

Drugs and Alcohol

Introduction:

A. Drugs and alcohol is a major problem causing death, injury, illness, and emotional problems.

B. The problem of alcohol.

1. The legal drinking age in the US is 21, but on average Americans have their first drink at age 14.
2. According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, almost 80% of high school students have tried alcohol – estimated there are over 3 million problem drinkers 14 and 17.
3. “Alcoholic beverages have become America’s number one public health problem, costing over \$117 billion a year and claiming at least 100,000 lives per year, 25 times as many as all illegal drugs combined.” – *Wine in the Bible*, by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi.
4. “One-half of all traffic fatalities and one-third of all traffic injuries are related to the abuse of alcohol. One-third of all suicides and one-third of all mental health disorders are estimated to be associated with serious alcohol abuse.”
– Daniel Whitfield – <http://chetday.com/alcoholandthebible.htm>
5. “Approximately 240,000 to 360,000 of the nation’s 12 million current undergraduates will ultimately die from alcohol-related causes — more than the number that will get M.A.s and Ph.D.s combined.”
– *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*
– <http://www.gdcada.org/statistics/consequences.htm>

C. The problem of drugs.

1. “Results from the 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse indicate that 10.8% of youth ages 12 to 17 are current drug users, having used an illicit drug at least once in the previous month.”
 - a. “The 2001 survey also shows that 20.8% of youth reported using illicit drugs at least once in the past year, and 28.4% reported having used drugs at least once during their lifetime.”
2. “Among youth that smoked cigarettes, the rate of past month illicit drug use was 48%, compared with 5.3% for nonsmokers.”
3. One source reported:
 - a. “The average age at which teens start using tobacco is a little past 12 years old.”
 - b. “The average age at which they start drinking alcohol is almost 13.”
 - c. “And the average age at which they start smoking marijuana is 14.”
4. The number of cocaine-related emergency room episodes in 2002 was 199,000.
5. “At least half of adults arrested for major crimes — including homicide, theft, and assault — tested positive for drugs at the time of their arrest. Among those convicted of violent crimes, approximately half of state prison’s inmates and 40% of federal prisoners had been drinking or taking drugs at the time of their offense.”
6. “In calendar year **2000**, an estimated 14.0 million Americans were current illicit drug users, meaning they had used an illicit drug during the month prior to interview. This estimate represents 6.3 percent of the population 12 years old and older.”
7. “In **2002**, an estimated 19.5 million Americans aged 12 or older were current illicit drug users.”
8. “There were 21,683 Deaths from Drug - Induced Causes in 2001 (legal and illegal drugs).”

D. Are Christians immune to these issues?

1. Unfortunately not.
2. How DO these things affect Christians?
 - a. Some Christians themselves have problems with drugs and alcohol.
 - b. Children of parents who are users.
 - c. All parents have to be concerned about these issues because of peer pressure on their kids.
 - d. Sometimes an unbelieving spouse, or a close friend, or a co-worker is dealing with these issues (whether directly or indirectly).
- E. In this lesson we want to look at the problem of illegal drugs and alcohol and note why the use of such is sinful.

I. First, Consider How Alcohol affects a person.

- A. What is it that causes people to go after it so, and even causes some Christians to defend its use?
- B. The Bible not only discusses the use of liquor, but it also explains its effects on a person.
 - 1. Many of these points apply equally to illicit drug use.
- C. **Alcoholic beverages are deceptive.**
 - 1. Prov.20:1; 23:31,32.
 - 2. Alcohol has an appeal that is only a veneer that hides pain and sorrow – cf. Jer.25:27; 48:26.
 - 3. Alcohol is deceptive so that even though there are some physical consequences that come the morning after, all they can remember is the momentary pleasure of the night before.
 - 4. People who drink often have no idea how drunk they are because of its deceptive nature.
 - a. In 1982 Anheuser-Busch began their “Know When To Say When” ad campaign.
 - 1) The more one drinks the more deceived they are about how drunk they are and thus they aren’t able to “Know When To Say When.”
- D. **Alcohol causes errors in judgment.**
 - 1. Isa.28:7; Hos.4:11.
 - 2. The affects of alcohol are not limited to vision and reaction times, but mental judgment as well.
 - a. The fact is alcohol disrupts your normal thinking patterns and you’re not able to adjust for that.
 - b. Thus, the drinker makes errors in judgment, errors in thinking, errors of reasoning or figuring out what is going on and what should be done in response to it.
 - 3. He will often make decisions he would never make if he was sober.
 - 4. “When driving under the influence of alcohol, tests have indicated that errors in judgment and loss of control increase as soon as alcohol is present in the blood stream.”
 - a. NOT when you reach .08%, but when it hits the blood stream!
- E. **Alcohol lowers moral standards.**
 - 1. Hab.2:15; cf. Gen.9:20-23.
 - 2. This is often the reason why alcohol is used to “loosen up” a party.
 - a. Drunk people will do things they would be embarrassed to do while sober.
 - 3. As one person who had overcome an alcohol addiction put it, “alcohol abuse lowers your moral standards, and one becomes selfish, devious, manipulative and cruel.”
 - 4. Alcohol has often been used to loosen someone up so that illicit sexual activity can take place.
 - 5. Again, he will often make decisions he would never make if he was sober.
- F. **Detailed description of the effects of alcohol.**
 - 1. Prov.23:29-35– It causes woes and sorrows; strife and anger; lose tongues and babbling to one self. It affects the memory (one can get hurt and not feel it nor remember were the injuries came from the next day); Redness of the eyes. It is referred to as a poison. They see strange things (hallucinations). They will seek it yet again.
- G. **Alcohol is addictive.**
 - 1. A person under its influence would do just about anything for another drink.
 - 2. Prov.23:35; Isa.5:11; Joel 1:5.

