



What About Social Drinking?



I. Importance of Context

Basic principle

- **Wine** depends on **context** for meaning
- Many automatically assume *wine* = alcohol

WINE

Generic term for grape juice from time when:

- Still in grape on the vine, to...
- Extraction into winepress, to...
- Beverage: non-fermented grape juice, to...
- Fermented wine

“Grape juice was a common drink of the time: when available, it was drunk fresh, and also evaporated of water into ‘must,’ a thick paste of the consistency of toothpaste, that was kept in wineskins and reconstituted as required with the addition of water. This did not ferment during the time it was being thus kept, and when reconstituted was in fact more resistant to fermentation than if it had not undergone this process. If produced with cold water (especially from a spring or well or deep pool) it made a very refreshing drink.

Now, undoubtedly alcoholic wine was produced from grapes. But one did not always and exclusively want to drink wine when thirsty and desired a cool drink. This reconstituted grape juice was one option available in the Middle East in biblical times. There are still places in the Middle East where this practice of making “must” and reconstituting it into grape juice has continued into modern times” – W.Powers

Passages

- **Gn.40:11**, freshly squeezed grape juice, a refreshing beverage
- **Job 24:11**, “tread winepresses, yet suffer thirst”

Implication: they expected to derive a thirst-satisfying drink from what emerged out of the winepresses

Passages

- **Mic.6:15**, LXX: “and wine [you shall tread out], and not drink [it]”
 - NRSV: “you will tread grapes but not drink wine.”

They trod out wine, but this wine
they will not drink.

Implication: they expected to drink
the juice that was pressed out
Gn.49:11 (parallelism)

Wine In Different Contexts

Four categories of “wine”:

- 1. Unfermented** grape juice, Isa.65:8
- 2. Fermented** wine (but not fortified wines of today), Pro.23:30
- 3. Both** categories together, Nu.6:3
- 4. Ambiguous** references, Gn.14:18;
1 Tim.5:23

“Wine was drunk only on festive occasions ... Otherwise wine was generally used in everyday life only for medicinal purposes; it was regarded as an excellent medicine. In everyday life, water was drunk. The daily breakfast consisted of ‘bread with salt and a tankard of water,’ and even at the main meal bread and water were the chief ingredients. It is ... quite out of the question that Jesus and his disciples should have drunk wine with their daily meals” –Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, pp.50-52

“Wine was drunk only on **festive** occasions ... Otherwise wine was generally used in everyday life **only for medicinal purposes**; it was regarded as an **excellent medicine**. In everyday life, **water** was drunk. The daily breakfast consisted of ‘bread with salt and a tankard of water,’ and even at the main meal bread and water were the chief ingredients. It is ... quite **out of the question** that Jesus and his disciples should have drunk wine with their daily meals” –Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, pp.50-52



I. Importance of Context

II. Objections

1. Jesus turned water into wine, Jn.2

- Assumes it was fermented.

Drunk freely

Ftnt.: 'Or, have
become drunk"
(NASB)

Depends entirely

on context, 10
Gn.9:21; 43:34
Ps.23:5

Gn.9:21, *drunk*

Gn.43:34, *filled*, not drunk

Ps.23:5, cup *runs over*. LXX: *overflows*

1. Jesus turned water into wine, Jn.2

■ Assumes it was fermented.

Pr.23:31

Do we believe Jesus made
strong drink ...120 gallons?

■ John 2: even if fermented, not distilled but diluted

1 part wine: 3-4 parts water

1. Jesus turned water into wine, Jn.2

2. Bible forbids only drunkenness, not moderate / social drinking

■ **1 Tim.3:8**

Does not say, “Not given to much wine,
but to a little wine”

■ **Tit.1:7**

“Not addicted to wine”; drunkard,
heavy drinker – L-N.

1. Jesus turned water into wine, Jn.2

2. Bible forbids only drunkenness, not moderate / social drinking

- **1 Tim.3:8; Tit.1:7 – to prohibit much is
not to authorize little**

Do not murder, Mt.5:21-22

Do not commit adultery, Mt.5:27-28

Lay aside all overflow... Ja.1:21

Not to same excess... 1 Pt.4:4

Not pugnacious, striker, Tit.1:7

1. Jesus turned water into wine, Jn.2

2. Bible forbids only drunkenness, not moderate / social drinking

- **1 Tim.3:8; Tit.1:7 – to prohibit much is
not to authorize little**
- **1 Tim.3:8; Tit.1:7 – to forbid an extreme
is to forbid steps that lead to it**

“If I ever hear of your getting drunk...”

**“Don’t drive so fast that
you break your neck...”**

1. Jesus turned water into wine, Jn.2

2. Bible forbids only drunkenness, not moderate / social drinking

3. Paul commands Timothy to drink wine, 1 Tim.5:23

- The rest of it: *stop* drinking **water**.
- Timothy had not been using **any** wine.
- Paul commanded Timothy to take **little**.
- Purpose: not social but **medicinal** (stomach, poor health).

**How long do we take medicine?
When do drinkers stop drinking?**