



MARCH 16, 2026

PUBLIC SERVANT
ENDORSEMENT 2

Scott Turner
United States Secretary of Housing
and Urban Development

VERSE OF THE WEEK 3
1 Corinthians 10:31

ABOUT CAPITOL MINISTRIES 4



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FOCUSED ON THE WORD

Alcohol and Office



As you know, we frequent the book of Proverbs. Of the 66 books of the Bible, this one is perhaps the most applicable for you who choose to live your life under scrutiny in the capital. Solomon, king of Israel, is instructing his son, Rehoboam, on how to live skillfully in governmental leadership. Much can be gained from the topical study of this book. *Alcohol and Office* is one of those subjects that needs special consideration. Read on, friends.

I. INTRODUCTION

This Old Testament (OT) book contains 915 proverbs which can be divided into six main divisions for exhaustive study:

1. Spiritual Wisdom
2. Personal Wisdom
3. Family Wisdom
4. Intellectual Wisdom
5. Marketplace Wisdom

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

White House Cabinet and Governors: Wednesdays 8am (EST), light breakfast served

Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served

House Members: Thursdays 8am, Natural Resources, Longworth 1334, hot breakfast served

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 - Robert Aderholt AL
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 - Josh Brecheen OK
 - Tim Burchett TN
 - John Carter TX
 - Juan Ciscomani AZ
 - Rick Crawford AR
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 - Pat Harrigan NC
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 - Marlin Stutzman IN
 - Glenn Thompson PA
 - Tim Walberg MI
 - Randy Weber TX
 - Daniel Webster FL
 - Bruce Westerman AR
 - Roger Williams TX
 - Rob Wittman VA
 - Steve Womack AR
 - Rudy Yakym IN

The views expressed in each Bible Study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study sponsor.

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ENDORSEMENT**Scott Turner***United States Secretary
of Housing and Urban
Development*

“The Capitol Ministries Bible study is a true blessing to me. The opportunity to sit for one hour under the teaching of God’s Word, in prayer, and the fellowship of believers is a highlight of my week! As public servants, I believe we are called to be salt and light, to be steadfast and strong in the Lord. Having this weekly Bible study is a key factor in fulfilling that mission!”

6. Societal Wisdom

The narrower topic of alcohol consumption falls under the category of personal wisdom. What follows is all that Proverbs has to say about alcohol. As much as this beverage is available in the capital community—especially during free receptions and dinners—it can become your greatest enemy because it can lead to ruin. A special word is in order here: partaking of everything that is “free” is not in your best interest. Do not be like the kid in the candy store without self-control. The surrealism of the capital environment coupled with being away from home can corrupt you faster than you think.

Remember the words of the Apostle Paul who said, *I discipline my body and make it my slave* (1 Corinthians 9:27). We all know that those who are without personal discipline do not function well here—especially when it comes to booze and food. The following is what Solomon had to say regarding alcohol to his son who would someday lead the nation.

II. THE PRESENT FRUITS OF FERMENTATION

Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise (20:1).

Biblical history records that since the days of Noah (Genesis 9:21), the love of wine and strong drink have deceived and shamed many. *Mocker* has the idea of “scoffing,” and *brawler* carries the meaning of “being violent, loud and uncontrollable.” What’s doubly sad is that these fruits of the fermented grape, so to speak, overcome a drinking individual before he or she is aware of it, all the while failing to deliver the pleasure he or she is seeking.

Noah is an example of one who drank excessively from his own vineyard. He soon lost his dignity while his family lost respect for him. Notice the extrapolation of this devolvement in Proverbs 23:29–35:

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine, those who go to taste mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things and your mind will utter perverse things. And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, or like one who lies down on the top of a mast. “They struck me, but I did not become ill; they beat me, but I did not know it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.”

A person’s governing reason is lost when alcohol is used wrongly. In place of reason are lust, appetite, and passion. As a result, the heart *utters perverse things*. It’s not surprising that in the New Testament (NT), the Apostle Paul commands, *And do not get drunk with wine* (Ephesians 5:18).

III. THE FUTURE FRUITS OF FERMENTATION

The effects on the overall direction a person charts for his or her life is a secondary result of indulging:

Listen, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, or with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe one with rags (23:19–21).



