

Of The Same Mind Concerning Social Drinking

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Social Drinking Outline

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Introduction

We have heard many sermons about how alcohol kills a human being. We have heard how alcohol kills externally, internally, and eternally. Alcohol is a killer. Alcohol kills the body, the mind, and the soul of any human being that partakes of it. In colonial America informal social controls in the home and community helped maintain the expectation that abuse of alcohol was unacceptable. There was a clear consensus that while alcohol was a gift from God, its abuse was caused by the devil.¹ The problem with this line of thinking is: what does it mean to **abuse** alcohol? What is the standard concerning alcohol abuse? Does each individual determine the proper use of the beverage alcohol?

I believe the consensus in our society can clearly be seen on The Rachel Maddow show which aired on December 5, 2008 on MSNBC network.² The show's title was "Happy Repeal Day" celebrating 75 years since the 18th amendment was repealed with the ratification of the 21st amendment. The 18th amendment to the constitution outlawed the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages. The prohibition of alcohol lasted for thirteen years, (1920-1933). The 21st amendment allowed alcohol to again be produced. Rachel Maddow said prohibition did not work. She said it was a 13 year failed experiment. Maddow's guest Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian,

agreed that prohibition was a failure. Brinkley said our country was “forged on alcohol,” and that alcohol is a “public policy success.” Maddow ended her show by saying there are only two appropriate ways to celebrate repeal day: (1) to have a cocktail, (2) to think hard about the whole big dumb idea of legislating morality. There are two problems with this information. The first problem is a majority of people may actually believe what Rachel Maddow and her guest said. My grandfather, Lewis Nedland, lived during the prohibition years and said prohibition did work. The second problem is some members of the church adopt the current philosophies of our society even when they are against the laws that God has given us to live by. Rachel is right about one thing however; morality cannot be legislated. God determines what is right or wrong, not our congress or senate.

What Is The Beverage Alcohol?

Ethyl alcohol or ethanol, known commonly as alcohol, is the same whether the beverage is wine, beer, or hard liquor. Beverage alcohol is a drug that depresses the central nervous system like barbiturates, sedatives, and anesthetics.³ The beverage alcohol is produced either from fermentation, brewing, or distillation. Fermentation requires the presence of sugar, a temperature between 50 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit, the correct consistency of the liquid, and the presence of the right quantity of yeast.⁴ The amount of alcohol produced depends chiefly upon the amount of sugar in the liquid allowed to ferment.⁵ Brewing is a process in making beer and malt liquors in which the grain hops is used as a part of the process. Hops are from the same plant family as marijuana and operate as a narcotic.⁶ Distillation is the process of liquor that increases alcohol content. In distillation, one part of a liquid is separated from another by boiling

and condensing the vapor. Whiskey, rum, brandy, and gin are made this way and have higher alcohol content than wine and beer.⁷ Any beverage that contains alcohol is a drug. As a drug, alcohol slows down brain activity which results in slurred speech, hazy thinking, slowed reaction time, dulled hearing, impaired vision, weakened muscles, and fogged memory.⁸ Drinking alcohol in any amount has a direct effect on the human body.

The Beverage Alcohol Kills Your Body

There are two basic ways that alcohol kills the body. When a person drinks alcohol, 20% is absorbed directly into the bloodstream through the stomach walls and 80% is absorbed into the bloodstream through the small intestine.⁹ The blood alcohol level (BAL) is the measure of the ratio of alcohol in the blood. A BAL of .10 means one part of alcohol for every 1000 parts of blood.¹⁰ Elimination of alcohol from a healthy adult body occurs at an average rate of ½ to ¾ ounce per hour. When the BAL reach a high level the brain's control over the respiratory system may be paralyzed. A .30 BAL is the minimum level at which death can occur; at .40 BAL the drinker may lapse into a coma. At .50 BAL respiratory functions and heartbeat slow drastically, and at .60 BAL most drinkers are dead.¹¹ You can literally drink yourself to death in a single session by ingesting a large enough amount of alcohol. The second way alcohol kills the body is through damage to the body's organs. Because alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream it can harm virtually every organ and system in the body. Alcohol is the single most important cause of liver disease. Alcohol is associated with cardiovascular disease, 65% of all cases of pancreatitis, depresses the immune system, and increases the risk for cancer. Alcohol contributes to 100,000 deaths annually in the United States making it the

third leading cause of preventable death. Of these 100,000 deaths: 5% of all circulatory diseases, 15% of all respiratory diseases, 30% of all accidents caused by fire, 30% of all accidental drowning, 30% of all suicides, 40% of all accidental falls, 45% of all automobile accidents and 60% of all homicides are attributed to the consumption of the beverage alcohol.¹² 100,000 deaths each year in The United States alone cause by alcohol and people like Rachel Maddow want us to celebrate the repeal of the 18th amendment! Why would a Christian want to put this drug into their body? Alcohol kills your body.

