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ALCOHOL and DRUNKENNESS



New Brain Software:
Facts about alcohol and other drugs

AIM:

- Alcohol is widely used and available in society, and there is little condemnation of drunkenness in society, other than while driving/working etc.
- Furthermore, the church may be perceived to be giving mixed messages about alcohol, given that Jesus turned water to wine, and wine is used as part of the Holy Liturgy.

- The aim of this lesson is to give a very clear and strong message to the kids – the Lord undeniably condemns drunkenness. This is clearly stated in many places in the Bible.

- It is critical in this lesson that each student is aware of the prohibition on drunkenness.
- The aim of this lesson should NOT be to discuss the rightness or wrongness of drinking in moderation. To do so, may cloud the ultimate message which is the absolute rejection of drunkenness.
- Do not dwell on the negative health effects of alcohol or the possible dangers of drinking, as rarely will a teenager feel that they are at risk of health problems, nor will they be scared to drink if many of their friends are drinking. Rather, they should avoid drunkenness because of the clear biblical statements condemning excessive drinking.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR SERVANTS:

- Review your own attitude and practices regarding alcohol.

LESSON PLAN

A. EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

1. Short term effects

- The following effects are felt as a person progressively becomes more drunk:
 - i) Dulling of the neurological system.
 - ii) Feeling of relaxation and disinhibition (start to do and say things you ordinarily would not).
 - iii) Feel euphoric – everything is good in the world.
 - iv) Lethargic and slowing of motor skills
 - v) Depressed and sometimes aggressive (hence the many alcohol related crimes and incidents)
 - vi) Severe distortion of neurological function – slurred speech, staggering gate, delayed thought and illogical thought processes. Inco-ordination.
 - vii) Nausea and vomiting – caused by the irritation the central nervous system by the alcohol, as well as an attempt by the body to expel the alcohol from it.
 - viii) Sometimes prolonged loss of consciousness if the blood alcohol level becomes too high, as there is a profound depression of the central nervous system,

and the breathing reflex may become severely depressed leading to a low blood oxygen level.

ix) The next day frequently severe headaches/nausea/vomiting – the hangover.

2. Long-term effects

- i) Liver failure – fatty liver which gradually becomes destroyed (cirrhosis)
- ii) Brain damage – especially damage to the balance and co-ordination part of the brain, as well as the ability to think properly.
- iii) Heart damage – alcoholic cardiomyopathy
- iv) Increased risk of cancer of the mouth and throat, oesophagus (food pipe), stomach and pancreas.

B. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ALCOHOL?

1. Alcohol as a Substance

- In and of itself, alcohol is not an evil substance.
- Wine is mentioned repeatedly in the old and new testaments.
- Jesus turned water to wine at the wedding of Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11).
- There was wine present at the last supper.
- In the church we use wine as part of the sacrament of the Holy Liturgy. This is fermented alcoholic wine.
- Therefore, wine or alcohol itself is not evil and prohibited.

2. Drunkenness

- There is absolutely no doubt that God rejects the practice of drunkenness.
- While alcohol is a creation of God, He expressly states that it should not be abused, and that people should NEVER get drunk.
- That drunkenness is condemned by God is very clearly and undeniably stated in the Bible, in many different sections:

Romans 13:13-14

¹³Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts.

Ephesians 5:17-19

¹⁷Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

1 Thessalonians 5:6-8

⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

1 Corinthians 5:11

¹¹But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

C. WHY IS THE LORD AGAINST DRUNKENNESS?

1. Drunkenness makes a person unable to resist sin

- a) The devil is always roaming around us waiting to make us fall and to destroy us.
- Even if we are always extremely aware and alert we may still fall.

1 Peter 5:8

⁸Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in the faith....

- b) As we know that the devil is a strong opponent who would like to make us fall, we should not deliberately put ourselves into a weak position in which he will more easily overcome us.
- Getting drunk weakens our ability to resist sin.
- This is clearly stated in the Bible:

Proverbs 20:1

*¹ Wine is a mocker,
Strong drink is a brawler,
And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.*

Proverbs 31:4-5

*⁴ It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
It is not for kings to drink wine,
Nor for princes intoxicating drink;
⁵ Lest they drink and forget the law,
And pervert the justice of all the afflicted.*

- c) EXAMPLE - This is clear in the story of Lot, such that when he became drunk, he allowed himself to fall in sin with his two daughters. He ordinarily would not have done this sin, but due to the alcohol, he could not resist it. Note that the people who were born to the two daughters, the Moabites and the Ammonites, were cursed by God.

Genesis 19:30-38

³⁰Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave. ³¹Now the firstborn said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. ³²Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father.” ³³So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

³⁴It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." ³⁵Then they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

³⁶Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. ³⁷The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day.

2. Drunkenness leads to poor judgement and mistakes

a) Noah's Error when he got drunk, and the curse that resulted on Ham:

- Ham's offspring was Canaan, the children that were forced out of the land of Canaan to make way for the nation of Israel.

Genesis 9: 20-25

²⁰And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. ²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. ²³But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

²⁴So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. ²⁵Then he said:

*"Cursed be Canaan;
A servant of servants
He shall be to his brethren."*

b) Isaiah 28:7

*⁷ But they also have erred through wine,
And through intoxicating drink are out of the way;
The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink,
They are swallowed up by wine,
They are out of the way through intoxicating drink;
They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.*

3. Drunkenness leads people to fail in their life plans and hopes

- Those who drink are frequently those who fail in their life

Proverbs 23:19-21

*¹⁹ Hear, my son, and be wise;
And guide your heart in the way.*

*²⁰ Do not mix with winebibbers,
Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;*

²¹ For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,

And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.

Proverbs 23:29-32

- ²⁹ *Who has woe?
Who has sorrow?
Who has contentions?
Who has complaints?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?*
- ³⁰ *Those who linger long at the wine,
Those who go in search of mixed wine.*
- ³¹ *Do not look on the wine when it is red,
When it sparkles in the cup,
When it swirls around smoothly;*
- ³² *At the last it bites like a serpent,
And stings like a viper.*

4. Drunkenness stops people inheriting the kingdom of God

- This is the greatest deterrent to getting drunk. God tells us very clearly in the Bible that those who get drunk will not inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

⁹Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor ⁹homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: ⁹adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, ⁹murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

5. Our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and drunkenness destroys that temple

- We know that alcohol in excess is bad for the body, and our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19

¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

6. Drunkenness stops us from “praying without ceasing”

a) We have been instructed to pray without ceasing, as that is God’s will for us:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies. ²¹Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

b) However, if we get drunk, we are not able to pray. This means that we have willingly and deliberately done something which separates us from God. In the Old testament, the priests were told to never approach God if they have had strong drink, showing that drinking separates us from Him.

Leviticus 10:8-11

⁸Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: ⁹“Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, ¹⁰that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, ¹¹and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.”

c) The result of that mistake will be catastrophic.

Luke 21:34-36

³⁴“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Watch therefore, and pray always that you may ^obe counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

D. IS IT PRACTICAL FOR US TO REJECT DRUNKENNESS

- Almost everybody in society gets drunk every now and again, most especially at university and it is strongly associated with some professions (eg. banking and finance, law).
- It is also very accepted to get drunk at certain big occasions (graduation ceremonies and weddings).
- However, we should never let the acceptance and normality of drunkenness in society affect us. The biblical intention is clear, drunkenness is wrong, and we should never allow ourselves to become drunk.
- People will think that we are strange for taking that stand, but St Peter warned us this would be the case 2000 years ago:

1 Peter 4:3-4

³For we have spent enough of our past ^olifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. ⁴In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.