So much of Proverbs talks about how those with whom you choose to fellowship will affect your life. Proverbs 4:14–17 states:

Do not enter the path of the wicked and do not proceed in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not pass by it; turn away from it and pass on. For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; and they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble. For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.

Hanging out with wicked people quickly loosens a person's attachment to instruction. Cultivating such relationships quickly forsakes the way of God. The results over the long term are a lack of personal productivity, *poverty*, and *clothing oneself with rags*. Skid row serves to illustrate this truth; a majority of those who live on our nation's streets suffer from alcoholism. The following proverb underscores this actuality:

He who loves pleasure will become a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not become rich (21:17).

Solomon offers biblical insight that should guide policy formation on poverty.

The root solution to poverty has more to do with the formation of Christ's character in individuals than in meeting their personal needs.

Woefully inadequate are policies to overcome poverty that fail to consider the Solomonic truths regarding alcohol. This insight also underscores why the institution of the church is so much

better equipped to handle the plight of poverty than is the institution of the state. The church is designed by God to address the issues of the heart, where, in a majority of cases, the real problem lies.

IV. FERMENTATION AND LEADERS

It is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to desire strong drink, for they will drink and forget what is decreed, and pervert the rights of all the afflicted (31:4–5).

In the book of Esther, King Xerxes was drunk and ordered his wife to come before his eunuchs *to display her beauty to the people and the princes* (1:11). When King Herod asked for the head of John the Baptist, his request took place in the middle of a feast (Mark 6:21). These and the consequential drunkenness of Elah, king of Israel, and Ben-hadad, king of Syria (see 1 Kings 16:8–9; 20:16; Hosea 7:5) serve to illustrate the truth of this proverb in terms of state leadership.

When rulers—both kings and priests—desire strong drink, they *forget what was decreed, and pervert the rights of all the afflicted*. It follows that one of the qualifications for spiritual leadership in the church is leaders *not addicted to wine* (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7). The leader in any of God's ordained institutions whose decisions affect the present circumstances and future consequences of so many others cannot afford to have a mind clouded by intoxicants. The point of this principle is that such behavior in a leader negatively impacts others. The leader must have a higher standard.

Often throughout Scripture, drunkenness and adultery, or other sexual sins appear side by side, indicating the quick downward spiral for both secu-

VERSE OF THE WEEK



1 Corinthians 10:31

Whether, then, you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.



Nothing should be practiced that impairs a person's ability to reason and judge with biblical precepts.



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lar and sacerdotal leaders who abuse substances which inevitably leads to shameful activities. Intemperance is unseemly as it turns a leader into a beast. And to lose respect in leadership is to lose leadership. Guard it! Keep your integrity at all times! You were elected to serve others, not indulge yourself!

Notice that the following proverb directly proceeds from the previous one given in verses 4 and 5:

Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to him whose life is bitter. Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his trouble no more (31:6-7).

Whereas drink is not for kings, it does have its use. Psalm 104:15 states wine which makes a man's heart glad. Such is illustrated by the Samaritan who gave drink to the wounded traveler in Luke 10:34. Paul prescribed it to his ailing understudy, Timothy, stating No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments (1 Timothy 5:23).

Conclusively, to drink wine was not a sin in the OT (cf. Deuteronomy 14:26)

but drunkenness was (cf. Isaiah 28:7). So it is in NT times. This teaching of Proverbs regarding wine, instead, promotes demonstrating an attitude of selflessness. Rather than for personal indulgence, alcohol can be prudently prescribed for medicinal purposes when necessary. Solomon is teaching his son the principles of self-denial and service of others.

V. CONCLUSION

The Scriptures do not state hard and fast that any consumption of alcohol is sinful, but it does repeatedly warn against the sin of drunkenness and its results. The stakes are much higher as this principle relates to leaders. Nothing should be practiced that impairs a leader's ability to reason and judge using biblical precepts. Higher stakes demand the leader's standard be higher—not only because his reason and judgment affect his constituents, but also in terms of the example his high-profile life is. Consider 1 Corinthians 10:31, Whether, then, you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

May God give you self-control and great wisdom when it comes to alcohol.

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