THE SAD OCCASION OF THE DRUNKENNESS OF R.C. SPROUL, JR. AND SOUND REASONS NOT TO DRINK ALCOHOL

I. 'Bad Beer or No Beer?' R.C. Sproul, Jr., Who Advocated 'Drinking Well,' Arrested for Felony DUI, By Heather Clark on December 18, 2016; EDITED FOR LENGTH... whole article can be read at the following URL: http://christiannews.net/2016/12/18/bad-beer-or-no-beer-r-c-sproul-jr-who-advocated-drinking-well-arrested-for-felony-dui/



Prominent Reformed theologian, author, speaker and former Presbyterian elder Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr., who once stated that one of his "favorite intellectual debates" is "Is bad beer better than no beer?" has resigned from his positions at his father's Ligonier Ministries and Reformation Bible College a week after being arrested on felony DUI charges.

... Sproul was arrested in Indiana on Nov. 29 and charged with four DUI accounts, including felony charges for being under the influence with a minor in the vehicle, and at twice the legal limit.

The case summary of "State of Indiana v. Robert C Sproul" in Allen Superior Court outlines that Sproul has been charged with "operating a vehicle while intoxicated with a passenger under 18," and placing a "dependent in a situation that endangers the dependent," as well as "operating a vehicle while intoxicated" and "operating a vehicle with an alcohol concentration equivalent to .15 or more." He posted \$5,000 bond and is free via a "monitored conditional release.

Sproul had written about his beliefs regarding alcohol on a number of occasions, including in 2003, when he wrote the forward to the book "Drinking With Calvin and Luther: A History of Alcohol in the Church," stating,

"[I]t's not enough that we should drink, but that we ought to drink well."

In 2005, he also stated in a <u>blog post</u>, "Would you please, so as not to cause me to stumble, **stop suggesting that it is wrong to drink alcohol in moderation, or that drinking alcohol in moderation somehow is a failure to love my brothers?"**

His "Basement Tapes" collection included discussions on alcohol and tobacco, and in a section on his Highlands Study Center site, Sproul recounted of his college years, "I learned that perhaps the greatest sport a jock might aspire to was chugging beer. And I learned that I was pretty good at it."

In recent times, Sproul had been a repeated guest on the Reformed Pubcast, a broadcast that focuses on Reformed theology and beer. The podcast, which invites listeners to "[g]rab a brew and pull up a stool," has been controversial to some over its flaunting of a perceived Christian liberty, such as <u>Adam Powers wrote</u> on his blog "The Publicans."--

"The Pubcast's emphasis on beer is too much for my liking. I don't think it takes the consequences of alcohol seriously, or the struggle certain people have with it. It borders on sin, and has crossed the line at times by celebrating/flaunting our Christian liberty before God and others," he [Powers] wrote.

The Reformed Pubcast conducted a podcast live at Ligonier Ministries in February of this year. Sproul also has been a guest on the Arizona-based Apologia Radio, and spoke at Apologia in July following controversy over the group's beer flight sampler at a local pub that served as a fundraiser for a church plant in Hawaii... Sproul has a hearing scheduled in February and faces possible fines or jail time.

II. RESPONDING TO THIS TRAGIC NEWS

THE ABOVE NEWS is very, very sad. Above all else... AS IT IS WHEN ANY CHRISTIAN PUBLICALLY sins— the name of Christ is drug in the mud; and sinners are encouraged to BLASPHEME God, even as when King David sinned. LET EVERY ONE OF US TAKE

HEED! Sooner or later, sin's wages demand to be paid! FOR ANY AND ALL, God will not be MOCKED— as we sow, we shall reap! III. YOU CAN DEBATE ALL YOU WANT TO— HOWEVER, THERE REMAIN SOUND REASONS NOT TO DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES... gleaned from several sources. I believe it is wise to avoid drinking alcohol:

- **1)** Because alcohol kills brain cells and delays thinking and reaction time. As one who wants to sharp and alert, alcohol is counterproductive.
- 2) Because in biblical times the average person did not strap themselves (and their children) into large metal boxes weighing 1-2 tons and propel themselves inside those boxes at speeds regularly beyond 100 feet per second within a few feet of other people who are doing the same thing, I think the stakes of risking impaired judgment by alcohol use back then is nowhere near the same as we face today. Because alcohol has the potential to greatly impair my reaction time and my discernment, I do not think it is wise to put it in my system and operate heavy machinery. Driving a car is operating heavy machinery
- **3)** Because people claim that they will not get behind the wheel if they've had too much to drink, and because they frequently do anyway, and because alcohol impairs my judgment, I do not want to have to worry about whether or not I am correctly assessing my ability to drive a vehicle because I might not be in the proper state of mind to make that decision for myself!
- 4) Because so many people in our society have chosen to drink alcohol and drive and have therefore been the cause of so many deaths on the roads and highways, I do not want to be part of something that has caused so much pain and heartache for so many people
- 5) Because the alcohol industry promotes responsible use of alcohol publicly but privately lobbies for lax laws relating to drinking and driving and keeping the public accountable for responsible use of alcohol, I do not want to give my money to support companies, and an entire industry, that is hypocritical about responsible drinking.

