



## *Sippin' Soul-winners?*

By Kurt von Schleicher

*"The Bible teaches that there is deliverance from the things that come upon the world ... not by chemicals, but by Christ, bringing the mind and heart into harmony with God through submission to His will and accepting His forgiveness. ... In Christ alone there is deliverance from man's tortured thoughts and freedom from the sordid habits which are destroying so many people. Why does the Bible so clearly denounce drunkenness? Because it is an enemy of human life. Anything that is against a person's welfare, God is against." —Billy Graham*

Are you a Christian who likes to get a buzz going with alcohol? Do you consider yourself a righteous social drinker and you enjoy that buzz and it loosens you up to meet and talk with people? Do you use it as much as you can get away with ...or are you one who likes to get buzzed on something else.. something "natural" that grows freely here on God's earth? May I ask why?

You know, sipping doesn't really have to be a big issue with every Christian, but how much do you sip and for what purpose? Motives and personal convictions have a lot to do with it whether sipping is right or wrong for you. Have you even looked at all the verses in context dealing with drinking or talked with the Lord about what convictions He wants you to adopt. Are you in pain or trying to escape something? Is it a wing or a weight? Do you know with your wine... where is the line? You and I deep down, want to please God seven days a week and cling to Him for constant victory. We never want to be self-confident like *Hey I've got this wired; I'm strong in myself. I hold my liquor well and can handle it.* Man, I've heard that type of thinking from so many "believers" ..some of which ended up eating it and didn't handle it well. Some are even dead today. Whoa Kurt, are you like trying to freak me out with some fear tactics now? I'm trying to get you to quit trusting in yourself and in the judgment of the crowd. Look at history, the majority is often wrong and doesn't know what's best, but God's Word does!

Remember Pete by the fire, remember the Israelites and Ai, remember that no Alcoholic ever planned on becoming addicted. Hey, if you never drink, you'll never fall into this sin of drunkenness.

Listen, you don't need to get buzzed, plastered, blitzed, wasted, or totally blasted. That only hurts you and the work of God. So stop that! God has something better for you—He wants to fill you with His Spirit and His peace. There really are no good reasons for Christians—*fishers of people*—to drink alcohol. There are actually many good reasons why we should totally avoid it all together:

*Domestic arguments or fights*

*Marital strife*

*Crashing into precious people*

- ❖ About 185,000 people are killed each year in drunk driving accidents
- ❖ Three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash in their lives (MADD).

*Family breakdown*

*Violence even among friends or coworkers*

*The economic costs involved*

*It brings a reproach on the Cause of Christ and upon your Christian witness*

*It causes pain and harm ...or worse to innocent people*

*It leads to crime in general*

*Losing self-control and sound thinking*

*Giving yourself serious health problems such as liver damage and literal shrinkage of the brain*

*You trash your calling and ministry potential*

*God is not pleased to win souls for His Kingdom using sipping or buzzed saints*

Allow me to ask you this: Are you good at telling the difference between a “no-doubt Christian” and a “maybe Christian” today? You know, I'm not always good at it, but I think there will indeed be spiritual results—hard evidence—in the real Christian's life. The real Christian will be in hot pursuit of knowing Jesus better and won't be getting buzzed that's for sure.

I would say that here in America today (where it is socially acceptable for all to get drunk), what is considered bona fide Christianity by many people would not have even qualified as a genuine conversion experience for those in the early church of Paul's day.

Sadly there are a lot of people today among us who are messing around. They think that they are really saved and righteous in God's sight, but in reality they are not real Christians yet. I blame a lot of this on the weak and lost preachers that fill our pulpits, and who put out political talks of expediency—a lot of very shallow and anemic teaching. Many don't teach the Bible at all and other's have ministries that are so Word-lite or hyper positive. But you can't appreciate the Good News until you've heard the bad news of a devil that hates your guts and wants to kill you, or of broken Commandments, Hell, sin, a need for turning and certain judgment ahead. Some ministers only export their own opinions and idiotic social philosophies. I sincerely apologize for us letting you down. Please forgive us, look to Jesus more, and bail out on churches that fail to give you all the Bible counsels of God systematically.

In a recent poll that was taken, the results indicated that seven out of ten American adults have no clue about the meaning of John 3:16 which states: ***"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*** And get this; barely one-third of all adults today know the meaning of the expression *"the Gospel."*

Due to the internet, many Westerners know a little bit about a whole lot of subjects, but we in this civilized land are a lot like a very broad dead sea that is only half an inch deep. We don't pray or study truth much, so we lack depth. Biblical illiteracy is at an all time high.

