

Megachurch Pastor Asks: 'Is It Wise for Christians to Drink Alcohol?'

Drinking alcohol has been a topic of heated-discussion amongst the church for quite a long time.

The Bible references wine on numerous occasions, while Peter admonishes believers to be "sober-minded" throughout the book of 1 Peter.

Author and senior pastor at Long Hollow Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee, Robby Gallaty addressed the question, "Is it wise for a Christian to drink alcohol" in a recent sermon.

"Alcohol is a pretty hot pastors I talk to, with Christians I meet with, everybody wants to know about drinking," says Gallaty.

It is naturally a place of confusion and interest for American Christians who want to do the right thing according to the Bible, but are beset on multiple sides about what the Bible interprets as appropriate when it comes to drinking.

"The way you look at drinking kind you on one of two sides: on one side you may use drinking as a litmus test to determine someone's spirituality. You may judge someone and say 'oh look there, they drink,' and so they live this way," Gallaty discusses with his congregation.

"On the other hand, you look at someone who doesn't drink or abstains from drinking as being 'old-fashioned' or maybe legalistic in their faith, and so it's important for us to figure out what the Bible actually says about drinking," he adds.

Gallaty has been open throughout his ministry regarding past struggles with alcoholism and drug use in his earlier years. After thousands of dollars and two rehab stints, Gallaty made the decision to give up drinking alcohol for good.

“By God’s grace, last Monday, May 1, I haven’t drank alcohol in 20 years,” he shares.

Taking the approach of not whether the Bible says to or not, Gallaty asks the congregation, “Is it wise to drink alcohol?” putting the decision of imbibing squarely in the laps of the individual and their personal convictions.

“I want you to go figure it out for yourself,” Gallaty explains.

Addressing what the Bible says about alcohol, Gallaty shares several points in helping a Christian come to the decision themselves about whether to drink or not.

- Drinking is not a sin (John 2:1-11).
- Drunkenness is a sin (Gal. 5:19-21).
- Wine was safer than water [to drink] in the first century.
- Drinking alcohol can lead to reckless living (Eph. 5:15-18).
- Drinking alcohol can cause others to stumble (Rom. 14:15).
- Drinking alcohol masks a deeper problem (Prov. 31:6-7).

Going through Scripture and addressing what the apostle Paul says about drinking, wisdom and sober-mindedness, Gallaty comes to a definitive answer for his question: Is it wise for Christians to drink alcohol?

One particular area that Gallaty researched was the texts of Charles Quarles, a research professor of New Testament and biblical theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, who wrote in depth about the dilution process of

wine in the biblical age.

“A careful study of the Mishnah and Talmuds [Jewish texts] shows that the normal dilution rate among the Jews was three parts water to one part wine,” Quarles wrote. “[T]his was very likely the commonly accepted dilution rate among Jews of the [New Testament] era as well. This dilution rate reduces the alcohol content of New Testament wine to to 3.0 percent.”

Pastor Gallaty then took the numbers Quarles researched and compared them to the alcohol content of multiple spirits imbibed in today’s culture.



“The answer is, according to Paul, in many situations and circumstances at different stages of life, it’s not,” wise for Christians to drink alcohol, Gallaty says.

The best thing a Spirit-filled Christian can do in times of questioning and uncertainty, when they’ve heard the different lessons preached by biblical authorities but still have questions, is to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and ask, “Lord, what do You want me to do about this situation?”

Allowing the Holy Spirit to guide one’s path is not always easy, but it is the best decision a Christian can make.

To watch Pastor Gallaty’s full message on Christians and alcohol click here.

James Lasher is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.