- **6)** Because I know that **a person who never takes a single drink of alcohol will never become addicted to alcohol,** I believe the wise and loving thing to do is to abstain from alcohol use myself.
- 7) Because as New Testament Christians we have the Holy Spirit, we do not need wine to "gladden the heart."
- **8)** Because alcohol is such a common factor in crime, domestic violence, and as an entry drug to more illicit drugs, it seems wise to simply avoid alcohol altogether.
- **9)** Because many people who have overcome alcohol addiction are best helped in their sobriety by avoiding social situations in which alcohol is present, the loving thing to do is avoid using or serving alcohol.
- 10) Because nowhere in the Bible is abstaining from alcohol looked down upon or considered unwise and because people who abstained from alcohol were presented in the Bible in a positive light for their decision or vow to abstain, it is certainly wise and favorable to abstain today.
- 11) Because I do not want to be tempted to run to alcohol during stressful times, but instead want to run to God.
- **12)** Because as a pastor I have seen first-hand the heartache in homes in which alcohol addiction was present, and because I know that addiction is an easy thing to fall into, I want to have an alcohol free home.
- 13) Because moderation-ists argue that drinking alcohol vs. the sin of drunkenness is no different than eating food vs. the sin of gluttony, yet I seem to notice that people that don't drink alcohol don't die of thirst while people who don't eat food do die of hunger, I find this and many other arguments for drinking to be deficient.
- 14) Because 'alcoholism' (Being a drunkard) is a sin and not a disease; you won't "catch" the sin of drunkenness if you never drink alcohol to begin with. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) REALITY: The Bible contains so many warnings about the dangers surrounding alcohol, I believe the only safe route is abstention.

16) Because the entire alcohol industry promotes a complete advertising LIE. All of their ads show all drinkers as perfectly happy and healthy people with no problems. Their ads say, in effect, 'Here's the path to true living and good times!" SUCH IS NOT THE CASE... and, moreover, they are promoting the substance which is the #1 drug problem in America.

David L. Brown, Ph.D. 1989 & February 2002 David L. Brown (The statistics, here, although dated... would be no less devastating in 2016... probably more so)

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration a person dies every 33 minutes in an alcohol related accident. And that's not all. An estimated 310,000 persons were injured in crashes each year where police reported that alcohol was present. That's an average of one person injured approximately every 2 minutes.

Consider these additional statistics from the United States Justice Department: Nearly <u>4 in 10 violent victimizations involve use of alcohol</u>. Also, victim reports show, on average each year about <u>183,000 rapes and sexual assaults involve alcohol</u> use by the offender, as do just over <u>197,000 robberies</u>, about <u>661,000 aggravated assaults</u>, and nearly <u>1.7 million simple assaults</u>.

The Scripture is true! "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 20:1. Proverbs 23:31-32 is a powerful injunction against drinking alcoholic beverages. It says, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

In this report I list **7 Good Reasons Why Christians Should Not Drink Alcoholic Beverages.** However, before we do that, we are going to look at the words translated wine, drink or drinking. **A LOOK AT THE WORDS**

There are 637 references to wine, drink and drinking in the King James Version of the Bible. Most people think in today's terms, believing that

when wine is mentioned it refers to alcoholic wine. Actually, that is not necessarily true. **Thirteen different words** are translated "wine" in the King James Version of the Bible. The word wine has a wide range of meaning in the Bible, covering everything from grape juice, to concentrated grape syrup to alcoholic wine.

OLD TESTAMENT HEBREW WORDS FOR WINE

"yayin" -- It is a general term for grape beverages and includes all classes of wine, non-alcoholic or alcoholic; unfermented, in the process of fermentation and fermented. (Proverbs 31:4) The context will show whether it is alcoholic wine or not. *Yayin*, when used properly was always diluted with water.

"shekar" -- It is the word for strong drink, unmixed wine. The 1901 edition of THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA says, "Yakin, wine, is to be distinguished from Shekar, or strong drink. The former is diluted with water; the later is undiluted." Shekar was not diluted with water." (see Numbers 28:7)

"**Tirosh**" -- This word refers to <u>fresh grape juice</u>. It is referred to often as new wine or sweet wine. (see Proverbs 3:10; Deuteronomy 7:13)

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK WORDS FOR WINE

"oinos" is the counterpart to the Old Testament word **yayin**. It is a general term for grape beverages and includes all classes of wine, non-alcoholic or alcoholic; fermented or unfermented. The context has to be used to determine whether the drink was intoxicating or not. (Luke 10:34; Ephesians 5:18). *Oinos*, when used properly was always diluted with water.

