

3 D's Of Drinking

There is a story about a guy who was drinking pretty heavily and then decided to go ice fishing. He gathered his gear together and went looking for a lake that was iced over. He found one, went to the middle of it, got out his saw and began to saw a hole in the ice. All of sudden, out of thin air came a voice that said, **“there is no fish underneath that ice.”** The drunk looked around didn't see anyone, thinking that it was the wind, he began to saw again. Immediately the same voice said, **“I said there is no fish underneath that ice.”** The drunk looked around, still not seeing anyone, he spoke into the air, **“is that you God?”** In reply, the voice said, **“no I am the manager of this hockey rink.”**

Like this drunk, are you looking for life in all the wrong places. Just like this rink, which had the appearance that it was a lake and there were fish in it, there are a lot of things that give the appearance of life, but in reality produce death. **Proverbs 14:12** says, **“There is a way {which seems} right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”** There are a lot of things in this life, that this scripture could speak to, but for our purposes I would like to address just one.

In our culture **“alcohol”** has been portrayed by the media as a source of life and happiness. I want to emphatically tell you that as the drunk came to the realization that there were no fish underneath the ice, our society needs to come to the realization that there is no life in that bottle of alcohol.

Listen to these list of things that are said about Alcohol.

1. The driver who has a few quick ones, is bound to have a few close ones.
2. Many things can be preserved in alcohol, but Christian character is not one of them.
3. Corkscrews have sunk more people than cork jackets ever saved.
4. The steady drinker soon becomes an unsteady driver.
5. The tavern keeper is the only businessman ashamed of his customers.
6. When a man drinks to forget, he usually forgets to stop.
7. Liquor fools the man who fools with it.
8. The drunkard commits suicide on the installment plan.
9. Arresting a drunken driver, is like destroying the web and leaving the spider alive.
10. Glasses change your personality, especially if you empty them too often.
11. Alcohol is something that often puts the "wreck" in recreation.
12. The person who thinks won't drink.
13. Keeping blood free from alcohol, is the best way to keep the highways free from blood.
14. The hand that lifts the cup of cheers, should not be used to shift gears.
15. There is not situation so bad , that a few alcoholic drinks won't make worse.
16. Strong drink can weaken character.
17. I am the greatest criminal in history. I have killed more men, than have fallen in all the wars, of all the world. I have turned men into brutes. I have made millions of homes unhappy. I've changed many promising young men into hopeless parasites. I destroy the weak and weaken the strong. I make the wise man a fool and I ensnare the innocent. I have ruined millions and shall try to ruin millions more. I am alcohol.

I want to share with you a presentation that I have done in schools, college fraternities, and military posts. I call it “**3/D Drinking.**” In it I share the **3 D’s** of drinking which are: **Deception, Denial, and Death.**

DECEPTION: THE LIE THAT STARTS PEOPLE DRINKING

Noah Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines deception this way, “**to mislead the mind in order to ensnare, to cause err, to believe what is false as though it were true.**” Deception is what causes people, especially young people to start drinking. Because of the way that it is promoted, it’s one of those “**ways that seems right to a man.**”

One of the deceptions that surround alcohol, is the myth that alcohol consumption will make you feel good. This is a lie that is designed by the enemy to ensnare us. Alcohol is a mood elevator. Which means that if you go out with your friends for the evening and you’re already in a good mood, if you drink some alcohol, you will be in a better mood. But it is this very dynamic that makes alcohol so dangerous, because you can’t guarantee what kind of mood you stay in. Too many unknown, unpredictable, and uncontrollable elements can be introduced into your setting.

You start out in a good mood, but someone from the party makes you mad. In your natural state you could have handled the anger, but in your inebriated state the alcohol elevates this anger to where it handles you, and you end up hurting both yourself and others. Or you meet someone at the party from the opposite sex, that stimulates you. In your natural state you could have handled the stimulation, but again the alcohol elevates this stimulation to where it begins to handle you and you end up doing something that you may regret for the rest of your life.

Alcohol turns the voice of reason into the voice of rebellion. Alcohol transforms your conscience into a consenter. It will lower your inhibitions, your values, and your standards. You will think, speak, and act in ways that you would never would in your natural state. It may bring you some temporary freedom, only in the end to cause some long term bondage.

The biggest deception surrounding alcohol is the way that it is advertised on TV. Kid’s favorite and most devastating drug is the alcohol in beer. It’s legal for adults and heavily advertised. TV ads often reach millions of teens and children with messages that appeal to their humor, sense of fantasy, or identification with sports. The Alcohol industry spends more than \$1 billion annually on advertising. The reason they are willing to spend so much is that alcohol advertising has proved to cause an increase in alcohol consumption, especially among young people.

More children ages 9-11 know the slogan associated with the Budweiser frogs (“**Bud-weis-er**”) than that for Smokey the Bear (“**Only you can prevent forest fires**” or “**Don’t play with matches**”) or Tony the Tiger (“**They’re Grrreat!**”) Students surveyed in 1996 reported that they had “been drunk” in the following proportions: 27% of 8th graders; 48% of 10th graders; and 62% of 12th graders.

The deception surrounding alcohol is causing our nation to treat something that is both bad and dangerous, as though it were good and safe. This deception is seeking to ensnare an entire generation

of young people.

DENIAL: A FRAME OF MIND THAT KEEPS PEOPLE DRINKING

Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary defines denial this way, "**An affirmation to the contrary; an assertion that a declaration or fact stated is not true.**" Simply stated, it's where we let our feelings overrule the facts.

