

Alcohol and Drugs

By Paul Golata

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read Ephesians 5:18–21 and then read the comments related to Ephesians 5:18 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: If alcoholic consumption is not prohibited, what, if any, limits are placed on consumption? What is a virtuous strategy to avoid crossing these limits? How does one best make available his body and mind to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

Assignment Two

Read Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:37–40. Notice how God has commanded us to love Him with all our heart, soul, might, and mind. In other words, we are to love Him with all that we are. Read the comments related to 1 Corinthians 10:31 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: How does what people place into their bodies reflect on their love of God and their desire to give Him glory?

Assignment Three

Paul states that, due to the atoning sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, Christians have been bought with a price and therefore are to glorify God as Master with their bodies (1 Corinthians 6:20). Read the comments related to 1 Corinthians 6:10 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: If Christ is our Lord and Master and if inheriting the kingdom of God is at stake, what should be our response when it comes to using alcohol and drugs?

Scripture to Memorize

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,” Ephesians 5:18

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand what the Bible says about how one can be wise and prudent in the consideration of drinking alcohol and consuming non-medicinal drugs.

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He holds an MDivBL from Southwestern Seminary, an MBA from Pepperdine University in Malibu, California, and a BSEET from DeVry Institute of Technology in Chicago. Since 1991, Paul has been married to Dianna, and they have four daughters. When not writing youth curriculum, Paul enjoys playing his electric guitar and riding mountain bikes.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

The Seahawks have just come from behind to win their last game of the season. To celebrate, one of your friends invites you and others to rendezvous at the park. Upon your arrival, some of them are smoking cigarettes, others are drinking alcohol and you notice the scent of marijuana. You are invited to partake. You want to be cool and liked by your friends. How should you handle the situation, knowing that almost everybody around you is participating in one manner or another? Is celebrating events by using alcohol and/or drugs acceptable?

Live as Children of Light, Not as Pagans

Read Ephesians 5:3–20 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 8. walk as children of Light. To do so is to follow after what is good, true and right.

Verse 10. try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. One should take only those actions the Lord would want us to take.

Verse 18. And do not get drunk with wine. Jesus strictly prohibits getting drunk on wine. The practical implication extends to all other alcoholic beverages and would also apply to taking drugs in a manner contrary to medical practices. **For that is debauchery.** Drunkenness (or drug abuse) is reckless, careless, immoral, unrestrained, lacking in self-control, vicious and is thus not acceptable behavior. **but be filled with the Spirit.** In contrast to drunkenness, Christians are to be filled with God's Spirit. An implication is that when drunk, Christians are not properly oriented in the manner they are meant to be for God.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: If alcoholic consumption is not prohibited, what, if any, limits are placed on consumption? What is a virtuous strategy to avoid crossing these limits? How does one best make available his body and mind to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

On Your Own

God clearly has placed limitations on drinking alcoholic beverages. Many people have a hard time knowing when they have crossed the line to drunkenness. What implications does this have for disciples as they consider whether to partake? Is abstinence (avoidance) being legalistic or is it a prudent and practical method to employ? Write some of your thoughts below.

Discussion Question

How are Christians to fill themselves with God's Spirit? As a Christian, how much of the time are we to allow Jesus Christ to be King and Master over our lives?

Do All for the Glory of God

Read 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 out loud

Studying the Passage

Verse 24. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. The disciple has two priorities: God and others. **Verse 31. do all to the glory of God.** Everything one does, including the partaking of food and drink, must always be done with the intention of bringing glory to God the Creator and Redeemer.

Verse 33. not seeking my own advantage, but that of many. Place others first in your consideration. **that they may be saved.** Place other people first because you desire that your lifestyle witness and testimony lead them to salvation in Jesus Christ.

Verse 1. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. We should imitate the apostle Paul who imitated Jesus Christ.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share answers to the following question: How does what people place into their bodies reflect on their love of God and their desire to give Him glory?

Discussion Question

How does the fact that God wants your life to bring Him glory impact every decision and action you undertake, including the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs?

On Your Own

If we are to be imitators of Christ, as the apostle Paul states, what impact does this have on getting drunk or intoxicated by drugs? Given our fallen nature, what steps might we consider in our handling of alcohol and drugs? Write several of your thoughts and reactions in the space below.

Inherit the Kingdom of God

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Alcohol and drugs are present in the Scriptures because the Bible describes historical reality. This inclusion in Scriptures does not imply that alcohol and drugs are therefore without proper biblical guidelines and limitations based on biblical wisdom.

Verse 9. the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Those who consistently abuse alcohol are characterized as drunkards and are called out by the apostle Paul as living unrighteous lives.

Verse 10. drunkards. Note how Paul's listing shows that drunkenness is surrounded by other sins of the flesh and the flesh's craving for what is sensual. Peter describes drunkenness in the same way, demonstrating that it is characteristic of a person who lacks self-control (see 1 Peter 4:3). Those under the intoxication of alcohol lack wisdom and are prone to suffering, sorrow and woe (see Proverbs 20:1; 23:29–35).

The abuse of drugs for nonmedicinal purposes is an appropriate and applicable extension of this biblical principle. What is socially acceptable to the culture is not necessarily wise and prudent for disciples to incorporate and live out in their lives.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share answers to the following question: If Christ is our Lord and Master and if inheriting the kingdom of God is at stake, what should be our response when it comes to using alcohol and drugs?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

If you love and adore Jesus, then His written Word is valuable to you. Take time to read all that Scripture has to say on the topic of this lesson.

- Disciples recognize the importance of properly administered medicine while strongly standing against consuming alcohol to intoxication: Ecclesiastes 10:17; Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:19–21; 1 Peter 4:1–5
- Disciples use drugs for virtuous medicinal purposes: 2 Samuel 16:2; Proverbs 31:6; Mark 15:23; Luke 10:34; 1 Timothy 5:23
- Disciples know how to make a distinction between virtuous and prohibited uses of drugs: Genesis 9:20–26; 19:30–38; Proverbs 23:33–34; 31:4–5; Isaiah 5:11–12; Luke 21:34; Romans 14:21; Galatians 5:21
- Disciples joyfully surrender to the lordship of Christ. They live lives that are for His glory, including how they respect their body and mind: 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20; 10:31
- Disciples realize that Satan longs for them to stumble so he may devour them: 1 Peter 5:8
- Disciples recognize that God has saved them so they may reflect His love, grace, and mercy toward others. Christianity is not primarily focused on the self but is rather outwardly directed and concerned with the love of God and the love of others: Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37–40; Mark 12:30–31; Luke 10:27; 1 Corinthians 8:8–13; 10:24
- Disciples voluntarily lay aside their rights for the opportunity to responsibly reveal love for God and others: Romans 13:13; 14:19–22; Ephesians 5:18
- Disciples sacrifice, not because of legalism but in order to take up their cross and follow Jesus: Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23
- Disciples want to hear “Well done!” when God judges their thoughts, intentions, and actions: 1 Corinthians 11:31
- Disciples deeply desire to imitate the Christ they adore: 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Ephesians 5:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6

Follow up Question

What Scriptures have guided your decisions regarding alcohol and drugs?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.