

Oracles of God

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God - 1 Peter 4:11

The Moderate Social Drinker

The laws of our country, based upon sound and tested medical evidence, declare that we are intoxicated (drunk) and unable to think and act correctly during the driving of our cars after consuming just two alcoholic drinks.



This inebriated condition is exactly the same condition as that in which moderate social drinkers find themselves. Their judgment is impaired; their inhibitions loosened; they are drunk; intoxicated; unable to think and act correctly regarding their lives and the will of heaven.

The inebriating effect the alcohol is having upon them is the result of an intentional and unnecessary hindering of their ability to exercise full control of their thoughts and actions — a clear violation of the commands to be sober and in control of our thoughts (Titus 2:11-15; 2nd Corinthians 10:5b).

Methusko

The Greek word *methusko* (word 3182), translated drunk or drunken in Luke 12:45, Ephesians 5:18, and First Thessalonians 5:7, is very significant in our search for God's truth concerning what constitutes the true definition of drunkenness.

According to noted Greek scholars *methusko* in these passages means:

...to **make** drunk, or **grow** drunk (an inceptive verb, marking the **process** of the state expressed in *methuo*), to become intoxicated (Vine).¹

...**begin to be softened** (Young's).²

...to **grow** drunk (**marking the beginning of *methuo***) (Bullinger).³

...**causal of *methuo***, to make drunk with wine, to intoxicate...**to get drunk**... (Liddell and Scott).⁴

Those who seek to justify social drinking make the claim, contrary to scripture and medical evidence, that a person is only drunk when he is staggeringly drunk or in a stupor, or using slurred speech.

However, this is **not** the understanding God's word reveals to us. God's definition for being drunk and His standards for right conduct are *clearly* different from that of the moderate social drinker.⁵

God's word informs us that drunkenness is progressive. It's a **process**; we **grow** drunk; we **get** drunk; we become more and more intoxicated with every sip we take. The first drink is the **cause and beginning** of the intoxication.



A Work of the South Cambridge Church of Christ

Schedule of Services

Sunday School ... 11:00 AM
Worship.... 12:00 AM

Bible Study Wednesday.... 7:30 PM

Location

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This is what the medical evidence has been clearly stating and confirming to us all along. This is the reason why legally we are only allowed to drink a very small amount of alcohol before driving our cars. This is why we are not allowed to drink any amount of alcohol when we are at our places of work.

The testimony of God's word and the testimony of medical science are in perfect agreement:

Any amount of alcohol you drink will impair your ability to drive (NHS, Home Office Website).⁶



Overall, intoxication **is a matter of degree**, [it] **is a process that begins with the individuals first drink** (Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Bexar County, Texas).⁷

...all alcohol is poisonous to human beings...**Even a single drink can produce measurable adverse physiological effects**, such as flushing of the skin, slurring of the speech, and slowing of the reflexes...**some degree of physiological intoxication begins to appear after even one drink**, long before an individual is 'stumbling drunk'...it should always be remembered that alcohol is a drug which is poisonous (toxic) to some extent **in any quantity** (Medical Examiner for Nueces County, Texas).⁸

...to **make** drunk, or **grow** drunk (an inceptive verb, **marking the process** of the state expressed in *methuo*), to become intoxicated (W.E.Vine, comments on *methusko*).⁹

It needs to be made clear; intoxicants intoxicate; it's what they do; it's what they are designed for. You can't participate in moderate or social intoxication without committing the sin of drunkenness.

Matthew 11:18-19

Some moderate social drinkers, in order to hold on to their drinking of alcoholic beverages, are so blind in their stubbornness and rebellion that they think it is okay and respectable to call the Son of God a glutton and a winebibber. This is an unthinkable and truly shameful position to be in.

