

Because of the pervasiveness of alcoholism in our culture, the Central leadership encourages all partners to prayerfully consider the consequences of alcohol use on themselves, their family, and those around them and to educate themselves as to what God's Word says about alcohol (wine) and the dangers of abuse and drunkenness.

The Bible does not regard alcohol as evil or state that it is a sin to consume alcohol in moderation. God gave wine to man to drink, as it states in Psalm 104: 14-15, "He makes grass grow for the cattle and plants for people to cultivate – bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts." Wine or strong drink was even part of the God ordained tithe (Deuteronomy 14: 22-27). In the New Testament as a first sign revealing His glory, we see Jesus turning water into wine at a wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11). Other New Testament scripture illustrates that Jesus himself drank wine (Matthew 11:19 and Luke 7:33-35, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The accusations of the Pharisees that Jesus himself was a drunkard were unequivocally false, as our Lord lived a life without sin, and yet He did drink wine.

Although some scripture states how wine is permissible, there is much more scripture stating the downfalls and sin involved with over consumption. Drunkenness is forbidden in the Bible and is considered sin. In Ephesians 5:18, Paul exhorts us, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." In 1 Timothy 3:2-3, 3:8, Paul also sets the standard for church leaders (elders/deacons) that they be above reproach, and not addicted to wine. The Bible clearly states many examples of how the over consumption of wine or alcohol can lead to disgrace (Genesis 9), immorality (Habakkuk 2:5, 15-16, Lamentation 4:21), health problems (Isaiah 19:14, Hosea 7:5, 1 Timothy 5:23), poverty (Proverbs 23:21), woe from God (Proverbs 23:29, Isaiah 5:22), confusion and lack of good judgement (Isaiah 28:7-8, Proverbs 31:4-5), foolishness and violence (Proverbs 20:1), and dulls the senses and deceives (Hosea 4:11, Isaiah 56:12). In 1 Corinthians 6:9 the Apostle Paul strongly warns that drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God. These are just a few of the many examples where our Lord warns us in Scripture against drunkenness and the sin that stems from it.

Just as Jesus warned us in scripture not to be taken up by drunkenness (Luke 21:34, 12:42, Matthew 24:45-51), we as the leadership of Central believe that Christians should heed His warning and consider becoming a total abstainer from alcohol. As stated above, too much alcohol can negatively affect your health, your family, lower your inhibitions, and diminish your Christian witness. Abstaining from alcohol ensures that you will never become an alcoholic, and abstinence sets a positive example for your children and others. If one chooses not to totally abstain from alcohol, then he/she should follow the guidance of Holy Scripture and not become drunk and be very careful

not to cause a brother or sister to stumble by your freedom to have a drink (Romans 14:13-23).

Although scripture does not mention, by name, any drugs (*i.e.*, marijuana, heroin, pain killers) it does not mean that that Bible has nothing to say on the topic of drug abuse. One could very easily substitute any illegal drug into existing scripture relating to alcohol abuse or drunkenness and it directly applies. For example, 1 Peter 5:8 teaches us to - "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." Both alcohol and/or drug addiction 'dulls' the mind and makes it much easier to fall into destructive behavior. Peter is warning his readers that when you are not sober, you are more likely to make bad choices. The writer in Proverbs echoes this advice; "Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise (Proverbs 20:1)." This could obviously be taken as alcohol will make a drunk say horrible things and fight. Likewise, drug abuse certainly makes a person do things they would not usually do (*i.e.*, lie, steal, commit violence to support their addiction). Abusing substances is certainly not a wise nor Christ-like thing to do. The use of illegal drugs and abuse of prescription drugs is not inline with Christian ethics and teachings of the Bible and thus is not condoned by Central leadership.

Central Christian Church is committed to helping those dealing with alcohol or other (*i.e.*, drugs) addictions. We can recommend faith-based treatment programs that can transform your life through the power of Jesus Christ. Addicts often drink or use drugs to fill a void in their lives. That is why the Apostle Paul encouraged us not to get drunk with wine, but instead be **filled with the Spirit** (Ephesians 5:18). The Holy Spirit can fill the void in the addicts' life that no amount of alcohol or drugs could ever fill. The Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies." Amazing as it sounds, you were created by God in His image! Know that God LOVES you and is there for you when you are tempted. "But when you are tempted, He [God] will also provide a way out so that you can endure it (1 Corinthians 10:13)." We at Central are here to encourage and help you abstain from substance abuse and to guide you to a loving and life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. Cast all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7).