

## “Drugs, Alcohol, and the Great Controversy” A Bible Study by Chaplain Michael Boddie II

- **Interactive Question: Why is drinking and taking drugs such a big deal if it is done in moderation?**
- The word “marijuana” is not in the Bible. However, there are Biblical principles that give clarity on God’s opinion of the subject.
- According to dictionary.com, marijuana, or weed, is “the dried leaves and female flowers of the hemp plant, used in cigarette form as a narcotic or hallucinogen.”
  - A narcotic, according to this website, is “any of a class of substances that blunt the senses, as opium, morphine, belladonna, and alcohol, that in large quantities produce euphoria, stupor, or coma, that when used constantly can cause habituation or addiction, and that are used in medicine to relieve pain, cause sedation, and induce sleep.”
  - **Summary: Marijuana puts a person under the influence of something or someone other than themselves. It’s probably important to be careful about who is controlling you, huh?**
- According to the word health organization’s website, “Alcohol is a toxic and psychoactive substance with dependence producing properties.”
  - It goes on to say that “Alcohol consumption contributes to 3 million deaths each year globally as well as to the disabilities and poor health of millions of people. Overall, harmful use of alcohol is responsible for 5.1% of the global burden of disease.  
Harmful use of alcohol is accountable for 7.1% and 2.2% of the global burden of disease for males and females respectively. Alcohol is the leading risk factor for premature mortality and disability among those aged 15 to 49 years, accounting for 10% of all deaths in this age group. Disadvantaged and especially vulnerable populations have higher rates of alcohol-related death and hospitalization.”
  - **Summary: Alcohol is a poison or toxin that does not belong inside of the human body. Consumption of it also affects one’s ability to think clearly. Once again, just like marijuana, it puts the person that is consuming these poisons under the influence of something or someone other than themselves.**
- Biblically, people are controlled or influenced by spirits, whether good or bad.
  - What is a spirit?
    - πνεῦμα (pronounced: nooma)
      - It can refer to the third person in the Godhead. It can also refer to the soul, or your very essence.
      - It’s who you are. It’s what controls and influences your actions.
  - The fruits of the Holy Spirit, found in Galatians 5:22-23 KJV, are:
    - Love
    - Joy
    - Peace
    - Longsuffering
    - Gentleness
    - Goodness
    - Faith

- Meekness
  - Temperance
- The Bible gives us a way to test a spirit to see what kind it is. 1 John 4:1-3 KJV says:
  - “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of an an-ti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”
  - **Summary: If you are not influenced to testify of Jesus, not only in your words, but especially through your actions, you are not under the influence of God’s Spirit.**
  - **Critical point: If we drink or take drugs, it impairs our thinking and negatively influences our actions. Thus, even if done with pure intentions, drinking and taking drugs make us more susceptible and vulnerable to being controlled by the devil.**
- **Interactive Question: Have you ever encountered someone, even a Christian, who said that taking drugs and drinking alcohol is not a salvific issue? If so, how did you handle it, and if you have not encountered this, how would you handle it if you encounter it in the future?**
- As human beings, we are simply conduits (2 Timothy 2:21, 2 Corinthians 4:7). Whether we realize it or not, we submit to one of two authorities.
  - “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24
    - The Greek word for mammon appears 3 other times in the New Testament. It means wealth or money.
      - We know from 1 Timothy 6:10 that the love of money is the root of all evil. Essentially, the love of wealth indicates a desire for power and glory. This was the same motive of Lucifer when he became Satan. We wanted more power and glory than God. He wanted to be God.
      - The statement, “serve God or mammon” is equivalent to saying God or Satan. To serve money is to seek the same negative desires that Satan’s kingdom promotes.
      - Furthermore, whether it’s money, sex, popularity, or anything, God says clearly, about Himself, in his very first commandment to “have no other gods before me.” Exodus 20:3
      - **Summary: Life is The Great Controversy. It’s the battle between God and Satan over our souls. Who will you surrender to?**
- God wants us to be under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He produces good fruit.
  - John 14:26 - But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

- Romans 8:26 - Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
- Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- 1 Corinthians 6:19 - What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?
- Isaiah 11:2 - And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;
- God wants us to be clear critical thinkers, so we can make decisions that will lead to life.
  - 1 Peter 5:8 - Be **sober**, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
  - 1 Peter 4:7 - But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore **sober**, and watch unto prayer.
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:6 - Therefore let us not sleep, as [do] others; but let us watch and be **sober**.
  - 1 Timothy 3:2 - A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, **sober**, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;
- But didn't Jesus drink alcohol?
  - The simple answer is "no". There are two types of wine mentioned in the Bible which are fresh grape juice and aged and fermented juice.
    - "The word "wine" in the Bible sometimes refers to the new—or fresh juice of the grape; other times it is used to describe the aged or fermented product containing the drug alcohol. The translators never used the term "grape juice." In the Hebrew text, the writers use different words to distinguish between the two. The word tîyrôsh is used for new unfermented wine, and yayin is generally used for fermented wine, but there were some exceptions (Isaiah 16:10). However, in the New Testament, only one Greek word is used to describe both fermented and fresh grape juice: oinis . But this shouldn't be a problem. By simply understanding the context of the word in a passage, the appropriate meaning will usually surface. So unless the passage says old or new wine (as in Luke 5:37–39), the context will often tell us what kind of grape juice is being described." -*The Christian and Alcohol* by Doug Batchelor
    - The Bible speaks multiple times about the importance of abstaining from the aged and fermented wine.
      - "11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning so that they may pursue intoxicating drink, Who stay up late in the evening so that wine may inflame them!" -Isaiah 5:11 NASB
      - "29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has red eyes?

