

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Judging Food And Drink: Colossians 2:16

by: Ryan Hasty

One of the arguments used to justify the consumption of modern day alcoholic beverages is by appealing to Paul's instruction in Col 2:16 – "Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day." In this verse, did Paul intend to include the various views of whether or not it is right to consume alcoholic beverages?

First, it is ironic that those who teach abstaining from alcohol never use this verse against those who defend its consumption. If this verse truly means we are to never make a judgment against another person for their opinions regarding food or drink, it would be just as wrong to rebuke someone who teaches abstinence as it would be to rebuke someone who teaches moderation. But if it is right to rebuke someone who encourages abstinence toward alcohol beverages, it would be just as right for abstainers to use this verse against imbibers when they are rebuked for

taking their stand. If not, why not (Rom 2:21a)?

Second, if we are not careful, it is possible to misinterpret and twist bible verses to achieve our own end (Matt 4:6; 2 Pet 3:16) even if it is unintentional. There is a context behind Col 2 that we need to consider. In the first century, one of the first Christian sects that began teaching a false gospel was the Judaizing teachers (Gal 1:6-9). These were Jewish Christians who were not satisfied with Gentiles becoming Christians unless they observed rites such as circumcision, Sabbath keeping, and various other aspects of Mosaic Law (Acts 15; Gal 5:1-4). The Apostle Paul spends a large part of his ministry combating this teaching and the entire letter to the Galatian churches was written to warn them against it. One aspect of Mosaic Law involved certain dietary restrictions (Lev 11) of which even Daniel would not defile himself (Dan 1:8); but Jesus has since lifted those restric-

tions (Acts 10:1-17). Col 2:16 does not merely mention food and drink, but other Mosaic customs such as the Sabbath, New Moons, and Festivals. All of these, as vs. 17 reveals, were shadows of the Law (Heb 10:1) that pointed to better things to come in Christ. Can the Jews eat pork? Yes. Can they abstain from pork? Yes. But no one was to judge them concerning their choice in the matter. Understanding this context should show why this is not a verse we should turn to as a defense for the consumption of modern day alcoholic beverages as it simply does not line up with the context. It would be much more enlightening to instead consider other teaching throughout scripture that specifically refers to strong drink.

Colossians 2:16-17

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Third, not all judging is wrong – this cannot be overstated. Self-righteous and hypocritical judgment is prohibited (Matt 7:1-5) along with unrighteous judgment based on insufficient premises and ill-will (John 7:24). But Jesus commands Christians to judge false teachers by their fruit (Matt 7:15-20) and to judge righteous conduct amongst one another (1

Cor 6:1-5). A Christian does not err when he encourages and pleads with another concerning sin or unwise decisions. We are commanded to “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3) and to be the “pillar and support of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). Therefore, not only do Christians have the right to judge in such matters, we have the obligation to do so. Otherwise, there is no way we can defend the purity of the truth and sanctity of the church against false positions. When a bible subject is properly exegeted and evidence and facts are ascertained, the result for all who consider such subjects will be either belief or unbelief – this is always indicative of the heart of the one considering the teaching (Matt 13:14-15). Proper Christian judging has nothing to do with personalities and everything to do with principles. We hate the sin and love the sinner. Therefore if the consumption of modern day alcoholic beverages is wrong, we will confront it with biblical and historical evidence in an attempt to “persuade men” (2 Cor 5:11) against its consumption. If it is right to consume them, we must be willing to defend this consumption with stronger and more robust evidence. But we must not pander to and follow the path of a society that condemns any and all judging as they liberally judge the judgments of us judgmental Christians – at least that is my judgment.

Old and New Wineskins

by: Ryan Hasty

In Luke 7:37-39, Jesus says, “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, “The old is good enough.” It is suggested by some that new wine placed in old wineskins would already exist in a state of active fermentation and that the chemical forces of fermentation would therefore rend the fabric of an old wineskin. A new wineskin, as some have suggested, would be able to withstand the strain of fermentation as it would be more elastic and could easily stretch. This has led some to suggest that Jesus was commending the consumption of intoxicating beverage.

