



Separation within the Church, 1 Cor 5:9-14; Biblical Approval for Moderate Consumption of Alcohol, 1 Tim 5:23, Ps 104:15a; Prov 31:6, 17; Principles

Objectivity toward one's weaknesses should motivate a believer to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and doctrine in his soul to avoid situations that would play to his weaknesses.

It is also important to avoid those who obviously do not have control of their lust patterns:

1 Corinthians 5:9 - I wrote to you in my epistle [a previous noncanonical letter to Corinth] not to associate with immoral people [πόρνος, *pornos*: sexual promiscuity].

v. 10 - I did not at all mean with the immoral people of the world [unbelievers], or the covetous [πλεονέκτης, *pleonektēs*: those with materialism lust], and swindlers [ἄρπαξ, *harpax*: to steal money or property by force, fraud, or deceit], or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world [there is no way to avoid those who are outside the church].

v. 11 - But now I write to you not to associate with anyone who calls himself a fellow believer if he should be sexually promiscuous [*pornos*], or in materialism lust [*pleonektēs*], or an idolater, or a reviler [λοιδόρος, *loidoros*: those who verbally & maliciously denigrate another's reputation through the public lie], or a drunkard [μεθυσος, *methusos*: a drunkard; deriv., Romans 13:13; syn., 1 Pet 4:3], or a swindler [*harpax*]—do not even eat with such a person.

v. 12 - What do I have to do with judging those outside the church [unbelievers]? Do you not judge those who are within the church [believers are to separate from fellow believers who are guilty of the sins enumerated above]?

v. 14 - Those that are without, God judges. [Next Paul quotes a mandate found in eight passages from Deuteronomy:] “Remove from among yourselves the evildoer [in this case, the church member guilty of incest, 1 Cor 5:1].

In these and other biblical lists of sins we discover that heavy use of alcohol is generally associated with a number of crimes and an accomplice in sexual promiscuity.

However, in marriage the moderate consumption of wine would comport with several passages which indicate that it would enhance their relationship:

a. To relax from the trials of the day:

1 Timothy 5:23 - No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

b. The divine provision of wine is said by the writer of the Psalm 104 to be a source of happiness and joy for the soul:

Psalm 104:15a - The Lord provides wine which makes man's heart glad [׀ ׀ ׀ ׀ sameach: glad, happy, joyful].

c. Solomon, who is an expert on such matters, informs us that moderate portions of wine eases the burden of life's exigencies:



Proverbs 31:6 - Give strong drink [שֵׁכָר *shechar*: beer] to him who is perishing [an ancient form of narcotic to mask the pain of the terminally ill], and wine to those who are distressed [physical and mental suffering of those who are afflicted, in grief, or in suffering];

v. 17 - Let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more [a means of soothing the senses while under pressure].

In marriage the vows pledged are to remain inviolate whether in prosperity or adversity. When hard times come, the husband and wife are allowed moderate consumption of alcohol, specifically wine. This will provide for them a period of R&R—rest and relaxation—a brief oasis away from the storms of life.

PRINCIPLE: Alcohol is to be avoided entirely by children since their bodies are not capable of metabolizing it efficiently. Further, early use will lead to disease of the liver.

PRINCIPLE: Alcohol lowers one's inhibitions and as such should only be taken in moderation. It is especially dangerous to over-imbibe in social situations among strangers. Those whose weakness is sexual lust are often taken advantage of while intoxicated since they can be easily influenced to assuage this agent provocateur.

PRINCIPLE: Drunkenness is a sin and should be avoided. However, a husband and wife may imbibe moderately and if sex results then all the better.