

April 28, 2024

Proverbs 20; 23; 31

Dangers of Drinking

Have you noticed that advertising for alcoholic beverages seems to be everywhere? You can't watch a sporting event on TV or online without being bombarded by beer commercials. Alcoholic beverage manufacturers spend billions of dollars annually on advertising. American young people and adults see thousands of beer and wine commercials each year.

Those ads always show happy people having lots of fun. Many beer commercials feature scantily-clad women in suggestive situations. The alcohol industry does everything it can to make drinking attractive to entice people to drink.

Have you ever heard a church member defend so-called "social drinking?" They remind you that Jesus drank wine, and insist that the Bible doesn't forbid drinking, only drunkenness. Is that true? What does the Bible actually say? The verses you will study today from Proverbs answer that question.

Prov. 20:1 "Wine is a _____, strong drink is _____: and whosoever is _____ thereby is not _____."

First, we need to define some terms. What are **wine** and **strong drink**? Water purification is a relatively modern luxury. We think nothing of drinking water from our faucet or of ordering iced tea made with tap water in a restaurant, but in ancient times, clean water was not available. This is still true in many foreign countries; American travelers are often warned, "Don't drink the water!"

People in Bible times mixed a very small amount of fermented wine with their water to purify it. The alcohol in the wine killed the germs in the water, but the alcohol content was so small that you'd have to drink large amounts of wine to become drunk. Strong drink, on the other hand, had much more alcohol and would quickly make someone drunk.

Now, read Proverbs 20:1 again. The Bible clearly says that wine is a **mocker** (something that makes a fool of you), and strong drink is **raging** (tumultuous, causing an uproar). What does the verse say about the person who is deceived by wine or strong drink?

You can drink alcoholic beverages if you want, but the Bible says you are a **fool** if you do.

Prov. 23:20 Who should we **NOT** hang around with?

The Hebrew words that are translated **winebibbers** literally mean heavy drinkers or drunkards: those who drink to excess.

Prov. 23:21 What will happen to drunkards and gluttons?

Drinking wastes your money and will ruin your life.

Prov. 23:29 “Who hath _____? Who hath _____? Who hath _____? Who hath _____? Who hath _____ without cause? Who hath _____ of _____?”

Prov. 23:30 What’s the answer to **all** those questions?

Prov. 23:31 What does this verse tell you **NOT** to do?

It is foolish to justify social drinking when the Bible says not to even **LOOK** at wine!

Prov. 23:32 What is the end result of drinking?

Prov. 23:33 If we drink alcohol, what will we **see** and what will we **say**?

Prov. 23:34 What will happen to we if you lie down in the middle of the sea?

What will happen if we lie down on top of a tall flagpole?

The person who drinks alcohol is **FOOLISH!**

Prov. 23:35 This is the foolish babbling of a drunk. What does he want to do when he wakes up?

You’re probably aware that Proverbs 31 tells about the virtuous woman, but did you know it also contains warnings King Lemuel’s mother taught him about the dangers of drinking?

Prov. 31:4 What should kings and princes stay away from?

Prov. 31:5 What will happen if they drink alcoholic drinks?

A king needs a sound mind to make wise judgments and decisions. This is true for anyone who has authority or influence over someone else. If we drink, however, our reasoning and judgment will suffer.

Prov. 31:6 Who can we give alcohol to?

Prov. 31:7 What will alcohol do for them?

Alcohol doesn’t make problems go away, but those facing execution or imminent death from a terminal illness can gain some anesthetic benefit from it. The only other time wine is commended in the Bible is as a treatment for stomach problems (1 Tim. 5:23).

Prov. 31:8-9 Who should those in authority speak up for?

Concluding Thoughts: Let's review some of the things the Bible says about drinking, and compare those things to the advertising you see for alcoholic beverages.

- Alcohol will make a fool of you and lead you into tumultuous behavior (Prov. 20:1). Do the beer ads tell you this?
- Drunkards and gluttons waste their money and ruin their lives (Prov. 23:21). How many beer and wine ads tell you of this danger?
- Do the alcohol ads tell you that drinking will bring you woe, sorrow, contention, babbling, wounds, and red eyes (Prov. 23:29)?
- Do the people in those beer ads turn to the camera and tell you that in the end alcohol is as bad as being bitten by a poisonous snake (Prov. 23:32)?
- If you drink, you'll see strange, wicked things, say bad things, and act like a complete fool (Prov. 23:33-35). Do the ads tell you this?
- Do the beer and wine ads tell you that drinking will cloud your judgment so you forget right and wrong (Prov. 31:5)?

The alcohol industry wants to deceive you into thinking you'll have fun and be accepted if you drink. **This is a lie! Don't be deceived!** Some church people even may foolishly try to convince you that "social drinking" is okay, but the Bible warns us to stay away from alcohol and those who drink it.

Drinking is **FOOLISH**, and it will **HURT** you.

Do you want to be a fool, or would you like to live wisely?

If you're involved in drinking, stop it right now. Confess your sin, pour out your beer, wine, or liquor, and ask God to enable you to resist alcohol's temptations. Don't go to bars or befriend drinkers.

If you're sympathetic to alcohol, confess that as sin.

Confess your sin and change your behavior. Your future will be better if you do.

Project: Memorize **Proverbs 20:1**. If you hear someone speak favorably about alcohol this week, ask them if they would like to hear what the Bible has to say. Show them some of the verses you have studied in this lesson.