Have you heard the genuine [Gospel Message](#) yet? We've all no doubt heard a lot of loud preaching. It's kind of irritating to be constantly yelled at isn't it? Lots of people are sick of feeling bored or afraid in church.

Have you been around preachers that refuse to keep the main thing the main thing? It's no wonder there are so many that feel like drinking. But I wonder if most Americans have really heard the authentic Gospel presented? And do they have a non-religious understanding of it and what God expects of them in response? Are their leaders, who they tend to emulate, playing fast and lose with the truth... playing fast and lose with convictions, with women, or with alcohol? It's wrong!

In a book called *unChristian* that was penned by two very inquisitive guys named *David Kinnaman* and *Gabe Lyons*, it was identified that there are certain behaviors that so-called Christians do express and share in with their non-Christian contemporaries today. When the respondents were asked to describe what they have been doing over the last 30 days, the people that claimed to be real born-again Christians were, according to this book, just as likely to go gamble with money (that's bad stewardship of God's money), go visit a porn site on their computers (that's all about lust and perv-ing-out), go take something that belongs to someone else (that's the five finger discount—stealing), go consult with a spiritist, a witch, a medium or a psychic (that's spiritually going a whoring), go out and party consuming enough alcohol to get legally drunk (that's catching a buzz or getting blasted), go use an illegal drug to get loaded (you know, enlightened), or to lie about someone just to retaliate against a person who hurt them (that plain revenge).

It makes me wonder if these people were ever Christians in the first place or just ill-informed church attendees who ignore their conscience, their Bibles and what God clearly teaches inside the chapters. There are those among us with *said faith* and those with *saving faith*—the wheat and tares—and God's angels will be the ones to soon separate them. Jesus said, ***“Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn”*** (Matt. 13:30). But it's so sad when you meet someone who has totally ditched the church fellowship due to some negative experiences that they encountered with a horrible representative of the Lord there—a so called Christian leader or saint with deplorable behavior. It's sad when they never make it to church at all due to the lack of love or humility they see. I personally want to apologize to them for how these so called Christians have treated them “in Jesus name” ...or apologize to you, if what I'm saying fits your situation.

We need to keep in mind that each person will answer for themselves before the Judge of the universe, rather than for those around us who get buzzed or let us down in other ways. We should never allow anyone to get in the way of our relationship with God, no matter what they live like, but that is not to give any of us license to do what we feel.

Hey, even if you are not a Christian, please cease hitting the bottle! You also don't need that so called *demon rum* and all the problems that follow! Come to Christ as you are,

willing to cooperate with Him and to be changed. Hey, I'm not here to condemn anyone really. I know it's hard to take life sober without the Holy Spirit living on the inside.

What's the solution? Be filled and refilled with the Spirit—be so busy walking in the Spirit that you don't have time to walk in the flesh!

In the world, I used to drink for only one reason—to get drunk as a skunk. That was before I met Christ in '77. But why would someone who knows Jesus and is called by His Name ...someone who could be enjoying peace with God (in a born again relationship with Him) and the peace of God (from letting Him be Lord over every area of life) settle for that cheap substitute-peace that the world offers?

It's time we get serious about serving the Lord! I would never be the one to say that it is sin for every Christian to drink alcohol. Some Christians do not have a problem with a glass of wine in the evening and it is not my job to tell others what convictions they ought to have regarding so called grey areas (non-essential issues). But my point is this: too many would-be-soul-winners are out with other saints and sinners wanting to get as blitzed as they can possibly get away with getting. They have one foot in the world and one foot in the church and they have become miserable inside and ineffective. They have too much of the world to be happy in the Kingdom and too much of the Kingdom to be happy in the world. **WE MUST BE STRONG IN THE LORD FOR THOSE AROUND US WHO ARE COUNTING ON US TO BE FAITHFUL!**

It's true that drunkenness has contributed to half our road accidents. It has also contributed to the tearing apart of millions of beautiful families and marriages. It has damaged people's health permanently, crushed dreams, and has stopped people (even Christians) from thinking clearly. I have never seen one positive thing that comes from getting buzzed on alcohol. Alcohol has contributed to so much misery, heartache and crime. It's beyond sad!

