

Ephesians 5:18-20 – Live Soberly

Handfuls, TSK, GreekLexicon, PNT, Geneva, Robertson, Poole, Family, JFB, Trapp, Henry, Rienecker, Calvin, Clarke, Barnes, Eclectic, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: I grew up in a country of drunks. We didn't have coffee shops; we had rum shops...and we had more of them than we have coffee shops in Canada! My father was a drunk before the Lord saved him. Most of my neighbors were drunks – even some women! And I've seen firsthand what happened to drunks. Many died premature deaths. My neighbor died after being run over by 4 vehicles one night. Her drunkenness caused her to lose weight and she was about 65 pounds when she died. Drunks, think they are safe and competent but they hurt themselves and others. Many innocent people – especially women and children – have been hurt. Poverty envelops many families. And of course, there are premature deaths. It is therefore not surprising the Apostle Paul, as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, **warned against physical drunkenness.**

But that was only the first part of his message. Apostle Paul also warned the Ephesians Christians against spiritual drunkenness. You will hear today about being sober in body and in spirit.

Our headings are:

Be physically sober

Be spiritually sober

Our goals are: **That you will not come under the control of any fleshly lusts, but rather, that you will contemplate how to live honorably before your Savior and bring honor to his name.**

Be physically sober

18 And do not be **drunk with wine**, in which is **dissipation**;

1. Drunkenness was one of the worse sins of the day and it was always attached to other sins, so the Apostle Paul warned the Ephesians Christians to avoid becoming drunk.

He said that to be drunk was “dissipation.” “Dissipation” means “in excess,” “sold to,” “or “to be soaked.”

2. Why would men indulge (soak themselves) themselves in wine?

a. Men **love the pleasure of wine** and know no control. They can't see straight! They can't walk straight!

b. Men wanted to **stifle their consciences**, often to escape guilt or hurt.

c. Men wanted to **commit the great wickedness** and drunkenness provided the “liquid courage.” Liquor removes inhibitions.

This is the same word used to describe the “prodigal living” of the prodigal son.

3. Consider some biblical examples of drunkenness of what happened when men became drunk.

Remember what happened when Noah became drunk. He humiliated himself before his family.

Remember what happened when Lot became drunk. He committed incest.

Remember what happened when Christians were getting drunk in the church. They ignored the poor and indulged themselves. 1Corinthians 11. **Jn.2:10**

4. Lessons:

a. Drunkenness represents many other activities and sins today. It represents any lust that makes you lose control and not be able to obey your Savior. These sins would include becoming sinfully **angry and losing control, gluttony and eating too harm yourself, playing too much on the computer** and not being able to wake up to work... So even if you are not a drunk, you can be controlled by other things.

b. Drunkenness (not “drinking”) is a horrible sin. When you are drunk you lose a sense of reality, you lose the ability to do right, and you can cause much damage and pain. You lose inhibitions. Insults fly, wives and children are abused and suffer from physical and psychological trauma (from which some never recover), drivers and passengers are killed, people are robbed, property is destroyed, suicides take place, and riots happen. When men are drunk they don't care what they say. Look at some of the consequences of drunkenness (those who soak themselves in wine) as outlined by the wisest man who ever lived.

Proverbs 23:29 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...**

In Ephesus, drunkenness **allowed people to feel comfortable to get involved in the Bacchanalian mysteries.**

c. Drunkenness results often in poverty. Money is wasted, children lack proper education.

d. Drunkenness results in a lack of direction. You don't see one CNTOWER, but three. You won't know what is right and good. You won't be able to discern the law of God – what is wrong and right – physical or spiritually.

e. Ultimately, drunkenness results is the stifling of spiritual growth. You will never find a drunk excelling in spiritual maturity!

Be spiritually sober

18...but be **filled with the Spirit,** 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making **melody in your heart to the Lord,**

1. Instead of being drunk with wine and cause pain to themselves and others, the Ephesians had to be filled with the Spirit of God.

2. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit (for that is the Spirit to which Apostle Paul was referring)?

To be filled with the Holy Spirit means you show the signs (fruits) of the Holy Spirit. (If you are filled with the Holy Spirit it must flow out – overflow!) **The word “filled” means to drink deeply!**

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.
Against such there is no law.

Note the figurative language: “It is not against the law to show this fruit.” What a beautiful euphemism!

The one who resorts to physical drunkenness doesn’t have the joy of the Lord filled in his heart! So he must pray he would be emptied of the alcohol spirits so that he could be filled with the Holy Spirit and have true joy of the Lord.

When he was filled with the Holy Spirit he would then bear fruit of the Holy Spirit. These fruits would be beneficial to him and those around him, and these fruits would cause others to praise God.

3. What are practical examples of the fruits that he will bear that would cause others to glorify God?

He will quote Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs so **he and others** can be encouraged, challenged, rebuked, and instructed. **The Pagan Ephesians would sing songs to Bacchus, the god of wine, in the Bacchanalian wickedness.** (Ever listen to the ramblings of drunk people? Ever hear the silly things they sing? Have you listened to one recently? They talk about themselves or other things that have no substance. They are immature.

