

=SEPARATION=

Lesson 2

Alcoholic Beverages

AIM: to convince my pupils that the alcoholic drink which destroys a person is the very first drink that person takes.

POINT OF CONTACT: The life of an alcoholic beverage drinker could be likened to an elevator. To take the first drink puts anyone on this elevator that can go no place but down. The teacher could bring to class two contrasting groups of pictures. The first group could include pictures of nice houses with well-kept lawns or pretty snow scenes; pretty, well-dressed children; groups of adults having good times; nice cars. The second group could include pictures of run-down houses or shacks; littered yards; dirty, badly-dressed children; wrecked cars. The first set of pictures could be labeled: "Life's store outside the elevator." The second set could be labeled: "Life's store as seen from the elevator of alcohol." This is what alcohol can do.

INTRODUCTION: Alcoholism has become a most serious social problem in our country and in many other countries of the world. World leaders are beginning to recognize the seriousness of the consequences of drinking liquor. If the Bible warnings about drinking had been heeded by society a long time ago, alcoholism would not be the curse that it is now.

I. WHAT STRONG DRINK IS. Proverbs 20:1 tells us: "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*"

1. A person who drinks is mocked by the liquor. The drinker thinks that liquor can never hurt him, that he will never become an alcoholic, that he will always be able to "hold his liquor." One of these badly fooled persons was the author, Jack London. In 1913 he wrote a little book entitled JOHN BARLEYCORN. In this book he tells of the history of drinking in his own life. He wrote, "Mine is no talk of a reformed drunkard. I was never a drunkard, and I have not reformed.... No...I shall take my drink on occasion." However, this "occasion" became morning, then noon, then before-supper drinks and after-supper drinks. One drink ceased to satisfy him so that he had two at a time, then three at a time; then he was constantly drinking. At the age of 40, he committed suicide. Thus goes the story of just one life that alcohol has ruined.
2. "*Strong drink is raging.*" Just as we hear accounts of slaves wearing balls and chains, so we read of and observe the plight of drinkers—they eventually become enslaved to drink. The number of alcoholics is constantly on the increase. In a recent survey it was estimated that there were about seventy-five million social drinkers in this country and that approximately one of every five drinkers is a "problem drinker." Some drinkers—perhaps 10%—are alcoholic from their very first drink. Some become so after three or four years of drinking. Some take 15 or 20 years. This varies with the resistance of the individual to the toxic agents, the state of his liver, etc. If some people believe that by drinking only beer they will run no risk of alcoholism, this is incorrect. Alcohol is alcohol, regardless of the vehicle in which it comes. One can be just as alcoholic on beer as one can on wine or on whiskey.

There are as many women alcoholics as men. At least 2/3 of the known alcoholics began drinking while in high school, or even sooner. Alcoholism is now an epidemic. Ten percent of the population are alcohol dependent, and five percent are alcoholic. The alcoholic population of the state of New York increases by 20,000 annually! There are estimated to be more than five million alcoholics in the country today. At the present rate of increase, one of every fifteen children in the United States under the age of eighteen will become an alcoholic. This means that they will eventually die from alcoholism; their home life will never be normal, and their place in society could be ruined.

II. WHAT CAN RESULT FROM DRINKING LIQUOR?

1. The drinker's characteristics become bad. Read Proverbs 23:29. Hard times, sorrow, fighting, senseless conversation, hurt feelings, marred facial features are all visible results of drinking.
2. The drinker's heart is turned away from God. Hosea 4:11.
3. The drinker becomes enslaved by drink. Isaiah 5:11.
4. The works of a drinker become bad. Habakkuk 2:5. He becomes proud, does not take care of his household, craves liquor more and more and yet cannot be satisfied by it until it knocks him out.
5. The drinker becomes a poor man. Proverbs 21:17.
6. The drinker becomes classed with thieves, covetous people, revilers and extortioners. I Corinthians 6:10.
7. The drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:21. They that yield themselves to drink rather than to God shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The dulled mind of the unsaved drunkard has a hard time comprehending the Gospel of the grace of God.
8. Drinking leads to other serious sins. II Peter 2:13-15. The drinker begins to think that committing really bad sins is all right; his conscience is dulled to right. Alcohol goes to work on the area of the brain which controls reason, judgment and inhibitions. Teenagers and adults have confessed that they first became involved in illicit relations while under the influence of alcohol. Liquor has the power to break down the will and to paralyze the judgment. Drinking alcohol leads to adultery and fornication.
9. The drinker's health is eventually ruined. Alcohol can attack all of the organs, but it always attacks the liver. Alcohol is a poison, and all toxins come through the liver. Alcohol also acts on the stomach of some drinkers because of their particular chemical makeup. Alcohol can seriously damage the heart of the drinker. Through consistent use of alcoholic beverages, the drinker becomes physically dependent upon it and suffers terribly whenever he cannot get it. Alcohol is a depressant—it is not a stimulant. Liquor produces a superficially stimulating effect, but the exhilaration is only temporary. Alcohol cannot improve talent, nor can it bring out hidden genius. It can only fog the judgment and display the raw, uninhibited personality.
10. The drinker is a potential murderer. Alcohol causes traffic deaths. In Illinois during a recent year, 50% of all traffic accident fatalities involved drinking drivers; however, during the Christmas holidays, 80% of the traffic deaths were caused by drinking drivers. Countries are beginning to recognize how horrible the drinking driver is. Laws have been passed in England stating that the driver who has drunk over the minimum will have his license taken away for a year, will be fined a possible 100 pounds, and will be in danger of a prison sentence. In Sweden, a driver who does not pass the drinking test that is given in a hospital where the police take him has to go to jail for six months and be fined 10% of his last year's wages. The person who reports the drinking driver is rewarded the equivalent of \$150.00 in American money.
11. Drinkers can destroy a nation. Drunkenness of some of the kings and priests of Israel played an important part in the defeat of that nation and its final destruction. See Isaiah 28:7; Hosea 7:5; Joel 3:3.

III. WHAT GOD COMMANDS ABOUT DRINKING LIQUOR.

1. God commands that we not drink alcoholic beverages and that we should not keep company with those who do. Read Proverbs 23:20, 21. Wine in the Bible refers to the fruit of the vine—the grape juice—except when called “strong drink,” or, as in this case, “*when it moveth itself aright.*” See Proverbs 23:31.
2. We are to watch for Jesus' coming again, but strong drink can cloud our minds enough to keep us from watching. Luke 21:34.
3. We are not to give or serve liquor to anyone else. Notice Habakkuk 2:15.

IV. ABSTINENCE CAUSES GOOD RESULTS.

1. An honest life has a chance to emerge when the mind is not clouded by the influence of alcohol. Romans 13:13.
2. Blessings and honors come to those people who take their stand to be clean and to abstain from strong drink. The life of Daniel is a perfect example.

3. Blessings come to the country whose rulers abstain from strong drink. Ecclesiastes 10:17.
4. We experience real security because of leaning upon God instead of leaning upon liquor. Proverbs 3:5. Liquor gives a false sense of courage and a false peace. It is deceitful.

CONCLUSION: Just like forming principles to follow on other matters, now is the time for the person who has not formed such a conviction to determine that he will never touch a drop of liquor! It is the first drop that sends a person on the downward ride that alcohol takes him. One of the most tragic and sweet stories in the Bible is found in Luke 15:11-32. Just like any other sin, drinking can be confessed. One can repent of this sin also. The sinner will find forgiveness and salvation. How much better it is to abstain completely, never to have any regrets that liquor brings!