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PROVIDING BIBLICAL GUIDANCE ABOUT ALCOHOL  
ABUSE TO CHURCHES  
IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Educational Ministry

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by  
Christopher Okechukwu Uche  
December 2021

**APPROVAL SHEET**

PROVIDING BIBLICAL GUIDANCE ABOUT  
ALCOHOL ABUSE TO CHURCHES  
IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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For the glory of God

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
PREFACE.....	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Context .....	5
Rationale.....	7
Purpose .....	8
Goals.....	8
Research Methodology.....	9
Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations .....	12
Conclusion .....	16
2. A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION THAT ESTABLISHES THAT ALCOHOL ABUSE DISRUPTS GOD’S DESIGN OF PEOPLE AS HIS IMAGE BEARERS .....	17
People Were Made to Worship God and Enjoy His Creation (Gen 1:26; Ps 8).....	17
Human Life is Made to Find Joy in God in Contrast to the Joy in Creation. ....	18
The Body as God’s Temple in Contrast to Alcohol Abuse (1 Cor 6:19-20; Prov 23:29-31).....	22
Acknowledgement and Enjoyment of the Beauty of God in Creation .....	31
People Were Made for Meaningful Work That Contributes to Their Community .....	32
God’s Purpose for Work (Prov 23:29-31).....	32

Chapter

Contribute to Community (Prov 23:32-35).....	34
People Were Made to Have Self-Control over Their Minds and Bodies (Eph 5: 18-21) .....	38
Biblical Concept of Self-Control over Food: The Imperative That Prohibits Drunkenness (Eph 5:18).....	39
Self-Control over What Inhabits Our Minds: The Positive Imperative That Supports a Holy-Spirit-Filled Life (Eph 5:19-21).....	43
Self-Control over Habits and Attitudes .....	47
Conclusion .....	49
<b>3. THEORETICAL, HISTORICAL, AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO ALCOHOL ABUSE .....</b>	<b>52</b>
Theoretical: Alcoholism as Sin.....	52
Definition of Sin .....	52
A Biblical Perspective on the Relationship between Sin and Alcoholism .....	53
Alcoholism as a Form of Idolatry .....	56
Causes of Alcoholism .....	56
The Consequences of Idolatry .....	59
Historical, Socio-Cultural, Economic, and Health Perspectives on Alcohol Addiction in Nigeria .....	63
Historical Development of the Rise of Alcohol Consumption in Nigeria.....	63
Socio-Cultural Development of Alcohol Consumption.....	67
Economic Effects of Alcohol.....	70
Health Effects of Alcoholism .....	73
Practical Guide to Counseling and Building Leadership Skills in Young Adults on Alcohol Abuse in Local Churches in Abia State .....	75
Discipleship .....	75
Spiritual Disciplines: Bible Meditation and Prayer Groups .....	77

Chapter

Instilling Hope .....	79
Developing Relationships.....	80
Conclusion .....	83
4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT .....	86
Preliminary Plans for the Implementation of the Project.....	87
Ethics Committee Approval and Expert Panel .....	88
Research and Teaching Methodology .....	90
The Teaching of the Curriculum.....	91
Curriculum Development .....	91
Session Lessons .....	92
Conclusion .....	97
5. EVALUATION OF PROJECT.....	99
Introduction.....	99
Evaluation of the Purpose.....	99
Evaluation of the Project Goals .....	102
Strengths of the Project.....	110
The Weaknesses of the Project.....	112
Proposed Changes to the Project.....	113
Theological Reflections.....	114
Personal Reflections.....	116
Conclusion.....	117
Appendix	
1. DISCIPLESHIP KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE SURVEY (DKPS).....	119
2. CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC.....	130
3. STRATEGICALLY PLANNED BIBLE TEACHING “MINISTERS OF GOD’S GRACE” (MOOG) CURRICULUM LESSON PLAN.....	134
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	148

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. T-test results .....	103
2. Changes between pre- and post-surveys on individual performances.....	109
A1. Curriculum evaluation rubric results .....	133



## PREFACE

It is a thing of joy to come to the completion of this project. Paul's words of prayer to the Philippian church that states, "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus," (Phil 1:6) (NASB) is the best way to express such joy of prayer answered toward the completing my work in Biblical Counseling. First, I will state that my joy is made complete by the grace of God that has been showered on me through the finished work of His Son, on the cross of Calvary. To God alone be all the glory.

Second, I give God all glory and honor for his grace and support that I have received from godly men along the part of this journey of training at SBTS. I would like to express my profound thanks and gratitude to Dr. Jeremy Pierre who the Lord has used to bless and guide me through this project and in the class setting. The impact you have made in me in this field of Biblical Counseling Ministry will remain indelible in my ministry. I looked forward to more in the future by God's grace. Others that God has used to guide this my academic studies are Dr. T. Vaughan Walker of blessed memory. Although you received a call to join the saints' triumph before the completion of this project, your fatherly role, support, and love for African International Students which you extended to me will not be forgotten. Another individual that deserves thanks for the completion of the program is Deacon Majemite Onosode and his wife, Esther Onosode. They have been pillars of support to our ministry at Immanuel Baptist Church Benin City and our studies here in Louisville. Thanks a lot.

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Finally, I bless the name of God for the foundation that I received from my home Church, Umuode Baptist Church. That foundation pointed me to God and helped me to know God's plan that was found only in the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This I received and it has helped me in His services in the following churches, Jerusalem Baptist Church, Umuanyagu in Etche Home Field of the NBC, Rivers State, Nigeria, Immanuel Baptist Church, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, Hunsinger Lane Baptist Church Louisville, that has supported this study, and now Bible Community Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, Louisville. I also bless the name of the Lord for friends in the school and members of the African Christian Fellowship here in Louisville. I thank God for your warm fellowship and the love of God that you have shared. Once again, May God's Name be Praised, for the great things He has done!

Christopher Okechukwu Uche

Louisville, Kentucky

December 2021

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Societies all over the world abuse alcohol. Evidence of its abuse can be seen in the support alcohol receives through media advertisements, its open use in most social engagements, and its sales across the streets in Nigeria without control. According to *The Global Burden of Disease: 2004 Update*, a World Health Organization's (WHO) Department of Health Statistics and Informatics report released in 2008, alcohol is one of the selected conditions that causes disability problems in the world. Others mentioned were HIV, epilepsy, tuberculosis, and diabetes mellitus. The report states that alcohol use results in severe disability and death in the world at the rate of about 125.0 million. This disability problem is part of what the report described as Prevalence of Moderate and Severe Disability (PMSD). The PMSD is a synonym or proxy for loss of health in a person. The distribution of this figure among the continents of the world is as follows: Africa 3.8, the Americas 24.2, Eastern Mediterranean 1.1, Europe 26.9, South-East Asia 21.5, and Western Pacific 47.3.<sup>1</sup> Again, on average severity weight globally, alcohol ranked third with 0.12-0.24 in the disability class of GBD study. This study includes an example of long-term disease and injury in average weight globally for both sexes and all ages in 2004.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, on alcoholic abuse globally, the report indicates that adults ranging in age from 15 to 59 years will experience a rise in disability prevalence diseases

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, *The Global Burden of Disease: 2004 Update* (Geneva: WHO Press, 2008), 31-32.

