

A Biblical View of Food and Drink

#7 in Series – *Proverbs: Wisdom for the Ages and Now*

Pro. 23:19-21 (NASB)

¹⁹ Listen, my son, and be wise,
And direct your heart in the way.

²⁰ Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine,
Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;

²¹ For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty,
And drowsiness will clothe *one* with rags.

In our series through the book of Proverbs, we are seeking to address several different subjects and themes through the lens of God-given wisdom... This is a book of wisdom – and it not only teaches us truths we should know – it is showing us how we should apply that knowledge to our lives... That, my friend is wisdom!

Wisdom is simply to appropriate application of what one knows...

So – how are you doing so far in applying God’s Word to your life in the various subjects we have covered so far in the book?

So far, we have looked at wisdom and folly, sexual appetite, work, discipline, friendship and parenting...

Today’s topic is a difficult subject for me... There are various themes throughout the book of Proverbs that stir us – and we can jump on and get behind that issue and push with all of our might... and then there are those themes that come against us and we can become defensive and protective of our current attitude and practice toward a subject we do not want anyone challenging us on... In the words of some old-timers I knew when I was young – “*You’ve quit preach ‘n, and gone to meddle ‘n*”...

It’s for that very reason that I resisted entitling this message with the first title that came to mind – and that was ... “*No Gluten-Free Gluttons*”.

Rather, the desire today is to simply consider what does the Bible say should be a Christ follower’s attitude be toward what they eat or drink?

Some of you may be thinking; “Really?... You mean to say that what I eat, or what I drink matters somehow to God?”... The answer is; “Yes... and No.”

“Yes” – in that God loves and cares and has provided all things good to be enjoyed by His children – which, of course, includes what we eat and drink. And He does not want us to harm ourselves by not being discerning in our appetites...

“No” – in that God allows you a great deal of freedom to choose whatever you desire to eat or drink – when as a Christ-follower – you are seeking to glorify Him in all that you do.

1 Cor. 10:31 (NASB) “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

As we approach our subject, let’s begin by simply seeking to answer the question –

1. What is God’s Purpose for Food and Drink?

First – God intends food for our –

➤ Nourishment

Initially, only plants were given for our food –

Gen. 1:29 (NASB) “Then God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you’”

There is a lot of speculation as to why – but after the flood – God opened up the buffet line to include meat –

Gen. 9:3 (NASB) “Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.”

Remember – the primary purpose for eating is simply for our nourishment...

You’ve heard the old saying; “*Eat to live – don’t live to eat*”... Food should be for our nutrition, not our obsession...

Having said that – God does intent food to be pleasurable... God is also for –

➤ **Enjoyment**

We are to enjoy what God has created – which includes our food!...

We all know the pleasures related to eating. Good food is enjoyable, and God intended it that way...

Carefully consider what God says in –

1 Tim. 4:1-5 (NASB)

¹But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ²by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; ⁵for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

1 Tim, 6:17 (NASB) “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

God also intends that mealtime should be for our –

➤ **Fellowship**

Eating is a social event... Though there are times when we eat alone – there should be times when we eat with others...

The sharing of food is a healthy social event and has been in every culture through the ages... God intended it that way. Everything from family mealtimes, to weddings, funerals, feasts and even our worship – we share the eating of food together...

Some of you may raise the question about worship ... remember, though The Lord's Supper is a time for focusing on Christ and what He did to redeem us – it is still an eating event...

There are a myriad of opportunities to share meals with others for the purpose of connecting with others!... Fellowship!

[] David Lambert's brother, Scott ... "*It's not the food... it's the fellowship*"

There is ample evidence that the Bible suggest that we will be eating together in heaven...

2. What are God's Guidelines for Food and Drink?

Some of you may already be questioning the point – what do you mean “guidelines”?...

Yes – God does put limits / restrictions and guidelines on us in our consumption of anything and everything He has provided us... God invented sex – and He intends it only for marriage... God provides rest – He intends it only for recovery... God provides “**everything good thing**” (**Jam. 1:17**) – and He has a God-given purpose for every good thing... That includes food.

Ever since the fall – man has struggled against God's intentions for just about everything... Man seeks to throw off God's restraints when it comes to work, rest, recreation, sex, food – and just about anything you can think of where God places boundaries – mankind seeks to throw-off those restraints... That of course includes our attitudes toward food and drink...

Let's think this through ... first there were –

➤ **Restrictions**

When it comes to limitations with food – God prescribed to His people in the Old Covenant very restrictive limits as to specific foods they were not to consume, and even with very specific instructions with food preparation and consumption of many of the things they could eat... You can read a great

deal about those dietary laws in the book of **Leviticus** (particularly **chapter 11**)... We could easily spend hours examination those restrictions – but we are not orthodox Jews nor do we believe that God intends for Christians to follow these Old Covenant prescriptions ... Listen – you can follow them if you want to – but you are not commanded to do so... And for that matter – following them does not somehow make you more acceptable to God or in any way “improves your standing with Him”... So because of that – we are not going to spend a lot of time on those restrictions today...

