

Does God Tell You to Avoid Alcohol?

I am a Christian and I don't drink. I am also an ordained minister and ex-alcoholic. I need to make that disclaimer right up front. Although it makes me biased, it also makes me an expert on this hotly debated issue.

Some of the worst "shudder moments" of my life have been under the influence, and as a pastor, some of the worst "shudder moments" I have witnessed in the lives of others have been because of alcohol. You have come too late to tell me it's God's best for a Christian to drink.

We are living in a church age where drinking has become "hipster" for some. Christian young adults 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. Even some pastors drink. Not this one.

I stopped drinking when I became a Christian 34 years ago. No one told me to abstain. I just knew it would be contradictory and self-defeating to my relationship with Christ. I had given my life to follow Jesus and nothing was going to hinder my walk. For me, it was a no-brainer.

This article is not a theological defense on the topic of Christians and alcohol (another article for another time), but it is a heartfelt plea. I humbly ask you to table any knee-jerk, pro-alcohol, fight-for-my-right-to-drink arguments that you have ever heard, or made, and prayerfully consider this list.

Here are 50 reasons why I don't drink:

1. I can't be sober-minded if I'm not sober.
2. Alcohol has an assignment: destruction.
3. Alcohol is a depressant. Anything that depresses should be avoided at all costs.
4. I don't want to make my brother or sister stumble in the name of exercising my "Christian liberties." My choice to drink could lead to someone's demise.
5. Alcohol skews my judgment.
6. Alcohol leaves me worse, not better.
7. What I do in moderation, my children will do in excess.
8. 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.
9. Alcohol doesn't bring others closer to the Lord when they see me drinking, but further away.
10. Alcohol doesn't bring me closer to the Lord when I drink, but further away.
11. I want to be fully awake and ready for the return of Christ, not drowsy, sluggish and fuzzy.
12. Show me a family for whom alcohol has made a positive difference in their lives. You won't be able to.
13. I have never heard anyone say, "Wow, that gin and tonic made me feel so Christlike!"
14. I want to avoid all appearances of evil.
15. Alcohol makes it much harder for me to practice the fruit of self-control.
16. Alcohol causes me to lose my filter.

17. Alcohol is a legal mind-altering drug.
18. Alcohol is addictive.
19. Alcohol is a numbing agent for pain and sorrow only Jesus can heal.
20. Many regrets are associated with alcohol. (I can give you a whole bunch!)
21. No one has ever said, "If only I had taken a drink, things wouldn't have gotten out of control."
22. Alcohol causes me to act in ways I normally wouldn't.
23. Alcohol kills brain cells.
24. Alcohol is a counterfeit and provides a false peace.
25. The Bible says that no drunkards will enter the kingdom of God. 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.
26. Alcohol is a waster—money, gifts and talents, destinies and so on.
27. Alcohol leads to really bad behavior. It is a factor in 50 percent of violent crimes.
28. Alcohol distracts and derails you from living the victorious life for which Christ died.
29. Wisdom is the principle thing that I need to pursue at all cost; alcohol makes me stupid.
30. Alcohol has ruined many, many marriages.
31. The only influence I should be "under" is God's.
32. The Bible tells me to be alert; alcohol delays my reaction time.

33. If I don't start drinking, I'll never have to stop.
34. Alcohol severely tarnishes my testimony.
35. Don't want your teenagers to drink? Yep, same reasons apply to you.
36. God is holy; alcohol is not.
37. Alcohol and prayer don't mix.
38. Alcohol and Bible study don't mix.
39. Alcohol lowers my resolve to resist temptation.
40. Alcohol = Brokenness (broken lives, health, dreams and so on)
41. When the world sees us drinking, it sends the message that Jesus isn't enough.
42. Moderate drinking? How about moderate pornography or moderate heroin use or moderate lying or moderate adultery?
43. Christians are called to live a life of total surrender and separation from the world.
44. Alcohol makes me forget. It can make me forget that I am married, that I am saved and so on.
45. "I don't get drunk. I only have one or two drinks." If they didn't affect you, you would drink soda.
46. I should never look to the glass or bottle for joy, which can only be found in the Lord Jesus Christ.
47. Alcohol fills my mind with impure thoughts.
48. If it could hinder my faith walk or love walk or dishonor the lordship of Jesus Christ, I need to forsake it.
49. Alcohol doesn't help me run the race that Jesus has marked

before me to finish with more accuracy. It does the polar opposite.

50. 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. {eoa}

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