

Introduction:

1. This morning we began a look at some of the Scriptures dealing with alcohol.
 - a. Priests are never to use it when they are supposed to be doing the work of the Lord (Leviticus 10).
 - b. It's only permitted use (as a drink) was for already-existing medical conditions (and then only when it would help).
 - i. The Bible does not permit alcohol for a hangnail.
 - c. We saw that the word "wine" can refer to the juice of the grape in any form (fermented or not), and that it is dependent upon the context to determine which is being discussed.
 2. Tonight, we will be looking at the qualification for elders which also deals with alcohol: "an elder must...not be given to wine."
 - a. There are many different interpretations of this qualification.
 - b. They usually hinge on that interpreter's stance on "social drinking."
 - c. Let us look at the Scriptures and determine what they say.
- I. What does "given" mean here (I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)?
- A. Other translations:
 1. ASV – Not a brawler
 2. ESV – Not a drunkard
 - B. The phrase comes from one Greek word "PAROINOS"
 1. That word has two parts
 2. PARA – Beside
 3. OINOS – Wine.
 4. So, literally, the phrase "not given to wine" means not beside (or next to) wine.
 - C. What some say about this word:
 1. Some say it only condemns drunkenness, and means not staying with wine for a long time. So long as you are not just wasted, it is permissible to drink.
 2. Others say it only condemns the violent actions that come from being drunk (they pair it up with "no striker" to arrive at that meaning).
 - a. So, as long as you aren't a violent drunk, it is ok to drink all you want and still be an elder.
 - b. Except that Paul listed them as two separate qualifications.
 3. Others pair it with the statement of Paul that deacons are "not given to much wine" and say elders are not permitted to drink at all, but deacons can drink so long as they don't get plastered.
 - a. The problem with this view is that the qualification for deacons does not permit drinking either (we will touch on this a little bit later).
 4. With these differing opinions, can we know what the truth is?
 - D. Let us look back at the word which Paul uses.

1. This word appears only twice in the Bible, but times used in the qualifications of elders.
 2. Because of this, there is no reason to assign a meaning to the word other than what it literally means.
 3. An elder is one who refuses to be around (beside, next to) alcohol.
- E. Remember that an elder is to be blameless in all of these categories.
1. Literally, it means that no charges could stick to him, or that he is unarrestable.
 2. So, an elder must be one that no one could say he is around alcohol.
 3. You will not find an elder with beverage alcohol in his house.
 4. You will not find an elder hanging out at a bar.
 5. You will not see an elder in a liquor store.
 6. An elder will not be present at a drinking party.
 7. If an elder drinks “socially” can charges that he is next to wine stick? ABSOLUTELY!
- F. So, though it is translated “not GIVEN to wine,” (meaning not addicted to alcohol), the actual meaning is “not BESIDE [or near] wine.”
1. Does this mean he cannot use Nyquil or cough medicines, which have alcohol in them?
 2. No, as we saw this morning, God permits the use of alcohol for medicinal uses for already-existing conditions.
- G. No one should ever be able to accuse an elder of drinking alcohol.
- II. Can other Christians drink alcohol?
- A. Older women are commanded to not be “given to much wine” (Titus 2:3).
1. Literally, it says they are not to be enslaved by much wine.
 2. The Greek is even more specific than that.
 3. It is in the perfect tense, which also shows past actions with continuing effects.
 4. So, she is not to be enslaved by alcohol currently, but also if she was in the past, she should not let that take her back into alcohol-drinking.
- B. Deacons are commanded to not be “given to much wine” (I Timothy 3:8).
1. Though the exact same words are used in English for the older women and the deacons, the Greek is very different.
 2. Deacons are commanded:
 - a. Don’t pay attention to many wines.
 - b. Don’t think about many wines.
 - c. Don’t give heed to many wines.
 3. Basically, what it says is that deacons are not to even be thinking about the many forms of alcohol which exist.
 4. Does this sound like Paul was saying that deacons could drink, so long as they don’t get drunk?
 - a. Far from it!
 - b. Paul is telling them don’t even be thinking about alcohol!
- C. All Christians are commanded to be sober (I Thessalonians 5:8).
1. As we discussed a few weeks back, to be sober means to be clear-headed.

- a. You cannot let anything over-ride your thinking.
 - b. That includes letting your emotions control your thinking.
 - c. That includes dwelling on certain things which monopolize your thoughts.
 - d. That includes taking any drugs (such as alcohol) which cloud your mind and judgment.
2. It is interesting to note the word translated “drunk” in Ephesians 5:18.
- a. It says “be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess...”
 - b. The word translated “drunk” is what is called a progressive or inceptive verb which describes the process of getting drunk, not the end result.
 - c. So, Paul is condemning the process of getting drunk.
 - d. Where does that process begin?
 - 1) It begins with the first drink.
 - 2) Some have said one drink makes you “one-drink drunk.”
- D. Some people claim that there is a difference between drinking alcohol and being drunk.
1. Being drunk is a process, which we can prove by this question.
 - a. Is it possible for someone who is drinking to become MORE drunk?
 - b. Since there are degrees of drunkenness, it should be obvious that being drunk is a process which begins at the first drink.
 2. An example of how even one drink keeps you from obeying the command to be sober.
 - a. Jesse was shown this in college.
 - b. A man signed his name on a piece of paper.
 - 1) It was legible.
 - c. Then he had a drink, and signed his name again.
 - 1) The signatures bore very little resemblance to each other.
 - 2) The writing was not neat nor very legible.
 - 3) This after one drink.
 - d. The experiment continued, and after a few more drinks and signatures, the writing bore no resemblance to letters at all.
 3. It has been shown by tests that just one drink of beer will slow down reaction time by $1/1-1/2$ second.
- E. Paul specifically said that regardless of what it was, he would not be brought under the power of anything.
1. This means he will not let anything control him.
 2. He won't let his appetite for food control him.
 3. He won't let desires control him.
 4. He won't let drugs (alcohol) control him.
 5. Yet some say it is ok for us to do those things...
- F. Some answers to common arguments.
1. The Jews did not have any way of keeping grape juice fresh, so it always fermented and was alcoholic.
 - a. This is not true, as we mentioned in passing this morning.

