



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Christian and Alcohol!

The New Testament does not command total abstinence in every passage. Jesus turned water into wine (**John 2**), and Paul advised Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach (**1 Timothy 5:23**).

#### Sobriety and Self-Control

Scripture consistently calls believers to be sober-minded. A clear mind is essential for spiritual alertness, prayer, and resisting the enemy.

**1 Peter 5:8**, *"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."*

**Ephesians 5:18**, *"Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit."*

**Galatians 5:19–21**, *Works of the flesh include drunkenness (methé) and debauchery — those who practise such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

**Galatians 5:23**, *"...self-control; against such things there is no law." Self-control (enkrateia) is a fruit of the Spirit.*

Alcohol impairs the very self-control that the Spirit produces in the believer. If sobriety is commanded and self-control is a virtue, then anything that undermines both is spiritually dangerous.

## **The Body as God's Temple**

The body of a believer is not their own. It is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, purchased by the blood of Christ.

**1 Corinthians 6:19–20**, *"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies."*

**Romans 12:1**, *"...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."*

**1 Corinthians 3:17**, *"If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple."*

Alcohol is metabolised by the body as a toxin, and it carries the documented risk of dependency and physical harm. Introducing that into a body described as holy and set apart raises serious theological questions about stewardship.

## **Not Becoming a Stumbling Block**

Christian liberty must always be exercised in love. The question is not only 'Is it permissible?' but 'Does it build up?'

**Romans 14:21**, *"It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall."*

**1 Corinthians 8:9**, *"Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak."*

**Matthew 18:6–7**, *"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."*

A recovering alcoholic in the congregation, a young believer, or an observer from outside the church could be caused to stumble by a Christian who drinks publicly. Love — not personal freedom — must govern the decision.

## **Direct Biblical Warnings**

Proverbs and the prophets speak plainly about alcohol — not merely about excess, but about its character and effects.

**Proverbs 20:1**, *"Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise."*

**Proverbs 23:29–35**, *A vivid portrait of the drunkard: sorrow, strife, wounds without cause, bloodshot eyes, a wandering mind, loss of judgment — and the compulsion to return to drink.*

**Isaiah 5:11–12**, *"Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink... they do not regard the deeds of the Lord, or see the work of his hands."*

**Habakkuk 2:15**, *"Woe to him who makes his neighbours drink — you pour out your wrath and make them drunk."*

Scripture does not merely warn against excess it warns about the nature of alcohol itself: **it mocks, it brawls, it redirects attention from God**. These are descriptions of a substance, not just a quantity.

## **Consequences of Drinking:**

### **1. Spiritual consequences.**

- Drunkenness is listed among works of the flesh that exclude from God's kingdom (**Galatians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10**).
- Alcohol dulls the spiritual senses, impairing prayer, discernment, and alertness to spiritual attack (**1 Peter 5:8**).
- It redirects focus from the things of God to sensual appetite (**Isaiah 5:11–12**).

### **2. Relational consequences.**

- A brother or sister with a history of addiction may be caused to stumble (**Romans 14:21**).
- Young believers or seekers watching Christian leaders may be confused or misled.
- The unity of the church body can be harmed by the careless exercise of personal liberty (**Romans 15:1–2**).

### 3. Physical consequences.

- The body described as the temple of the Holy Spirit is harmed by alcohol (**1 Corinthians 6:19–20**).
- Proverbs 23 describes physical deterioration: wounds, bloodshot eyes, diminished perception.
- Risk of dependency dishonours the call to freedom from every enslaving habit (**1 Corinthians 6:12**).

### 4. Moral and cognitive consequences.

- Alcohol impairs judgment, the very faculty required for righteous decision-making.
- "Wine is a mocker" it deceives those led astray by it (**Proverbs 20:1**).
- **Proverbs 31:4–5** warns rulers not to drink, lest they forget the law and pervert justice.

### 5. Witness and testimony.

- A Christian seen habitually drinking may undermine the credibility of the gospel in the eyes of the world.
- Leaders especially are called to be 'above reproach' and not 'addicted to much wine' (**1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7**).

### 6. Spiritual vulnerability.

- **1 Peter 5:8** directly links sobriety with vigilance against the devil.
- Anything that lowers the mind's guard opens the believer to temptation and deception.

## **Biblical Examples of Abstinence**

Throughout scripture, certain individuals and groups are commended for abstaining entirely from alcohol as an act of consecration or obedience.

**Nazirites: Numbers 6:3**, Total abstinence from wine and strong drink as part of a holy vow dedicated to God.

**The Rechabites: Jeremiah 35**, God commends the Rechabites for keeping their ancestor's command to drink no wine, contrasting their obedience with Israel's disobedience.

**John the Baptist: Luke 1:15**, Set apart from birth, he was to drink no wine or strong drink, and was filled with the Holy Spirit even from the womb.

**Priests on duty: Leviticus 10:9**, Priests were forbidden to drink wine before entering the tabernacle, so they could distinguish between holy and common.

***1 Corinthians 10:31, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."***