

## Ephesians 5:18-21

This is a very controversial passage of scripture. I do not have all the answers and this is only my opinion on the subject and you need to read and decided for yourselves what God is telling you to do. It is used to justify all kinds of bad behavior and bad decisions. A warning here- never use scripture to justify behavior God never intended it to. Scripture is used for us to know how to live a more Christ-like life. It is never used to give freedom to sin or create confusion among believers. Wine in the Bible is always a symbol of the very best we have to offer. When the Kings gave wine, it was to visiting diplomats. When Jesus turned water into wine, it was for the bride and bridegroom at their wedding. When the soldiers gave Jesus wine mixed with vinegar it was to mock that He was a King.

1. Do not be drunk with wine – vs. 18a it is important that we establish right here that the Bible does not say “don’t drink”. That is not what this verse says. Other places say we should not drink, but this verse does not. Why not? If it is not telling us not to drink, what is it saying? I take this verse at its face value. DON’T GET DRUNK. Paul was concerned that the church was using wine as a dumbing agent to get through the tough situations facing it. And if we were really honest, we would admit that the times we drink too much is when we are depressed or hurt, or just being stupid. We probably do things on a dare that we would never do if were sober. Getting drunk is stupid. Plain and simple. You lose control of your senses, you either get sleepy or are no fun, or you get irritable and start fights. Neither of those have good outcomes. If you get sleepy you run the risk of date rape or something worse. Consent. If you get irritable you just might get to see the inside of a jail cell. All of these choices are bad. So if the Bible does not tell us here not to drink, when can we drink, what can we drink? I believe that there are some firm principles that guide us here on drinking. The first thing is not to take one verse and hang all of your defense on it, either for or against drinking.
  - a. We should not drink to dull our senses – 2 Sam 13:28; Prov. 31:4-5;
  - b. We should not drink to show off or be cool – Luke 21:34
  - c. We should not drink wine if it causes others to stumble – Rom 14:21
  - d. We can drink fruit of the vine (wine) in moderation – 1 Tim 3:3; Titus 2:1-6
  - e. We can drink wine for medicinal purposes – Ps 104:15; Prov. 31:6; 1 Tim. 5:23
  - f. We can drink wine for celebrations and communion – Num. 15:6; Deut. 14:26;
  - g. We can drink wine only if God gives us a clear conscience – Lev 10:9; Jas. 3:1
2. To abuse wine is a sin, just as abusing anything else we do is a sin. – vs. 18b Dissipation – wasteful expenditure; intemperate living, especially excessive drinking. The act of using all or a lot of money, time, etc., in a foolish way. Behavior that shows you are interested only in pleasure, money, sensual indulgence, etc.
3. Be filled with the Holy Spirit – vs. 18c What we have to understand here is the way Jesus gives us His standard for anything, especially proper behavior. Jesus is always telling us what we may be allowed to do under the law, but then goes on to tell us a “better way”. Remember what He

said about murder; “if you hate your brother, you have committed murder in your heart. If you lust in your heart, you have committed adultery in your heart”. These are pretty strong guidelines for our behavior. It is God’s way of keeping us out of trouble. So God’s plan for us is to not get drunk to forget our problems, but allow the Holy Spirit to fill us and meet all of our needs. He can and will do that for you. If we allow the Spirit His proper place in our hearts, we can endure all the difficulties in life. So many use alcohol to be nothing more than a drug help dull the pain of life. When used in that way it has devastating results. I will promise you this. If you are filled with the Spirit, you don’t need anything else to deal with life’s problems.

4. Praising God with songs and prayers is a better way to deal with issues – vs. 19 If you have a problem, sing. Praise God and you will soon forget your pain. It is difficult to praise God and complain about your life at the same time. Many were just in Helen this past week. I watched you as God was dealing with you about areas of your life that needed attention. The pain I saw was real. But as we sang our songs, I saw the pain in your faces fade away. You lifted your hands to God and your smiles came back and your tears of hurt stopped flowing and became tears of joy.