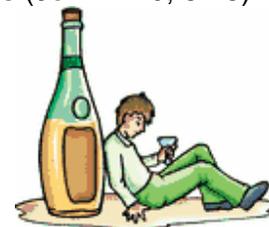
Are they really willing to be consistent and affirm that the Son of God was actually stating in Matthew 11:18-19 that He really was a glutton and a winebibber; and that John was in actual fact demon-possessed? This is nothing more than spiritual blindness to the very extreme (John 12:40; 2 Cor. 4:2-4).

John didn't come eating and drinking only in the sense that he played no part in society and lived in isolation. Jesus, on the other hand, did not isolate Himself, but rather, reached the people in their homes, towns and villages. The emphasis is not on alcohol but social lifestyles. They had different missions.¹⁰

Because of this the enemies of John charged him with being demon-possessed. The enemies of Jesus charged Him with being a gluttonous man and a winebibber.

These statements were made by the followers of Satan — the enemies of Jesus. They were lies and slander against the two righteous men who had exposed their own wickedness and religious hypocrisy.

Moderate social drinkers ought to realise that all three charges either stand or fall together. Will they be consistent? What is it to be? Do we accept as truth the words of Christ's enemies (John 7:20; 8:48)?



According to the word of God (see Proverbs 23:31-32) it was not even possible for Jesus to have looked upon intoxicating wine and still be pleasing to the Father. This one scripture alone destroys the idea that Jesus was in any way connected to the drinking of intoxicants (see also John 8:29b).

The idea that Jesus was a glutton and a winebibber beggars belief and is blasphemy and slander of the worst possible kind (John 8:44b).



John 2:10

Furthermore, those who insist, in order to justify their moderate social drinking, that the master of the feast in John 2:10 was referring to intoxicated (drunk) wedding guests at the feast Jesus attended, and that Jesus miraculously produced a large additional quantity of intoxicating wine for the drunken guests to **continue** their drinking, ought to be made aware that they are clearly teaching, by implication, that the Son of God sanctions the social **and** the excessive drinking of alcoholic wine.

This interpretation proves far too much. Those who use John 2:10 in this way are teaching a doctrine which destroys the sinlessness of Christ's nature and teachings.



It is simply impossible to have the Bible condemning drunkenness and drinking parties on one page; and then on another page present Jesus Christ not only **attending** a wedding feast drinking party (with His mother and disciples), but also **providing** a large quantity of alcoholic wine for **already** drunken guests. How absurd is that? Both these slanderous teachings are shameful and blasphemous.

The Son of God was not a glutton and a winebibber, and the Son of God did not attend a wedding feast drinking party and encourage drunkenness.¹¹

The holy scriptures condemn all degrees of drunkenness and insist upon a sober and clear alcohol free mind:

Wine is a mocker, intoxicating drink arouses brawling, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise (Proverbs 20:1).



Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper (Proverbs 23:31-32).

Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbour, pressing him to your bottle, even to make him drunk, that you may look on his nakedness (Habakkuk 2:15).

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, **be sober... be holy in all your conduct...** (1Peter 1:13, 15).

For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — when we walked in...**drunkenness**, revelries, **drinking parties...**(1Peter 4:3).

And do not be drunk (*methusko*) with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

Bringing **every thought** into captivity to the obedience of Christ... (2 Corinthians 10:5b).

...but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night and those who **get drunk** (*methusko*) are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober (1Thessalonians 5: 7).

But if that servant...begins...to eat and drink and **be drunk** (*methusko*: to become drunk; grow drunk; begin to be softened) (Luke 12:45).



1 Timothy 5:23

In 1 Timothy 5:23 the apostle Paul gives Timothy advice in connection with a specific medical problem:

No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

Please note carefully, the apostle Paul does not say, “**drink wine**”, but rather “**use a little wine**”. Just like a doctor prescribing a medicine. He does not say, “for the physical pleasure of your belly”, but rather, “...for the medical needs of your stomach and infirmities.”¹²

Can the moderate social drinker, in the presence of God, put his hand on his heart and sincerely say that he only drinks alcoholic beverage for medical purposes? Let’s be honest with this text. The moderate social drinker knows full well that he is not obeying the purpose and intent of the will of heaven in this passage. What does the passage actually teach? That’s what needs to be considered (Isaiah 8:20).



