

WHO WOULD  
*Kiss*  
A  
SNAKE?



THE CHRISTIAN  
AND ALCOHOL

# **Who Would Kiss a Snake?**

## ***The Christian and Alcohol***

Some people say God doesn't mind if Christians drink alcoholic beverages. Many religious people used to feel drinking was okay as long as you didn't get drunk, but attitudes are changing. A recent poll by the Barna Group reveals that one out of every five people who call themselves Christians don't think it is sin to get drunk. What do you think? More importantly, how does God feel about Christians using alcohol? What does the Bible say?

### ***Wine in the Bible***

Bible students debate whether the wine Jesus and His disciples drank was alcoholic or nonalcoholic. While strong arguments are offered on both sides of the controversy, we don't benefit by speculating about uncertainties. Some-times unfermented grape juice, which is not intoxicating, is also called wine.

The Bible affirms that wine can be a

blessing. One Bible poet praised God for causing *the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart* (Psalm 104:14, 15).

And yet, we can be sure that the wisest approach for the Christian is to abstain from alcoholic drinks. The Bible repeats ominous warnings against wine's destructive effects and the dangers of drinking. Drunkenness will destroy your life!

*Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder* (Proverbs 23:29, 30, 32).

*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise* (Proverbs 20:1).

*He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor*

*man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich (Proverbs 21:17).*

*It is not for kings . . . it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink (Proverbs 31:4).*

*But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment (Isaiah 28:7).*

The Old Testament's strong warnings against alcohol's destructive properties tell us it is foolish and presumptuous for the follower of Christ to drink for pleasure. Who would kiss a snake?

### ***The Dangers of Drunkenness and Addiction***

All around us the results of using alcohol confirm the Bible's warnings. Drunkenness and alcohol addiction have become a major problem. Each year, tens of thousands of Americans seek help in substance abuse centers. Young people

especially are likely to abuse alcohol, drinking until they're drunk, and often become addicted to alcohol. Nearly half of America's teenagers drink alcohol.

The New Testament warns even more strongly than the Old Testament against drinking. Christ and His apostles repeatedly declare that a drunkard has no share in the kingdom of God: *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God* (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; see also Luke 21:34; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:11; Galatians 5:21; and 1 Peter 4:3).

### ***The Danger My Drinking May Pose to Others***

Maybe you are thinking, *Oh, yes, but I'm strong enough not to get drunk.* Maybe. But we must also consider the effects our drinking may have on our

children and our brothers and sisters in Christ.

God says emphatically that we must avoid any behavior that might contribute to someone else falling into sin: *Let us . . . resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way . . . if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died* (Romans 14:13, 15, NKJV).

Maybe *you* are strong, but think how awful it would be to find out that your drinking has caused a weaker person to fall into sin and spiritual death. The use of an intoxicating, addicting substance such as alcohol is a very serious matter because many who become addicted are never able to overcome their addiction. Would you like to discover at God's final judgment that your self-indulgence had caused a brother or sister to fall?

Denying ourselves the use of alcohol for our brother's sake is a small sacrifice compared to how greatly a weaker person may benefit. And think about this: If

abstaining from drinking does seem too great a sacrifice, maybe you are not really as strong as you think.

### ***The Cost of Drinking***

Drinking is expensive. Americans spend over \$150 billion every year on alcohol. God wants His children to help others in need. How can Christ's followers selfishly spend money on wining and dining, while so many people go without food, or clothes, or a scrap of Scripture for their children? Just think how much suffering \$150 billion could relieve!

### ***Have a Drink?***

The followers of Jesus are His purifying salt and illuminating light in a dark world. He has given us His very own Spirit so that we can help lost people find their way into His pure, whole, and righteous kingdom. How can we justify dissipating our strength and wasting God's gifts on drinking for pleasure, especially when it may create a temptation for others? Is it Christlike to run the risk of being overcome with drunkenness

just for temporary pleasure? Would *you* kiss a snake?

On the other hand, the more devoted your heart is to Christ, the more fit you will be to advance His kingdom. We must keep our minds clear, so that we are ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us, and we ought to devote our resources to bringing His love and blessings to others who are suffering. It is the Spirit of Jesus to deny one's self for the sake of others, and that Spirit can best live in and guide a heart that is voluntarily free from the use of alcoholic drinks.

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