



**“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord,” James 5:7a.**

## **Diligent Service: Business Life**

**Covenant:** We further engage . . . to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

**Aim:** to consider some of the very fruitful principles by which one may render diligent service in forwarding the kingdom of our Saviour. (A Temperance lesson).

**Text:** I Corinthians 6:9-12; James 5:1-6

**INTRODUCTION** — The Christian has been made free in Christ, but there is a limit to his freedom. He is free from sin and free to serve the Lord. His freedom does not include freedom to sin but freedom from sin. **“As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God,”** I Peter 2:16. He who uses his freedom in Christ as an excuse to sin is perverting the gospel and inviting the discipline of God. Read Romans 6:1-14 with this thought in mind!

This principle of Christian liberty and Christian responsibility applies to all of life: business, social, and religious. There can be no division of life into compartments of “secular” and “sacred.” To the believer, redeemed in body and soul by the Lord Jesus, all of life is sacred. There is no part of his life which is beyond God’s concern and watchfulness, Psalm 139.

Today’s study deals with a major problem in current American life. It is the problem of alcoholic beverages. “We further engage . . . to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour. This is a temperance lesson.

Every citizen of the United States bears a responsibility in this matter. The persons who make alcoholic beverages, those who transport and distribute it, those who lease property to be used in its sale, those who serve as drinks in liquor stores, bootleggers on a backstreet, and even the respected citizen in the church pew who votes to legalize its sale and consumption—each of them bears a responsibility for the distress it brings and the waste it produces.

Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying, “Liquor may have its defenders, but it has no defense.” With 500,000 liquor establishments and but slightly 300,000 churches in our nation, it is time Christians awoke to this evil.

## **EXPOSITION**

### **I. INTOXICATING DRINKS**

Bible-believing Christians are opposed to the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage. Why? For the following primary reasons.

1. Beverage alcohol is indicted at the bar of financial wisdom. Advocates say beverage alcohol brings great tax revenues into governmental treasures through legalized liquors. The Massachusetts State Legislature made a study of the subject that revealed it cost them six times as much to have legalized liquor as was brought in by taxes. A similar study in Texas showed it cost \$53.38 to every \$1.00 brought in. A rather strange way to make a “profit” isn't it?

“But,” it is insisted, “it offers employment to many people in manufacture, transportation and sale.” One study shows that one million dollars involved in liquor industry employs sixty-two people. Invested in soft drinks the same amount would employ 106 and invested in lumber would employ 135.

Consider the millions of man-hours lost from work due to drinking, multiply by the minimum wage, and see how profitable it is to drink! Financial wisdom, not considering broken hearts and homes, says it is not profitable to legalize alcoholic beverages.

2. Beverage alcohol is indicted at the bar of moral virtue. Intoxication is conducive to immorality. A magazine named “Advertizing Age” advertised Champaign cocktails as “cupid's most loyal, and efficient helper.” Look at what the Bible says about this in Proverbs 23:33; Hosea 4:11; Genesis 19:30-38. Alcohol affects the brain by stopping the action which governs ethical standards and releases the base animal passions. Like all engine runs wild when its governor fails to function, so man loses moral restraint and

becomes cruel and inhuman. Immorality, brutality, and even murder is the consequence. Often even those whom the drinker should love are the objects of his drink-crazed anger. Moral virtue flees when intoxication arises.

3. Beverage alcohol is indicted at the bar of social values. Since beverage alcohol puts to sleep the portion of the brain guiding moral conduct, it causes one to lose his sense of social values. The drunkard will beat his wife and children and break his furniture in defiance of social values. Drunkenness debases and destroys the home. Sixty percent of all broken homes have alcohol involved. When it is remembered that the home is the foundation of a nation, the evil is evident.

Beverage alcohol demoralizes youth. Seventy percent of all alcoholics begin to drink in youth. The Attorney General of the State of California said beer, wine and whiskey are the major contributors to juvenile delinquency. It is reported that 85% of the 17,000 delinquents in custody of the California Youth Authority went wrong when they started drinking. In Texas there are 38,000 minors receiving "Aid to Dependent Children" from the State Department of Public Welfare (1964) because of alcohol. Over one-half of the poverty cases resulted from beverage alcohol. Beverage alcohol brings untold suffering, sorrow and loss. This is evident in three points. First, it produces alcoholics. There are now 9,000,000 problem drinkers in the United States compared with 2,000,000 fifty years ago. In 1873 one person in sixty was alcoholic. In 1955, one in twenty-eight was alcoholic. The number is mushrooming. One of fifteen young people today will become an alcoholic.

