics/alcohol-related-emergencies-and-deaths-united-states>

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

alcoholic fermented juice of fresh grapes used as a beverage.” While wine means this today, the words translated wine did not always mean this in Bible times.

*The Hebrew words.* There are many Hebrew words<sup>7</sup> used in the Bible translated wine. Of those, *yayin* is found 140 times. This is a “generic term”<sup>8</sup> and it could either mean alcoholic wine or non-alcoholic wine. The key thought to remember is that context determines the usage.

*The Greek words.* There are Greek words that are translated “wine” or “given to wine” or “excess of wine.”

- *Oinos* (33x). This word is used in connection with the Hebrew *yayin*; they are similar. It is a generalized word and the context must be determined before a definition can be placed.
- *Gleukos* (1x). Thayer said, “the sweet juice pressed the grape, sweet wine.”
- *Paroinos* (2x). One who is given to wine Strong says.
- *Oinophylgia* (1x).

*Yayin* and *Oinos* specifically are general terms and we must remember that words differ in place and time. An illustration of this would be the word coke. In the south, the word “coke” is used as a reference to all soda flavors, so you have to specify what “coke” you want.” In the North however, the word is used for a specific type of soda. Cooper says,

*Oinos* and *yayin* in the original language refer to the fruit produced by the vine. This comes in many forms. It could refer to the grape or it could refer to the juice of the grape. It could even refer to raisins or to raisin cakes.<sup>9</sup>

*The word drunkenness.* The word according to Cambridge Dictionary means “the state of being drunk (= **under the influence of alcohol**)” (Emp. Mine, NO). This dictionary definition agrees with the Biblical definition of drunkenness, but it disagrees with modern assumption of the word. Today, “drunkenness” is taken to mean that one becomes drunk when he reaches a certain point in his drinking. While he may drink a beer or two, it doesn’t

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<sup>7</sup>One is encouraged to see William Patton’s Bible Wines pages 50-52.

<sup>8</sup>William Patton quotes F.R. Lees in *Bible Wines*, p. 47.

<sup>9</sup>Carl O. Cooper, *Does GOD Drink Wine*, p. 12-13.

actually mean he is drunk. Instead, the Bible affirms the well-known adage, “one drink drunk.” The word Greek word *methusko* is used three times in the Bible (Luke 12:45; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:7) and Strong says it means to intoxicate. The word in Ephesians is inceptive and it means to not even begin the process of drinking. One said, “We are not ‘sober’ after even one drink.”<sup>10</sup>

Don’t be fooled by man’s deceptive definitions. This is just another tool in Satan’s box to get men to succumb to the murderous drink. Be wiser than that!

### **The History.**

Interestingly, wine was made differently than it is made today. Today, many more ingredients are added to create the drinks known today as liquor, whiskey, beers, and even wines. It is of interest to note that the alcoholic content of the wine in the Bible times was not like it was today. NATURAL fermentation was the process by which it was created. Cooper<sup>11</sup> notes the process: Fermentation is the process of breaking down organic matter. Sugar decays in this process when met by yeast, molds, or bacteria. Yeast will convert the sugars into ethyl alcohol in the right environment. Fermentation only occurs between 65-75 degrees F. Grapes must be about 20% sugar content. Containers must be sterilized. He then observes:

- First, grapes were gathered from the vine and crushed.
- The bloom on the grapes was essential for fermentation. Today other yeasts are added.
- The grapes and bloom were crushed together in what was known as the “must.”
- Decay then begins and the struggle for fermentation is fought.
- If the temperature, sugar, and yeast are all correct, the yeast creates ethyl alcohol.
- The must then must be mixed. The alcohol is in the center of the must and the lees and so it must be separated.

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<sup>10</sup><https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/eng/ctf/ephesians-5.html>

<sup>11</sup>Carl O. Cooper, *Does GOD Drink Wine*, p. 18-23.

The reason for presenting this material and the process by which such beverages occur, is to show that alcohol is created by specific persons, and it does not make itself.<sup>12</sup> One French Chemist said, “Nature never forms spirituous liquors; she rots the grape upon the branch; but *it is art* which converts the juice into (alcoholic) wine.”<sup>13</sup> The natural fermentation process produced in Biblical times was 11-14% alcohol, while the modern percentage of alcohol today is 40-50%;<sup>14</sup> a vast difference indeed. Rushmore rightly wrote:

Therefore, the proponents of alcohol are defeated before they begin, because there is little similarity between even alcoholic wine in antiquity and modern wines. If it were the case, as some historians allege, that ‘wine’ in the Bible always refers to alcoholic wine, approval of alcoholic wine that was available then would not justify the alcoholic potency of wine on our shelves today. One drink of what passes for wine now equals several drinks of alcoholic wine of antiquity. Therefore, **if it were the case:** (1) ‘wine’ in the Bible always refers to alcoholic wine, (2) biblically, alcoholic wine was permitted *in moderation*, **then**, *a single drink of modern wine would exceed the supposed Biblical moderation.*<sup>15</sup>

The process by which alcoholic wine or other drinks is made is by human hands. It is never natural, and God never sanctions the concocting of such a beverage. Now...what are some arguments used in support of drinking this beverage that could kill you?

