



WESTMINSTER  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# “SHOULD I DRINK?”

John Galbreath  
Bible Study Series

Text: John 2:1-11  
Date: July 18, 1948

About Westminster's Galbreath Bible Study Series:

This lesson is one taken from a sermon preached by John Galbreath at Westminster Presbyterian Church on July 18, 1948.

To complete the lesson, we suggest that you begin by reading the designated Bible passage (John 2:1-11).

Next, review the outline of the sermon. Reflect on the chosen scripture and how you would “fill in” the remainder of the message from the chosen passage.

Then, review the study questions posed about the lesson — whether by yourself or in your small group.

Finally, share your thoughts on the Galbreath Bible Study blog on the Westminster Intranet.

It should be noted that on the packet this sermon is titled “*Shall I Drink?*” while on the sermon outline itself it is titled “*Should I Drink?*” As you review the sermon notes, think about why he might have used both terms and which you believe is the more appropriate title.

## I. Introduction

### A. Importance of the problem

1. \$8.7 billion spent last year
2. Widen influence on the moral and sociological life of the nation

### B. Difficulty of objective refusal

1. Most information is out to prove a point, rather than seek an honest opinion.
2. Positions of churches vary widely.
  - a) *Some deny membership to any who take alcoholic beverages.*
  - b) *Some ignore the problem – even permitting excess drinking of the clergy.*

## II. Drunkenness

### A. A gross sin

1. Scriptures classify drunkenness among the gross sins (Galatians 5:2, I Corinthians 6:10)

### B. The cost of drunkenness

1. Two marines who attacked Japanese girls
2. Cases in the Norfolk brig
3. San Quentin – 41% of offenses directly attributed to drinking, 71% indirect.
4. Within our community
  - a) *Most communities have seen the tragedy of death through drunken driving, homes broken, etc.*

### C. Alcoholism

1. Seagrams says 1 in 20 can't drink.
2. Symptoms: (see – "McGee)

3. Alcoholics are morally responsible for their condition
  4. Look for more basic causes. Drink is usually a symptom of a deeper problem.
  5. Alcoholism is a killer.
- D. Excessive drinking is more of a symptom than a problem in itself.

### III. Drinking in Moderation

#### A. Scripture gives no warrant for prohibition

1. Jesus drank
  - a) *Making wine was his first miracle*
  - b) *The wine wasn't "grape juice."*
  - c) *He could have drunk water.*
  - d) *Was criticized by priests for drinking, etc.*

#### B. Will it harm me?

1. No conclusive evidence that moderate drinking shortens life.
2. Moderate drinking does affect time of reaction – can be the difference between life and death in case of auto accident.
  - a) *Those under influence of liquor are 55 times more likely to be involved in a crippling accident (National Safety Council).*
3. Can I afford to drink?
  - a) *1 person in 50 is an excessive drinker, yet average family spends nearly \$200 a year on drink.*
4. Can I risk the habit?
  - a) *Russian roulette – 1 in 20 lose*

#### C. Will it lead others to make a mistake

1. Replacing barfly chaplain
  - a) *He could expect no man to have a higher code than he.*

*b) 12 men attended his services*

2. **I do not now drink – I haven't a chance to explain to everyone.**

*a) No one should give as a reason for their mistakes – “The preacher does.”*

*b) When in Europe, I did take wine.*

#### **IV. Conclusion**

*Concerning drunkenness, the Scriptures are emphatic in condemnation. Concerning moderation, each must answer for himself.*

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**Study Questions -- Part I***Bible Reading: John 2:1-11*

John 2:1 through 4 say: <sup>1</sup>And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: <sup>2</sup>And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. <sup>3</sup>And when they wanted wine, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no wine.' <sup>4</sup>Jesus saith unto her, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.'

- Why do you think Mary spoke to Jesus about the lack of wine rather than a servant? What do you think she expected?
- Why do you think Jesus responded to Mary the way he did? Why do you think he mentioned 'mine hour'?

John 2:5 through 8 say: <sup>5</sup>His mother saith unto the servants, 'Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.' <sup>6</sup>And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. <sup>7</sup>Jesus saith unto them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup>And he saith unto them, 'Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bear it.'

- Why do you think the author notes that Mary still expected Jesus to act?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to do as his mother expected?
- Why do you think he simply told the servants what to do without mentioning the miracle he had performed?

John 2:9 through 11 say: <sup>9</sup>When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, <sup>10</sup>And saith unto him, 'Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.' <sup>11</sup>This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

- Why do you think the author notes that the wine Jesus provided was the "good wine" compared to what had been served earlier?

## Study Questions -- Part II

### Sermon :

Included in the packet was a pamphlet that provided the statistics and warning signs of a drinking problem. It was in the pamphlet that the reference to “Tain’t funny, McGee” was found. This alludes to the *Fibber McGee and Molly* radio program.

Another clipping gave FBI statistics of the time and a third, quoting *The Baptist Standard*, noted that there was an insurance company in Texas that was offering policies for people who did not drink.

I.A.1. – Dr. Galbreath notes that \$8.7 billion was spent on alcohol. In reviewing information available online, that figure is now approximately \$57 billion. Certainly the population is larger and inflation has played a role. However, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, per capita consumption rose from 1.97 gallons when this sermon was written to 2.31 gallons in 2007. What do you think are some of the causes of that rise? The total peaked at 2.76 gallons in 1980 and 1981. Why do you think that may have been the time of greatest consumption?

I.B.2.a. In today’s world, do you think some churches still deny membership to those who drink?

I.B.2.b. Do you think some churches still ignore the problem?

II.A.1. Why do you think the two scriptures mentioned are both New Testament passages?

II.B. Do you think these kinds of stories and statistics still hold true today? Do you think the increase in drug use over the years would change them? Which do you think has the greater impact: alcohol or drugs?

II.B.4. To what degree do you think alcohol presents problems in our community?

II.C.2. What symptoms would you look for to see if a family member, friend, or member of the congregation had a problem and needed help? What help would you offer?

II.C.4. What are some “deeper problems” that you think can play a role in problems with alcohol?

II.C.5. Do you think our view of alcohol as a killer has changed since 1948?

III.A. Why do you think wine was so prominently mentioned in the Bible? Do you think those mentioned would be the same in today’s world?

III.B. With all of the research conducted since 1948, what do you think Dr. Galbreath might have cited if he preached this sermon today?

III.B.4.a. Do you think today’s young people understand these odds?

III.C. What impact do you think it would have for service members to have seen their chaplain drinking to excess? Looking back do you think it might have been more accepted based on the circumstances of World War II?

III.C.2. Do you think Dr. Galbreath was right to take such a clear stand as a role model? Why do you think he noted that in a different cultural environment he did have wine?

IV. How do you define moderation? How do you answer for *yourself*?