



The Caller

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Confidence Corner John F. Board

In this week's *Confidence Corner* we will examine the question "What is the big deal with alcohol?" I ask us to consider the following thoughts regarding this danger against which God provides strong warning.

People see themselves using alcohol in four different ways. (1) Some people do not drink at all. (2) Some experiment with it—experimental drinkers. (3) Others are social drinkers, and (4) some are dependent or problem users. Some may move from one category to another in sequence, but others jump directly from nonusers to abusers.

That alcohol is a drug is not up for debate. Its toxic effects are well-known and cause permanent damage to the body. Large doses can result in immediate death, and prolonged usage can also hasten or cause death.

Unfortunately those who think the Bible permits them to drink socially think they will never slip into the category of problem or dependent users of alcohol, and they have convinced themselves that they will never become alcoholics. They think that happens only to others. Yet, if twelve people drink over the course of ten years, one will become an alcoholic and three others will become problem drinkers. People do shift from one category to another, sometimes without realizing it.

After cancer and heart disease, alcohol is the third leading cause of death in this country. Alcohol is responsible for thousands of suicides and drowning deaths. Drunk drivers are responsible for about one-half of the fatal automobile accidents each year. In 1989 it was estimated that there were close to twenty million alcoholics in America. It has proved to be a dangerous drug.

So what is the big deal about alcohol? If we look to God and Scripture, the answer is clear. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).

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Rise Up O Men of God

What a great blessing to our current generation (and future generations) to have the men who have come before us who have been servants of God. Of course, we have the men we read of in the Bible. Think of the 17 men/prophets from whom we have written messages. Think of the preachers of the New Testament who we have God's message revealed through! Think of those like Moses who have blessed our lives! But we also have those who have come since the 1st-century men of God. Each generation has had them. I think of those that Mr. Higg spoke of and I think of men I have known who are true men of God. I cannot stress the level of blessing all these and many others have been to our lives!

You see, whether the prophets of old, or those of the more recent times, the men I am thinking of were all like prophets in one sense—they HAD TO SPEAK FOR GOD! When we first read the word to describe a prophet, the word used in the original language (Hebrew) meant "to bubble forth...to boil up like a mountain." I love what Homer Hailey said about these men from the Old Testament... "the prophets had something to say and they had to say it!" I love that concept—compelled to speak/no choice because of obligation. But another thing that is so important to understand about the great men of God then and now—their message never originated with them! They all realized it was GOD'S MESSAGE they were conveying to others! I don't know about you, but I know I am so thankful for the men of God in the past, present, and those who will come in the future!

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Sunday's Sermons:

**A.M. — I Am A C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N, Part 1
Genesis 15:12-16**

**P.M. — I Am A C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N, Part 2
John 13:12-16**

Give Me the Bible

I love the young people who attend at Elizabethtown. It is so sweet to see some of our smallest ones holding a songbook and learning to sing or seeing one of our young men practicing their song leading from their seat as we sing. One of the songs we sometimes sing in PewPackers is "Give Me the Bible." What a wonderful song with an important message! I hope that our congregation will always stress the importance of reading Scripture.

Sadly today many are more interested in reading what others say about the Bible rather than reading the Bible itself. Never has there been a time when there has been more opportunity to read the thoughts of men regarding what they think the Bible says. With Blogs, Facebook and other formats people read and comment thus giving more credibility to much error that is written. Since this format is available that has no checks and balances, many write and are considered to be experts. People under the guise of University degrees in some other field, use their titles to write in fields of Biblical studies as if their terminal degrees were in the text of Scripture. Please do not misunderstand what I am saying. I honestly believe one of the greatest Bible students I have read after, Gus Nichols, was not someone who was University trained. What I think is a danger is the trend of many today that are trying to use education to act as if they have some expertise. Some who do so do not have a fundamental knowledge of Scripture. In their search for some new deep truth of Scripture they overlook a fundamental truth that refutes their new found deep thought.

We have been studying the book of Judges. One of the statements that occurs in the book is that there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes. Today in the Israel, the Church, it could be said that there is no filter in Israel and everyone writes what is right in his own eyes. One of the most disturbing trends is the writing of articles that leave the impression that the Church in years past has missed something. The writers often think they have cleverly written a message that can be interpreted a number of ways. In this way, sometimes there is praise from many because people read the article to support what they believe. This is a sad trend!

The Bible is a book that is intended by God to be clearly understood. Paul wrote to those at Ephesus and encouraged the Church to "understand what the will of the Lord is." Today, much of what I read on the Internet is confusing. Much is not written clearly enough for a person to even know for sure what the writer intends to convey. Such ought not to be. Do we risk offending some when we write clear articles and blogs? I would guess the answer to such a question would be yes. This article could offend some, but I think it is fair to say that what I intend as the writer is not vague—it is quite clear!

*John F. Board
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