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, *The Global Burden of Disease*, 33.

like depression, alcohol use disorders, and psychoses. Unfortunately, the report stresses that alcohol is among the twenty leading causes of disability<sup>3</sup> and it specifically reveals that Years Lost Due to Disability (YLD) among males are about 19.9 million in YLD or 6.8 percent of total YLD.<sup>4</sup> To support this claim, Edward T. Welch believes that “alcohol is one of the biggest killers in this country”<sup>5</sup> when compared to nicotine. These statistics reflect the global problem that alcohol and its abuses can cause.

I. I. Chukwunonye et al., in their article “A Rural and Urban Cross-Sectional Study on Alcohol Consumption Among Adult Nigerians in Abia State” on the Nigerian national level, the WHO data that was released in 2011 acknowledges that “Nigeria tops the list of other African countries in alcohol consumption (alcohol consumption measured in equivalent liters of pure ethyl alcohol consumed per capita per year).”<sup>6</sup> According to WHO the adult per capita consumption is at the rate of 12.3 liters per year.<sup>7</sup> This data shows a high rate of consumption of alcohol among adults. This project observes that young adults within the range of Chukwunoye and others’ surveys fall within their data in Nigeria.

Abia state, the context of this research, is no exception. According to Chukwunonye et al., the need for state data on alcohol consumption led to a seven-month period survey in Abia state. This was between August 2011 and May 2012, and the survey was conducted in the three senatorial zones of the state. They include Abia North,

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<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization, *The Global Burden of Disease*, 34.

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization, *The Global Burden of Disease*, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Edward T. Welch, *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), 91.

<sup>6</sup> I. I. Chukwunonye et al., “A Rural and Urban Cross-Sectional Study on Alcohol Consumption among Adult Nigerians in Abia State,” *International Journal of Medicine and Biomedical Research* 2, no. 3 (September-December 2013): 180, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260936621\\_A\\_rural\\_and\\_urban\\_cross\\_-\\_sectional\\_study\\_on\\_alcohol\\_consumption\\_among\\_adult\\_Nigerians\\_in\\_Abia\\_state](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260936621_A_rural_and_urban_cross_-_sectional_study_on_alcohol_consumption_among_adult_Nigerians_in_Abia_state).

<sup>7</sup> Chukwunonye et al., “Alcohol Consumption among Adult Nigerians,” 180.

Abia Central, and Abia South; the survey captured the rural and urban settings of these zones. In the study, adults the ages of eighteen years and above were engaged. The data used WHO standards, and it involved the federal and state ministries of health of the state. Their results discovered that of 2,977 participants on alcohol consumption data, a total of 1,549 (52.0 percent) were men while the women were 1,428 with (48.0 percent).<sup>8</sup>

Chukwunonye et al. reports the following data:

One thousand six hundred and sixty-three 55.8 percent gave history of alcohol consumption either in the past or present, while 1315 (44.2 percent) had never consumed alcohol .... One thousand four hundred and one (47.1 percent) gave history of alcohol consumption within the past one year preceding the survey. Two hundred and fifty-two (8.5 percent), did not consume alcohol in the past. The most commonly consumed alcohol among this group was beer, followed by gin, and then palm wine.... The prevalence of alcohol consumption in our study during the last one year was 47.1 percent, this very high.<sup>9</sup>

In a related development, in neighboring Imo state, a survey by Ebirim I. C. Chikere and Morakinyo O. Mayowa, on “Prevalence and Perceived Health Effects of Alcohol Use among Male Undergraduate Students in Owerri, South-East Nigeria: A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study,” reveals that “alcohol consumption has a prevalence of 78.4 percent among the respondents” that are males.<sup>10</sup> In their further discussion, they observed that “Several schools and college surveys in Nigeria have found alcohol use to be common among students, with many drinking students having their first drink in a family setting.... Findings from this study show that “majority of the respondents were initiated into the use of alcohol at a tender age of 16 to 20 years.”<sup>11</sup> The result of the

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<sup>8</sup> Chukwunonye et al., “Alcohol Consumption among Adult Nigerians,” 181.

<sup>9</sup> Chukwunonye et al., “Alcohol Consumption among Adult Nigerians,” 181, 184.

<sup>10</sup> Ebirim I. C. Chikere and Morakinyo O. Mayowa, “Prevalence and Perceived Health Effect of Alcohol Use among Male Undergraduate Students in Owerri, South-East Nigeria: A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study,” *BMC Public Health* 11, art. no. 118 (2011), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49847294\\_Prevalence\\_and\\_perceived\\_health\\_effect\\_of\\_alcohol\\_use\\_among\\_male\\_undergraduate\\_students\\_in\\_Owerri\\_South-East\\_Nigeria\\_A\\_descriptive\\_cross-sectional\\_study](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49847294_Prevalence_and_perceived_health_effect_of_alcohol_use_among_male_undergraduate_students_in_Owerri_South-East_Nigeria_A_descriptive_cross-sectional_study).

<sup>11</sup> Chikere and Mayowa, “Health Effect of Alcohol Use.”

findings of Eberim in schools in Imo state may be likened to what could be seen in Abia state undergraduate schools, within the age range of their survey.

The average Abian uses alcohol for leisure and for social entertainment without much concern for its harmful effects. Following such effects, the church of God should map out plans to address the dangers that alcohol consumption poses to all societies, including residents of Abia state. Therefore, using preventative training that will involve biblical counseling will help prevent alcohol abuse among the young adults in Baptist churches in Abia state is necessary. What is important in this case is to recognize the importance of young adults in society. Since their position as the foundation for the future of any thriving society is so important, allowing them to engage in such self-destructive behavior will jeopardize their contributions towards nation-building. This calls for training that would be informed by biblical counseling principles for the youth in Baptist churches in the area.

The project will train the people of God to be aware of their heart responses and to address those responses by using an informed biblical counseling training plan that will help them (specifically young adults) to overcome alcohol abuse in Baptist churches in Abia state. To achieve this, the work will:

- (1) Define some key terms and limitations of this project, such as alcohol abuse, young adults, and biblical counseling.
- (2) Examine the biblical and theological foundations that will establish how alcohol abuse disrupts God's design of people as His image-bearers with emphasis on Proverbs 23:29-35 and Ephesians 5:18-21, in the light of historical and practical realities related to alcohol abuse in Abia state.
- (3) Measure a representative sample of testimonies regarding the effects of alcohol abuse on the spiritual, physical, economic, social, and numerical growth of young adults in Baptist churches in the Abia state.

(4) Develop a teaching plan based on biblical counseling principles to address the dynamics of alcohol abuse that can be used within the young adult ministries of Baptist churches in the Abia state.