It is characteristic of our age that people want to have God, but do not want to have the Devil. People are inventing gods for themselves, with what I call their do-it-yourself God Kits. But they are gods who do not demand much of them, and they certainly are not gods who punish, although they are allowed to reward. On the contrary, their gods absolve them from conflict and doubt, massage them, pat them on the head, but above all, they are gods who will not trouble them with the fact of evil. The problems of evil, suffering, and death are not confronted, but evaded and dismissed.

John 8:32 says, "*that you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.*" Real truth has the power to set you free, to keep you free, or both. If something is true, you only have two responses; you can believe it or prove it. Those of you who choose not to believe the truth about alcohol, will sooner or later become the very statistics that prove the truth. The only way to get free from alcohol is to quit denying the truth and allow the truth to deal with you.

Proverbs 28:13 says, "*He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes [them] will have mercy.*" You can cover your sin by hiding it or excusing it.

Truth is the light that exposes the things you have hidden in darkness. Most people don't like the light, because it exposes the deception that has brought damage to their lives. It's embarrassing and humbling to see that you were wrong. But the same light that exposes also heals. It will move you from denying the truth, to being delivered by the truth. We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark, the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.

If a person is not hiding from the truth of alcohol, then they are trying to excuse the darkness that alcohol causes. They do this by shifting the blame from themselves, by placing it on others or circumstances. As long as people blame their race, gender, family upbringing, or their circumstances, they trap themselves in their destructive behavior. The truth about alcohol can't change a person's race, it can't change their gender, it can't change the way they were brought up, and it can't change their circumstances. But it can change them.

If people are not denying the truth about alcohol, they are dismissing it. This is an attempt to trivialize the damage that alcohol causes. You will hear people say things like, "**no big deal everyone is doing it**" or "**I don't really have a problem, I can control it, I can handle it.**" The reason they can so easily dismiss the truth about alcohol, is because they have yet to reap any severe consequences of their drinking.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 says, "*When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.*" Because nothing immediately happens, as a result of

their alcohol consumption, they are deceived into thinking nothing is going to happen to them. What they need to understand, is that though the sentence isn't quickly carried out, it is always ultimately carried out.

The opposite of denying the truth is dealing with the truth or allowing the truth to deal with you. I have found that you can't put something behind you, until you face it. If you face the truth about alcohol, there will be both consequences and conquests. It's in embracing the consequences of the alcohol, that will bring the conquest over the alcohol. For God is able to minimize the damage of those consequences, and maximize the good that comes as a result of facing them.

Recently, my son Jason was out in the woods, where he fell and got a splinter in his finger. He came into the house crying and wanting me to help him. I immediately went to the medicine cabinet, and got out the Band-Aids and the Neosporin. I could tell by the expression on his face that Jason agreed with this decision. I then went to my wife's sewing case and got out a needle. As soon as I did this, my son protested saying, **“no Daddy, not the needle, just the Band-Aid and Neosporin.”** **My son was wanting the healing without the treatment.** But his healing was found in the needle. Like my son, there are many people who want healing and deliverance from alcohol, without going through the treatment.

Someone once said **“You are only as sick as the secrets you keep.”** How can God heal what we deny? How can God touch what we cover up? How can God grant us pardon when we won't admit guilt. Guilt is a healthy regret for our wrong doing. Guilt is the nerve ending of the heart. To feel guilt is no tragedy, to feel no guilt is.

There is an old story, about the time Emperor Frederick the Great visited Potsdam Prison. He spoke with the prisoners, and each man claimed to be innocent, a victim of the system. One man, however, sat silently in the corner. The ruler asked him, “And you, sir, who do you blame for your sentence.” His response was, “Your majesty, I am guilty and richly deserve my punishment.” Surprised, the emperor shouted for the prison warden: “Come and get this man out of here before he corrupts all these innocent people.”

Through honesty and taking responsibility, this man was freed and the same thing can happen to you. Denying the truth will keep you drinking, but dealing with the truth will free you from drinking.

DEATH: THE EVENTUAL RESULT OF ALL DRINKING

Proverbs 14:12-13 out of the translation called **“The Message”** says, ***“There's a way of life that looks harmless enough; look again it leads straight to death. Sure, those people appear to be having a good time, but all that laughter will end in heartbreak.”***

Death is the only thing that will cause most people to stop drinking. When I mention death, I am not necessarily talking about physical death. Physical death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside of you, while you live. Every time you drink, you are playing Russian roulette with your marriage, your family, your career, your reputation, your health, and the lives of others.

Alcohol consumption causes more than 200,000 deaths annually in the United States. But if you would factor in the death of good health through sickness, the death of marriages through divorce, the death of families through neglect, the death of personal productivity through lost work days, the death of social well being through crime, and the death of morality through the corruption of character, then the death toll rises to about 65,000,000. Or one in four people experience some kind of death as a result of alcohol consumption.

Alcohol is even producing a certain kind of death in our personal and national economy. It is estimated that for every dollar that is spent to consume alcohol, another dollar has to be spent to undo the damage of that alcohol. The estimated costs of alcohol abuse was \$148 billion in 1992.

It usually takes paying the cost of some type of alcoholic death for our eyes to be opened to the truth. There is a story about a man who had been a counselor for over twenty years but then resigned, and went back to school to become a mortician. When asked why he did this, he responded by saying, that as a counselor he spent years trying to straighten peoples problems out, with very little success, but now as a mortician, when he straightens them, they stay straight. Please don't let something die in your life, as a result of alcohol, before you decide to straighten it.