**Undeniable Reasons Not To Drink (At All!) (SR: Prov. 23:29-35)**

 We are living in a church age where drinking has become "hipster" for some. Christians. They even go so far as to post pictures of their signature drink on Facebook. Middle-aged Christian women name-drop their favorite brand of *Pinot Grigio* to impress their wine snob friends. Churches send direct-mail postcards that read, "Give our church a shot!" featuring an edgy shot glass graphic.

As a preacher, brother, son, father, & friend, some of the worst "shudder moments" I have witnessed in the lives of others have been b/c of alcohol. You have come too late to tell me it's God's best for a Christian to drink. As for me, I made a decision to give my life to follow Jesus and nothing was going to hinder my walk. For me, abstinence is a no-brainer.

This lesson is a heartfelt plea. I humbly ask you to table any kneejerk, pro-alcohol, fight-for-my-right-to-drink arguments that you have ever heard, or made, and prayerfully consider the thoughts I have to present to you this morning.

**I. God Demands My Sobriety.**

 A. God is holy; alcohol is not. It is a matter of whose will we prioritize (1Pet. 4:1-3).

1. Alcohol doesn't bring me closer to the Lord when I drink, but further away.

2. Christians are called to live a life of total surrender & separation from the world. The only influence we should be "under" is God's (Eph. 5:18).

3. God’s influence is accomplished through prayer and Bible study. Neither comports with alcoholic consumption (contrast Gal. 5:19-21, 22f).

 B. God’s command is clear (Rom. 13:13f).

1. I can't be sober-minded if I'm not sober (1Co. 15:34; 1Th. 5:6-8; 2Tim. 4:5; 1Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:8).

2. I can’t be ready for the return of Jesus if I’m not sober. I want to be fully awake and ready for the return of Christ, not drowsy, sluggish & fuzzy.

 3. The Bible tells me to be alert; alcohol delays my reaction time.

 C. God’s command makes great practical sense.

 1. Alcohol skews my judgment and lowers my resolve to resist temptation. It increases the difficulty of practicing self-control.

 2. Alcohol causes me to lose my filter. It fills my mind with impure thoughts.

 3. Arguments for moderation are inconsistent. Moderate drinking? How about moderate pornography or moderate heroin use or moderate lying or moderate adultery?

 D. The Bible says that no drunkards will enter the kingdom of God (1Cor. 6:10f). Being drunk starts with one drink. I don't want to see how far outside the lines I can color when eternity is at stake.

E. Alcohol doesn't help me run the race that Jesus has marked before me to finish with more accuracy. It does the polar opposite. If it could hinder my walk or dishonor the lordship of Jesus Christ, I need to forsake it.

**II. My Family Needs My Sobriety.**

 A. My Physical Family:

1. Show me a family for whom alcohol has made a positive difference in their lives. You won't be able to.

2. Alcohol has ruined many, many marriages.

3. What I do in moderation, my children will do in excess.

4. Don't want your teenagers to drink? Yep, same reasons apply to you.

 B. My Spiritual Family (1Cor. 5:11 – my brothers have to withdraw if I get drunk)

 1. I don't want to make my brother/sister stumble in the name of exercising my "Christian liberties." My choice could cause another’s demise.

 2. Alcohol is a waster—money, gifts and talents, destinies and so on.

 3. If I don't start drinking, I'll never have to stop.

**III. My Non-Christian Friends Need My Sobriety (1Pet. 4:3-5 – they must be shocked!)**

A. Alcohol severely tarnishes my evangelism for the Lord (1Tim. 5:14; 6:1; et al).

B. Even the unsaved know I shouldn't drink. Bible in one hand, beer in the other— any lost person could point this out as a confusing contradiction. I have never heard anyone say, "Wow, that gin and tonic made me feel so Christ-like!"

C. I want to avoid all appearances of evil. Alcohol doesn't bring others closer to the Lord when they see me drinking, but further away. When the world sees us drinking, it sends the message that Jesus isn't enough (cf. Rom. 12:2).

D. If Christians are told not to associate with drunkards (1Cor. 5:11), how much more should we be sober to influence those outside the church?

**IV. My Life Is Better Overall With Sobriety (Is. 19:14; Jer. 25:27)**

A. Alcohol has one assignment: destruction. We’ve seen already that it destroys families, influence, & holiness. Consider these other facts regarding alcohol.

1. Alcohol is chemically considered a depressant. Anything that depresses should be avoided at all costs, not run toward!

2. Alcohol is a legal mind-altering drug, is insanely addictive, and kills brain cells. It can bring only brokenness. But some hopelessly argue, “I don't get drunk. I only have one or two drinks." If they didn't affect you, you would drink any other number of non-altering drinks; it’d be cheaper!

3. Alcohol leads to wicked behavior. It is a factor in 50% of violent crimes.

 B. Alcohol pretends to be that which it is not.

 1. It claims to provide courage and resolve; what it provides in actuality is stupidity and asinine-decision-making. When God commends wisdom, can these effects of alcohol suffice?

 2. It claims to numb pain and sorrow; in actuality it multiplies. Only Jesus can heal pains and sorrows (1Pet. 5:6f).

 3. It claims to bring fun & joy; in actuality, many regrets are associated w/ it.

 4. It claims to bring peace; in actuality it’s a counterfeit & gives turbulence.

C. Fundamentally, alcohol leaves me worse, not better. Alcohol distracts and derails you from living the victorious life for which Christ died (Heb. 12:1).

 D. No one has ever said, "If only I had taken a drink, things wouldn't have gotten out of control." Alcohol causes me to act in ways I normally wouldn't. It makes me forget. It can make me forget that I am married, that I am saved and so on.

Prov. 23:29ff. For any argument that tries to justify Christian drinking, there are at least 50 other reasons not to. The writing is on the wall. It's not God's best for Christians to drink. We hope this lesson has provided you w/ some considerations that will modify the direction of you life, particularly for advocates of social/moderate drinking. It’s not worth it. We also hope this lesson helps you in your defense to others against the perils of drinking, whether it be friends outside of the church or the deluded within the church.