### **Context**

The context of the ministry project will center on the Baptist Churches in Abia state in the southeastern part of Nigeria. This project is relevant because first, the people need to understand the biblical truth about alcohol abuse since its consumption and effects have not been viewed as a major problem by some. Second, it is necessary to faithfully address the issue to help young adults understand its effects. For this reason, some of the church-based organizations that cater for the youth, like the Girl's Auxiliary, the Lydia's Group, and the Royal Ambassadors will be used as church-based study groups.

Another context of this project arises because of the need to find biblical and theological solutions to alcohol abuse among young adults in Abia state. Finding these truths from the Bible will help in training and disciplining these young people according to the mind of God for their lives. The spiritual aspect of man is important because it will help guide the other aspects of human life. Following this, the church should be able to engage with people on the teaching of the Bible and what could be termed the mind of Christ concerning alcohol abuse to one who is growing up as a young man or woman. This project will also correct the wrong notions and teachings that see alcohol as harmless to young people. The errant biblical teaching that claims that Jesus made water into wine that many hold as the basis of alcohol intake in the area will be exposed, and the theological in-depth understanding of these passages and other related ones will form the basis of this project.

The importance of using these groups that fall within the range of young adults for this study will help the churches in the state develop effective discipleship programs

that will contribute to the spiritual and numerical growth in churches found in Abia state. The growth and expansion of Baptist ministries are slow in the area. Therefore, there is a need to devise evangelism strategies that will help the church reach out to their young adults that are not taught about alcohol abuse. Some still participate in social activities that attract drinking, which can lead to alcohol abuse. Considering the social factor and its relationship with building the body of Christ forms the bedrock of this project. The spiritual life that will commit a believer in Christ to be a good witness for Christ cannot create room for abuse, especially in these church organizations.

The other reason for the ministry context of this project is a look at the health implications of alcohol abuse in the area. Considering the impact of alcohol, its addictive tendencies, and its implication on the life of these young adults in the area will go a long way in controlling the health problems that come with it. The church needs to minister to the people and find solutions to abuse problems to create a healthy community. In a situation where young people indulge in substance abuse that will affect their future health, the church should come to their aid.

The economic burden that alcohol abuse can cause in the state is another reason for the ministry context of this project. The implications of abuse and addiction to the young adults, their future, and the ability to plan on how to meet their daily needs, call for proper enlightenment and discipleship of these young adults. A good number that indulges in alcohol consumption do not plan well financially. This project will help teach them how to be a good steward of God's talents and skills, engage in meaningful jobs that can sustain life, and have adequate plans to sustain their future. Alcohol abuse causes them to spend their resources on drinks just to satisfy their desires. Therefore, proper education will go a long way in addressing the economic hardship this brings to their homes.

Another consideration that gives rise to the ministry context of the project is the educational factor. Due to alcohol abuse, many young adults drop out of school. The



reason is that most of them spend their time enjoying their lives in social activities like partying, visiting gambling centers, and being at viewing centers to watch soccer or football matches. All these factors affect their commitment to education and the church. Consequently, a more robust approach to reach them at these centers is using peer groups like the Girl's Auxiliary, the Lydia's Group, and the Royal Ambassadors in the churches in Abia state. These organizations will draw the attention of fellow young adults to teach them the importance of education and how to plan their lives to make attending school a priority. Some of the teachings will address the importance of education. Although drinking alcohol may not be seen as a sin by all, this project upholds the idea that the issue of abstinence by some denominations and outright rejection of alcohol is to avoid its temptation that can lead to abuse. The biblical passages will help establish the idea of total abstinence and rejection of alcohol as a beverage or for pleasure. This will help the young adults not to be lured into alcohol abuse.

### **Rationale**

The young adults in our Baptist churches in Abia state are expected to live for Christ daily. First, to help them live a good and meaningful life, a solid biblical context that will help them avoid or overcome alcohol abuse for quality spiritual growth is necessary. This will support the biblical standards that give direction on the problem of alcohol abuse in the books of Proverbs 23:29-35, Ephesians 5:18-21, and others. Proper understanding of the problem inherent in the use of alcohol by young ones will help churches to have healthy members that will proclaim the Lordship of Christ always.

Second, this study will help counter the problem of abuse that is encouraged by society, evident in one of the social adages that say, "alcohol is better stored in the stomach." Therefore, the church will utilize her organization to enlighten and train the young ones on the ills of such statements and will be able to disciple them rightly. This is the step that Jesus took to disciple the twelve that turned the world upside down.

Third, general training of the young adults into a purposeful life is important to the context of the project. To accomplish it, some weeks of training will be given to the young adults using biblical counseling training materials in some selected Baptist churches. This training will further strengthen the discipleship goals of the churches that will be involved.

Lastly, growing in the knowledge of the Scriptures is important in the young adults overcoming the temptation of drinking alcohol, possibly leading to abuse. Therefore, well-planned Bible studies that will focus on educating them on the hazards that abuse poses to their lives will be taught. This education will train them on biblical passages that will help them serve the church and be good representatives of Christ in their community. People will see the changes and the difference Christ is making in their lives. This will support Christ's teaching on the sermon of the mount which will make their light shine so that the whole world will see and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to provide knowledgeable guidance to churches in the Abia State to address with biblical care and counsel the problem of young adults abusing alcohol.

### **Goals**

The following four goals were addressed in this project, which ascertained the level of commitment and engagement of young adults in alcohol intake and abuse as it sought to find biblical counseling solutions that counter it. A possible biblical counseling solution will center on these goals:

1. The first goal was to assess the use of alcohol among young adults attending five Baptist churches in Abia state.
2. The second goal was to provide instructions about the effects of alcohol abuse on young adults in five Baptist churches in Abia State.

3. The third goal was to measure the biblical understanding of alcohol before and after the curriculum, based on biblical counseling principles, in five Baptist churches in Abia state.
4. The fourth goal was to develop plans on how to engage the young adults in teaching and training through young adult organizational structures established in the church, such as the Girl's Auxiliary, the Lydia's Group, and the Royal Ambassadors.

While considering these goals, the research methodology will focus on the measurement that will help assess the level of commitment of the young adults to alcohol abuse in the areas, the side effects, the biblical teachings that will address the problem, how to counsel young adults on alcohol problems, the need to biblically consider total abstinence as a way of life, and to use them to evangelize to their peer groups.

