**Avoiding the Death Trap**

**Family Worship Center 9/14/14**

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Text: II Timothy 3:16-17 16All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Part One: The Life Source**

1. The Bible
2. Word of God… Hebrews 4:12 12For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

1. Inspired… God breathed. II Timothy 3:16-17 16All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1. The authority of the Word requires being rightly interpreted and applied.

1. Some distort- II Peter 3:16 “…untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.”

1. Distort (Wrestle) is from the Greek Word στρεβλοῦσιν (streblousin) meaning to twist, distort, misinterpret and even torture.
2. The error of eisegesis… introducing your own presupposition or bias into the text.

1. We want Exegesis… taking meaning out of text and not reading it in.

1. Two steps of hermeneutic- proper interpretation and application.

1. Two step understanding… (Hermeneutics- science of interpretation).

1. Step One: What did it mean to the people it was originally written to?

1. Step Two: How does that meaning apply to you?

1. Keep it in Context, Context, Context.

1. Literary Context. 2. Historical Context.

1. Cultural Context.

1. Literary Context…

1. Read verses before and after.

1. The context of the book or letter.

1. The context of the whole Bible- Build and compare Scripture with Scripture.

1. The grammatical context- what the original words mean.

1. Historical Context…

1. Understand what it meant in that time of history.

1. Look for external writings that shed light on meaning.

1. Cultural Context…

1. The context of where the people lived.

1. The context of what the people faced.

1. The context of what the people believed or thought.

1. But that takes study…
2. Study to show yourself approved. II Tim. 2:15.
3. To not be ashamed.
4. Being faithful to church- when not here still take in message.

**Part Two: The Death Trap**

1. Welcome to the death trap…

1. Wisconsin is #1in the nation for binge drinking.

1. Door County is within one % point of top making it above the nation.
2. Research…
3. Health Dept., Human Services Dept., Sheriff, Family Services, MADD, AODA Coalition et all.
4. Consensus is not only do we have a severe crisis of binge drinking and DUIs, even though great work is being done, there is a giant problem that seems impossible to overcome… culture!

1. WI and Door County has a culture of alcohol.

1. 76% of sexual assaults are alcohol related (F.S).

1. 24% of high school students admit to binge drinking in last 30 days (Public Health Dept).

1. Our alcohol culture causes homelessness, sickness, death, disease, financial disaster, divorce, unfaithfulness, child neglect and child abuse, elder abuse and so much more.

1. The church is the cornerstone of the culture… we either are part of the problem or the solution.

1. Miranda Lambert justifies drinking culture in song… “Cause I heard Jesus he drank wine, and I bet we’d get along just fine…”

1. People use verses to justify drinking…

1. Jesus changed water into wine… John 2.

1. Paul told Timothy to drink… I Timothy 5:23.

1. Paul told Titus to tell the ladies to drink a little wine… Titus

**Part Three: The Truth Key**

1. To equip you and protect you.
2. Historical Context…
3. Historical context of what “wine” (article).
4. Wine was always mixed with water… normally 3 or 4 parts water to one part wine. This was done to disinfect and make the water safe to drink.

1. Wine without water was considered barbarian… or totally uncivilized or “unchristian”.

1. Cultural Context…

1. If you drank water without wine to purify it you risked dysentery, cholera, e-coli, microsporidiosis, hepatitis or literally dozens of other diseases from bacteria, viruses, protozoans and parasites. These diseases were often fatal. Even today the WHO says water borne diseases are still the world’s leading killer[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. No antibiotics, no ability of rehydration with IV.

1. Boiling water not practical as there was little wood available making wine the cheapest and best disinfectant.

1. Context, Context, Context!
2. Literary Context: Jesus at wedding feast-John 2.

1. Literary Context: Extra guests…

1. Cultural Context: 7 days long for which you would provide food and water.

1. Historical Context: No wine meant people getting very sick with no cure.

1. Historical Interpretation - *Jesus changed the water into wine in the amphorae, the servants “draw it out” into the krater where it was mixed 3 or 4 parts water to 1 part wine, and given to the governor of the feast in a kylix.*

1. Jesus was not giving a license to drink; He was saving the wedding by providing disinfectant for their water. The lesson is *practice good hygiene*.

1. Timothy and wine I Timothy 5:23… “No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.” ESV

1. Frequent ailments caused from bacteria in water without wine

1. Paul tells him to add wine like we use chlorine.

1. This is in no way a justification to drink, it is a call to healthy living and safe water practices.

1. Paul to Titus I will cover in the days ahead.
2. Literary context…

1. Proverbs 20:1 “Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”

1. Drunkenness leads to hell… do you really want to be involved in behaviors that lead to hell? (Galatians 5:19-21, I Corinthians 6:9-11)

1. Step two- making application…

1. Wine was for medication and disinfecting water.

1. Be health conscious and provide safe drinking water.

1. The Bible strongly condemns drinking alcohol outside of using it for purification of water.

1. Love people enough to not be a stumbling block (Matt. 18, Romans 14).



**Part Four: The Key to Changing our Culture**

1. We are called to be in the world not of it (I John 2).

1. Christians should love and care enough not to engage in the destruction of the culture (We are the Light of the World…Matthew 5:14-16, John 8:12).