The Beverage Alcohol Kills Your Mind

The beverage alcohol's damaging effects on the brain include difficulty walking, blurred vision, slurred speech, slowed reaction times, and impaired memory. Clearly, alcohol affects the brain. Some of these impairments are detectable after only one or two drinks and quickly resolve when drinking stops. On the other hand, a person who drinks heavily over a long period of time may have brain deficits that persist well after he or she achieves sobriety. Even moderate drinking (no more than one drink per day for women, no more than two drinks per day for men)¹³ leads to short-term impairment, as shown by extensive research on the impact of drinking on driving. Alcohol can produce detectable impairments in memory after only a few drinks and as the amount of alcohol increases, so does the degree of impairment. Blackouts are much more common among social drinkers than previously assumed. College students reported learning later that they had participated in a wide range of potentially dangerous events they could not remember, including vandalism, unprotected sex, and driving.¹⁴ Heavy drinking may have extensive

and far-reaching effects on the brain, ranging from simple ‘slips’ in memory to permanent and debilitating conditions that require lifetime custodial care.¹⁵

Because alcohol is a drug, when taken in any amount it has an affect on the brain. In fact, the brain is the organ most affected by alcohol, and proves it is being damaged through the drinker’s behavior changes and emotional distress. Three noticeable effects of alcohol injury to the brain are memory loss, confusion, and augmentation. The drinker’s rapid mood swings and emotional and behavioral instability can be brought under control by stopping drinking and allowing the body to process the alcohol out.¹⁶ In this regard the Christian has to be very careful to keep his mind sober. Christians need to be in their right mind. *“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he”* (Proverbs 23:7).¹⁷ *“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life”* (Proverbs 4:23). The brain is where our thought process takes place. It is the seat of intelligence and emotion. What we think about most of the time is who we are. Jesus said in Matthew 12:35-37: *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”* Of these Bible verses, Roy Deaver said: *“The speech is evidence of the condition of the heart.”*¹⁸ The words we speak come directly from the deduction of our thoughts (mind). Jesus explains this thought process in Matthew 15:18-19: *“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”* Jesus is saying we choose to be who we are in our mind (heart), by our thought process in the free will choices we make. This thought process, takes place in

our brain. If we put alcohol in our bodies it will affect our thought process in a negative way. We will not be able to think clearly with the drug alcohol affecting our brain's function. This inability to think clearly will last until we quit drinking and allow our body to eliminate the alcohol out of our bloodstream. When dealing with God's Word in our life we do not need our judgment, memory, and learning ability impaired by the affects of the drug alcohol. Alcohol kills your mind.

The beverage alcohol changes your mind towards service to God. Under the Old Testament God did not allow the priests to drink wine or intoxicating beverages. Leviticus 10:8-11, *"Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying: "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, that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses."* The priests needed to be able to distinguish between holy and unholy, between clean and unclean. They would not be able to do this with the drug alcohol affecting their mind. They would also not be able to teach anyone God's word unless their mind was functioning normally. With the drug alcohol affecting their brain function the priests mind would not be functioning normally. God, through Malachi tells the priest's in that day: *"For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts"* (Malachi 2:7). This is a principle of God that carries into the New Testament age and is in effect on the Christian's life. *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"* (1 Peter 2:9). Jesus said: *"Go therefore and make*

disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). When Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church in Jerusalem those Christians: “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). Do Christians really think they can have a good influence on the world by having a Bible study while drinking a beer? How about talking Bible with someone when you have obviously been drinking?