The CO₂ gas generated by the process of fermentation would produce enough force to rupture a new skin almost as fast as it would an old if the skin was not vented. Job 32:19 – “Behold, my belly is like unvented wine, like new wineskins it is about to burst.” If your purpose was to produce fermented wine, you would not only choose a new skin, you would also leave a vent in it to allow the gas to escape. But if your purpose was fermented wine and you left a vent in it, there would be no threat of bursting, new or old. It follows therefore that not only would the wineskin of Jesus’ parable be unvented, but the wine would be unfermented without the possibility of fermentation occurring.

How could unfermentable wine be produced? Antiquity reveals that wine could be boiled into a concentrate, filtered, or kept cool in caves, under water, or underground. It could then be safely placed in an unvented wineskin. An old wineskin would not have been used because there would have been molds and fungus clinging to it and it would have contained the leftover sour remains of old wine, cracks, tears, etc. Therefore a new wineskin would be used to keep the wine fresh and perfectly sweet. It was for these reasons that Columella stressed new unfermented wine being placed in a new “amphora” (De Re Rustica 12. 41.).

Why then did Jesus say in Luke 5:39 that the old wine is “good enough”? Only the context can help us. Jesus’ teaching is compared to new wine and the teaching of the Pharisees is compared to old wine. The Pharisees were so attached to their traditions and their interpretations of the Law of Moses that they were unwilling

to consider any teaching of Jesus that contradicted it. The Pharisees, in essence, were set in their ways (old wine skins). Any new teaching that contradicted their own would cause them to “burst,” as evidenced by their numerous “outbursts” toward Jesus and His eventual crucifixion. When Jesus says that the old wine is “good enough,” He is saying that the Pharisees were so satisfied with their biases and presuppositions that there was no way they would listen to anyone who challenged them. To them, their religion was “good enough”. Therefore this verse is in no way a commendation by Jesus for the consumption of intoxicating beverage, but a challenge to have the heart of a fresh, uncontaminated wineskin.

Rather than using this passage in an attempt to justify the consumption of intoxicating beverages, perhaps it would behoove us to let the actual meaning challenge our preconceived beliefs concerning the same subject. In other words, why do I choose to consume strong drink? Is it because the evidence from scripture warrants it, or simply because I enjoy the effects that alcohol produces in me? Am I willing to honestly consider the abundance of evidence that suggests there is wisdom in abstinence, or will I attempt to twist verses to justify my own desires? Let us strive for the new wineskin of an open and honest heart and lay aside the Pharisees’ old wineskin of self-justification and presupposition.

Quotes Worth Considering...

“When we Christians behave badly, or fail to behave well, we are making Christianity unbelievable to the outside world.”

--C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

“The terrible thing, the almost impossible thing, is to hand over your whole self – all your wishes and precautions – to Christ.”

--C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

There Arose a Generation

by: Irven Lee

Moses found a people who were not well informed about God when he went back to Egypt to lead Israel out of bondage. The Lord sent him for this task. It was not a strong faith in Israel that sent out an invitation to Moses to help them escape bondage and find freedom in a land flowing with milk and honey.

During the forty years in the wilderness these descendants of Jacob had a great opportunity to learn much about God and his righteousness. There was a great revelation made. These former slaves were taught by Moses who was given power to confirm his message by miracles, wonders, and signs. Food and water were provided by the power of God in the sight of all. The Lord blessed, punished, and protected a people who needed to learn of him.

After the death of Moses, Joshua continued this leading and teaching process. There may never have been a generation of Jews that knew more about God than those who were given the land by Joshua. Millions of people had grown from childhood to maturity in intimate and personal contact with God in all his power, love, and righteousness.

“The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. . . And that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor the works which he had done for Israel. . . and they forsook the Lord god of the fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman
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the Lord to anger” (Judg. 2:7-12).