II. Why Is Drug or Alcohol Use Wrong?

- A. **It is Illegal.**
 - 1. Most drugs that are abused are illegal, and alcohol is still illegal in some parts of the country and illegal for everyone under 21.
 - 2. We are to obey the laws of the land – 1 Pet.2:13,14; Rom.13:1,2.
 - 3. Even if there was nothing else wrong with it, Christians could not use drugs or in many cases alcohol because they are illegal.

B. They impair our ability to serve the Lord.

1. Our body is a temple of the H.S. – 1 Cor.6:15-20.
2. As Christians we are to make use of our bodies in His service – Rom.6:12,13.
 - a. Is our body being used as an instrument of righteousness when it's chemically abused?
 - b. How is it an instrument of righteousness when it is used in unrighteousness, since, if nothing else, it's illegal?
3. Paul's desire was to use his flesh to further the spiritual progress of his brethren – Phil.1:21-25.
 - a. Does shortening our lives through drugs accomplish what is best for those around us?
4. Clearly the use of drugs and alcohol can shorten our life and thereby take away our ability to carry out the Lord's will for us.

C. They are addictive.

1. 1 Cor.6:12.
2. Addiction means: "The state of being enslaved to a habit, practice, or something that is a psychological or physical form of habit, as narcotics, to such an extent that its cessation causes severe trauma" – Random House Dictionary.
3. No one sets out to be addicted to anything.
4. One source listed 150 different things to which people can be addicted – so we are talking about more than just drugs and alcohol.
5. To allow myself to become addicted is to focus my affections on the flesh and no longer be focused on serving the Lord.

D. They destroy our influence.

1. 1 Pet.2:13-16; Titus 2:7,8.
2. If we use illegal drugs and alcohol we give foolish men reason to speak evil of us.
3. What would you think of a preacher who used some drugs or had a six pack in the fridge?
 - a. His influence would be destroyed and so would yours.

E. They rob us of our mental control.

1. 1 Pet.4:7– *"... be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer:"*
2. **Sound Mind.**
 - a. From SOPHRONEO "signifies (a) to be of sound mind, or in one's right mind, sober-minded" – Vine's.
 - b. 2 Cor.5:13; Mk.5:15; Rom.12:3.
3. **Sober** – from NEPHO.
 - a. Vine, page 1057– "signifies to be free from the influence of intoxicants."
 - b. Thayer, page 425, on another form of the word– "sober, temperate; abstaining from wine."
 - c. Strong– "to abstain from wine (keep sober)."
 - d. Adam Clark says it literally means, "DO NOT DRINK! or do not swallow down."
 - e. If we are going to be sober as the N.T. clearly teaches us to be, then we must not consume ("swallow down") intoxicants.
 - f. 1 Thess.5:6-8; 1 Pet.1:13; 2 Tim.4:5; 1 Pet.5:8.
4. Clearly the Christian is to have complete control of his mind at all times – 2 Cor.10:5.
 - a. Clearly such is not possible when under the influence of ANY intoxicant.

III. How to Overcome Such Addictions.

A. Admit that you have a problem.

1. Until we are able to admit we have a problem we will not do anything about correcting it.
2. This is the first step in overcoming any addiction's power over us.
3. There are several passages in the New Testament which warn against self-deception.
 - a. 1 Jn.1:8; Gal.6:3; Jas.1:26.
4. We **MUST** acknowledge that we have a problem that needs to be dealt with.

B. Take full responsibility for the problem.

1. One must admit: "This is my problem and it is up to me to overcome it."
2. One must learn self-control – 1 Cor.9:24-27.
3. Strong self-discipline is the key – Gen.4:7,8.
4. The devil cannot exert any power over us other than what we give to him – Jas.4:7.

C. Turn to God with earnestness and plead for help from Him.

1. Pray hard, earnestly for help, especially when tempted.
2. Psa.40:1,2,11-13; 116:1-7; Matt.26:41.

D. Remove all occasions of temptation.

1. 2 Tim.2:22; 1 Cor.6:18; Prov.23:31.
 - a. The addiction will "call out" and make itself seem appealing.
2. "Those who flee temptation generally leave a forwarding address" – Lane Olinghouse.

E. Allow God's word to be a "lamp unto our feet" guiding us away from the addiction.

1. The word of God is living and powerful – Heb.4:12.
2. Study of the word, prayer, and worship are essential.

F. Fill the void with Good things.

1. Consider the demon that left the house – Lk.11:24-26.
 - a. It was good to clean the house, but it was not enough,
 - b. The house left empty was open for the return of the unclean spirit which came back w/more.
 - c. The point is to clean the house, but also fill it with good things leaving no room for the bad.
 - d. We must fill our minds and our schedules with the things of the Lord to avoid a return of the evil we cast out.

G. Seek other Christians who can help.

1. Fellow Christians can comfort and encourage us – Heb.3:13; 10:24.
2. As members of a local congregation, Christians have a strong "support group."

Conclusion:

- A. Satan has conquered over many with drugs and alcohol.
- B. Let's be wise and keep our thoughts and bodies under control so he will not cause us to lose our souls.