1. For the sake of…

1. Your witness (II Cor 6:3). B. Your family.

C. Your friends. D. The Lord Himself.

1. Come out from among them and be separate… 2 Cor. 6:17

Closing… Destruction is taking place all around us… we must be the light to show the way to safety- TRAP

**Discussion Items and Questions for Home and Small Group**

1. The Bible says if you love someone you will avoid making them stumble. How does this apply to drinking?
2. Practice explaining to someone what the Bible teaches about how wine was used for purification of water and that drinking it straight was condemned.
3. How can you help change our culture? Pray together.

**Wine-Drinking in New Testament Times**

ROBERT H. STEIN

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| As evangelicals we maintain that the Bible is for us the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It is our final authority in all matters of doctrine (faith) and ethics (practice). Yet the Bible was not written to evangelicals living in the twentieth century. The science—or better, the art—of interpreting the biblical text so that the revelation of God written centuries ago is meaningful and correctly understood today is called “hermeneutics.” The basic principle of hermeneutics, to be somewhat simplistic, is that the question “What does it mean for us today?” must be preceded by the question “What did it mean for them yesterday?” If we do not seek first to understand what the text meant when it was written, it will be very difficult to interpret intelligently what it means and demands of us today. My subject here is the use of the term “wine” in the New Testament. Some readers may already be thinking, “Is he going to try to tell us that wine in the Bible means grape juice? Is he going to try to say that the wine mentioned in the New Testament is any different from the wine bottled today by Christian Brothers or Château Lafite-Rothschild or Mogen David?” Well, my answers are no and yes. No, the wine of the Bible was not unfermented grape juice. Yes, it was different from the wine of today. In ancient times wine was usually stored in large pointed jugs called *amphorae.* When wine was to be used it was poured from the *amphorae* into large bowls called *kraters,* where it was mixed with water. Last year 1 had the privilege of visiting the great archaeological museum in Athens, Greece, where I saw dozens of these large *kraters.* At the time it did not dawn on me what their use signified about the drinking of wine in biblical times. From these kraters, cups or *kylix* were then filled. What is important for us to note is that before wine was drunk it was mixed with water. The *kylix* were filled not from the *amphorae* but from the *kraters.*The ratio of water to wine varied. Homer *(Odyssey* IX, 208f.) mentions a ratio of 20 to 1, twenty parts water to one part wine. Pliny *(Natural History* XIV, vi, *54)* mentions a ratio of eight parts water to one part wine. In one ancient work, Athenaeus’s *The Learned Banquet,* written around A.D.200, we find in Book Ten a collection of statements from earlier writers about drinking practices. A quotation from a play by Aristophanes reads: “‘Here, drink this also, mingled three and two.’ Demus**.** ‘Zeus! But it’s sweet and bears the three parts well!’” The poet Euenos, who lived in the fifth century *B.C.,* is also quoted: *The best measure of wine is neither much nor very little; For ‘tis the cause of either grief or madness.**It pleases the wine to be the fourth, mixed with three nymphs.*Here the ratio of water to wine is 3 to 1. Others mentioned are:  3 to 1—Hesiod 4 to 1—Alexis 2 to 1—Diodes 3 to 1—Ion 5 to 2—Nichochares 2 to 1—AnacreonSometimes the ratio goes down to 1 to 1 (and even lower), but it should be noted that such a mixture is referred to as “strong wine.” Drinking wine unmixed, on the other hand, was looked upon as a “Scythian” or barbarian custom. Athenaeus in this work quotes Mnesitheus of Athens:  “The gods has revealed wine to mortals, to be the greatest blessing for those who use it aright, but for those who use it without measure, the reverse. For it gives food to them that take it and strength in mind and body. In medicine it is most beneficial; it can be mixed with liquid and drugs and it brings aid to the wounded. In daily intercourse, to those who mix and drink it moderately, it gives good cheer; but if you overstep the bounds, it brings violence. Mix it half and half, and you get madness; unmixed, bodily collapse.”It is evident that wine was seen in ancient times as a medicine (and as a solvent for medicines) and of course as a beverage. Yet as a beverage it was always thought of as a mixed drink. Plutarch *(Symposiacs* III, ix), for instance, states. “We call a mixture ‘wine,’ although the larger of the component parts is water.” The ratio of water might vary, but only barbarians drank it unmixed, and a mixture of wine and water of equal parts was seen as “strong drink” and frowned upon. The term “wine” or *oinos* in the ancient world, then, did not mean wine as we understand it today but wine mixed with water. Usually a writer simply referred to the mixture of water and wine as “wine.” To indicate that the beverage was not a mixture of water and wine he would say “unmixed *(akratesteron)* wine.” One might wonder whether the custom of mixing wine with water was limited to the ancient Greeks. The burden of proof would be upon anyone who argued that the pattern of drinking wine in Jewish society was substantially different from that of the examples already ‘given. And we do have examples in both Jewish and Christian literature and perhaps in the Bible that wine was likewise understood as being a mixture of wine and water. In several instances in the Old Testament a distinction is made between “wine” and “strong drink.” In Leviticus 10:8, 9, we read, “And the **LORD** spoke to Aaron, saying, ‘Drink no wine nor strong drink, you nor your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting. . . .