

GOD GAVE WINE

WHY THIS? WHY NOW? #1

Why This Topic?

Alcohol is a part of our society, and has been for thousands of years.

- Christians have debated the place of alcohol in their lives for years, with good people lining up on both sides of the issue.
 - Christians at GAC (just like every other church) have different opinions about alcohol (and many other topics).
- This raises questions like: “Who is right”, and “What do you do with people who are wrong?”
 - *My Experience with the Young Adults*

Why Are We Addressing This Topic Now?

GAC is growing up!

- The leadership here has been very deliberate in trying to teach disciples how to think and reason from the scriptures for themselves.
 - I believe that one of the signs of an immature church, is the inability to be unified if there is not uniformity.
 - Church history is full of churches that split into opposing groups, rather than learn how to find unity.
- Because of this growth toward maturity, we are just beginning to experience sincere differences of opinion on a wide variety of issues.
 - In my experience, most churches are so threatened by differing opinions, they insist on uniformity, and consequently stay locked in immaturity.
 - The result of this immaturity: They alienate anyone who dares to disagree with them.
- How can you have unity without uniformity? By agreeing that we don't always have to agree with each other; we just have to agree with Jesus!

Alcohol As A Case Study:

I hope we can take 'Alcohol' and use it as a case study to learn how to find God's will in other areas that may not be specifically addressed in scripture:

- These are often referred to as “**Gray Issues.**”
- Some Examples: cannabis, dating, kissing, gambling, smoking, clothing, music, movies, television, birth control, dancing, spending your money, home schooling, working moms, etc.

The goal of this seminar is to educate, not indoctrinate.

ALCOHOL

Being Drunk Is Black And White.

1Cor. 6:9-11

*“Or 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 effeminate, nor homosexuals,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the covetous, **nor drunkards**, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ **Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified**, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” (NASV 95)*

- The “one drink” argument is often debated; but not “being drunk”.
- The word “sanctified” is the Greek word **hagiazō**; which means *to make holy, consecrate, set apart for special use.*

But Drinking ‘That Doesn’t Result In Getting Drunk’, Is Not Black & White.

There are well over 200 verses in the Bible that reference alcohol in some way.

- Some of these references are positive, and some are negative.

1) Having a Drink is nowhere **condemned** in scripture.

Some Christians argue that they can drink and not get drunk.

- It is difficult to argue what another person can or can’t do.
 - We all know that alcohol has different effects on different people.
 - This can be due to weight, metabolism, trained tolerance, and a number of other factors.

Christians who argue for abstinence usually respond to the “one drink” argument with valid questions like: *“If one drink can make a person drunk, then is half a drink equivalent to being half-drunk?”*

- Their point is: Since one cannot half-lust or half-blaspheme without sinning, how can one justify being partially drunk?

Another question ‘abstinence people’ ask is, *“Which are you really trying to justify; drinking in moderation... or being moderately drunk?”*

- Recently TV ads have popped up warning against driving “buzzed.”
- If the secular world concedes, even short of being drunk, that alcohol alters your ability to drive, then do Christians really believe that stopping short of getting drunk doesn’t impair them on some level?

2) Having a Drink is nowhere **commended** in scripture.

The verse that comes closest to commending drinking is [1Tim. 5:23](#).

- This was medical advice; not social or recreational advice.
- The word for “wine” in this verse could mean alcoholic or non-alcoholic.
- The advice was for a “little” wine.
 - But why was Timothy abstaining from wine in the first place?
- It is undeniable that 1st century Christians drank alcohol. ([1Cor. 11:21](#))
 - Paul condemned getting drunk; he did not condemn drinking alcohol.

So Where Do We Begin?

[Eph. 5:8-11](#)

*“you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰ trying to **learn what is pleasing to the Lord.** ¹¹ Do not participate in **the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;”** (NASB 95)*

- We must do our best to find out what pleases the Lord.

How Do We Go About Pleasing God In Gray Areas?

[Heb. 11:6](#) *“And without **faith** it is impossible to please Him...”*

- Whatever we decide on this issue, it has to be based on faith.

[Rom. 10:17](#) *“So **faith** comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”*

- We must rely on God’s Word to develop our faith.

Romans 14:23 "... whatever is not from **faith** is sin."

- Making a decision based on your preferences, family traditions, fears, etc., does not come from faith. Therefore:
 - It does not please God
 - It will be sin for you.

Romans 14:5 "One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. **Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.**"

How Do We Become "Fully Convinced"?

The best way to come to a "fully convinced" Biblical position is to survey what the Bible says about the subject.

If an issue is gray, there probably is no one passage that deals with it exhaustively.

- It is important not to look for just one verse to prove your position if there are more verses to consider.

Example: How many of you think Polygamy is a sin, or displeases God?

- Is there a verse in the Bible that says polygamy is a sin?
- We could justify polygamy by pointing to Biblical characters who practiced polygamy, such as Abraham, Jacob, and David.
 - **Deuteronomy 21:15** provides instructions for men with more than one wife.
 - "If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him sons, if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved..."
- The New Testament nowhere condemns polygamy.
 - It does say, however, that a man could not be an elder in a church if he was the husband of more than one wife.
 - **1Timothy 3:2** "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the **husband of one wife, ...**"
- When we take an overall look at the Biblical presentation of polygamy, we see that it paints polygamy as being fraught with moral, spiritual, material, and physical danger.
 - Polygamy was the downfall of Patriarchs, Kings, and common men alike.
 - It led to family schisms that often resulted in treachery.
- Clearly, the overall Biblical presentation of polygamy is intended to condemn it.
 - This condemnation is doubly subtle when you consider the parallels that the Bible makes about monogamous marriages.
 - It uses Adam and Eve, God and Israel, Christ and the Church, as examples and models of godly marriages.

SUMMARY APPLICATION:

- Whether we choose to drink alcohol or not, we need to start with knowledge of the Word.
 - Even after exploring the Word, some uncertainty may linger; but at least we will be armed with the knowledge of what God has to say on the subject.
- If you choose to drink, you need to be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance, and be responsible for your own behavior.
 - Be Honest... Don't rationalize or justify!
 - Purify your motives!
- If you choose not to drink, make sure that any accusing thoughts or words you may have against a drinker, have a Biblical basis.
 - Don't try to judge things that God has not ruled on!