



THE TRUTH
UNVEILED



IS IT A SIN TO DRINK ALCOHOL?



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What is the truth concerning this subject? Can a Christian work in a brewery factory? Can a Christian sell alcohol? Can you buy alcohol for someone? These questions are debated all the time. We will answer all these questions and much more, and in the end, it will be difficult for you not to understand this subject. The Bible is our guide, and we are going to use the Bible entirely to answer these questions and not the precepts of men.

If you sample ten people and ask them these questions, you will likely get ten different answers. Why does understanding differ regarding things written in clear black-and-white terms in the Bible? It's all down to how one studies the Bible. Then, how should one study the Bible? **Isaiah 28:10** answers:

ISAIAH 28:10 "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:"

When one fails to assemble all precepts related to a subject, one is likely to come up with a skewed interpretation. The Bible interprets itself—you don't have to inject your interpretation. Let us look at an example:

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-6

4 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

ISAIAH 6:15-18

15 For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. 17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord. 18 For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory.

ISAIAH 66:15-18 is a future prophecy related to the **Day of The Lord**—this is yet to be fulfilled. How do we reconcile the two passages (**ISAIAH 66:15-18** and **1 TIMOTHY 4:1-6**)? Can we say Apostle Paul is telling people to eat unclean meats like pork, while Prophet Isaiah says Jesus is coming to destroy those eating pork and all sorts of unclean meats? The Bible interprets itself. How? The Most High God has instructed people since the beginning and reminded people during the time of Moses concerning what beast is clean and what beast is unclean (**Leviticus 11**,

Deuteronomy 14, Isaiah 66:17). The instructions given by the Most High God are the truth (**Psalms 119:142**)—and it always will be the truth. Apostle Paul is saying that every creature of God that has been sanctified (set apart) by the word of God (**Leviticus 11, Deuteronomy 14**) is good and to be received with thanksgiving. If God has called an animal clean, we are to accept that with thanksgiving and eat it—that's all Apostle Paul is saying. Can you see the Bible interprets itself?

When it comes to the subject of **whether a believer should drink or not drink alcohol**, people have misinterpreted the Bible. We are going to allow the Bible to interpret itself. I once mentioned to a pastor's wife that eating unclean meats (unclean according to the Bible—**Leviticus 11, Deuteronomy 14, Isaiah 66:17**) is a sin; the husband was drawn into the conversation in which he was very angry with my position. His understanding was one can eat unclean meats like pork, catfish, and crayfish. I only quoted from the Bible, but the pastor treated me very harshly for politely and kindly reminding them that eating unclean meats is a sin.

Alcohol is another subject that has followed the same trend as the subject of unclean meat. In the Christian church, I was taught that drinking alcohol is a sin while eating unclean meats like pork, catfish, and crayfish is OK. So, the question that should come to our mind is, what is the yardstick determining whether drinking alcohol is a sin or not? What is sin according to the Bible?

1 John 3:4 “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

Sin is the transgression of the law; if there is no law in place to transgress, there will be no sin.

JAMES 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

Apostle James is saying the same thing: If you do not do what is good—good according to the standard of God, you have sinned. James is referring to the righteousness of the Most High God (**Psalms 119:142**).

Romans 7:7 “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”

In the above passage, Apostle Paul says the same thing—the law defines what sin is. Apostle Paul had not known sin except by the law of God.

Prophet King David said the same thing in the passage below.

PSALM 119:9 “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

By God's word, a young man can keep his ways pure. From all the passages above, we can see that the word of God is the yardstick for determining what is right and what is not. The broad basic foundation that all believers should get is that one should be able to tell if one is transgressing a commandment.

Always remember this, if there is no law (commandment, instruction) in place that says one should do/not do something, there is no sin. For example, one commits a

traffic offence because there are traffic rules in place; if there are no traffic rules/laws, there will be no traffic offences.

THE DIVIDING LINE

When it comes to the issue of alcohol, two things should be understood. First, drinking and second, drunkenness; these two are related but different—there is a line dividing the two. So, we must distinguish between drinking and getting drunk—excess alcohol.

The Bible has given us several passages concerning these two:

Alcohol

Leviticus 10:9; Numbers 6:3; Deuteronomy 29:6; Judges 13:4, 7, 14; Proverbs 20:1; 31:4; Isaiah 5:11, 22; 24:9; 28:7; 29:9; 56:12)

Drunkenness:

LUKE 21:34

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and **drunkenness**, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

ROMANS 13:13

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and **drunkenness**, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

GALATIANS 5:21

Envyings, murders, **drunkenness**, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

We can see in the above examples; the Bible gives more light on drinking and drunkenness. So, let us pause and ask a further question: which one is wrong—drinking or getting drunk? The Bible will give us the answer.

