

THE WORLD'S BIBLE #15

By Keith Greer

THE SOCIAL DRINK. Part 5

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!

Our society seems to love "catchy phrases" and slogans. Not only are the slogans used by those who would discourage drinking alcohol (such as "DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE"), but the makers themselves of alcoholic beverages use such slogans as "KNOW WHEN TO SAY WHEN" at the same time that they are encouraging you to buy their product."

Brethren who try to say that you just have to "KNOW WHEN TO SAY WHEN" often use 1 Timothy 3: 3 and 1 Timothy 3: 8 in what they believe "proves" their position.

In describing the qualifications of elders, Paul told Timothy that the elders should be "not given to wine ... " (1 Timothy 3: 3). "Given" is from the Greek word "paroinos" which carries with it the idea that they were not to "stay near wine". It did not mean that they were just to "KNOW WHEN TO SAY WHEN". One of the qualifications of being "blameless" included that an elder should not have anything to do with wine, including even being "near" it.

As we skip down to 1 Timothy 3: 8, we find that Paul told Timothy that "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;" While verses 1-8 are a little more specific about the qualifications for elders ("not a brawler" "not covetous" and "given to hospitality", for example), we cannot miss the point that Paul was telling Timothy that the character of deacons had to be blameless - just like the elders. We know this because Paul began with the phrase "LIKEWISE ... "

In 1 Timothy 3: 8, "given" is from the Greek word "prosecho" which is defined as "pay attention to", or "be cautious about". It is derived from the Greek words "pros " (meaning "near to") and "echo~ (meaning "to hold"). They were to "pay attention to" or "be cautious about" even being near wine.

As we read these verses, do they mean that the elders are not to be around wine, but the deacons can drink a little - just as long as they "KNOW WHEN TO SAY WHEN"? If we jump to that conclusion, then we are choosing to ignore the word "likewise" when Paul told Timothy that just as the elders were to be "sober. .. not given to wine ... and not greedy of filthy lucre", "likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre." If we think that we can pick and choose whatever characteristic we might want to incorporate into our lives and still be pleasing to God, then we had better think again.

Why do brethren go to such passages to try and defend social drinking? Consider the subject matter of these texts – qualifications for elders and deacons. Elders overseers of the Lord's heritage – His church. Deacons – servants of that blood bought institution. How in the world can honest thinking brethren believe that men seeking these offices, along with all the

other qualifications they must meet, would have a different law considering the drinking of alcohol than the other members of the body. Guess the same thinking brethren that would even seek to suggest that Jesus would make 180 gallons of fermented wine for a wedding party to get blasted!

Whether we want to admit it or not, alcohol is a drug. Our children have been taught another slogan - "JUST SAY NO." Personally speaking , this is an excellent slogan for every person who is tempted to allow alcohol to pass their lips! ***