Buzzed Christians can easily commit serious crimes too ...as easy as any one can due to their alcohol consumption. Buzzed Christians are atrocious witnesses. They drive recklessly taking unnecessary risks having very skewed judgment. They think they are funny when they really are not, they can become violent and argumentative after only a few drinks. The Bible says, **“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise”** (Prov. 20:1). People who want to remain sober, simply do not want to be around buzzed Christians ...or others.. when they are sauced. And people who drink typically want company bad; if they've had a few already, they want you to drink with them. But they never want to face any consequences. Christians that get buzzed give the Gospel a black eye so to speak! The world might encourage Christians to drink, but the people in the world won't feel respect for Christians that get buzzed along with them. This sin really hurts the whole fishing venture and Jesus hates drunkenness for that reason. He never wants you to harm your spirit, mind or body which are His property. He never wants you to cause anyone to stumble.

Underage drinkers who learn it from their role models are headed for problems in a hurry too. Yes, those who get buzzed on alcohol are often setting themselves up for a whole lifetime of catastrophic and other problems. Heartache will be their close companion. Drunken teens are the ones who become drunk adults (duh!) ...who continue to have all

the problems that alcohol causes .. and they compound getting worse as the years go by. Alcohol saps one's mind, potential and their money. It robs people of their sensibility.

What does the Bible have to say to Christians about their drunkenness? It commands them to repent of this sin. That means be so sorry about it that you never do it again. Jesus Christ spoke strongly against drunkenness (see Lk. 12:45; 21:34), as did Paul (see Eph. 5:18; 1 Cor. 11:21, for example). The Word of God especially warns Christians who have leadership roles in the Christian community not to become a stumbling block for others and to avoid getting buzzed on booze. You know what I mean, drunk (1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 2:3). We are to be filled with the Spirit, pray without ceasing and set a good example at all times.

Paul told the Corinthian believers who had been drinking at the Lord's Table to cut it out: ***“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither ... drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any”*** (1 Cor. 6:9-12, nkjv). It's simply not expedient.

Do you recall how those believers had divisions and were not experiencing the unifying power of God? Their celebrations of the Lord's Supper were characterized by lots of carnal activity. People were selfishly pigging out on their own food at church and letting some go hungry. Some of them were getting tipsy in Jesus Name. It grieved rather than glorified God. Paul warned and rebuked those Christians and then urged them to examine themselves and get right (v.28). That's the way we should handle this as well.

What will unite those in the Word of God more than humbleness, soberness and forgiveness? Nothing! It is right to confront under-aged drinking Christians. It is right to rebuke snookered hypocrite-Christians with tough love at the right time. They might call you legalistic or self-righteous, but just make sure you are doing this in because you care. Have a wise approach, a right heart and proper tone. God will be pleased that you addressed the rebel who claims to be a believer.

I personally like to thank sinners when they offer me a drink for their kind generosity, (even though I choose not to take it or drink) unless they are trying to get me to sin with them. When we read the Bible, it's clear to see that Jesus was gracious with sinners. I love how Christ gently dealt with the woman at the well to bring conviction of sin to her. He asked some pointed questions at just the right time.

She was so thirsty for what men couldn't provide her (see John 4:5-26). Men were not satisfying her deep inner needs. Often times, we Christians have the mistaken notion that if we don't verbally condemn every wrong attitude or misdeed with sinners, we will come off as condoning all the sins they commit, and we often try to reform sinners of their bad habits too. That's a waste of time.

But sinners typically know more about what we Christians are against than what we are for. We are often viewed as negative prudish people who look down on others like we are somehow better than them. We're not! A lot of times they don't know that what might

not be a conviction for them to avoid, is a conviction that I have from God to always avoid. They don't even know that I had an alcoholic dad, and grandfather and I actually, to this day, feel very uncomfortable around people drinking, even if they are not getting drunk.

### ***There is Help for Them***

Bottom line: Habitual use of alcohol often results in addiction. The drinker's inadequacies, faults, and problems became intensified, and often personality changes result. Though feeling confident when under the influence of alcohol, he or she is often immature, insecure, and afflicted by guilt and depression. The alcoholic does not feel good about himself or herself and cannot face the addiction and the problems it creates; so he or she denies the problem and is dishonest in covering it up and in blaming it on family members, parents, work supervisors, or the "bad breaks" of life. This deviousness and denial leads to a masquerade in life that at times assumes almost comic, though actually tragic, overtones.

Alcoholics desperately need God's help. If they do not hit rock bottom and admit that their life is out of control, there is little hope of any change. Admitting that there is a problem is the first step on the road to recovery.

There is hope for the alcoholic: God is able to deliver them from this addiction. If the person is drunk or "loaded," any help you might try to offer them will be futile, a conversation with the alcohol and not with the person; it might be counterproductive for the alcoholic. Arrange a meeting or have him or her telephone the following day when he or she is sober. If the person appears to be out of control, get him or her to a detox center. In some cases, you might ask if there is someone else available to take the person to a center.

