

The Book of Proverbs

Godly Wisdom for Everyday Life

SSBC Proverbs Bible Study # 21

Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passage that next Sunday's sermon will be focused on.

A Portrait of the Wise

Key Passage: Proverbs 23:29-35

Related Passages: Proverbs 20:1

Sermon Date: February 24, 2008

. The wise avoid excessive drinking.

The Book of Proverbs warns against the dangers of alcohol. Drink deprives people of good judgment, health and well-being (Proverbs 31:4-9). You might even wonder why our theme for this study is that “the wise avoid excessive drinking. Might it not be much wiser for them to avoid *all* drinking? Perhaps so. But the Bible does not teach total abstinence. In fact, ancient Israel was a wine-producing country. In the Old Testament, wine-presses bursting with new wine were a sign of blessing (Proverbs 3:10). Even Wisdom herself, personified in Proverbs 9:2-5, invites us to her table set with wine she has mixed for us.

The Scriptures abound with examples pointing to both the goodness and the evil of alcohol. Jesus changed water into the wine needed for a wedding feast. Yet he warned that drunkenness could lull his hearers into the trap of the coming judgment (Luke 21:34). Where is the line between innocent pleasure and dangerous drunkenness? At what point does my drinking become excessive and dangerous?

1. Read this week's Bible passage and use the following charts to note your observations and any questions you have. The first verse below is the key verse for this study. Keeping this verse in mind, read each of the subsequent verses and note how each provides further insight into the meaning of this key verse.

| Scripture | Your Observation & Questions |
|---|------------------------------|
| <p>Key Verse Proverbs 23:29-35 (NIV)</p> <p>23:29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?</p> <p>23:30 Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.</p> <p>23:31 Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly!</p> <p>23:32 In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper.</p> <p>23:33 Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things.</p> | |

| Scripture | Your Observation & Questions |
|---|------------------------------|
| <p>23:34 You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging.</p> <p>23:35 "They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt!</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">They beat me, but I don't feel it!</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">When will I wake up so I can find another drink?"</p> <hr/> <p>20:1 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.</p> | |

2. Next, use this chart to interpret some key observations.

a. From the chart on the previous pages, select a few of your observations & questions that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and then interpret and apply each of them using the columns to the right.

b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What does it mean?
- Why is this important?
- What does this tell me about the Father,? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
- Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

| Observation What does it Say? | Interpretation What does it mean? |
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3. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- ◆ **Sins** to avoid
- ◆ **Promises** to believe
- ◆ **Examples** to follow (remember "SPECK")
- ◆ **Commands** to obey
- ◆ **Knowledge** to share

Don't just write things to write them — listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

| Application How do I apply what it means? |
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4. Proverbs 23:29 asks the reader a series of questions. Verses 23:30—35 provide answers to those questions. Write some reasons people drink according to these verses. Write some effects of drinking according to these verses.
5. List some features of alcoholic drinks that entice us as portrayed in Proverbs 23:30-31? How does self-control play into our response?
6. The Bible does not explicitly forbid the drinking of wine or other alcoholic drinks, so when does drinking one of these drinks become too much? How does one know when that point is reached? Consider Ephesians 5:18.
7. Wine, as used in the Bible, can mean fermented or non-fermented drink. When, according to the scriptures, is it acceptable to drink wine? Consider Luke 10:34 and I Timothy 5:23.
8. What role does “peer pressure” play in excessive drinking amongst adults? How can you overcome peer pressure for yourself?
9. Read Romans 14:13-22. What do you believe would be a wise practice in regard to drinking? What are some of your reasons?
10. How can you apply what you have learned in this study to your life this week?

Memory Verse

Proverbs 20:1

^{20:1} Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler;
whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

Alcohol deadens the senses. A couple generations ago people drank to deaden the pain of surgery or tooth extractions. But there are other kinds of pain in life which we need fully to experience because they motivate us to change or work hard. Pain can even be God's call to abandon worthless evil desires and set our hearts on things above. If we drink to "ease the pain" we may numb the piercing agony of the destruction of our souls.

The Bible testifies of a lasting joy which overshadows all earthly trials and pains. If a drunk can ignore beatings or sickness, how much more will a person filled and renewed by redeeming grace through the Spirit of Christ persist joyfully through difficulty! Christians have always faced pain with joy and a "peace that passes all understanding." (Philippians 4:7)

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
Romans 8:18

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
2 Corinthians 4:17-18

Have you found this joy that makes tragedy seem "light and momentary?" You will find it in the love of God demonstrated in Christ's death for sinners. Bow the knee to Christ today. He says, "whoever comes to me I will never drive away." (John 6:37)

These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon as inserts in the church bulletin and are also posted at <http://sermonhouse.com/SSBC>. Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website. Have feedback or questions? Contact studyeditor@southshorebaptist.com

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