### **Research Methodology**

The first goal of this project was to assess the use of alcohol abuse among young adults attending five Baptist churches in Abia state. To accomplish this goal, a survey was administered within selected five Baptist churches. The project also sampled some other related works or surveys on alcohol consumption or abuse that were accessible in the state. What this goal aimed to achieve is to know the extent to which young adults have access to alcohol intake that leads to its abuse. The goal was to assess how to engage the young adults in the area using the instruments of teaching and biblical counseling to understand the problem of alcohol abuse. The teaching and counseling plan was administered to selected Baptist churches and young adults in those churches in the state.<sup>12</sup>

The second goal was to provide instructions about the effects of alcohol abuse on young adults in five Baptist churches in Abia State. Instructions provided in this project addressed such effects that related to the spiritual, health, economic, and social lives of young adults in the state. Based on the instructions from the spiritual angle, the

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<sup>12</sup> All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

study identified that the effects of alcohol abuse disrupt God's design in them as His image-bearers and their commitment to the local church. Regarding health effects, the study noted or observed the effects of health challenges that are linked to alcohol and its excessive use. The likely effects of economic challenges that are associated with alcohol abuse also formed part of the training material. As much as alcohol abuse begins with its attraction and desire to have it, young adults can be tempted to spend their resources on it. Therefore, the group teaching and coaching sought to find out areas young adults will likely spend or invest their income. This project looked at ways social engagements contribute to alcohol abuse in the state. Discovering social activities that expose young adults to alcohol use and minimizing such exposures formed part of the group training session. A selection of young adults in the Girl's Auxiliary, the Lydia's Group, and the Royal Ambassadors who are between ages fifteen and twenty-five helped ascertain the use or their involvement in alcohol and its abuse.<sup>13</sup>

The third goal measured the biblical understanding of alcohol abuse before and after the curriculum which is based on the biblical counseling principle in five Baptist churches in Abia state. To realize this goal, a survey was administered to six young adults in five Baptist churches to measure their biblical understanding of alcohol and its abuse before and after the curriculum. Also in the survey, a preaching and teaching survey on selected sermons that center on alcohol and its abuse within the past six to twelve months was administered. Such a survey aimed to discover if their teachings encourage alcohol abuse in the area. Abia state, as part of Nigeria, experienced foreign denominational missionary activities in the past. This led to the founding of the following denominations: Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and most recently, Pentecostal. Biblical counseling teaching that focuses on key Bible passages was

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<sup>13</sup> The main group that was the target of this exercise were young men and women of ages 15-25. The group comprises church organizational groups that fall within this bracket: the Girl's Auxiliary, the Lydia's Group, and the Royal Ambassadors. They come from six selected Baptist churches in Abia state.

conducted with the group. There was a possibility that some churches do not mention alcohol or sideline the issue.<sup>14</sup> I have written something about this in my Masters of Theology Thesis with the title, “An Evangelistic Strategy for Men’s Missionary Union in Southeast Nigeria.” Citing Holly Reed and Blessing Mberu on the demography of the Southeastern Nigeria that has Abia state as one of its five states, he notes that the characteristics of the Nigerian population, “using the two recent Demographic and Health Survey Plans of Nigeria for (2003 and 2008), the 2006 Census Figures and the United Nations,” the report showed an estimated population of Nigeria to be around 162 million people.<sup>15</sup> The report as he further states showed “a projected increase to 239 million by 2025 and 440 million by 2050.”<sup>16</sup> Uche again notes that in the demographic survey data, “the major growth in the population will be between the working ages of 15 and 64.”<sup>17</sup> Considering this demographic survey data, it should be observed that the population of young adults in Nigeria is experiencing major growth.

The fourth goal was to develop plans on how to engage young adults in teaching and training through organizational structures established in the church such as the Girl’s Auxiliary, the Lydia’s Group, and the Royal Ambassadors. This goal helped in the creation of Bible Study materials that were used to teach and train the young adults, on a weekly or monthly basis, on God’s mind for them and how to avoid alcohol. This

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<sup>14</sup> Survey samples were sent to pastors of 10 selected Baptist churches on their levels of preaching, teaching, and counseling involvement in the past six to one-year period. Then it ascertained their level of commitment to change and make emphasis on the problem of abuse.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Okechukwu Uche, “An Evangelistic Strategy for Men’s Missionary Union in Southeastern Nigeria” (Master of Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 11. For further reading, see Holly E. Reed and Blessing U. Mberu, “Capitalizing on Nigeria’s Demographic Dividend: Reaping the Benefits and Diminishing the Burdens,” *African Population Studies* 27, no. 2 (March 2014): 319-30, <https://doi.org/10.11564/27-2-477>.

<sup>16</sup> Uche, “An Evangelistic Strategy,” 11.

<sup>17</sup> Uche, “An Evangelistic Strategy,” 12.

teaching incorporated counseling tips for young adult trainers that would like to counsel those who were already abusers and their families.<sup>18</sup>

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

The following definitions of key terms will be used in this ministry project:

*Alcoholic.* The project will define *an alcoholic* using different authors' notions on the subject. John Keller sees the mark that characterizes an alcoholic as including a "loss of control: the inability or lack of freedom to drink within and according to one's own intention despite the increasing problems related to the drinking."<sup>19</sup> One issue that Keller raised for defining an alcoholic is the uncertainty of knowing when one has passed the limit and then become an alcoholic. He goes on to state that "alcoholism is the inability to predictably and with consistency stay within moderate limits."<sup>20</sup> Another definition is that of C. Roy Woodruff, in his book *Alcoholism and Christian Experience*, and he notes that its "a chronic disease, or disorder of behavior, characterized by the repeated drinking of alcoholic beverages to an extent that exceeds customary dietary use or ordinary compliance with the social drinking customs of the community, and that interferes with the drinker's health, interpersonal relationships, or economic functioning."<sup>21</sup>

Considering these definitions, an alcoholic is a person that constantly engages in the use of any alcoholic drinks that may result later in the loss of control in the use of the substance, which may result in health hazards, social, moral, and economic problems

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<sup>18</sup> The curriculum that will be developed will educate and counsel the groups that fall under the young adults. The leadership formation that will form it will take the style of mentoring group that will meet on a weekly basis.

<sup>19</sup> John Keller, *Alcoholics and Their Families: A Guide for Clergy and Congregation* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995), 5.

<sup>20</sup> Keller, *Alcoholics and Their Families*, 5.

<sup>21</sup> C. Roy Woodruff, *Alcoholism and Christian Experience* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 18.

that are associated with alcoholism or similar substance abuse In this project one may disagree with Woodruff that alcoholism is a disease; instead of viewing it as a habit that an individual formed by himself through repeated drinking of alcoholic beverages. Regardless, a biblical understanding of human beings is that they are embodied souls, and the effects of a sinful use of addictive substances involve the body becoming dependent on the substance, leading to harmful urges and behaviors.

*Abuse.* Charles R. Carroll in his book, *Alcohol: Use, Nonuse, and Abuse, Second Edition*, observes that what constitutes alcohol abuse is “Evident in most instances of problem drinking is the isolated or continued consumption of beverage alcohol in excess of dietary and social customs and tradition of the community.”<sup>22</sup> To him, problem drinking is the term that describes “alcohol consumption which results in damage to the drinker, his family, or his community.”<sup>23</sup> He further stresses that “From a personal perspective, alcohol abuse can be responsible for intoxication, death or injury by accident, loss of job, disruption of the family, impoverishment, and the various deficiency and functional diseases often associated with excessive drinking.”<sup>24</sup> What should be acknowledged from the definitions is that alcohol abuse involves the individual engaging in improper use or intake of alcoholic drinks that affect his daily behavior or engaging in problem drinking that will affect the personal, social, economic, and health of an individual. Alcohol abuse from these definitions can result in actions that can cause or lead to the death of the person or others.

