

Can a Follower of Christ Drink Alcohol? (What we know from the Bible)

1. Drunkenness is forbidden as is defying the civil authority (ie. underage drinking).

Gal 5:19-21

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. NIV

Rom 13:1-2

1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. NIV

2. We have freedom on things not specifically forbidden in Scripture, but we must be careful not to "idolize" anything.

1 Cor 6:12

12 "Everything is permissible for me"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-but I will not be mastered by anything. NIV

3. As a person "in Christ" for many years, I have a responsibility to both non-believers and to younger and possibly weaker brothers and sisters to keep them from stumbling.

1 Cor 10:31-33

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God- 33 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. NIV

4. Anything that I cannot do in faith is sin.

Rom 14:12-23

12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. 14 As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. 15 If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. 16 Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. 19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. 22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin. NIV

Because of common sense and the above Biblical principles, Joan and I have chosen not to drink alcoholic beverages. Here is our reasoning:

- 1. alcohol is expensive, low in nutritional value, and often detrimental to our health**
- 2. knowing where to "draw the line" with the number of drinks is often difficult**
- 3. both of us have seen the devastating physical, emotional, and financial results of alcohol abuse in our families (no one knows with which drink one might become addicted)**
- 4. drinking alcohol lowers our natural inhibitions toward sexual sin and violence**
- 5. young believers are watching us for an example of Christ-like behavior**

All this said, Paul reminds us not to judge others harshly.

Rom 14:3-4

3 The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. NIV