- b. They could boil the grape juice until it became a syrup, then seal it (and airtight seals have existed since at least the time of the ancient Egyptians).
 - c. If the temperature was over 65 degrees, grape juice will not ferment, but instead will turn to vinegar.
 - 1) What is the weather like in the Middle East?
 - 2) The average temperature is well over that amount.
 - 3) So, in order for them to make it ferment into alcohol, they would have to purposefully dig out holes in the ground and bury the grape juice in new wineskins.
 - 4) There was no “accidental alcohol.”
2. They had alcoholic wine then, so it is ok for us to have whiskey now.
- a. Alcoholic wine existed during the Bible times, there is no doubt.
 - b. However, even those alcoholic wines were far less intoxicating than even light beers today.
 - c. In fact, most research shows that those of Bible times took the alcoholic wine (which was less alcoholic than beer today) and then they diluted it with 2 or 3 times as much water.
 - d. In order for someone to get truly plastered on the wine they had in Bible times, they would have had to drink it by the gallon!
 - e. One can of beer contains as much alcohol as around 2-3 gallons of the alcoholic wine from Bible times.
 - f. Now, ask yourself this:
 - 1) If this FAR LESS INTOXICATING alcohol was condemned, what does that say about the FAR MORE INTOXICATING liquor sold today?
3. It is ok to drink socially, as long as you don't get wasted.
- a. Elders are not to even be next to wine.
 - b. Deacons are not to even think about wine.
 - c. Older ladies are not to be effected by wine.
 - d. All Christians are to be sober, clear-headed.
 - e. One drink stops you from being clear-headed.
4. “My grandfather made wine and he was an elder in the church.”
- a. This argument makes out like the grandfather is the standard of right and wrong.
 - b. Some have said that Alexander Campbell had a large wine cellar.
 - c. Just because an elder does something, that does not mean it was right.
 - d. An inspired apostle of Jesus Christ, who had miraculous ability to heal and to cast out demons, committed suicide, therefore it is ok, right?
 - 1) The same logic applies.
 - 2) If we can point to an elder and say “if he did it, it must be right,” then how much more should we be able to say “if an inspired apostle did it, it must be right”?

- e. While we should hope that an elder only does what is right, we must still remember that they are not the standard of right and wrong—the Bible is.

III. The influence of a Christian.

A. Alcohol is a potent and deadly weapon of Satan.

1. Thousands are killed as a result of alcohol each year.
2. In many studies, Down Syndrome has been linked to alcohol use in the parents.
3. Alcohol use has been the primary cause of untold numbers of divorces.
4. Is this really what God wants a Christian to be involved with?

B. Alcohol damages the body irreparably.

1. Alcohol kills brain cells which cannot be brought back.
2. Have you met someone who drank a lot when he was younger, and you can tell just by talking to him (even if he's been sober for decades)?
3. Do you really think God wants us to end up in that kind of condition?

C. Alcohol damages your influence with those around you.

1. Do this experiment in your head.
 - a. You go to the liquor store, park your car out front and walk in.
 - b. You don't even have to buy anything, but people recognize your car.
 - c. What is that going to say about you to those who know you, even if you didn't even buy or drink anything?
2. Do this experiment in your head?
 - a. You go to the gas station and buy a 20-oz can of beer.
 - b. Open it, then go door to door with it in your hand asking people if they want to study the Bible with you.
 - c. Do you really think anyone is going to take you seriously with the Bible in one hand and a beer in the other?
3. Non-Christians recognize that Christians shouldn't drink.
 - a. Even those of the world know that Christians would not drink alcohol.
 - b. If I were to open a beer in the pulpit and take a drink, then you told all your friends, what kind of influence would I have with them?

Conclusion:

1. There are many reasons why a Christian should not drink alcohol:
 - a. We are commanded to be sober and to avoid alcohol.
 - b. It damages the body and brain.
 - c. It kills our influence with others, making us a useless soldier for Christ.
2. Elders are to not even be next to (near, in the presence of) wine.
3. Deacons are not to even be thinking about wine.
4. Christians are not to allow anything to keep them from being sober, clear-headed.
5. Don't fall into the trap of alcohol.
6. Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging, any who is fooled thereby is not wise – Proverbs 20:1.