The Beverage Alcohol Kills Your Soul

We have seen that the beverage alcohol kills the body, it kills the mind, but it also kills the soul. Killing the soul is the saddest death of all because it is unnecessary and, it is eternal. Denominational teaching of “once saved always saved” has not fooled us in the one true church. Christians know we can fall away. One of the ways we can be lost eternally is by drinking the beverage alcohol. Paul, by inspiration tells us: *“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 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” (Galatians 5:16-21). The word “drunkenness” in this passage means “to intoxicate,” “to make drunk,” mostly passive “to get drunk.”¹⁹ We see by the definition of drunkenness that it is the process of becoming drunk. The process then, starts the very moment the beverage alcohol is taken into the body. When alcohol is put into the body it*

starts to have its affect on the entire body. The practice of drinking alcohol in any amount will keep a Christian out of the kingdom of God and condemn his soul to eternal torment. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 5:11: *“But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner — not even to eat with such a person.”* The Christian who practices the drinking of an alcoholic beverage in any amount is one who has fallen away and should be disciplined. Social drinking will keep you out of heaven and will cost you the fellowship of the church unless it is repented of. *“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit”* (Ephesians 5:18). The word “drunk” in this passage signifies “to make drunk,” or “to grow drunk” (an inceptive verb marking the process or the state expressed in methuo) “to become intoxicated.”²⁰ This passage talks about the process of becoming drunk. The Christian who takes part in social drinking is in the process of drunkenness. Social drinking is defined as the “imbibing of non-medicinally light or small amounts of mind-altering or intoxicating alcoholic drinks as beverages.”²¹ Social drinking kills your soul. People do not drink the beverage alcohol for the taste alone, they drink it because of the affect it has on their mind. Exposure to alcohol leads to changes in behavior and is the very reason why a social drinker is partaking of the beverage alcohol. If this were not so, the social drinker would be just as satisfied drinking water to quench their thirst. There is not one faithful Christian that will drink the beverage alcohol socially, because alcohol kills the soul.

Our Lord Was Not A Social Drinker

To say that our Lord was a social drinker is a contradiction of the highest order. We have the Words of God recorded in our Bibles today, (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The Word

of God condemns the process of becoming drunk, (Proverbs 20:1, 23:29-35, Isaiah 28:7, Hosea 4:11, Luke 12:45, 1 Corinthians 5:11, 6:10, Ephesians 5:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:7, etc.). Why would our Lord participate in something that condemns the human soul to torment? The answer is He would not. We are told how Jesus lived His life on earth: *“but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin, (Hebrews 4:15).* The most common word used for “wine” in the New Testament is a generic word (oinos), which designates the juice of the grape in all its stages.²² It could mean freshly squeezed grape juice or a fermented juice containing alcohol. The context always determines the definition of a Bible Word.²³ At a wedding in Cana, Jesus turned about 120-180 gallons of water into wine, (John 2:1-10). If this were the beverage alcohol, Jesus would have provided over 100 gallons of alcohol to a wedding party that already would have been intoxicated! This would have been sin according to the Words God has spoken condemning the beverage alcohol. A problem we have is transferring the same meaning of our words to that of Bible words without considering time, language, or culture. We think of wine only with alcohol content and have another word for non-alcohol grape juice. In this case the Bible uses a generic word (oinos) in which context determines to be a non-alcoholic beverage.

But even if being “legally drunk” is the standard of a social drinker, they cannot by themselves know whether they are “legally drunk” or not. The drinker’s blood alcohol level rises as a factor of the relationship among the amount of alcohol consumed, body size, and proportion of body fat, the amount of food in the stomach, and what is mixed with the alcohol.²⁴ There are so many variables, the social drinker would have to continually check themselves with a breathalyzer or blood monitor to know when to stop drinking. This makes the real problem of social drinkers the problem of authority. Will

you submit to the authority of God concerning the beverage alcohol? If you do, you will not drink one drop because God condemns it. The beverage alcohol kills the soul.

Conclusion

We have seen that the beverage alcohol kills the body, mind, and soul of any human being that partakes of it. Even in colonial times people knew about the dangers of alcohol. We see the consensus of how our society feels about the beverage alcohol on such news show as “The Rachel Maddow Show” on MSNBC with their celebration of the ratification of the 21st amendment to our constitution. Alcohol is a drug that depresses the central nervous system. It is taken in the form of a beverage such as wine, beer or liquor. The drinking of alcohol in the United States accounts for about 100,000 deaths each year. Alcohol also kills the human mind. Because alcohol is a drug it affects the brain. The brain is the Bible heart, and is where our thought process takes place. When alcohol is consumed our thought process is changed and we cannot think clearly until the alcohol is eliminated from our body. The saddest death alcohol produces is the death of a soul. God tells us those who engage in the process of becoming drunk will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus was not a social drinker because He had no sin, nor did He produce alcohol so others could sin. We are of the same mind concerning social drinking and that is, total abstinence from it.

References

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