

## Alcohol - The Case for Total Abstinence

One of the Bible-Presbyterian distinctive is total abstinence from alcohol (and tobacco).

It is necessary and important to know why we believe what we believe, and know why we do what we do.

The case for total abstinence from alcohol can be explained from the Doctrinal (Biblical) and Historical (Traditional) positions.

### 1. Doctrinal position

Biblical perspective - The Bible is replete with warnings and cautions regarding the evil of alcohol:

- i. Causes drunkardness (Ephesians 5:18)
- ii. Results in sin and ungodly behaviour (Genesis 9:20-25, Genesis 19:32-25, Judges 14:10, Proverbs 23:29-33)
- iii. Leads to folly and poverty (Proverbs 20:1, 23:21)
- iv. Addictive and harms body (Proverbs 23:25)
- v. Defiles the temple of the Holy Ghost whose body we are (1 Cor 6:19-20)
- vi. Associated with evil (1 Cor 5:11)
- vii. Causes brethren to stumble (Rom 14:21)
- viii. Accursed thing to even pour alcoholic beverage for someone (Habakkuk 2:15)
- ix. Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven
- x. Not for Christians who are royal priests to drink like kings in OT times (Prov. 31:1-9)

### 2 . Historic position

Perspective from Tradition - BP Distinctive (Separation on the basis of Morality).

- i. The B-P church in America was borne out of biblical separation from Orthodox Presbyterian church and moderates primarily on 3 issues – Millennial view, Cooperation in Missions and Morality (total abstinence).
- ii. Total Abstinence from alcohol (and tobacco) is similarly also a distinctive of the B-P church of Singapore when she was founded in 1955 like it was for the B-P church of America.
- iii. However, the way of ecumenism is conformity. The neo-BPs in BPCIS\* adopt a graded fashion and tone to gambling, dance, cinemas, tobacco and alcohol. They will not 'impose singular conformity' in any way i.e. every member and church is free to hold on to their own position regarding these issues.
- iv. The Bible's position is non-conformity "*Be not conformed to this world*" (Romans 12:1-2).

*\*The Bible-Presbyterian Church In Singapore (BPCIS) is a deviant group of neo-evangelicals formed by a group of churches who attempt to distort the history and rewrite doctrines of the BP church in Singapore by publishing a book title "Heritage & Legacy of the Bible-Presbyterian Church in Singapore" in 2018. They do so in order to confuse newer generations of B-Ps through registering themselves as BPCIS with the Registry of Societies (ROS) and Commissioner of Charities (COC). They are liberals in the BP cloak and disguised with fundamental cosmetics to hide their evil intentions. Their worship is contemporary, their Bible the corrupted NIV and they have clearly an ecumenical spirit. They are not BPs, but the new BPs. They are of another spirit.*

Some verses about “wine” to clarify:

1. Ephesians 5:18
2. 1 Timothy 5:23

1. *Ephesians 5:18. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”*

This passage is often used to argue that it is fine to drink in moderation so long as it is not in “excess”.

The term “excess” is translated from the Greek term asotia. This term refers to a lifestyle that is wasteful, profligate, riotous and full of debauchery. It is used to describe the prodigal son in Luke 15:13 who wasted his life away.

This passage is thus a warning of what can happen when one is drunk with wine. It can lead one to be riotous in his conduct, engaging in much sin and debauchery. Instead of filling oneself with the wine spirit, a Christian should instead be filled with the Holy Spirit. It should not be used to justify drinking in moderation.

2. *1 Timothy 5:23. “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.”*

Context is the key in this passage. Timothy has been suffering from stomach discomfort. This was possibly exacerbated by the water which he had drunk. In those days, water was treated by disinfecting it with some wine.

Timothy had kept himself from wine, wary that as a pastor, he ought not to be given to wine (1 Tim. 3:8). Thus, the Apostle Paul saw fit to ask Timothy to treat the water with wine for the sake of his health. The alcoholic content in this water would have been extremely diluted. Thus, this passage should not be used to support drinking in moderation.

#### Sources and Suggested Readings:

1. Bible -Presbyterianism – History & Theology. FEBC (page 128)  
[https://www.febc.edu.sg/v15/assets/pdfs/febc\\_press/Bible-Presbyterianism\\_%20History%20and%20Theology.pdf](https://www.febc.edu.sg/v15/assets/pdfs/febc_press/Bible-Presbyterianism_%20History%20and%20Theology.pdf)
2. Doctrinal distinctives of the B-P Movement (page 19)  
<https://s3-ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/cpbpc-documents/Books/Remembering+the+Singapore+B-P+Story.pdf>
3. The doctrine and practice of biblical separation in the Bible-Presbyterian Church (Singapore): A response to BPCIS. Burning Bush Jan 2021 (Page 8-11)  
<https://www.febc.edu.sg/v15/assets/pdfs/bbush/The%20Burning%20Bush%20Vol%2027%20No%201.pdf>