<sup>30</sup> Those who linger long over wine,  
Those who go to <sup>[o]</sup>taste mixed wine.” -Proverbs 23:20-30 NASB

- “<sup>15</sup>“Woe to him who makes his neighbor drink;  
<sup>[l]</sup>To you who mix in your venom even to make *your neighbors* drunk,” -Habakkuk 2:15
  - **Summary:** Based on context alone, when it comes to wine, it is easy to see that Jesus only partook in unfermented fresh grape juice. Some use the example of Jesus turning water into “wine” at a wedding. However, even just based on the verses provided above, it is clear that Jesus would not provide fermented intoxicating wine to people. Also, it was more impressive that He provided fresh grape juice at the wedding. This is what caused the people there to marvel over it.
- **Interactive Question: As Christians, what are some ways that we can show love, grace, and support to those trying to overcome a drug and/or alcohol addiction?**
- What about medical marijuana?
  - The end does not justify the means.
    - King Asa, in 2 Chronicles 16, is a perfect example of this. He accomplished a good thing, but God was displeased with the way He did it.
    - Another Biblical example is Moses, in Numbers 20. He got water out of a rock, which was a good thing. However, he disobeyed the way God told him to do it.
    - One of the most famous Biblical examples of this principle is Cain’s sacrifice in Genesis 4. He had a good motive when he brought fruit as a sacrifice to God. He sincerely wanted to please God. However, his method was not harmonious with God’s clear will.
  - **Summary:** It’s undeniable that medical marijuana probably can be used in a beneficial way. However, a good goal shouldn’t be achieved in a way that’s displeasing to Jesus.
  - It’s highly unlikely that medical marijuana is the only way to relieve headaches, glaucoma, and nerve pain. It may not even be the most effective way to do it.
- Let’s look at marijuana use from a purely health perspective. It has a lot of side effects. Yet, there are no side effects to God’s health principles (Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunlight, Temperance, Air, Rest, Trust in Him), or His method for true peace, relaxation, and joy, which can only be found in relationship with Him. Here are some side effects of marijuana listed on drugfreeworld.org:
  - SHORT-TERM EFFECTS
    - Short-term memory problems
    - Severe anxiety, including fear that one is being watched or followed (paranoia)
    - Very strange behavior, seeing, hearing or smelling things that aren’t there, not being able to tell imagination from reality (psychosis)
    - Panic
    - Hallucinations
    - Loss of sense of personal identity
    - Lowered reaction time

- Increased heart rate (risk of heart attack)
- Increased risk of stroke
- Problems with coordination (impairing safe driving or playing sports)
- Sexual problems (for males)
- Up to seven times more likely to contract sexually transmitted infections than non-users (for females)
- LONG-TERM EFFECTS
  - Decline in IQ (up to 8 points if prolonged use started in adolescent age)
  - Poor school performance and higher chance of dropping out
  - Impaired thinking and ability to learn and perform complex tasks
  - Lower life satisfaction
  - Addiction (about 9% of adults and 17% of people who started smoking as teens)
  - Potential development of opiate abuse
  - Relationship problems, intimate partner violence
  - Antisocial behavior including stealing money or lying
  - Financial difficulties
  - Increased welfare dependence
  - Greater chances of being unemployed or not getting good jobs.
- **CONCLUSION: WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF A WAR. ONE OF MY FAVORITE AUTHORS, ELLEN G. WHITE, CALLS IT “THE GREAT CONTROVERSY”. WE ARE NOT FIGHTING IN THE WAR. HOWEVER, WE ARE THE OBJECTIVE. GOD AND SATAN ARE FIGHTING FOR OUR ALLEGIANCE. GOD’S TRACK RECORD SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. HIS WAY LEADS TO PEACE, JOY, AND ULTIMATELY ETERNAL LIFE. DO YOU THINK SATAN WOULD EVER DIE TO SAVE YOU? DO YOU THINK HE WOULD EVER DO ANYTHING TO HELP ANYONE OTHER THAN HIMSELF? HIS WAY LEADS TO ETERNAL DEATH. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL MAY SEEM HARMLESS, BUT THE MIND CONTROLS THE PERSON. BY TAKING DRUGS AND ALCOHOL, MEDICALLY OR RECREATIONALLY, WE ARE ALLOWING THE ENEMY TO INFLUENCE OUR THOUGHTS, AND CONSEQUENTALLY OUR ACTIONS. THIS WILL PROBABLY LEAD TO OUR HARM, AND THE HARM OF OTHERS. IT’S GOD OR SATAN. WHO IS WORTHY OF YOUR SURRENDER?**