

Drinking In Moderation?

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The question has long been pondered in the Lord's Church, "Can I drink alcohol in moderation?" To be fair, that is a valid question to ask. After all, the Bible never specifically says, "Thou shall not drink." Without a doubt the Bible condemns drunkenness (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-21), but is a little wine just fine? Truthfully, these are questions that need to be addressed and discussed in the Lord's Church because our souls depend on it. So, with that in mind, let's notice what God's Word says on the subject.

First, as has already been noted, often the argument is made, "The Bible never specifically says we cannot drink alcohol." However, did you know that is simply not true? In fact, the Greek language highlights the sin drinking is. In Ephesians 5:18 the Bible says, "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit." So, what exactly does the Greek tell us? The phrase "do not be drunk" is translated "Methysko" which means "to be made drunk." The meaning of the phrase, then forces us to ask the question, "how are we made drunk?" and friends, the answer is found in the first sip of alcohol. We begin the process of becoming drunk, when our lips touch the bottle. When Paul writes, "do not be drunk" he is literally saying, do not begin the process of being made drunk. Scripture does not give us the liberty to drink in moderation.

Another argument often made for drinking in moderation is rooted in the command Paul gave Timothy. In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he gives Timothy a prescription for his stomach illness. In 1 Timothy 5:23 the Bible says, "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities." Social drinkers will often turn to this passage to defend their actions, but is that really the application to take away? The problem is, they focus too much on what Paul told Timothy, rather than why Paul told Timothy. We all need to ask ourselves the logical question, "Why did Paul tell Timothy to take some wine, if drinking it was a normal practice for a Christian?". We also cannot assume that the wine Paul told Timothy to take was alcoholic. Did you know in the New Testament the word for wine could mean anything from an alcoholic beverage to a grape still on the vine? Certainly it's possible the wine Paul told Timothy to take was simply grape juice. In fact, doctors today say under no circumstances is it good to drink wine for health benefits. Rather, grape juice is the recommended beverage. The reality is, we cannot turn to this passage and draw the conclusion it is alright to have a drink here and there.

In conclusion, the Bible is our only source of authority, and God's Word makes it clear drinking should have no place in the life of a Christian. If we strive each day to live in accordance with God's will, drinking in moderation will never be a thought, nor will alcohol ever touch our lips.