‘“ Concerning the Nazarite vow Numbers 6:3 states that the Nazarite “shall separate himself from wine and strong drink.” This distinction is found also in Deuteronomy 14:26; 29:6; Judges 13:4, 7, 14; First Samuel 1:15: Proverbs 20:1; 31:4,6: Isaiah *5:11,* 22; 28:7; 29:9; *56:12;* and Micah 2:11. The 1901 *Jewish Encyclopedia* (Vol. 12, p. *533)* states that in the rabbinic period at least “‘yayin’ [or wine] ‘is to be distinguished from ‘shekar’ [or strong drink]: the former is diluted with water (mazug’); the latter is undiluted (‘yayin hal’).” ln the Talmud, which contains the oral traditions of Judaism from about 200 B.C.to A.D.200, there are several tractates in which the mixture of water and wine is discussed. One tractate (Shabbath 77a) states that wine that does not carry three parts of water well is not wine. The normal mixture is said to consist of two parts water to one part wine. In a most important reference (Pesahim 108b) it is stated that the four cups every Jew was to drink during the Passover ritual were to be mixed in a ratio of three parts water to one part wine. From this we can conclude with a fair degree of certainty that the fruit of the vine used at the institution of the Lord’s Supper was a mixture of three parts water to one part wine. In another Jewish reference from around 60 B.C.we read, “It is harmful to drink wine alone, or again, to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet and delicious and enhances one’s enjoyment” (II Maccabees 15:39). In ancient times there were not many beverages that were safe to drink. The danger of drinking water alone raises another point. There were several ways in which the ancients could make water safe to drink. One method was boiling, but this was tedious and costly. Different methods of filtration were tried. The safest and easiest method of making the water safe to drink, however, was to mix it with wine. The drinking of wine (i.e., a mixture of water and wine) served therefore as a safety measure, since often the water available was not safe. (I remember drinking some water in Salonica, Greece, that would have been much better for me had it been mixed with wine or some other purifying agent.) When we come to the New Testament the content of the wine is never discussed. The burden of proof, however, is surely upon anyone who would say that the “wine” of the New Testament is substantially different from the wine mentioned by the Greeks, the Jews during the intertestamental period, and the early church fathers. In the writings of the early church fathers it is clear that “wine” means wine mixed with water. Justin Martyr around A.D.150 described the Lord’s Supper in this way: “Bread is brought, and wine and water, and the president sends up prayers and thanksgiving” *(Apology* 1, 67, *5).* Some sixty-five years later Hippolytus instructed the bishops that they shall “eucharistize [bless] first the bread into the representation of the Flesh of Christ; and the cup mixed with wine for the antitype of the Blood which was shed for all who have believed in Him” *(Apostolic Tradition* XXIII, 1). Cyprian around A.D.250 stated in his refutation of certain heretical practices: “Nothing must be done by us but what the Lord first did on our behalf, as that the cup which is offered in remembrance of Him should be offered mingled with wine. . . .  Thus, therefore, in considering the cup of the Lord, water alone cannot be offered, even as wine alone cannot be offered. For if anyone offer wine only, the blood of Christ is dissociated from us: but if the water be alone, the people are dissociated from Christ. . . . Thus the cup of the Lord is not indeed water alone, nor wine alone, unless each be mingled with the other [*Epistle* LXII, 2, 11 and 13]. “Unmixed wine and plain water at the Lord’s Supper were both found unacceptable. A mixture of wine and water was the norm. Earlier in the latter part of the second century Clement of Alexandria stated: It is best for the wine to be mixed with as much water as possible. . . . For both are works of God, and the mixing of the two, both of water and wine produces health, because life is composed of a necessary element and a useful element. To the necessary element, the water, which is in the greatest quantity, there is to be mixed in some of the useful element [*Instructor* II, ii, 23.3—24.1].To consume the amount of alcohol that is in two martinis by drinking wine containing three parts water to one part wine, one would have to drink over twenty-two glasses. In other words, it is possible to become intoxicated from wine mixed with three parts of water, but one’s drinking would probably affect the bladder long before it affected the mind. In concluding this brief article I would like to emphasize two points. First, it is important to try to understand the biblical text in the context in which it was written. Before we ask “What does the biblical text mean for us today?” we must ask “What did it mean to them originally?” Second, there is a striking difference between the drinking of alcoholic beverages today and the drinking of wine in New Testament times. If the drinking of unmixed wine or even wine mixed in a ratio of one to one with water was frowned upon in ancient times, certainly the drinking of distilled spirits in which the alcoholic content is frequently three to ten times greater would be frowned upon a great deal more.  *Robert H. Stein is associate professor of New Testament at Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota. He has the B.D. from Fuller Seminary, S.T.M. from Andover Newton Theological School, and Ph.D. from Princeton Seminary.* |

1. <http://www.voanews.com/content/a-13-2005-03-17-voa34-67381152/274768.html> <http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/takingcharge.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)