Spiritually sober people, on the other hand, tell people to love the Lord and serve him only and they teach them Bible doctrines, so they know how to love God.

4. What were these 3 “songs” Christians had to speak or sing and show spiritual sobriety?

a. Psalms. These refer to what God has given to us...we have more than 150 in the Old Testament. These include what we have in the Book of Psalms, but also songs like **Moses, Deborah and Hannah!** These were songs sung with musical accompaniment.

b. Hymns. A hymn is a song of praise to the Lord. And we have record of these from the very early church.

Acts 16:25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **singing hymns** to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

c. Spiritual songs. These refer to **songs of the emotions**...songs with strong spiritual feelings toward God. We get the word “odes” (oh-deys) from the Greek word for “spiritual songs.” Now let’s take a little needed excursion!

5. There are some who say that these psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs were 3 titles of the Book of Psalms and that we are therefore only to sing the 150 Psalms in worship, but these were not referring to the titles of the Psalms.

a. Linguistically, it is not required to limit “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” to specific headings of the 150 Psalms. Consider “elders” which may mean “older people,” or it may mean the “official leaders” in the church. Further, there is no proof these headings were part of the original text in the Psalms.

b. Historically, the Old Testament church was not limited to the 150 Psalms. Some Old Testament songs that were included in worship were not included in the Book of Psalms. So we must therefore not limit our singing to the 150 Psalms.

c. Well-written songs were sung in churches as far back as we have history without condemnation.

Yet, because the 150 Psalms were a required part of singing in worship, it is a sin to avoid singing them.

6. There are also some who argue that we should not have music in worship because music was part of the ceremonial system.

You can find 2 reasons in our text why they are wrong.

a. In the New Testament Apostle Paul continues to use the word “Psalms” which means “that which is sung to plucked instruments.” If no music were required any longer as in the Old Testament, he likely would have used a different word.

b. Apostle Paul also used the term “making melody” which in the Greek means to be “playing and singing with a plucked instrument.” (Literally, “psallo” means to “pluck” or “pull” like in strings of a harp!)

7. Christians were not only to speak (or sing) Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to edify others, they were to let others do this for them so they would be edified also.

There was mutual instruction. So they had to listen to the words others were singing as well!

8. Christians had to speak (or sing) from their heart, not just from their lips, as the Spirit worked in them.

The one who is filled with wine hurts himself, his neighbor, and God.

The one who is filled with the Spirit helps himself and his neighbor, and he exalts God.

This is a sober life!

God's people are concerned to make sure their hearts are right with God so they can worship him properly.

John 4:14 "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will **become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.**"

This doesn't flow from a drunk.

20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father **in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

9. Christians had to give thanks and praise to God for spiritual and temporal blessings.

They had to thank God for his salvation and sanctification and they had to thank God for health, home, and honey-food. And note where the praise ultimately goes: To the Father because of the Son! This is maturity.

10. But more than giving thanks, note the Ephesians could only worship in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Those who don't believe in Jesus can't truly worship. They may think they do, but they don't.

John 16:23 "... whatever you ask the Father **in My name** He will give you.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all **in the name of the Lord Jesus,** giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God **in Christ Jesus** for you.

11. Lessons:

a. A Bible commentator warned: "Too much singing in the churches is only from the lips." The heart must be in tune with what the lips are singing. Don't come to church with your lips alone!

1 Corinthians 14:15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. **I will sing with the spirit,** and I will also sing with the understanding.

Psalms 47:7 For God is the King of all the earth; **Sing praises with understanding.**

Sing with thoughts of what is before you!

b. Take time to count your blessings so you can praise God for them. Don't whine like a drunk.

c. When you sing and worship God, God is glorified, but you are also instructing each other!

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, **teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

d. What have others been teaching you? Are you learning? Do you listen to the words of the songs? Do you listen to what others say? You don't know everything. This is important, especially for children! **When you know truth you won't be shaky and uncertain!**

e. When you thank others who help you shovel your snow...remember to thank God for that person. Don't become infatuated with the man who helps you! It's God who is helping you. That is the sober way of thinking.

f. Since only Christians are able to sing to God, and since God wants praises, proclaim the Gospel so others can hear about Jesus, believe in him, and then praise the God of heaven.

CONCLUSION

Be warned of the curses that accompany drunkenness. Be physically sober and be spiritually sober!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Forethought is better than repentance. Biblically: Obedience is better than repentance.

Avoid getting drunk altogether so you don't have to repent.

2. Ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit so you can walk with a level head, guided by his Word (preaching and singing), and not stray and get lost. Keep control. Keep your eyes on the signs.

3. You are guaranteed the ability to live spiritually sober lives because Jesus died on the cross to remove your sins and restore your abilities that were destroyed when Adam sinned.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, you can't walk straight – spiritually. You will be blinded and lose your way. You will end up in hell. But someone is reaching out for you today. Jesus Christ offers you the waters of life which he purchased with his blood. Drink and live.