

THE WORLD'S BIBLE #13

By Keith Greer

"THE SOCIAL DRINK." PART 3

We want to continue discussing the subject of "Social Drinking." This is a difficult subject for many brethren who want to oppose getting "drunk," but give approval for the "social" aspect of drinking – whatever that is!

Does it matter what we, as Christians, do "socially" as long as we practice "self-control?"

In 1 Peter 4:1-4, the apostle Peter wrote, "Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles-- when we walked in lewdness, In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you:"

If we read these verses quickly, we may be tempted to say, "well, Peter was just telling them not to use an excess of wine - we just have to be careful about using too much." However, if we look at the original meaning of some of these words, we will have to arrive at a very different conclusion.

In the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, verse 3 is properly translated, "For (is) sufficient for us the past time of life the will of the nations to have worked out, having walked in licentiousness, lusts, wine-drinking, revels, drinkings, and unhallowed idolatries. "

While "excess of wine" is translated from the Greek word, "oinophlugia", and would certainly carry with it the idea of drunkenness, let's take a closer look at some of the other words in verse 3.

"Reveling" is from the Greek word "komos" and is properly defined in today's language as a "carousal". While we might say that you could have a "carousal" without alcoholic beverages, let's think about this word in connection with the next one in this passage.

Even though, as Christians, we should practice self-control in what we eat, "banquetings" is not talking about going down to "The Village Restaurant" for a feast of all the catfish you can eat on Friday night. "Banquetings" is from the Greek word "potos" which is defined as "a drinking-bout or carousal," or, a drinking party. It is derived from the root word "pino" which means, quite simply, "to imbibe or to drink".

Careful study of these passages clearly shows that Peter is condemning all categories of drinking: (1) Drunkenness (2) Partying (3) Social drinking. Every type of drinking situation fits into one of these three groups – thus improper conduct for the Christian.

What about Romans 12:2? "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Whose wisdom are we seeking to conform to, God's or the world?

Before we try to use the term "excess of wine" to "justify" social drinking, we need to soberly think about what Peter was telling these Christians. He wasn't giving them license to drink. He was telling them that those who wanted them to participate would think them "strange" and would speak "evil of them" for not participating. What should that tell us about our responsibility?

Christians are to live at a much higher standard than the world does. How does the child of God "show the character of the Savior" sitting down with a cold one, glass of wine, or a mixed drink so they can unwind or just be sociable? What in the world are we thinking about? Do we fit into the sinner's social circles or try to lead them to Christ by godly living? Simple, isn't it? ***