"sikera" is the counterpart to the Old Testament word shekar. It is the word for strong drink, unmixed wine. (Luke 1:15)

"gleukos" is the counterpart to the Old Testament word tirosh. Dr. Paul Dixon says "It refers to fresh wine, a new wine" or freshly squeezed grape juice.

NOTE: I am sure that plenty of studied ones who will be quick to debate the above statements about Hebrew and Greek works. REGARDLESS... the argument about these words do not make or break the abundant truth throughout this article!

Now, why believers should abstain from drinking...

1. DRINKING LEADS TO DRUNKENNESS: In the April 24, 1965 issue of Christianity Today, the article, on page 25 says, "People must be informed that the use of alcohol is not unlike Russian roulette: every tenth person becomes automatically hooked. The only solution is total abstinence." These statistics are supported by the American Medical Association.

DRUNKENNESS IS CONDEMNED IN THE BIBLE

Isaiah 5:11-- "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!" Proverbs 23:20-- "Be not among winebibbers;" The word means to drink so much that you become tipsy or drunk. Romans 13:13 -- "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting (drunken partying) and drunkenness (general drunken-ness)..." Galatians 5:19a & 21 -- "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these...drunkenness..." Ephesians 5:18 -- "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"

- DRUNKARDS ARE AMONG THE LIST OF THOSE WHO WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."
- 2. THE BIBLE CONDEMNS STRONG DRINK ALSO: Proverbs 20:1 "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." NOTE again, Isaiah 5:11 -- "Woe unto them that

rise up early in the morning, that they may follow **strong drink**; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!"

Proverbs 23:29-31 -- "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? (30) They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.(a mixture of wine and spices) (31) Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright."

• WHAT WAS "STRONG DRINK" IN BIBLE TIMES? Distillation was not discovered until about 1500 A.D. Strong drink and unmixed wine in Bible times was from 3% to 11% alcohol.

Dr. John MacArthur says "...since anybody in biblical times who drank unmixed wine (9-11% alcohol) was definitely considered a barbarian, then we don't even need to discuss whether a Christian should drink hard liquor--that is apparent!"

CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT DRINK STRONG DRINK! Since wine
has 9 to 11% alcohol and one brand 20% alcohol, you should not
drink that. Brandy contains 15 to 20% alcohol, so that's out! Hard
liquor has 40 to 50% alcohol (80 to 100 proof), and that is obviously
excluded!

Someone will say, "Since beer is only 4% alcohol, ITS OK FOR A BELIEVER TO DRINK BEER, RIGHT?" The answer is NO! Here's why...

3. IN BIBLE TIMES WHAT CHRISTIANS DRANK WAS SUB-ALCOHOLIC, BASICALLY PURIFIED WATER

Remember the Hebrew word "*yayin*" and the Greek word "*oinos*" that we looked at earlier? These were the companion words for wine whether fermented or unfermented. In fact, whether fermented or not, it was **MIXED WITH WATER**.

Norman Geisler, former Dean of Liberty Center for Christian Scholarship, Liberty University, has written: "Many wine drinking Christians today mistakenly assume that what the New Testament meant by wine is identical to wine used today. This, however, is false. In fact, today's wine is by Biblical definition strong drink, and hence forbidden by the Bible. What the Bible frequently meant by wine was basically purified water," purified by adding some alcoholic wine. The Holman Bible dictionary says, wine was also used as a medicine and disinfectant.

Geisler goes on to say, "Therefore, Christians ought not to drink wine, beer, or other alcoholic beverages for they are actually strong drink forbidden in Scripture. Even ancient pagans did not drink what some Christians drink today."

All alcoholic beverages used in our culture fall under the biblical classification of STRONG DRINK and are therefore forbidden. The least ratio of water to wine mixture used in Bible times was 3 parts water to 1 wine. That produced a sub-alcoholic drink that was 2.5% to 2.75% alcohol. Normally, the ratio was even higher, up to 20 to 1. What early believers drank was sub-alcoholic by today's standards.

The right choice is to abstain! What is your choice?

4. IT WILL CAUSE OTHERS TO STUMBLE: Romans 14:21 says "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to **"to drink wine**, nor anything whereby thy brother **stumbleth**, or is offended, or is **made weak**."

Innumerable Christians claim their "Christian Liberty" when it comes to social drinking. In order to do that, they must turn their backs on this passage of Scripture. "Sipping Saints" have given multitudes of people an excuse to drink. More than once, I have heard a believer say "there is nothing wrong with drinking in moderation.