We do however need to address what universally applies to God’s people – and we will can them –

➤ **Limitations**

We can certainly see, even in our focal passage, that consumption without limitations lead to complications – to say the least...

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And direct your heart in the way.

²⁰ Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine,

Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;

²¹ For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty,

And drowsiness will clothe *one* with rags.

As you think this passage through – you see how the unlimited consumption of food and drink – in this case alcoholic drink – leads a whole series of problems – only two of which are identified here: poverty and “drowsiness” (laziness) – which in turn contributes to one’s poverty...

Notice also the call to be careful about those whom you run with... ²⁰ Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;... Notice the social aspects to the sins of drunkenness and gluttony...

Four years the Elders shared a brief series during the morning worship services entitled “*Thinking Biblically*”... These were 8 to 10 minute presentations given in the middle of the service and did not take away from Pastor Phil’s time in bring the main message of the morning...

One of my assignments was to address the question; *Can a Christian Drink Alcohol?*... My convictions on that matter have not changed, and I will be happy to share the manuscript of that presentation with you, if you would like to have it... So please let me know, and I'll be happy to email you those notes.

But for now – we will only address a very limited portion of that presentation in noting the restrictions God has placed on the consumption of alcohol:

Proverbs 20:1 (ESV) “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler,
and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.”

There are several passages I've cited in you notes that address this matter – and I'm not going to take the time to read them to you, but you have them there – and you need to read them as you think back through this message:

Proverbs 23:29-35 (ESV)

- ²⁹ Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaining?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?
³⁰ Those who tarry long over wine;
those who go to try mixed wine.
³¹ Do not look at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup
and goes down smoothly.
³² In the end it bites like a serpent
and stings like an adder.
³³ Your eyes will see strange things,
and your heart utter perverse things.
³⁴ You will be like one who lies down in the
midst of the sea,
like one who lies on the top of a mast.
³⁵ “They struck me,” you will say, “but I was
not hurt;

they beat me, but I did not feel it.
When shall I awake?
I must have another drink.”

Isaiah 5:11 (ESV)

- ¹¹ Woe to those who rise early in the
morning,
that they may run after strong drink,
who tarry late into the evening
as wine inflames them!

Isaiah 5:22 (ESV)

- ²² Woe to those who are heroes at drinking
wine,
and valiant men in mixing strong drink,

Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)

- ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that
is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

However, what does need to be said is that the Scriptures are very clear that drunkenness is always wrong:

Rom. 13:13 (ESV)

¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.

There is a long list of sins labeled as “works of the flesh” in Galatians 5:19-21, among them is “drunkenness”. Paul then closes the passage by saying; “I

warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

The Bible is also clear that mature Christians should avoid causing others to stumble by drinking:

Hab. 2:15a (ESV)

15 “Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink...

Rom. 14:21 English Standard Version (ESV)

21 It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.

If you are in bondage to alcohol – or any other drug for that matter – I need to offer you a word of warning ... and encouragement:

– The warning is seen in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

– The encouragement is seen in 1 Corinthians 6:11.

11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Frankly – when it comes to a Christian casually consuming alcohol – the question isn’t so much “can he?” – but “should he?”...

The Bible is clearly opposed to both drunkenness and gluttony.

In seeking to understand **What are God’s Guidelines for Food and Drink**, we have considered some restrictions and limitations... Now we need to think about our –

➤ Freedoms

Gal. 5:1 (NASB) “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”

Gal. 5:13 (NASB) “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Yes – we are free in Christ to enjoy all that He is and all that He provides... We are to enjoy such freedom with WISDOM!

Be careful!... There are those who have the unique physical nature to be predisposes to intoxication – just as there are those who are predisposed to gaining excess weight... Each of those two groups should be careful.

Personal desires are secondary. Primary should be our desire to glorify God and demonstrate his love for others.

Rom. 14:3 (NIV) “The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them.”

And again –

1 Cor. 10:31 (NASB) “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

I'd like to end this message with the greater thought that is found in the words of Jesus:

Matt. 12:34b-37 (NASB)

³⁴ ... the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. ³⁵ The good man brings out of *his* good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of *his* evil treasure what is evil. ³⁶ But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. ³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

So we see that what comes out of our mouths is of far greater importance than what goes in.

Questions to consider in Community Group:

- Does God really care about what you eat or drink? Please defend your answer.
- Why did God place restrictions on the Israelites in what they should not eat?
- How do we know that Christians are free to eat whatever they desire? Or – are they?
- Why is drunkenness and gluttony prohibited in the Bible? What's the big deal?
- What challenged you the most in this message? What encouraged you the most?
- Why end the message by talking about “words” rather than “food”?