*Addiction.* Welch, in his definition of addiction, observes that it is a sort of “bondage to the rule of a substance, activity or state of mind, which then becomes the center of life, defending itself from the truth so that even the bad consequences don’t

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<sup>22</sup> Charles R. Carroll, *Alcohol: Use, Nonuse, and Abuse*, 2nd ed. (Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown, 1975), 53.

<sup>23</sup> Carroll, *Alcohol*, 53.

<sup>24</sup> Carroll, *Alcohol*, 53.

bring repentance and leading to further estrangement from God.”<sup>25</sup> What to note about Welch’s definition is that an addicted individual has already enslaved himself to a substance or behavior that now serves as an object of control in the person’s daily life and actions. Another important issue that Welch raised in the definition is the alienation that the addict suffers from God because of his personal choice and decision.

*Young Adult.* S. D. Park, while describing a young adult’s age, maintains that it is “a post-adolescent person still becoming fully mature human beings in the early period of adulthood.”<sup>26</sup> He again asserts that it is a “psychosocial era with a distinctive character in the life span.”<sup>27</sup> Park then gives the age bracket as between the ages of sixteen to twenty-one.<sup>28</sup> This age bracket that Park mentioned is normal in Nigeria.

*Biblical Counseling.* According to Robert Kellemen, in His book *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, biblical counseling is a

Christ-centered, church-based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally-informed one-another ministry that depends upon the Holy Spirit to relate God’s inspired truth about people, problems, and solution to human suffering (through Christian sustaining and healing) and sin (through reconciling and guiding) to empower people to exalt and enjoy God and to love others (Matt 22:35-40) by cultivating conformity to Christ and the Body of Christ, leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt 28:18-20).<sup>29</sup>

Kellemen recognizes that Christ and his gospel truth should be at the center of biblical counseling practices. His definition also emphasizes the effects of sin and the need for a reach-out through Christ-based counseling to achieve healing that comes through Scripture. In other words, counseling should be transformational, in nature.

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<sup>25</sup> Welch, *Addiction*, 75.

<sup>26</sup> S. D. Park, “Young Adult,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, ed. Rodney J. Hunter and Nancy Ramsay, exp. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 1344.

<sup>27</sup> Park, “Young Adult, 1344.

<sup>28</sup> Park, “Young Adult, 1344.

<sup>29</sup> Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011), 36.



Another definition is from the Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement. The statement maintains that biblical counseling

occurs whenever and wherever God's people engage in conversations that are anchored on Christ and the Gospel, grounded in sound theology, dependent upon the Holy Spirit and prayer, directed toward sanctification, rooted in the life of the church, founded in love, attentive to heart issues, comprehensive in understanding, thorough in care, practical and relevant, and oriented toward outreach.<sup>30</sup>

In this definition, the emphasis of biblical counseling still centers on Christ, His gospel, and dependence on the Holy Spirit. The mention of prayer and heart issues is important because Jesus' ministry on earth was rooted in prayer (Matt 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 9:18; 22:39-41; John 6:11) and the problem of heart issues (sin) should be dealt with in any counseling process.

Three limitations will apply to this project. First, the accuracy of the DKPS will center on the number of those that will respond sincerely to the doctrine of our Baptist denomination that hinges our faith solely in the Bible teaching about the subject matter. The second limitation will center on the number of responses from other denominations and their ability to give details of their beliefs and doctrinal teachings on the subject matter. To handle these limitations, the survey will be anonymous. The third limitation will center on the ability to get the number of pastors that can give an accurate number of sermons, teachings, and counseling emphases over a period. It may be difficult to get a clear record from the pastors. To handle this limitation, the survey will specify the topics the pastors could recollect upon that they have preached with the heading that will reflect alcohol abuse as a moral problem.

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<sup>30</sup> Biblical Counseling Coalition. "BCC Confessional Statement." Last modified July 2018. <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/confessional-statement/>. Another definition is from Jeffrey Watson, who understands biblical counseling as "a call to engage interpersonal relationships in a way that respects scriptural process." Jeffrey Watson, *Biblical Counseling for the Day: A Handbook for Those Who Counsel from Scripture* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 28. Watson acknowledges that "biblical counselors follow God-given principle for intervention: truth and love" (Eph 4:15). He maintains that "biblical counseling is a way to shepherd souls," with an example of Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian Christians (Acts 20:17-38).

The only delimitation that will be placed on the project is the timeframe. The project will be confined to a twenty-one-week timeframe. This will give adequate time to prepare, teach, train, and conduct the DKPS survey.

### **Conclusion**

The problem of alcohol abuse should not be left out from the activities of the local Baptist churches in Abia state. Therefore, the church should take adequate steps to address this problem that is recognized as a worldwide issue. In as much as the case of abuse can be likened to spiritual problems, a biblical counseling solution that draws its conclusion from the Scriptures needs to be established. This solution, which will target the young adults in the communities of Abia state, will help preserve future generations and build effective church membership in the area.

## CHAPTER 2

### A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION THAT ESTABLISHES THAT ALCOHOL ABUSE DISRUPTS GOD’S DESIGN OF PEOPLE AS HIS IMAGE-BEARERS

Understanding the biblical and theological foundations that establish the fact that alcohol abuse disrupts God’s design of creating man as His image-bearers is important. The reason for its importance is because of the spiritual and moral standards that God’s children are supposed to maintain that are found in the Scriptures, which all believers should emulate and pursue. Such standards that will bring glory and honor to God should be encouraged because a believer’s body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. In other words, whatever will keep the body away from corruption should be pursued by Christians. Therefore, a biblical and theological foundation that reveals God’s design for his children, that will lead to an ideal spiritual and moral life among the young adults as his image-bearers, needs to be explored and pursued. To understand the biblical and theological foundations that establish that alcohol abuse disrupts God’s design for young adults, three basic truths will be examined: 1. People were made to worship God and enjoy his creation; 2. People were made for meaningful work that contributes to their community; and 3. People were made to have self-control over their minds and bodies.

#### **People Were Made to Worship God and Enjoy His Creation (Gen 1:26; Ps 8)**

The Bible establishes that “God made man in his own image and likeness” (Gen 1:26). Man needs to reflect the image of God through his expression of worship and acknowledgment of the beauty of God’s creation. Man’s attitude towards His Creator should recognize and acknowledge the place of God and understand what he deserves in

his life. The account in Genesis 1:26 portrays man being made in the image and likeness of God. The image and likeness of God in man should not only draw man closer to Him, but it should further lead him in worshipping and glorifying God. This chapter will look at three aspects that will enable man to understand why he should engage in such meaningful worship while he also enjoys God's creation.