Moses commanded the parents to train their children with diligence. The book we call Deuteronomy is a book of sermons Moses preached near the end of his long and eventful life. In these sermons he made numerous appeals to the adults to train the young (e.g., Deut. 6:4-9). There was none to object to his teaching on this duty, but his suggestion was evidently not heeded with proper zeal.

Children can be taught. They can be taught to have faith and to accumulate knowledge. Eunice and Lois did their work so well in Paul’s day that Timothy had “unfeigned faith,” and from a child he had known the holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14,15). This faith and knowledge made Timothy one of the very best servants of his day (see Phil. 2:19-22). There are very few like Eunice and Lois, so there are not so many rooted and grounded in the truth as was Timothy.

Many general statements could be made about people in America today. One such remark is that there is a pathetic lack of Bible knowledge in our country. There are a few excellent students today, but in some cases their own children are not being well taught. Such students may be too busy writing, studying and teaching others to teach their own children. They may have a feeling that their children may absorb precious knowledge or just inherit it.

We are to buy the truth and sell it not. Peter wrote of precious faith (2 Pet. 1:1; Prov. 23:23). Timothy’s life was truly enriched by these two wonderful gifts from his mother and grandmother. Are you in similar way making your children rich? Parents need to start early and work hard at this worthy task.

Ignorance of the holy Scriptures is not a new thing under the sun. Many in the generation before mine did not attend school much so they were poor readers. They worked long hours to earn a living. Fifty years ago there was a serious lack of effective teachers and song leaders. In those days many attended worship services once a month on “preaching Sunday.” Others attended only during the “big meeting” in the summer. Some speak of the great Bible students in the past with “testaments in their pockets.” I knew a few, but very few, such people.

Now there is school for every one and there are many with their graduate degrees from the universities. There are many known for their great scholarship. Many of these highly educated people have been trained to a great extent by atheists, and they have been taught to disbelieve the Bible and to have no reverence for God. These educated people are pathetically ignorant of the Bible, but they may often

speaking with dogmatic arrogance about spiritual things as if their degree with biology gave them authority to speak about Christ and his Father.

There is a great multitude of people who attended school for twelve years, more or less, and who have developed skills and earn good salaries. Many of these watch TV to keep up with the world about them and for entertainment, but they do not read. The TV networks are not teaching people to be Christians! They teach promiscuity, evolution, and materialism. It is hard to reach many of this segment of the population because they do not listen to the gospel or read it. Of course, they are not teaching their children.

We are taught to pray for more laborers in the vineyard. They will have to be found among those who “give attendance to reading” (1 Tim. 4:13). If people close their eyes, stop their ears, and harden their hearts, there is hardly any way to help them. Even the Master and his apostles did not reach such people (see Matt. 15). The faithful need to shout the gospel from the housetops to awaken those who are asleep spiritually. Children of the spiritually blind are not well taught, of course. Preachers, teachers, and parents should, by all means, do their “homework” and be well prepared to teach the needed lessons.

Brief Exhortations...

Compiled by: David Riggs

“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.” (Prov. 16:32) “A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention.” (Prov. 15:18)

There was a little boy with a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, to hammer a nail in the back fence. The first day, the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Then, it gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally, the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, “You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say and do things in anger, you leave scars just like are in this fence.” (Author Unknown)

Daily Bible Reading

December 2019

December 2	Genesis 1-3	December 17	Genesis 27:30-29:30
December 3	Genesis 4-5	December 18	Genesis 29:31-31:21
December 4	Genesis 6:1-8:19	December 19	Genesis 31:22-32:32
December 5	Genesis 8:20-10:32	December 20	Genesis 33-35
December 6	Genesis 11-13	December 23	Genesis 36-37
December 9	Genesis 14-16	December 24	Genesis 38-40
December 10	Genesis 17-18	December 25	Genesis 41
December 11	Genesis 19-21	December 26	Genesis 42-43
December 12	Genesis 22-23	December 27	Genesis 44-45
December 13	Genesis 24	December 30	Genesis 46-47
December 16	Genesis 25:1-27:29	December 31	Genesis 48-50

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