THE BIG QUESTION: IS DRINKING ALCOHOL A SIN?

Let us look at the big question—can a believer drink alcohol? We have already laid the foundation required to answer this question. It is the word of God that determines that. We will answer this question: If sin is the transgression of the law, where in the Bible is it stated that one should not drink alcohol? Multiple verses in the Bible talk about alcohol and drinking, but none mention that drinking alcohol is a sin.

In all the references, there is not a single place in the Bible that states drinking alcohol is a sin.

The writings of Apostle Paul have always been hugely misinterpreted. People often run to the writings of Apostle Paul to find a cover not to keep the commandments of

the Most High God. Apostle Peter clearly states that Apostle Paul's writings must be read carefully. His writings, in some cases, are difficult to understand, and people often misinterpret his writings.

Let us walk through the Bible to have a more precise understanding.

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-3

3 This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 **Not given to wine**, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

In the above passage, Apostle Paul is charging Timothy with the requirements of a Bishop's office. Notice verse 3: **Not given to wine**. What does 'Not given to wine' mean? Does it mean one should not drink alcohol at all? What is Apostle Paul saying? Is he saying one should not drink alcohol? The phrase 'not given to wine' means one should be controlled by wine—one should not drink wine in excess—one should not be a drunkard. Some may still argue that Apostle Paul is telling people not to drink alcohol, but is this true? Hold on! Let us see more passages; the picture will be evident in the end. Let us see more of Apostle Paul's writings to understand what he meant in **1 Timothy 3.3**.

EPHESIANS 5:18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;" (KJV)

EPHESIANS 5:18 "Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit," (NLT)

EPHESIANS 5:18 "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit;" (ASV)

Apostle Paul cannot contradict himself; he says you do not drink wine in excess or not be drunk with wine. The King James Versions puts it clearly: **And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess**. He has explained how one should drink alcohol. Still not getting it? Hold on! We will look at more passages.

1 PETER 4:3-8

3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, **excess of wine**, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: 4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

Can you see what Apostle Peter is explaining in the above passage? Why is Apostle Peter stating **excess of wine** instead of **no wine**? Remember, at the beginning of this article, we have made a distinction between drinking and drunkenness. Apostle Paul and Apostle Peter are both on the same page. These two apostles say we do not drink alcohol excessively—we don't allow alcohol to control us.

Still not satisfied? Continue reading! Who called Apostle Paul? Who is Apostle Paul following? Let us see:

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Apostle Paul is saying we should follow him because he follows Christ. Apostle Paul cannot come up with a different standard other than what Christ has already established. What did Jesus do when it came to wine? Let us see:

MATTHEW 11:18-20

18 For John came neither **eating nor drinking**, and they say, He hath a devil. 19 **The Son of man came eating and drinking**, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a **winebibber**, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Observe the above verses, **eating nor drinking**—eating and drinking what? Eating and drinking water? No! Eating and drinking grape juice? No! It is talking about eating and drinking alcoholic wine. John came and did not drink wine; however, Jesus Christ (The Son of Man) ate and drank alcoholic wine. How do we know that Jesus drank alcoholic wine? The answer is in verse 19: a **winebibber**, a friend of publicans and sinners. So, let us see the definition of **winebibber**.

Wiktionary: *winebibber (plural winebibbers) (archaic, poetic) A habitual (or heavy) drinker of alcohol, especially wine, an excessive wine-drinker; a drunkard.*

Can you see the definition? Jesus drank alcohol but in moderation. The Pharisees accused him of being a winebibber, which He was not. If drinking wine (alcoholic) is a sin, why did Jesus drink wine? Can we be more righteous than Jesus? Some may argue that the wine referred to here is something non-alcoholic. Let the Bible clear the air. One cannot be a winebibber with pure non-alcoholic grape juice. Pure grape juice cannot intoxicate. So, we can see that Jesus drank wine.

LUKE 1:15-16

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

Another question we should ask is, why did John not drink wine? Let us reserve this question, and we will come back to it. Let us see more of Apostle Paul's writing.

1 TIMOTHY 3:8 “Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;”

We can see here in the same chapter we read earlier; Apostle Paul also charges the deacons not to drink too much wine. But, again, you can see that the subject is about moderation and not total abstinence. So, let us ask a question to get us thinking in the right direction: why is Apostle Paul charging bishops and deacons not to be **“given to much wine”**? The office of a bishop is a high position, and their conduct should be exemplary—they should set an example when it comes to drinking wine moderately. Christ drank wine moderately, and bishops and deacons should follow the same standard—do not abuse wine—alcohol. So, let us answer the earlier question: why did John not drink wine? One should remember John was on a special mission. There is a thin line between drinking and not getting drunk; not all people can control their drinking and drink moderately. To be safer, some people may choose not to drink at all. Drinking wine is not a sin but getting drunk with it is. John did not drink alcohol because drinking wine is a sin but because to be on the

safer side. So, if you drink alcohol even in moderation, you must be disciplined, or you may slip to the other side.