### **Human Life is Made to Find Joy in God in Contrast to the Joy in Creation.**

One of the outstanding reasons that someone should understand is that man's life is made to find joy and happiness in God which is in contrast to finding such joy only in creation. The reason for this joy is that God desires the best from all humans. Unfortunately, mankind has desired to find joy in things that God has made rather than in God Himself. This contradicts what Jesus said in Matthew 6:33 that stated, "Seek Ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things shall be added unto thee" (KJV). In other words, instead of seeking and desiring God and issues of His kingdom, man is busy pursuing worldly things that satisfy the flesh.

Another passage that captures the idea of a man finding joy in creation rather than the Creator is from Paul's letter to believers in Rome. In Romans chapter 1:18-25, Paul stated the contrast that points out that man is finding joy in the created things rather than in the Creator. The passage stated thus:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchange the glory of incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchange the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever, Amen. (NASB)

The contrast that Paul is making in this passage first identified that such an individual that is finding joy in creature suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. Second, the person ignores what is known of God that is made evident and is even revealed in His attributes. While expressing how such truth is being suppressed or denied by an abuser, Mark E. Shaw observes that an abuser in his act becomes a helpless victim of his own “harmful and compulsive behavior.”<sup>1</sup> Again, he states that the victim thinks that people are victimizing him; parents, spouse, society, or God Himself. According to Shaw, most of them have been indoctrinated in their secular treatment programs to believe the “compulsive and uncontrollable nature of addiction.”<sup>2</sup> He believes such thoughts or lies and is like individuals in Romans 1:21 described as those whose “foolish hearts become darkened.” Shaw agrees with the Scriptures that they need to embrace the truth that brings victory over abuse.<sup>3</sup>

The second issue that Paul raised in the passage is the person’s unwillingness to love God but prefers the lust of their hearts to impurities that, evidently, leads to their bodies being dishonored among them. As Paul notes, they exchange the truth of God for a lie that led them to worship the creature rather than the Creator. The key emphasis that should be stressed in this contrast is that the abuser loves finding joy in impure things, rather than in God, whom he should strive to know personally. *The Bible Commentary*, while commenting on the passage, notes that “the loss of the knowledge in the mind and heart leads to an exchange of the truth for a lie. Something created is served and worshipped rather than the Creator, and judgment is the result” (Ps 81:12, Acts 7:42).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mark E. Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2008), 25.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 25.

<sup>4</sup> E. Ray Clendenen and Jeremy Royal Howard, eds., *The Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, *The New Testament* (Nashville: B&H, 2017), 250.

The purpose of Him creating man is to find joy solely on Him and not in created images. Such knowledge of God is expressed by Heath Lambert, J. I. Packer, and John Frame sufficiently.

Heath Lambert in his book, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundation of Counseling Ministry*, writes that personal knowledge of God will enable man to “understand what it means to have a relationship with him.”<sup>5</sup> He states further that through such knowledge, man will be able to understand “Who God is,” and again view Him as “the most wonderful being in existence.”<sup>6</sup> To Lambert, “knowing who God is changes your life. You cannot be the same when you realize that God who fixes stars and planets in place directs his attention to caring for you.”<sup>7</sup> The realization of God as one who fixed the created order, as Lambert writes, will help the young adult know how to relate to Him. It will encourage them to accord him the needed respect and honor that He deserves in their daily lives.

J. I. Packer in his book *Knowing God* states that “to know God is what man is made for.”<sup>8</sup> He further stresses that man should aim at such knowledge throughout his/her lifetime. According to him, Christ emphasized this knowledge of God to his disciples and believers in His prayers when he prayed, “This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3).<sup>9</sup> Packer affirms that nothing else in life can bring “joy, delight and contentment” in man more than him possessing the knowledge of God.<sup>10</sup> He then argues that God demanded such knowledge

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<sup>5</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundation of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 104.

<sup>6</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 104.

<sup>7</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 104.

<sup>8</sup> J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1993), 33.

<sup>9</sup> Packer, *Knowing God*, 33.

<sup>10</sup> Packer, *Knowing God*, 33.

in these passages of Jeremiah 9:23-24 and Hosea 6:6 respectively, “This is what the Lord says: let not the wise man boast of his wisdom, or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me (KJV). I desired . . . the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings, says God (KJV).”<sup>11</sup>

The demand of God from these passages, as Packer points out, is to seek to discover and accept only God’s knowledge, not man’s wisdom, strength, or riches as the source of anything man will engage with himself in life. Therefore, believers must place God first in their dealings before any other thing in life. Packer further believes that such knowledge of God will provide the needed “foundation, shape and goal for our lives plus a principle of priority and scale of values.”<sup>12</sup> Present-day youth will require such a foundation that will create an opportunity of having adequate knowledge of God which will help such believers to set up good priorities and scale of values in life that will glorify God.

Packer goes on to describe the understanding of personal knowledge of God and how a believer will experience it. He describes the experience as, “a relationship calculated to thrill a person’s heart. What happens is that the almighty Creator, the Lord of hosts, the great God before whom all nations are as a drop in the bucket, comes to you and begins to talk to you through His words and truth of Holy Scriptures.”<sup>13</sup> It should be observed that such knowledge at this level thrills one's heart and will lead the believer in the worship of God. Such worship emanates as a response to God’s revelation of himself through his word. John Frame in his book, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, describes how we know God. He maintains that “We know God as

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<sup>11</sup> Packer, *Knowing God*, 33.

<sup>12</sup> Packer, *Knowing God*, 34

<sup>13</sup> Packer, *Knowing God*, 36.

Lord, for that is what he is.”<sup>14</sup> Such knowledge, he explains, is viewed in three ways; it views God as One who has full control over us and over all things as One who speaks with ultimate authority, and as One who is present to all His creatures. He again describes the biblical worldview that can serve as man’s steps in knowing God in these expressions:

If God is in control of the world, then the world is under his control. If God is our Supreme authority, then he has the right to tell us what to believe. And if he is present everywhere, our attempts to know the world ought to recognize that presence. The most important fact about anything in the world is its relationship to God’s lordship.<sup>15</sup>

God has the right to tell us what to believe, how to build a relationship that will remind us of his Lordship over us, and all these should be the focus that every young adult should pursue. The arguments of Lambert recognize the importance of knowing God through a relationship; Packer believes that such knowledge will help one set priorities and scale of values, and Frame understands that such knowledge should remind believers of God’s supreme authority to tell us what to believe and to recognize his presence should lead Christians to worship Him.

**The Body as God’s Temple in Contrast to Alcohol Abuse (1 Cor 6:19-20; Prov 23:29-31)**

Man will accomplish a fulfilled worship when he faithfully obeys God and acknowledge that his body is His temple according to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body” (NASB). The passage in Corinthians identifies man’s body as a temple in which the Holy Spirit resides, and it will be solely meant for

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<sup>14</sup> John Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013), 701.