Second, it brings untold suffering through automobile accidents. Fifty percent of all automobile accidents are alcohol-involved. In 1964 these accidents killed 40,000 and injured one million.

Third, it harms the body. Beverage alcohol encourages sclerosis of the liver, hardening of the arteries, high blood pressure, water on the brain, heart damage, blood unable to build tissue properly, digestion hindered, etc. Ask any medical doctor. Yes, "Liquor may have its defenders, but it has no defense."

4. Beverage alcohol is indicated at the bar of Scriptural teaching. Does the Bible speak on this subject? Yes, indeed! Look at the lesson text of today's study. God classes drunkenness with immorality, sex perversion, theft, idolatry, and like sins. This is mighty poor company for any reputable action to keep. But that is not all.

The Biblical terms for strong drink are built on two Hebrew words: **yarin** which means "to wait, lament," and **tirosh** which means "to go into poverty." There are seventy-five different Scriptures which warn of the use

of alcohol beverages. Typical of these are as follows.

**“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise,”** Proverbs 20:1.

**“The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty,”** Proverbs 23:21,

Though the Scripture is too long to quote here, a classic expression of the evils of alcoholic beverage is Proverbs 23:29-35. Read it in your own Bible.

**“It is not for kings to drink wine: nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted,”** Proverbs 31:4-5.

**“Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them,”** Isaiah 5:11.

**“Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart,”** Hosea 4:11.

**“Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also . . .”** Habakkuk 2:15.

**“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life . . .”** Luke 21:34.

**“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,”** Romans 13:13-14.

**“Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God,”** I Corinthians 6:10.

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

Baptists believe the Bible. We confess that it is the only rule of faith and practice which we must follow. There should be no question, therefore, about any Baptist's attitude toward beverage alcohol.

A successful businessman recently gave this testimony: “At one time I thought it was necessary to drink liquor with prospective clients in order to secure their business. For a while I did so. God convicted me of it, however, and I resolved to quit even if it ruined my business. On the contrary, I found business associates held me in higher esteem and my business actually increased when I stood by my Christian conviction on this matter. I would recommend every businessman to follow this example.”

People drink to forget their problems, to overcome fears, to gain greater

social acceptance, to encourage business contacts, etc. But God can do all this for you without the artificial stimulation of beverage alcohol. Come to Jesus. Be saved. Receive the Holy Spirit. The victorious life of Christ will be lived in you day by day. With increasing tensions and pressures in modern living, more and more people will turn to alcohol or to Jesus. Where will you turn? The obligation of the Church Covenant and the teachings of the Bible should answer the question for every Baptist.

## II. SPIRITUAL DELIVERANCE

The converse of the works of the flesh is the fruit of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 the works of the flesh are set forth. Compare this list with the one Paul included in Galatians 5:19-21. The believer is not to live this kind of life. What is the secret of his deliverance? Paul answers in I Corinthians 6:11-12 and Galatians 5:22-25.

1. Washing delivers from the works of the flesh. This does not refer to ordinances performed by men but by the spiritual cleansing effected through the blood of Jesus. Paul describes this miraculous experience in Titus 3:5, **“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”** The Apostle John praised the Lord Jesus, **“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from sins in his own blood . . . be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen,”** Revelation 1:5b, 6b. To be washed from our sins is to be made free from the contamination they brought. While some Christians had formerly lived in immorality, drunkenness, idolatry and kindred sins (enumerated in I Corinthians 6:9-10), they were washed free from such things. Praise God for purifying grace.

2. Sanctification delivers from the works of the flesh. Sanctification is the act of God in setting the believer apart from the world and adopting him into the family of the redeemed. The verb which Paul uses to describe this transformation is in the passive voice which suggests it is an act which God performs unto us and not a work of ourselves. There is no distinction to be made between God's elect and his sanctified ones, Acts 20:32; I Corinthians 1:2. Every saved person is sanctified unto the service of God. Each Christian is a living vessel in the new spiritual temple, “sanctified, and meet for the master's use,” II Timothy 2:21. Whereas “washing” makes one free from defilement of former sins, “sanctification” keeps him free from present defilement. To be washed and sanctified is to be saved and to live victoriously in Christ.

3. Justification delivers from the works of the flesh every believer in

Christ. Justification is the act of God by which the sinner is declared righteous by the provisions of divine grace. It is the free gift of God, Romans 5:18. Justification has two sides. First, it means the pardon, remission and non-imputation of all sins, reconciliation to God and the end of his enmity and wrath (Acts 13:39; Romans 5:9ff.). Second, it means the bestowal of a righteous man's status and a title to all the blessings promised to the just. Justification thus means permanent re-instatement to favor and privilege, as well as complete forgiveness of all sins. No wonder it delivers from the sins of the flesh!