NUMBERS 6:1-6

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall **separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord:** 3 **He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.** 4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. 5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6 All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body.

If someone is not making a vow of Nazarite, it is OK to drink **wine and strong drink, vinegar of wine, vinegar of strong drink, liquor of grapes; eat moist grapes, or dried.** But if someone is to vow a vow of Nazarite, one should not drink **wine and strong drink, vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, liquor of grapes; nor eat moist grapes, or dried.** So the question is, why the restriction? Is drinking wine a sin? No! As stated earlier, there is a thin line between drinking and getting drunk, requiring high discipline to maintain the boundary. Nazarite is someone dedicated to the Lord. Therefore, a Nazarite should abstain from these substances to eliminate the risk of getting drunk (or intoxicated). Drinking alcohol is not a sin but getting drunk; if one cannot control his drinking habit and drink in moderation, it is better not to drink at all. And that is why John and Nazarite did not drink alcohol—not because it is a sin but to eliminate the risks of intoxication with these substances, realising the nature of their calling and dedication to the Most High God.

WATER TO WINE

JOHN 2:1-11

2 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: 2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. 3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. 4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. 6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 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, 10 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. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

The above passage is an account of the first miracle Jesus performed. The wine being referred to here is an alcoholic wine. Many have argued that it refers to something non-alcoholic; however, this is not the case. How do we know that wine here refers to alcoholic wine? The word wine (**John 2:1-11**) is the same as in (**1 TIMOTHY 3:8**). They all have the same Strong's concordance number—they all refer to the same thing:

- **John 2:3** (The word WINE in this verse)—**Strong's g3631**
- **1 Timothy 3:8** (The word WINE in this verse)—**Strong's g3631**
- **1 Timothy 5:23** (The word WINE in this verse)—**Strong's g3631**

Let us see more passages to substantiate this claim.

1 TIMOTHY 5:23 “**Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.**”

The wine being referred to in the above passage is something alcoholic. Alcoholic wines have health benefits (medicinal), so Apostle Paul advises Timothy to take a little wine(alcoholic) for his frequent stomach illness.

At the beginning of this article, I mentioned that I was drawn into a conversation with a pastor in which the pastor was furious with me for saying that eating pork and all unclean meat is a sin. The pastor believes the tithing law and preaches and defends it, but when it comes to laws like the dietary law, it is no longer in effect—very ironic! In most Christian churches, people are taught that alcohol is a sin but eating pork, catfish, crayfish, and all unclean meats are OK—pray over it. The Bible does not teach that drinking alcohol is a sin. The Bible does not also teach people to pray over pork, catfish, and crayfish and eat it. So, why did Daniel not pray over a portion of the king's meat and eat it? Are we more spiritual than Daniel? If keeping the dietary law is unimportant, why did Daniel prioritise abstaining from food that defiles? Don't allow yourself to be drawn into foolishness by the Devil. What kind of food defile? See **Leviticus 11** and **Deuteronomy 14**.

In Nigeria, where I am very familiar, most churches teach people that drinking alcohol is a sin, but at the same time, teach them that they can eat pork, catfish, crayfish, and all sorts of unclean meats. Crayfish, catfish and pork are some of the delicatessens in Nigeria—people use these unclean creatures to enrich their soup and meal.

The meats that defile are clearly explained in **Leviticus 11** and **Deuteronomy 14**. Daniel understood this very well. Catfish, crayfish, and pork are all in the food category that Daniel abstains from.

By eating catfish and crayfish, are we more spiritual than Daniel? Do we know better than Daniel? Who has bewitched us into eating any and everything—things that are laden with bacteria, strains of bacteria resistant to antibiotics, viruses, toxins, and carcinogenic substances?

Some of my friends became very angry with me for telling them to stop eating catfish, pork, crayfish and all unclean meats. Daniel abstained from all these; why can't we do the same? Does the kingdom of God we are going to differ from that of Daniel?

In the churches, time and again, people are being reminded to bring their tithes and offering. The churches that teach **the dietary law is done away with** are somehow

defending the tithing law—very ironic! These churches created the game of **cherry-picking from the word of God**; their own game will defeat them. How?