<sup>15</sup> Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 701.



the purpose of glorifying God. While reacting to believer's faithfulness amid the changing culture, Bob Kauflin in his book, *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God* notes

By our breathless chase after relevance without a matching commitment to faithfulness, we have become not only unfaithful but irrelevant; by our determined efforts to redefine ourselves in ways that are more compelling to the modern world than are faithful to Christ, we have lost not only our identity but our authority in our relevance. Our crying need is to be faithful as well as relevant.<sup>16</sup>

Based on the observation of Kauflin in our quest for relevance, we have missed our commitment to being faithful to God as his temple. Mankind needs to work on how to be faithful and obedient to God, and such commitment will be accomplished through what he posits as "our determined efforts" to be faithful to Christ and his commands.

Such determined effort will come through an urgent cry for help from the atoning work of his Son, Jesus Christ. Brian Chapell in *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice in the New Testament*, believes that faithful obedience makes the focus of our worship towards "the one sacrificed once for all."<sup>17</sup> Again, he stresses that the greater emphasis in such worship of Christ centers on "the finishedness and completeness of His ministry" (Heb 8:25-27; 9:25-28).<sup>18</sup> He continues by stating that ceremonial details in such worship will dissolve into "consistent gospel structures that communicate the effects of grace fully provided."<sup>19</sup> In other words, the grace fully provided in Christ compels the believer's worship experience. This makes him/ her be fully committed to Christ in faithful obedience and total surrender to him.

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<sup>16</sup> Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 192-93.

<sup>17</sup> Brian Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 109.

<sup>18</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 109.

<sup>19</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 109.

Another factor that will make worship possible is when the worshipper acknowledges what his body represents in Christ. Chapell supports this idea by referring to Apostle Paul's passage that urges believers to engage in "spiritual worship by offering our bodies as living sacrifices to God" (Rom 12:1).<sup>20</sup> He goes on to state that Paul describes such worship not by ceremonial details but in these following ways in Romans: (1) obedience to God in our corporate worship (12:3-8), (2) Individual (12:9-12), (3) civil (13:1-7), moral (13:8-14), and (4) in responsibilities lived in mutual care for one another (14:1-15:13). He emphasizes that what Paul meant by "Holy and pleasing" in Romans 12:1, "are not descriptions of what we will become; they are declarations of what we are. Before we have performed our religious duties, God makes us holy and pleasing to himself."<sup>21</sup>

According to Chapell, these allusions of a worshipper come from the faith in the righteousness that God provided to the Jews in its first instance (Romans 10:1-3) but have been extended to all believers in Christ through God's mercy to all nations (Romans 11:25-32). It is by this mercy that all believers are made holy, pleasing, and acceptable unto The Lord.<sup>22</sup> Present-day young adults need to understand or recognize the rich mercies that God has provided in Christ to all nations and be humble and obedient to Him in worship.

David Peterson in his book, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*, describes the believers' understanding of our bodies as God's temple. He believes that 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9 describes the terms that God has proposed and the manner that He makes it possible for us to engage Him in our worship. He notes "it involves honoring, serving and respecting, abandoning any loyalty or devotion that hinders an

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<sup>20</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 109.

<sup>21</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 109.

<sup>22</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 109.

exclusive relationship with him.’’<sup>23</sup> He submits that God is worthy of man’s homage, praise, and grateful service because He is our Creator, Lord of history, and judge of all.<sup>24</sup> One needs to agree with Peterson’s argument about our bodies as God’s temple because young adult believers should understand that the worship that is acceptable to God is when their bodies are viewed as a temple of God. This can be accomplished through giving our proper homage, honor, praise, and grateful service to God our creator.

Lambert examines the biblical teachings of the body in 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 passage. He observes that Paul used the teaching on sexuality to ground his instruction against sexual immorality in his theology of the body. To Lambert, Paul’s theology understands that our physical bodies are members of Christ (1 Cor 6:15), sexual immorality is wrong because it is a sin against our physical body (1 Cor 6:18), our physical body is a temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), and we need to glorify God with our bodies because they are not owned by us, but purchased by Jesus Christ (1 Cor 8:20).<sup>25</sup> These theological teachings remind believers of the importance of faithful obedience to Christ who owns the body and for them to acknowledge that he bought it with a price. Therefore, any act of worship that will not present the body as his temple will be seen in the light of sexual immorality, and in a similar case in this project, alcohol abuse will affect and disrupt the victim’s worship. This will render one's worship useless and unacceptable. Therefore, the young adult must come before God in worship as one who sees himself or herself as the temple of God and such knowledge will accord Him the due worship that He deserves. This view will also refrain him from any act that will defy or disrupt God’s worship in the person’s life.

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<sup>23</sup> David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1992), 283.

<sup>24</sup> Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 283.

<sup>25</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 193-94.

Faithful obedience and acknowledgment of one's body are in contrast to Proverbs 23:29-31 that discusses the character of an alcohol abuser. The passage mentions some characters found in an alcohol abuser that can lead to misuse and destruction of man's life through allowing the created thing (alcohol) to rule over his body. Mark D. Futato and George M. Schwab in their book, *The Book of Psalms and the Book of Proverbs*, describe the personal characteristics of an alcohol abuser. Their description of the use of the word, "bloodshot eye" which literally means, "redness of eyes" could mean "scleritis."<sup>26</sup> They maintain that an addict could show the following signs that include "facial erythema, puffiness of the face and eyelids, a coated tongue, bronchitis, insomnia, depression, headaches, or a history of physical trauma." They further explained that "Redness" *khaklililuth* as an *hapax legomenon* is closely related to *khaklili* of Gen 49:12 which states, "His eyes are darker than wine."<sup>27</sup>

Another word that portrays alcohol abuse as a way of life in the passage is in verse 30. To them, an alcohol abuser not only lingers in wine but goes on searching or getting the taste of "mixed wine."<sup>28</sup> Futato and Schwab see a similar expression in Isaiah 65:11. Again, they assert that the description in 23:31 which states "how red it is, how it sparkles in the cup can be linked to the use of the word, redness of eyes in 23:29."<sup>29</sup> They believe that the use of the word *ra'ah* (gaze at) to *rawah* (drink deeply) by some scholar's interpretation is absurd because "How wine looks, and how the winebibber looks, are at issue. 'if the alcoholic keeps away from the substance, then he or she will not fall back under its spell.'<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Mark D. Futato and George M. Schwab, *The Books of Psalms and The Proverbs*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, vol. 7 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), 601.

<sup>27</sup> Futato and Schwab, *Psalms and Proverbs*, 601.

<sup>28</sup> Futato and Schwab, *Psalms and Proverbs*, 601.

<sup>29</sup> Futato and Schwab, *Psalms and Proverbs*, 601.

<sup>30</sup> Futato and Schwab, *Psalms and Proverbs*, 601.