Look back upon these three blessed works of grace: washing, sanctification and justification. While the believer may blush with shame over his former conduct, he is now freed from sin, a servant of God; producing a life of holiness, and enjoying the full blessing of eternal life, Romans 6:22. No wonder he no longer wants to live in the former sins of the flesh.

The very fact of sonship with God brings limitations upon the believer's freedom. Paul says some things may be "lawful" to the believer which are not proper, verse 12. That is, some things which are not directly against God's commands may cause a weak brother to stumble. These things should never be practiced, for the sake of the brother. The spirit of Christ is to deny self for the sake of others. As relating to alcoholic beverages, this means the believer has an obligation to refrain from its manufacture, transportation, distribution, and consumption. Neither vote, effort or influence should encourage it. Not even the profit received from it is worth the Christian denying his obligation to refrain therefrom.

### **III. BUSINESS INTEGRITY**

James 5:1-6 warns all those who make profit by unjust means. Three truths lie in these verses. They apply to all areas of business life and call for integrity therein

1. Earthly riches will corrupt and perish away, verses 1-3. It is foolish for one to seek wealth while ignoring God. The day comes when earthly riches will be as useless as dust and the wealthy will stand before God as paupers. Jesus said men ought to lay up treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust corrupts them nor where thieves break through and steal them, Matthew 6:19-21,

All wealth will pass but that wealth which is secured by unjust means "shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire, verse 3. Whether it is tax money and personal profit brought in by the liquor trade,

or profit secured by unjust transactions in other business, or profit secured at the cost of suffering laborers, God will condemn it all. Men will weep and howl because of their misery at seeing their wealth perish and knowing their evil deeds remain to condemn them.

2. A life lived for personal profit and satisfaction will end in deep regret, verses 4-6. God would be unrighteous if he overlooked and forgot business frauds or unjust dealings by which some gain wealth. But God is righteous! He will not forget the cries of the oppressed. He will see that business fraud will receive it just due.

James said some men are like animals. They make profit and grow fat thereon not knowing they are but being fattened for slaughter. In the midst of wanton living he calls all men to remember God and to prepare for judgment. The end of a life lived in selfish and ungodly living is “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Sinful living is not worth what it costs. Believe it, brother!

3. A day of judgment is coming. The entire passage in James 5:1-6 is underscored with the certainty of judgment. If there were no eternal judgment, perhaps a sinner might be able to escape. But James makes no exception among men, clearly inferring every man will face God in judgment to account for the things done in the flesh. **“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead,”** Acts 17:31. **“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God,”** Romans 14:12. **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,”** II Corinthians 5:10.

Every man, whether saved or unsaved must give an account of himself to God. This divine appointment is as certain and inescapable as death, Hebrews 9:27. Those who have lived dishonorable and ungodly lives will cry out in great distress. Only the righteous and humble will be approved. There will be no defense for the intemperate, ungodly, and guilty sinner. How would it fare with you if today were the end of the world?

CONCLUSION — Yes, it has been correctly stated, “Liquor may have its defenders, but it has no defense.” Financial wisdom, moral virtue and social values all warn against it. More seriously, the Holy Bible repeatedly speaks against beverage alcohol. The duty of the Christian is plain. God will hold him responsible to stop the waste and suffering and sin which beverage alcohol causes. Take a stand, Christian!

In becoming a member of a Baptist church, the believer enters a solemn

covenant, “in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly.” The portion of that commitment studied today declares the church’s attitude toward alcoholic beverages. “We further engage . . . to abstain from the sale and use of Intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.” Any Baptist who does not live up to this statement betrays his solemn word, disobeys the clear teaching of the Scriptures and grieves the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to defend and promote alcoholic beverages while seeking to advance the kingdom of the Saviour. Take a stand, Christian brother, and be sure it is with God.

## QUESTIONS

1. What portion of the Church Covenant is considered today?
2. What is your responsibility regarding alcoholic beverage?
3. What does financial wisdom say on the subject?
4. How does moral virtue suffer from alcoholic beverage?
5. What are some Scripture statements on the subject?
6. How can one overcome the curse of carnal sins in his own body?
7. Why must God be considered in all business matters?
8. How does eternal judgment enter into this study?
9. What is the end of the pleasure-filled life? Why?
10. How can you apply this lesson to your own life and community?