

# 99 bottles of beer on the wall



"Leaders can't afford to make fools of themselves, gulping wine and swilling beer, lest, hung over, they don't know right from wrong, and the people who depend on them are hurt."  
Proverbs 31:4-6, Message

So, should a Christian drink alcohol? Jesus turned water into wine, didn't He? Is there anything wrong with a beer, a glass of wine or a martini? In this party culture, we are asked that question a lot. Here are some thoughts...

I was playing Bunco with several girls years ago when one of the gals at the party asked me, "What do you believe about drinking?" Suddenly, I noticed everyone in the margarita-laden room turned their eyes toward me and my Coca-Cola and got very quiet. I knew I had an audience. I prayed, "Help, Lord!"

So, I told her that was a loaded question, but three things made sense to me. This is what I said...

**1. The Issue Is Drunkenness:** God seems to be more concerned with drunkenness than drinking. I went on to tell her that it was my personal opinion and experience that very few people seem to have the self-control needed to drink and not end up drunk. Back in my drinking days, I can't remember a kegger, fraternity party or night at the bar where I and all my friends had the self-control to NOT get wasted. In fact, getting blasted WAS the goal!

Today, we know many people who have a drinking problem, but they would deny it vehemently. Clearly, they think they have self control, but it turns out the alcohol is controlling them.

**2. Drinking Is A Counterfeit:** The Bible actually tells us that drinking is a counterfeit. God said, "*Don't be drunk with wine, but to be filled with the Spirit...*" (Eph 5: 18) Being "filled with the Spirit" is God's idea of getting loaded! I told this gal that getting drunk on alcohol is a counterfeit, because God has something better. The Lord knew we needed a little "intoxication" to get through this life and when we are "under the influence" of the Spirit we get all the benefits of being intoxicated: relaxed, carefree, uninhibited and bold—and all this without the

adverse side effects of hangovers and regrets.

**3. It's Not for Leaders to Drink:** While it may be okay for a believer to have a beer or a glass of wine as long as they don't get drunk, the Bible said it was not for kings or leaders to drink. Leaders are held to a higher standard. People follow leaders and they set an example. Leaders need to be sober-minded at all times in order to help others. Who wants to seek pastoral care in a time of crisis and wonder whether your pastor has been drinking?

As leaders, what kind of example are we setting for those who truly have a drinking problem? If God has dealt with them about being set free from that addiction, how do they get the victory when they see the leaders they respect doing the very thing causing them trouble?

Jesus, our example in leadership, turned water in wine and ministered to drunks, gluttons, prostitutes and lost people every day; but there is no record that He ever drank with them to relate better to them. In fact, if He followed the admonition in Proverbs 31, we know He did not drink. We used to hang out in bar parking lots and witness to people after they left the bar and headed to their cars. Just because we were ministering to a lot of people who drank and were drunk didn't mean we had to drink to "relate" to them. If we had been drinking along with them—it may have cheapened our witness for Christ in the long run and may have been a stumbling stone to their future growth and maturity in Christ.

If you are unsure or have not settled this issue in your own heart, why not pray and ask the Lord about it?

"Father, I seek Your direction on this topic in my life. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

In His Grip,



Beth Jones