

Intro:

God has given us all things for our enjoyment (1 Timothy 4:4-5; 6:17). We can expect in this rebellious, man-centered, sin-filled world that these good gifts from God are misused in ways that dishonor the Creator and harm the created ones. Three clear examples of good gifts that get misused are food, sex and alcohol. Each of these God-given gifts becomes harmful and disdainful when abused, evident in gluttony, sexual immorality and drunkenness. While this statement addresses alcohol specifically, a general warning regarding the abuse of other good gifts from God is warranted.

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Alcohol in and of itself is good. God has given it for pleasure (Psalm 104:14-15), celebration (Deuteronomy 14:26) and health (Proverbs 31:6; 1 Timothy 5:23). This goodness is supremely evident in the first miracle Jesus performed which centered around making a large quantity of wine to display his glory (John 2:1-11).

But the misuse of alcohol is a horrendous plight on mankind. Old Testament men of faith fell prey to the sin of drunkenness. Noah, a vineyard keeper, in a drunken indecent state, contributed to his son's sin (Genesis 9:20-27). Lot, a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7), committed incest with his daughters while drunk (Genesis 19:30-38).

There are numerous sins associated with the abuse of alcohol. Proverbs alone warns that the misuse of alcohol can lead to violence (4:17), foolishness (20:1), financial scarcity (21:17), sorrowful troubles (23:29-45), and injustice (31:4-5). Drunkenness is listed among the regular sinful activities that rebel against God's goodness and righteousness (Galatians 5:21, 1 Peter 4:3)

Implications for Christians.

First, There is an explicit warning not to tolerate Christians who are constantly drunk (1 Corinthians 5:11). Church leaders are to be known as those who are not "drunkards" or "addicted to wine" (1 Timothy 3:3, 8). Second, the freedom Christians have to drink alcohol must be carefully monitored so as not to give occasion for weaker but sincere believers to stumble into sin (1 Corinthians 8:9,12). Third, for the sake of the gospel there are times it is appropriate to drink and other times where it is prudent to abstain (1 Corinthians 10:31-33). Finally, all believers should act according to their conscience informed by Biblical principles when it comes to alcohol consumption. Because of past sin, some who have had problems with alcohol may need to abstain for fear of stumbling into old sinful habits (Matthew 5:30). Others may be lead to abstain for personal convictions or disciplines or promptings (Luke 1:15). For those who enjoy alcohol within biblical parameters, we urge discernment when providing hospitality for others who may have conscience or addiction issues (Romans 14).