

# Staying Sober

August 2, 2020

Proverbs 23:17-21, 29-35

From Proverbs 22:17—24:22, Solomon arranged a group of proverbs that are referred to as the *Thirty Pearls of God's Wisdom*. In this week's lesson, Solomon shows the virtues of wise living by painting a picture of the opposite, the portrait of a drunkard and glutton whose lifestyle is contrary to the very meaning of wisdom.



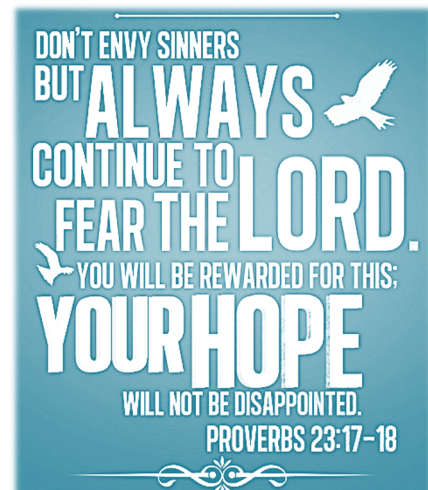
*"There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off" (Proverbs 23:17b-18).*

Today, in church circles, we can observe three attitudes toward alcoholic beverages--{a} complete abstention from drinking alcohol, {b} total acceptance of alcoholic beverages and {c} approval of very moderate use of alcoholic drinks. The history of American Christianity and alcohol is complex, but we can distill this history down to some key details. In the late 1800s, severe alcoholism had reached epidemic proportions in the United States. Booze was driving people into poverty, destroying families and contributing to widespread violence. While many Baptists agree that overindulgence in alcohol is wrong, we probably share less concern about another form of gluttony that is condemned by the wisdom writer--overindulgence in food.

God warns His readers to avoid evil people and the influence they can have on unsuspecting victims. A godly person builds a life that makes wise choices and builds relationships that will endure difficulties and avoid sinful practices. In all things, we must exercise prudence. The crippling damage of alcoholism and the devastation from drunk driving accidents should remind all Christians that no matter how we approach alcohol, we always must be careful not to let it master us or lead us into danger. [excerpts by Joshua Sharp]

## The Promise (Proverbs 23:17-18)

- In Proverbs 22:17-24:22, Solomon captures 30 proverbs of God's wisdom.
    - The first ten proverbs provide wisdom about wealth and power (22:22-23:11).
    - The next seven proverbs are from a parent to a child (23:12-28).
    - The final thirteen proverbs (today's lesson) provide God's wisdom on a number of issues.
  - We begin with a promise: ***"Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off."*** (23:17-18)
    - No matter how much influence parents have, one day their child would be tempted.
  - Sinners would be recognized by their decision to reject God's wisdom.
    - We might be tempted to want to copy and possess the sinner's lifestyle (envy).
      - We secretly desire to experience what seems to be their joy.
    - But such temptation can wreak havoc on a young Christian.
  - Aware of the temptation of a sinful lifestyle, Solomon reminded his son of the promise associated with living in fear of the Lord.
    - A promising future awaits, if he placed his hope in the Lord.
    - We will not be disappointed with the future He holds for us, instead of a lifestyle dominated by foolishness.
- **What temptations lead people to stray from God's wisdom?**
- **What temptations do you battle? What's the source of your help?**

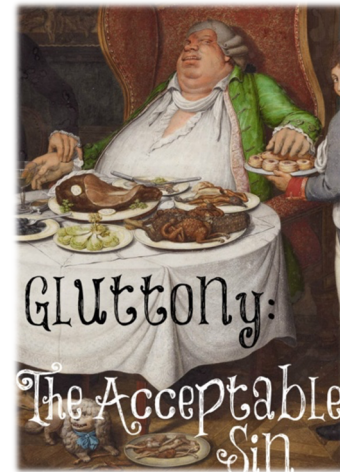
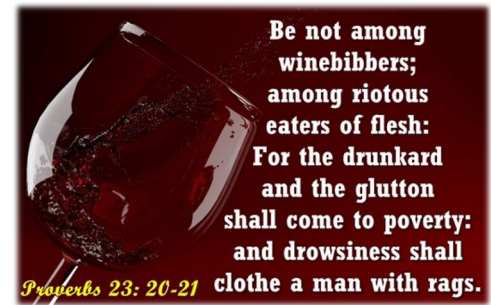


### The Petition (Proverbs 23:19-21)

- ***"Hear thou, my son, and be wise..."***
- This is a stern challenge about sinful behavior and what's at stake.
  - Solomon brings two influences to the attention of his son:
    - ***"Be not among winebibbers"***
      - Some people would give themselves over to drunkenness.
      - They would keep drinking until they drank too much.
    - ***"Be not among riotous eaters of flesh"***
      - Some people cannot control their food intake.
      - They are out of control as they stuff themselves with food.
- Solomon warned the future of a glutton as well as a drunkard looks grim.
  - They end up in poverty. The cost of their habits ruin them.
  - They end up groggy, unable to do useful work or too lazy to work.
  - All this is a high price for the foolish loss of control of our bodies.
- God's wisdom teaches us to treat gluttony and drunkenness in the same way.
  - There are both physical and spiritual effects of over indulgence.

➤ **What's your approach to overcoming influences that tempt you?**

➤ **List other temptations in addition to alcohol and food that tempt our bodies?**



### The Portrait (Proverbs 23:29-32)

- Solomon paints a portrait concerning drunkenness.
  - ***"Who has woe? Who has sorrow?"*** – emotional fatigue / depression
  - ***Who has strife? Who has complaints?"*** – problems with interpersonal relationships
  - ***Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?"*** – physical clues of addictive behavior
- For those who live under the control of their addictions, craving something dictates how they spend their time. Their addiction drives them to search for something more potent.
- **What's the best way to avoid drug abuse, pornography, alcohol, gluttony, ...?"**
  - Remember what Solomon said at the beginning of our study of Proverbs.
    - ***"Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evildoers."*** (4:14)
      - Don't shop when you're hungry and bring home unhealthy snack foods.
      - Don't set at the bar when you go out to eat.
      - Don't click that button on the computer that tempts you erotically.
      - Don't hang out with friends who do drugs.
- Temptations of the world may look appealing, but the appearance turns out to be a ruse.
- **What actions should you take so you don't find yourself in Solomon's portrait?**

### The Problem (Proverbs 23:33-35)

- Drug abuse and alcoholism present serious problems for addicts and the people who love them.
  - They hallucinate and drag others into a downward spiral.
  - They talk perverse things, they can't keep their balance, terror fills their hearts.
  - They are bodily injured and have no recollection of how it happened.
- **How can you help others around you suffering from addiction?**

**Biblical Truth: God expects believers to be good stewards of the bodies He has given them.**

*"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." 1 Cor. 6:19-20)*