Significantly, there are historical testimonies showing us that the ancient world used **unfermented** wines for medical purposes:

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) recommends the use of a sweet grape juice, called *glukus* in Greek, because, he says, “**though called wine [oinos], it has not the effect of wine...and does not intoxicate like ordinary wine.**”¹³

Athenaeus, the Grammarian (A.D. 280), specifically counsils the use of a kind of grape juice, which some called ‘sweet wine’ (*glukon onion*) while others *prodromos* or *protropos* (Latin names for unfermented grape juice), for stomach disorders.

He writes: “Let him take sweet wine, **either mixed with water or warmed**, especially that kind called *protropos*, **the sweet...glukus, as being good for the stomach**; for sweet wine [*oinos*] does not make the head heavy.”¹⁴

The moderate social drinkers have no proof that the wine in 1Timothy 5:23 was alcoholic, and whatever the case may be, they are certainly not using a **small** amount for their constant stomach problems. That’s one thing we do know for certain.

They know it, the Church knows it, and God knows it (1Corinthians 5:11; Ephesians 5:8-18; Ezek 8:12).

In Conclusion

Man’s love for alcohol is very strong, but the love we must have for our God must be even stronger.



Scripture and Medical Science are in complete agreement regarding what constitutes the all important definition of drunkenness. God doesn’t want people to even **begin** the intoxication and softening process. The command is to be sober minded; holy in **all** our conduct; the light of the world.

The Son of God was not a glutton or a winebibber, and He did not provide alcohol for fellow drunks at a wedding feast drinking party.

He **is** the Light of the world. He **will** judge those who try to stain Him with the darkness of alcoholic wine.

¹ W.E.Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Fleming H Revel Company, 1981), p.341.

² Robert Young, *Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Thomas Nelson Pub., 1982), p.275.

³ E. W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament* (Zondervan Pub.,1975), p. 238.

⁴ Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon. Abridged Edition* (Oxford University Press), p.430.

⁵ Charles N. Grump, “Drunkenness” *What Does The Bible Teach?* The First Annual Know Your Bible Lectureship, ed.:Roger Jackson, Alton Hayes, and James Rogers (Oxford, AL.,1988), p. 329.

⁶ NHS Home Office Website, *Know Your Limits*, knowyourlimits.gov.uk

⁷ Dr Robert C. Bux, M.D., Deputy Chief Medical Examiner for Bexar County, Texas, in a personal letter to Barry Lynn Parker dated 16. 11. 92

⁸ Lloyd White, M.D., Ph.D., Nueces County Medical Examiner, in a personal letter to Barry Lynn Parker dated 17. 11. 92.

⁹ W.E.Vine, p.341.

¹⁰ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Wine in the Bible: A Biblical Study on the Use of Alcoholic Beverages* (Biblical Perspectives, Michigan, 1989), p. 152-155.

¹¹The wine referred to here was doubtless such as was commonly drunk in Palestine. **That was the pure juice of the grape.** It was not brandied wine, nor drugged wine, nor wine compounded of various substances, such as we drink in this land. The common wine drunk in Palestine was that which was the simple juice of the grape. **We** use the word wine **now** to denote the kind of liquid which passes under that name in this country – always containing a considerable portion of alcohol – not only the alcohol produced by fermentation, but alcohol **added** to keep it or make it stronger. **But we have no right to take that sense of the word, and go with it to the interpretation of the scriptures:** Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes The Gospels: John 2:1-11* (Baker Book House), p.193.

¹²Samuele Bacchiocchi, p. 246.

¹³Aristotle, *Metereologica* 387. b. 9-13, as quoted by Samuele Bacchiocchi, p. 244.

¹⁴ Athenaeus, *Banquet* 2, 24, as quoted by Samuele Bacchiocchi, p. 244.