Let us see the tithing law:

DEUTERONOMY 14:22-29

22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. 23 And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always. 24 **And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee: 25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: 26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth:** and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,

Can you see the tithing law? The children of Israel (and all who serve the God of Israel) must take their tithe to Jerusalem. However, if your tithe is large and the way is too long for you, you can turn your tithe into cash and take it to Jerusalem. What do you do with the money when you reach Jerusalem? Watch verse 26: **And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, OR FOR WINE, OR FOR STRONG DRINK, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth.**

Can you see what the tithing instructions entail? If alcoholic wine and strong drinks are a sin, why would the Most High God instruct people to purchase wine or strong drinks to eat and rejoice before him in Jerusalem? We can see clearly that alcoholic wine or strong drink is not a sin. When someone abuses these substances, that is where the problem is. So, to bring money to the churches (tithe) is OK but drinking alcohol is a sin. Can you see how our understanding is severely diluted? Some prominent pastors tell their members that anyone who does not pay tithe will not make heaven. So, why was **Malachi 3.10** (the verse that these know very well) written? Malachi was sent to remind a backslidden Israel to return to keeping the laws, statutes, and commandments, including the tithing law. How do we know this? Watch this passage.

MALACHI 4:4

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Be wise! The Most High God tells you to remember the entire law, not just the tithing law.

WHAT IS THE CENTRAL POINT?

What is this article trying to teach? To make you begin drinking alcohol? No! This article is all about teaching the truth. We teach what the Bible says—nothing is added, and nothing is taken away. The Bible does not teach that alcohol is a sin—we follow that. The Bible teaches that drunkenness is a sin—we follow that. Whether to drink or not to drink is an individual choice.

There is a very thin line between drinking and getting drunk, and if your level of discipline is not strong enough to keep you from intoxicating, it is better not to drink at all. Some have chosen not to drink at all to be safer, and there is nothing wrong with that. The fact that it is lawful in the sight of God to drink alcohol moderately does not mean that it is essential. Because you can drink alcohol in moderation, you don't have to; if you choose to.

I, the writer of this article, don't drink alcohol. However, I will not teach people what the Bible does not teach. Instead, I will teach what the Bible teaches.

In a situation where one is with someone whose faith is weak, one may choose not to drink alcohol—if that will derail that person's faith. One is being considerate here—not because alcohol is a sin but because one considers the person with weak faith.

WOE FOR CALLING EVIL GOOD AND GOOD EVIL

ISAIAH 5:25

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!



Figure 1: Alcohol—mentioned in several parts of the Bible, is not a sin. It is drunkenness that is a sin. Do not abuse these substances. Alcohol, if taken in moderation, can be beneficial to health. Red wine can be good for a healthy heart. Alcohol has been used in purifying contaminated water to make it fit for drinking.



Figure 2: Unclean meats (Leviticus 11, Deuteronomy 14, Isaiah 66:17)—These meats are the same kind of meats Daniel abstained from. These meats defile; these creatures are laden with bacteria, strains of bacteria resistant to antibiotics, viruses, toxins, and carcinogenic substances—all at levels higher than accepted. So, there is a lot of clean meat to eat, why be disobedient and attract sicknesses and diseases?

If the Bible never categorise alcohol to be a sin, why would anyone do that? Are we more righteous than Jesus Christ, who drank wine? If the Bible did not call alcohol a sin, why do people create their standard of righteousness? Stop where the Bible stops—do not add to it, and do not take away from it. Look and **Figures 1 & 2**; drinking wine (especially red wine) in moderation can be suitable for having a healthy heart; several doctors attest to this. Alcohol has a medicinal effect and improves stomach health, like the case of Timothy (**1 Timothy 5:23**). In certain areas, water can be contaminated, and people often drink wine or add some alcohol to water to make it fit for drinking. So, why would someone label alcohol a sin even when the Bible didn't?

On the other hand, people have instead chosen to call what is bad good. **Figure 2**—These are unclean animals—creatures laden with bacteria, strains of bacteria resistant to antibiotics, viruses, toxins, and carcinogenic substances—all at levels higher than accepted. Why would people ignore the instruction of the Most High God and eat all these things? Why do people get cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other diseases? Disobedience to the commandments of the Most High God.

DEUTERONOMY 7:12-15

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: 13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. 15 And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of

the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.

Like for like: disobedience attracts sicknesses and diseases. Be obedient!

SUMMARY

The Bible does not teach that drinking alcohol is a sin. The Bible, however, does teach that drunkenness is a sin. One should not drink wine in excess. Jesus drank wine in moderation; in the tithing law, one can buy wine and strong drinks (if one wishes) and take it before the Lord at Jerusalem and eat it there. There is a thin line between drinking and getting drunk—one must be careful. The Nazarites, to avoid the risks of getting drunk, are instructed to abstain from substances that have the potential to intoxicate. Because drinking in moderation is lawful, you don't have to. If you choose to drink in moderation, you are fine. If you decide not to drink at all, you are fine.