



QA: Is There Any Good Use of Alcohol? by [John T Polk II](#)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.

QUESTION: Is there any good use of alcoholic beverages?

ANSWER: There are 3 uses of alcohol, each as a medicine, that is, to be used with a very low dose, only for pain relief, out of necessity, briefly at best. They are:

(1) **to relieve recurring weakening digestive problems.** Paul told Timothy to,

No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities. (**1 Timothy 5:23**)

Whether this wine was fermented or not, the emphasis is on the words "a little," for this gives no room for "social drinking," which always seems to involve more than "a little." It has been established that grape juice has beneficial digestive properties apart from its alcoholic content. Timothy was a total abstainer from "wine," for he had to be told to "use a little" as his medicine. The Holy Spirit-inspired Paul had made it clear that Christian men who became Elders were not to be "given to wine" (**1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7**), that is, lingering where it is served, having the regular practice of drinking it, or enjoying its use! If that doesn't condemn "social drinking," what would? With Deacons, the phrase is "not given to much wine" (**1 Timothy 3:8**), which is not approving the regular practice, but showing that a deacon should not have "much wine" on his mind! Again, "social drinking" was not to be a part of a Christian man's thought or concern. In Moses' Law, God absolutely prohibited a "priest's" use of "wine nor intoxicating drink" when offering sacrifices (**Leviticus 10:8-11; Ezekiel 44:21**). Since New Testament Christians are priests who offer spiritual sacrifices (**1 Peter 2:5**), it is reasonable, consistent, and clear that the regular practice of "social drinking" should be avoided (**Ephesians 5:18**) in order for Christians to be able to offer sacrifices "everywhere" (**1 Timothy 2:8**). Timothy understood this teaching and kept completely away from the practice, himself!

(2) **to ease a person about to die.**

Give strong drink to him who is perishing. (**Proverbs 31:6**)

Jesus on the cross was offered "sour wine" (vinegar) mixed with an ingredient (the description of "strong," or "intoxicating drink") to dull His pain (**Mark 15:22-23; Matthew 27:33-34**), but He refused. Just before His death, however, "sour wine" (vinegar) by itself, was offered to Him (**Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:36; John 19:28-30**), and He took it. Jesus maintained His purity in life by refusing

anything akin to “strong drink,” and vinegar only just before His death. Since alcohol is a drug, it is acceptable to use other drugs to ease pain in death.

(3) to relieve a bitter heart.

And wine to those who are bitter of heart. Let him drink and forget his poverty, And remember his misery no more. (**Proverbs 31:7**)

Since alcohol is a mood-affecting drug, people assume it is the only remedy for the “bitter of heart” (**Ecclesiastes 10:19**). Righteous Hannah however, had used prayer to deal with her “sorrowful heart” rather than drunkenness (**1 Samuel 1:12-15**). Though alcohol might be a medicine to lift one’s mood, repeated moodiness needs more spiritual attention than “spirits!”

A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones. (**Proverbs 17:22**)

— *jtp11, November 27, 2022*