

Reasons I Don't Drink

by Bryan Gibson

I don't want to become an alcoholic (drunkard), because I know what happens to them—in this life (e.g., Noah in Genesis 9:20-24; and Lot in Genesis 19:30-38), and the next (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21). Completely abstain from alcohol—that's the best way to make sure I never become one.

I love my wife and children, so I don't want them to develop a drinking problem either. My drinking could put a stumbling block in front of them (and potentially others), and that's enough right there to cause me to lose my soul (Matthew 18:6-7; Romans 14:13). Keep my family safe and provide the best spiritual environment possible—these are my duties as a husband and father, and drinking doesn't seem to be compatible with either one. Again, it's my conviction that the best course is to completely abstain.

Drinking problem or not, alcohol can still harm me mentally and physically. I know that from medical studies, from my observations of others, and from my study of the Scriptures (Leviticus 10:8-11; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5; Isaiah 28:7-8). Just thinking about the mental effects alone—doesn't that explain the warnings about drinking and driving? And doesn't it also explain why companies don't want their employees to drink at all during working hours?

Speaking of drinking and driving, that's something I would just as soon completely avoid. "Love does no harm to a neighbor" (Romans 13:10), so obviously I don't want to put him in harm's way on the highway. It scares me to think about killing someone because I was too impaired to think clearly or react properly. It would land me in jail, but the mental anguish might just be the worst part. But I don't intend to let this happen, because I don't intend to drink.

I worry, too, about alcohol's effect on my ability to resist temptation. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). It doesn't take much alcohol to lower my powers of resistance, and I don't want to give the devil even the slightest advantage. I want all my defenses in place, so clearly the best course for my soul is to completely abstain.

And finally, I have to consider the way drinking could hurt my influence on others. Because I want to save as many people as possible, it's very important that I preserve my influence for good (1 Corinthians 9:19-22). Could I drink and still be that same "salt of the earth" and "light of the world"? (Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:14-16). For example, if you readers saw me drinking, or knew that I drank, would you take these articles as seriously? That's what I thought.

"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those

who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: "They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?" (Proverbs 23:29-35).