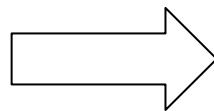


Alcohol

Read 1 Peter 2:9–10 and Exodus 19:5–6, what does God call his people to be?

A chosen people, set apart for God, a holy people proclaiming his praises.

What are the two extremes of understanding how we should live as Christians in the world?



Immersed in the world

outside the world

What are some of the consequences of these two extremes?

Invisible christian witness, people can't see any difference between us and non Christians.

We can't relate to normal people and so find it hard to share the gospel with them.

Alcohol can be a potentially controversial and even emotive subject to discuss. The Bible does have something to say, particularly in providing boundary markers.

What principles do we learn from these passages?

Psalm 104:14–15	Alcohol is a blessing and part of God's creation
Proverbs 31:4–7	Alcohol is not for everyone, some should abstain because of their position.
Romans 13:11–14	Drunkenness is a sin, it doesn't fit with the present time, it demonstrates a disregard for Christ's return.
1 Thesalonians 5:8	Self control and readiness are important.
1 Timothy 3:2,3,8,11	Leaders shouldn't get drunk nor be addicted to alcohol.

Alcohol is a part of God's good creation.

Drunkenness is a sin and Christian leaders need to be particularly careful about their use of alcohol.

Consumption of alcohol however falls into the category of matters of good judgement (from our guidance studies). It is a matter of freedom and Christian liberty, meaning some people will make different decisions from others .

According to Galatians 5:13, what is Christian freedom for?

For serving

Read Romans 14:1-8, which is not talking about alcohol but other practices that were causing stress for first century Christians.

What are the characteristics of the

	WEAK	STRONG
Attitude to eating particular things	Thinks eating some things is a sin.	Believes he may eat anything. It is a matter of liberty.
Attitude to particular days	Consider one day above another.	Considers every day the same.

You'll notice that the difference is not whether they eat or observe special days, the strong can either eat or not eat, they know it doesn't matter.

What principle can we take from verse 3?

If you do chose to drink either on a particular occassion or generally then you musn't have an attitude of condesensionor pride because it is a matter of liberty.

If you chose not to drink then you can't feel morally superior because it is a matter of liberty.

Some things it may be helpful to consider when making decisions about alcohol.

Your relationship with God and your own wellbeing.

Alcohol is a depressive drug (as are other substances we consume) and it can be addictive.

Alcohol can become a problem if

- you are prone to depression
- you are tempted to get drunk
- you have a family disposition to alcoholism.

Other things to consider?

Your relationship with your Brothers/sisters in Christ.

We always need to be aware of our weaker brothers no matter what we choose.

What are some ways to do this ?

Provide alternatives to alcohol, chose not to serve alcohol at some events for the sake of those who have aproblem or are weaker.

Your relationship with non Christians.

Read the following pssages and discuss.

John 15:18f,

1 Peter 3:15,

1 Peter 4:1-11

Our culture

In Australia around 7,000 people a year die from alcohol abuse. Domestic violence, youth suicide, assault and problems in Aboriginal communities can all be linked with alcohol abuse too.

Pray about the drug and alcohol problems in our country and our own attitudes to both alcohol and freedom in general.

Overcomes Outreach is a Christian support group for alcoholics, they meet on the first Wed of each month at the Cathedral, Bathurst st entry at 7.30pm. I have also provided the drug and alcohol referral pathways for Nth Sydney. It would probably be good to give this information to your group members.