### **Five Arguments Used to Justify Drinking Alcoholic Beverages.**

Abraham Lincoln said, “Liquor has many defenders but no defense.” Many have attempted for decades to prove FROM SCRIPTURE the allowance of partaking in the beverage known as alcohol. It is unfortunate to see many denominational persons seek to justify their behavior, but of a sadder and more dangerous quest, is the modern justification for such indulgence by members of Christ’s

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid, 21.

<sup>13</sup>See quote in William Patton’s book entitled *Bible Wines*, p. 15.

<sup>14</sup>Louis Rushmore quotes Milgram in *Beverage Alcohol*, p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Louis Rushmore, *Beverage Alcohol*, p. 37.

own church! Let us answer one historical argument, one argument regarding medicine, and three arguments with alleged “proof texts.”

*“Those in history had no way to preserve grape juice, so they had to drink it fermented.”* This is unwarranted and without evidence, for it was Aristotle, Horace, and Hippocrates who affirmed that there were ways to accomplish such.<sup>16</sup> Also, there were four ways to stop fermentation from occurring.

- Boiling.<sup>17</sup>
- Raise the sugar content to above 20%.<sup>18</sup>
- Sulfur or Chlorine could be added to preserve it.<sup>19</sup>
- Filtration. “The yeast was strained out of the juice...thereby stopping the process.”<sup>20</sup>

This argument does not hold any weight historically or scientifically.

*“We can drink cough medicine which has alcohol in it, so why cannot we drink alcoholic beverages?”* This argument is used in support of social drinking; however, this argument holds no weight either. Firstly, there is a purpose. Mostly, cough medicine is taken for pain and nothing more, while alcoholic beverages are used for pleasure. Second, the amount of alcohol in each matters too. One said, “The amount of alcohol in these products (cough medicine-NO) is not enough to cause intoxication.”<sup>21</sup> Alcoholic beverages have over triple this, one noted. Third, Rushmore’s thoughts are clear and concise

The only conceivable way in which a medicinal dose of alcohol could commend anything akin to social drinking is if: (1) One’s friends and acquaintances were all ill, (2) all the ill friends were afflicted by a malady that was favorably affected by consuming alcohol, (3) these ill friends assembled themselves together in one place, and (4) all these ill friends drank their medicine together. Incidentally, how many shots

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid, 84.

<sup>17</sup><https://gbntv.org/the-truth-about-drinking/>

<sup>18</sup>Carl O. Cooper, *Does GOD Drink Wine*, p. 21

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup><https://gbntv.org/the-truth-about-drinking/>

<sup>21</sup><https://cleanbreakrecovery.com/how-much-alcohol-is-in-cough-syrup/>



of whiskey or bottles of beer constitute a medicinal dosage of alcohol?<sup>22</sup>

*“Jesus turned water into alcoholic wine”* (John 2:1-11). “If Jesus did it then we can do it” is the argument used here; however, the evidence for Jesus making alcoholic wine is lacking. Don Blackwell mentions that one must first prove that Jesus created alcoholic wine. Tom Wacaster had this thought:

If excess of intoxicating beverage is wrong and that excess constitutes drunkenness And if it is the case that “drunk freely” means to “get drunk or become intoxicated.” Then it follows that Jesus provided a large quantity of intoxicating wine to people who were already drunk.<sup>23</sup>

Assuming Jesus made wine would equate Him with being a sinner (Habakkuk 2:15). Jesus DID NOT make alcoholic wine, no not even a little.

*“Deuteronomy 14:26 sanctions the use of alcoholic beverages.”* Some have attempted to say that God is promoting the use of drinking here, but such is not the case. The Hebrew word *Shekar* (translated “strong drink”) does not always mean an alcoholic beverage because the context determines the meaning. It is also used to discuss other fruit than the grape. The phrase “strong drink” causes us to compare it to modern whiskey, rum, or beer; however, remember that these drinks, “had not been invented in the days of Moses.”<sup>24</sup> We must remember that words do mean different things in different contexts and one passage of Scripture WILL NOT violate another (cf. Proverbs 20:1).

*“Paul told Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach’s sake in 1 Timothy 5:23.”* This argument has been used numerously to “prove” that alcoholic beverages may be drunk in moderation. Let us note however see that:

- *The context is important.* We wonder why Paul had to tell Timothy to NOT drink ONLY water. Cooper gives two reasons: (1) Perhaps it was because he was under a Nazarite vow, under which vow nothing from the grape was allowed (Numbers 6:3-4), or (2) perhaps if this is

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<sup>22</sup>Louis Rushmore, *Beverage Alcohol*, p. 89.