Pastor so and so even says it is OK." [AND RESPECTED BIBLE-TEACHER, PASTOR, AUTHOR, THEOLOGIAN R.C. SPROUL, JR... SAID IT WAS JUST FINE! ... YES, BUT ... Sproul was arrested in Indiana on Nov. 29 and charged with four DUI accounts, including felony charges for being under the influence with a minor in the vehicle, and at twice the legal limit.]

The problem is, drinking often sets off a chain reaction of influences that are like tipping over the first domino. Drinking causes some to stumble, others to be offended, and many to be weakened. Studies support my statement.

[TRAGIC 2016 EXAMPLE: R.C. SPROUL, JR: ... Sproul was arrested in Indiana on Nov. 29 and charged with four DUI accounts, including felony charges for being under the influence with a minor in the vehicle, and at twice the legal limit.]'

According to a survey done by the Daily Journal newspaper, October 26, 1988, one of the top five reasons teenagers drink is because their parents drink. This has proven true time and time again. Let me take it one step further. Parents, you must remember that **whatever you do in moderation your child will likely do in excess.** The Bible clearly defines drinking as an activity that is to be foregone because it causes others to stumble and makes them weak (fall into sin).

There is yet another reason believers should not drink...

5. IT HARMS OUR BODIES WHICH ARE THE LORD'S: I Corinthians 6:19-20 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

I Corinthians 3:16-17 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

The first effect of alcohol on the brain is to dull the capacity for self-criticism and the sense of caution. A lessening of care and anxiety follows this. The checks on irresponsibility and unreasonable behavior are also curtailed. Actions follow the impulses, which is dangerous. Reaction time becomes slower; coordination is disturbed; drowsiness follows.

Proverbs 23:29-33 gives clear testimony to the above description of alcohol on the brain. "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. 33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things."

Dr. Robert Haas, M.D... a former president of the American College of Sports Nutrition... said, "Beer, wine and hard liquor form toxic substances called aldehydes that can destroy the liver, kidney and brain cells. Aldehydes serve a useful function in preserving or pickling dead animal tissue, but they serve no beneficial purpose in people. Alcohol dehydrates (robs) your body of its precious water supply, and along with the water go vital nutrients such as B Vitamins, calcium, magnesium, and potassium."

Alcohol has adverse effects on your esophagus, stomach & intestines, bloodstream, pancreas, liver, heart, bladder, kidneys, glands and your brain.

"The most drastic and noticed effect of alcohol is the brain. It depresses brain centers, progressively produces un-coordination, confusion, disorientation, stupor, anesthesia, coma, death. Alcohol kills brain cells, and brain damage is permanent" (From-Office of Highway Safety, Madison, WI)

As believers, our body belongs to the Lord. We should not knowingly do anything that would harm it. Alcohol harms the body, therefore we should not drink alcohol.

There is a further reason you should not drink...

6. ALCOHOL IS ADDICTIVE: I Corinthians 6:12 tells us that we are not to "be brought under the power" or to be controlled by anything. The only exception is the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

Alcohol is clearly a powerful substance (Proverbs 23:35). Because alcohol is addictive, we should choose **not** to drink alcoholic beverages.

The final reason we will consider for not drinking alcoholic beverages is...

7. BELIEVERS ARE KINGS AND PRIESTS SEPARATED UNTO GOD

"The prophets, the kings, the Nazarites, the leaders -- those who were special in the plan of God were total abstainers" says Dr. Paul Dixon, and he is correct. Kings and PRIESTS were not to drink (Proverbs 31:4-5).

Further Dr. Dixon says "the priests of the Old Testament were to abstain totally." The Aaronic priests were not to drink because they ministered in the tabernacle before the Lord (Leviticus 10:9)

The application: Believers are a "royal" or kingly priesthood (I Peter 2:9). We are the temple of God (I Peter 2:5). We are God's special children and should choose total abstinence.

Drinking, even social drinking, cannot be legitimately supported by the Bible. Every drink that is available today, even beer, falls into the category of unmixed or strong drink. Clearly, Christians should not drink alcoholic beverages.

Drinking socially is a worldly activity and in light of the fact that believers are **neither to be conformed to the world** (Romans 12:2) **nor love the world** (I John 2:15) our choice should be clear.

We ARE to be **SEPARATE FROM** the world (II Corinthians 6:17) and **LIGHT TO** the world (Ephesians 5:8; Philippians 2:15).

Perhaps social drinking has enhanced the acceptability of Christians in society, but it has not advanced the cause of Christ, and it does not glorify God!

Social drinking is simply a means which the devil uses to blunt our testimony for Christ and squeeze us into his mold....

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LET EVERY ONE OF US TAKE HEED! Sooner or later, sin's wages demand to be paid!

FOR ANY AND ALL, God will not be MOCKED— as we sow, we shall reap!

LET US PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER AND ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER IN CHRIST LIKE LIVING!

Grace to all! James Bell