Because alcoholics are often dishonest and deceivers-con artists-you must evidence a "tough love" in dealing with them. Ask if he or she really wants help. Or did he or she just get in touch with you in order to make excuses or blame the problem on other things and people, while hiding his or her real self and the real problem?

In taking a tough stance, avoid being judgmental and do not use the Bible as a club. Helpful Scripture texts will come out naturally as you present the Gospel. Assure the inquirer that he or she is in touch with the right person because you care and are glad to speak with him or her (unless he or she is drunk).

Emphasize that the alcoholic must admit having a problem he or she can't cope with alone, and must be willing to make a commitment to quit drinking for good. Nothing short of this will do! The masquerade must stop, once and for all. He or she must admit being personally responsible for the condition and the problems.

This might be the time to ask the person if he or she has ever received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Christ went to the cross specifically for him or her; Christ offers both salvation and reformation. Share "Steps to Peace with God," page 11.

Never again use alcohol. Living one day at a time, he or she must learn to trust God's promise in regard to temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13; see "Scripture").

Sever all relationships that cause enslavement to this pattern of behavior: "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character'" (1 Corinthians 15:33, niv).

Establish new relationships. Identify with a Bible-teaching church for the spiritual support of worship, Bible study, and fellowship. Be real honest with the alcoholic in warning them about falling off the wagon so to speak (possible relapses), but also encourage him or her that they don't have to fall again... and besides a relapse doesn't mean that all is lost. Renewal may be sought on the basis of 1 John 1:9, and the steps of point 5 must be practiced a day at a time.

Pray for deliverance from the compulsion and bondage he or she is under, and for a transformation of mind and life by the power of God(see Romans 12:1-2). Explain the value of a life of prayer.

Whatever the situation, urge the alleged Christian who has become an alcoholic to seek further counseling from a pastor or psychologist who understands alcoholism or chemical dependence. Many times it is necessary to deal with the underlying causes of the addiction, such as insecurity, guilt, failure, stress, or deviant sexual behavior.

Read: Matt. 11:28, Jn. 3:16, Rom. 12:1-2, 14:11-12, 2 Cor. 2:14, Gal. 5:22-23

**Here are some Scriptures to meditate upon and memorize...**

***"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy"*** (Proverbs 28:13).

***"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You"*** (Isaiah 26:3).

***"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13, niv).***

***"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"*** (2 Corinthians 5:17, niv).

***"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"*** (1 John 1:8-9).

Proverbs chapter 20 (cev) ***"It isn't smart to get drunk! Drinking makes a fool of you and leads to fights."***

Hosea chapter 4:11 (tev) The Lord says, ***"Wine, both old and new, is robbing my people of their senses!"***

Proverbs chapter 23:19-21 (tev) ***"Listen, my child, be wise and give serious thought to the way you live. Don't associate with people who drink too much wine or stuff"***

***themselves with food. Drunkards and gluttons will be reduced to poverty. If all you do is eat and sleep, you will soon be wearing rags."***

***"Show me people who drink too much, who have to try out fancy drinks, and I will show you people who are miserable and sorry for themselves, always causing trouble and always complaining. Their eyes are bloodshot, and they have bruises that could have been avoided. 31 Don't let wine tempt you, even though it is rich red, and it sparkles in the cup, and it goes down smoothly. 32 The next morning you will feel as if you had been bitten by a poisonous snake. 33 Weird sights will appear before your eyes, and you will not be able to think or speak clearly. 34 You will feel as if you were out on the ocean, seasick, swinging high up in the rigging of a tossing ship. 35 "I must have been hit," you will say; "I must have been beaten up, but I don't remember it. Why can't I wake up? I need another drink."***

A prophet in ancient Israel said: (Isaiah 28, nlt) ***"Destruction is certain for the city of Samaria - the pride and joy of the drunkards of Israel! Israel is being led by drunks! The priests and prophets reel and stagger from beer and wine. They make stupid mistakes as they carry out their responsibilities."***

In the Book of Proverbs, the Bible says: (Proverbs chapter 31:1-7, tev) ***"These are the solemn words which King Lemuel's mother said to him: "You are my own dear son, the answer to my prayers. What shall I tell you? Listen, Lemuel. Kings should not drink wine or have a craving for alcohol. When they drink, they forget the laws and ignore the rights of people in need. Alcohol is for people who are dying, for those who are in misery. Let them drink and forget their poverty and unhappiness."***

The Bible advises Christians: (in Eph. 5:18, nlt) ***"Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, let the Holy Spirit fill and control you."***