<sup>23</sup> Tom Wacaster, *The Magnificence of Jesus*, p. 84.

<sup>24</sup> Carl O. Cooper, *Does GOD Drink Wine*, p. 70.

alcoholic wine, Timothy stayed away from it because he knew it was sinful.<sup>25</sup> Wayne Jackson would write: “First, it suggests that the young evangelist has been resistant to drink the wine prior to the admonition. If drinking fermented wine was common for the primitive Christians, the exhortation would scarcely have been needed.”<sup>26</sup>

- *The word wine can either mean alcoholic wine or non-alcoholic wine.* Because *onios* is used here, we cannot determine whether it is alcoholic or non-alcoholic with certainty.
- *Paul sanctions the usage to a “little.”* Even if this were alcoholic, it doesn’t mean he could just use as much as he wanted. Also, remember the alcoholic content was much different back then.
- *Paul gives a reason: “for thy stomach’s sake.”* This admonition then was given for Timothy’s physical benefit, not for his pleasure. We cannot use medical reasons so that we may indulge in sin.

It is dangerous to go to Scripture to find “proof texts” for one’s sin. Arrogantly and wrongfully, many do this with a drink that could kill them!

### **Three Verses and Three Biblical Illustrations That Can Be Used to Show the Sinfulness of Drinking Alcohol.**

Through the Bible, alcohol is looked upon as something hurtful and harmful. We must take an honest look at these verses to understand the dangerous effects of alcohol to both the physical body and the spiritual soul.

*Proverbs 20:1.* Wine deceives and makes a person himself deceitful. Those taken captive by such a drink are not wise. Alcoholic drink changes a persons brain, mindset, and body, making him someone who he really is not. If it “arouses brawling” as this author’s Bible margin says, which is a sin, would it not be a sin for one to do that which causes sin (cf. 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 3:9)?

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<sup>25</sup> Carl O. Cooper, *Does GOD Drink Wine Book II*, p. 23

<sup>26</sup><https://christiancourier.com/articles/what-about-moderate-social-drinking>

*Isaiah 5:11.* The context suggests alcoholic wine here. A woe is pronounced upon those that rise up early in the morning to pursue alcoholic beverages. This is a picture of one who is pulled by alcohol in the MORNING he pursues it! Sadly, many are so consumed by the beverage in the morning, at noon, and in the night. How many have died because of alcohol addiction?

*1 Thessalonians 5:6-7.* Since at the first drink one becomes intoxicated, would not it be that one loses his soberness immediately after the first drink? How can he then fulfill the command to be sober? The word “sober” means to be temperate. Drinking alcohol is condemned because the moment one swallows the first drink, they lose their soberness.

*Genesis 9:21.* Here, Noah drinks alcoholic wine for the context suggests it. He would not have been in the state he was in by simply making grape juice. There was no good that came from his taking part of the wine. Noah is often looked upon as a man who sinned because of his intoxication. We learn that alcohol produces no good thing. Some believe Noah was ignorant; however, let us remember, alcoholic wine MUST be produced by man; therefore, Noah or others had to do something.

*Genesis 19:30-38.* This passage shows the danger of alcohol on the mind of man. Lot’s two daughters decide to have children, but want to do it secretly. Why not just ask their father directly what they wanted to do? He likely would have said no and because of that, they use ALCOHOLIC WINE to intoxicate their father. In verses 33 and 35, the phrase “he perceived not” appears. Because of the alcoholic wine was given and drunk by lot, the senses were dulled. Again, we learn that alcohol perverts the mind from even recognizing simple second nature things. It led to an immoral act!

*Proverbs 31:4-5.* Wine and strong drink here MUST be alcoholic, for grape juice does not make one forget the law or pervert judgement. Upon partaking of it, many often forget where they are or believe something to be acceptable when it is not. King Lemuel’s mother wanted him to know that because of the special role kings played, it was especially condemned for them. Christians play a more important role as citizens in God’s kingdom! Therefore, they ought to stay away from it too.

Alcoholic beverages should find no place in the cabinet of Christians or the fridges of the faithful. The following poem sums of our study very neatly and nicely.

We drank for happiness and became unhappy.  
We drank for joy and became miserable.  
We drank for sociability and became argumentative.  
We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious.  
We drank for friendship and made enemies.  
We drank for sleep and awakened without rest.  
We drank for strength and felt weak.  
We drank "medicinally" and acquired health problems.  
We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.  
We drank for bravery and became afraid.  
We drank for confidence and became doubtful.  
We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech  
We drank to forget and were forever haunted.  
We drank for freedom and became slaves.  
We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply.  
We drank to cope with life and invited death."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> [www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/a/alcohol.htm](http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/a/alcohol.htm). Noah Olson took away a phrase because it was close to using a Biblical word for cursing. See the website link for the full illustration.