

# LIBERATING THE ALCOHOLIC

## I. INTRODUCTION AND STATISTICS

Alcohol abuse is a major problem and issue in our culture. Consider these statistics:

1. Alcohol contributes to 100,000 deaths annually, making it the third leading cause of preventable mortality in the US, after tobacco and diet/activity patterns.
2. More than seven percent of the population ages 18 years and older--nearly 13.8 million Americans--have problems with drinking, including 8.1 million people who are alcoholic. Almost three times as many men (9.8 million) as women (3.9 million) are problem drinkers, and prevalence is highest for both sexes in the 18-to-29-years-old age group
3. About 43% of US adults--76 million people--have been exposed to alcoholism in the family: they grew up with or married an alcoholic or a problem drinker or had a blood relative who was ever an alcoholic or problem drinker
4. 62% of high school seniors report that they have been drunk; 31% say that have had five or more drinks in a row during the last two weeks
5. Nearly one-fourth of all persons admitted to general hospitals have alcohol problems or are undiagnosed alcoholics being treated for the consequences of their drinking
6. Based on victim reports, each year 183,000 (37%) rapes and sexual assaults involve alcohol use by the offender, as do just over 197,000 (15%) of robberies, about 661,000 (27%) aggravated assaults, and nearly 1.7 million (25%) simple assaults
7. Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), which can occur when women drink during pregnancy, is the leading known environmental cause of mental retardation in the Western World

## II. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE

- A. Most \_\_\_\_\_ it
- B. Send suffering person to an \_\_\_\_\_

- C. Invoke unbiblical church \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Acceptance with no hope or requirement to \_\_\_\_\_

### III. THE WORLD'S RESPONSE

- A. 12-Step Recovery \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous)

- B. How does AA define the problem?

*Not too long ago, alcoholism was viewed as a moral problem. Today, many regard it primarily as a health problem. To each problem drinker, it will always remain an intensely personal matter. What is alcoholism? There are many different ideas about what alcoholism really is. The explanation that seems to make sense to most A.A. members is that alcoholism is an illness, a progressive illness, which can never be cured but which, like some other diseases, can be arrested. Going one step further, many A.A.s feel that the illness represents the combination of a physical sensitivity to alcohol and a mental obsession with drinking, which, regardless of consequences, cannot be broken by willpower alone. Before they are exposed to A.A., many alcoholics who are unable to stop drinking think of themselves as morally weak or, possibly, mentally unbalanced. The A.A. concept is that alcoholics are sick people who can recover if they will follow a simple program. Once alcoholism has set in, there is nothing morally wrong about being ill. At this stage, free will is not involved, because the sufferer has lost the power of choice over alcohol. The important thing is to face the facts of one's illness and to take advantage of the help that is available.*

- C. What is AA's position concerning the spiritual aspect of alcoholism?

*A.A. is not a religious society, since it requires no definite religious belief as a condition of membership. Although it has been endorsed and approved by many religious leaders, it is not allied with any organization or sect. Included in its membership are Catholics, Protestants, Jews, members of other major religious bodies, agnostics, and atheists. The A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism is undeniably based on acceptance of certain spiritual values. The individual member is free to interpret those values as he or she thinks best, or not to think about them at all. Most members, before turning to A.A., had already admitted that they could not control their drinking. Alcohol had become a power greater than themselves, and it had been accepted on those terms. A.A. suggests that to achieve and maintain sobriety, alcoholics need to accept and depend upon another Power recognized as greater than themselves. Some alcoholics choose to consider the A.A. group itself as the power greater than themselves; for many others, this Power is God — as they, individually, understand Him; still others rely upon entirely different concepts of a Higher Power.*

#### IV. THE BIBLICAL RESPONSE

- A. The Word of God is \_\_\_\_\_ to address this problem. *II Peter 1:2-4*
- B. The scriptural term for alcoholism is \_\_\_\_\_. *I Cor 5:11; Gal 5:21; I Pet 1:3; I Cor 6:9-11*
- C. The Scriptures teach that alcoholism, or drunkenness, is a wicked, sinful practice and desire, which is \_\_\_\_\_ news! Jesus died to set people free from sin. *I John 1:7-9*
- D. The Bible not only paints the ugly picture of sin and its consequences, it also provides a sufficient and powerful answer for deliverance – the \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. The goal is to not just learn to \_\_\_\_\_ with alcoholism, but be \_\_\_\_\_ from the bondage of drunkenness to the glory of God!  
*Rom 6:23*

#### V. PRACTICAL STEPS TO LIBERATION

- A. The proper goal and motivation for change must be established, which is to serve and \_\_\_\_\_ God. There are many legitimate reasons to quit drinking that fall short of the Biblical motive for change. The root issue is not alcohol, but idolatry. *John 8:34-36*.
- B. The counselee must recognize drunkenness is a life \_\_\_\_\_ sin. Life dominating sins affect every aspect of a person's life. Likely areas affected include health, relationships, finances, job, emotions, sleep, marriage, etc.
- C. The counselee must recognize the need for total life \_\_\_\_\_, which is a comprehensive radical change from the inside out. Need to address problem at root, which is the human heart *Mt 15:18-20*. Need to seek to discern the thoughts and intents behind the drinking.
- D. The counselee must recognize the need for and commit to radical \_\_\_\_\_. *Mt 5:27-30*. Includes getting rid of alcohol, but also cutting off all things associated with the drinking habit, including friends, activities, recreation. Counselee needs to make himself accountable for these commitments.

- E. Counselee must recognize and commit to the need to \_\_\_\_\_ the old with the new. *Mt. 12:43-45*. New friends are a real key in overcoming. New activities centered in spiritual growth. *Eph 5:18-20*. Being filled with Spirit is key. Humble attitude is critical, not becoming proud about own ability to overcome, but recognize the grace of the Lord as the source of victory.  
*1 Cor 10:12*
- F. Counselee must formulate a plan to address \_\_\_\_\_ areas of life. Includes organizing and planning activities and developing a disciplined lifestyle.  
*1 Tim 4:7*. May include asking for forgiveness and restoration of damaged relationships. Vibrant relationship with local church is imperative.
- G. As counselor, we must always realize that \_\_\_\_\_ gives the increase and creates lasting changes.