What Futato and Schwab explain about alcohol and the mess that is associated with the abuser is important. It is the engagement of an individual in drinking that leads to the extent of what is being described as the redness of eyes in the book of Proverbs. The change in the personality of an abuser is because of willingness to take it. Again, sparkling nature and taste make the abuser fall under its spell because of its attractiveness. The use of these words describes an alcohol abuser and contrasts the person that is worshiping God, faithfully obeying and acknowledging his body as the temple of God.

John Phillips in his book *Exploring Proverbs: An Expository Commentary* vol. 2 observed that Proverbs 23:29-32 presented an “unlovely picture—a full-length portrait of the drunkard.”<sup>31</sup> According to him, strong drink stupefies, and it reveals the drunkard’s personality and character. To him, the six questions that Solomon asked consistently in v. 29 bring out the full character that an alcoholic possesses.<sup>32</sup> Milton P. Horne sees the questions as a “series of riddle-like questions” in v. 29.<sup>33</sup> He notes that the questions “attempt to capture the life of one who is frequently drunk: woe, sorrow, strife, complaining, unexplainable wounds, and redness of eyes.”<sup>34</sup> Phillips states the questions in this way: “Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? The answer to these questions is given in verse 30 when the book of Proverbs declares ‘They that tarry long at the wine; they that go seek mixed wine.’”<sup>35</sup> Incidentally, Philip’s questions contrast with a person who uses his body to worship and glorify God.

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<sup>31</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring Proverbs: An Expository Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996), 238.

<sup>32</sup> Phillips, *Exploring Proverbs*, 2:238.

<sup>33</sup> Milton P. Horne, *Proverbs-Ecclesiastics*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2003), 289.

<sup>34</sup> Horne, *Proverbs-Ecclesiastics*, 289.

<sup>35</sup> Phillips, *Exploring Proverbs*, 2:239.

In his biblical approach, Stephen M. Reynolds in his book, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol*, examines the passage of Proverbs 23:29-35 by suggesting prohibition from strong drinks that will result in the character being exhibited by an alcoholic abuser.<sup>36</sup> He believes that the passage will help believers understand Christian practices and the absolute prohibition that the passage is suggesting. Viewing the passage especially from v. 31 and a corresponding passage in Psalm 104:15, he notes that people misunderstand the paradox of these two passages, by not giving their attention to the use of the Hebrew word *yayin* in both passages. Consequently, Reynolds believes that people indulge in this sin by using the opportunity of “one-sided interpretation of paradoxes to give themselves complacency in these sins, or in struggling half-heartedly against them.”<sup>37</sup>

According to him, Proverbs 23:29ff should not be seen as hyperbole because the passage is not suggesting that wine in the passage is what God has given us to enjoy. He supports this argument with verse 32 that describes the wine as “Viper’s poison,” which the writer of Proverbs commands its readers not to look at.<sup>38</sup> The reason for that command is that no one enjoys the viper’s bite and the poisonous effects. He interprets the passage with the idea of Gen 19:17-26 where Lot and the family fleeing Sodom were forbidden “not to look back.”<sup>39</sup> Reynolds argues that Lot and his family were instructed “not to look back,” and Proverb’s instruction not to look at wine when it sparkles supports absolute prohibition.<sup>40</sup> He further explains the passage when he states:

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<sup>36</sup> Stephen M. Reynolds, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 3.

<sup>37</sup> Reynolds, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Reynolds, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol*, 5.

<sup>39</sup> Reynolds, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol*, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Reynolds, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol*, 8.

But linguistically to understand the words “*ki yith’ addam*” to mean “when it is red” should not be rejected. The verbal root *adom* (a stative verb) is never used in any passage in the Bible concerning *yayin* except in this one (Prov 23:31), and here it is used in the *hithpael*. It is true that in the *qal* it means to be red, but the *hithpael* is a conjugation normally having a reflexive meaning and if it is so used here, the meaning is “it makes itself red.” Next, pushing aside all preconceptions, we must ask ourselves, what does this mean? “Look not on the *yayin* when it makes itself red. The *yayin* is naturally red in color when grapes are pressed; there is no working of the juice within itself that makes itself red. We must search for the meaning elsewhere.”<sup>41</sup>

The linguistic understanding of the word *yayin* (wine) and when it makes itself red is important in deciding of what the writer of Proverbs is addressing. This *hithpael*’s understanding will also support one’s desires not to have it as a normal beverage. Furthermore, Reynolds again refers to the subject of redness of eyes to the previous verse 29 that suggests that *yayin* is suggesting to the reader alcoholic beverages. He acknowledges that there is “no other word in the ancient languages in which the Bible was written for alcohol or alcoholic beverages.”<sup>42</sup> He then concludes that “wine” (*yayin*) would then mean alcoholic *yayin* and would not be a mere designation of color distinguishing it from white or rose wines.”<sup>43</sup> The need to agree with Reynold’s argument on the actual meaning of wine is important to understand the usage of *yayin* in the passage. Its usage especially when it makes the eye red means that it is an alcoholic drink that intoxicates, and its intake and abuse, results in the behavior the writer of the Proverbs explained to his readers.

Michael Fox, in *Proverbs 10-31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, argues differently on alcoholic consumption. He believes that “this epigram mocks the folly of drunkenness and lampoons the drunkard by quoting him the morning after as he longed for more wine even while suffering a hangover.”<sup>44</sup> He further states

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<sup>41</sup> Reynolds, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol*, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Reynolds, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol*, 9.

<sup>43</sup> Reynolds, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 10-31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 18B (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 740.

that the epigram “does not forbid consumption of wine, which was a staple of the ancient diet, but only its excess, as when one drinks deep into the night.”<sup>45</sup> Fox cites other passages that similarly mock and warn about alcohol addicts (Isa 5:21, Prov 21:17, 23:21, 31:4-5; Qoh 10:17; Ben Sira 31:30-31, 39-40 and the ones that praise moderate drinking, Ben Sira 31:32-36, 34:27-28, 35:5-6, 40:18).<sup>46</sup>

Fox’s views when he states that the passage did not condemn the consumption of wine as a staple in ancient times should have taken cognizance of the type like Reynold. Again, he should have further expressed the type of wine, the temptation, and the results that can be associated with such consumption at the end. The description of the wine states “when it is made red” or strong, although not a color issue as Reynolds observed,<sup>47</sup> the dangerous effects of alcohol should be seen on the person that consumes it. The passage may be referring in its entirety to the dangerous resultant effect. Although it can be argued that plain reading of the Scripture may not lead to total abstinence, working with the passages of the Scripture that addresses heart issues will be a helpful means of ministering to alcohol abuse in this cultural environment.

Understanding the adverse effect in character that alcohol produces in a person should cause an individual to refuse to take it. Using various languages from the original words to explain the effects and control is enough to deter any person from taking it. Not only that but an alcohol abuser also that the writer of proverbs described in this passage is not portrayed as one that uses his body well and is definitely disrupting the image of God in his daily living.

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<sup>45</sup> Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 740.

<sup>46</sup> Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 740.

<sup>47</sup> Reynolds, *Biblical Approach to Alcohol*, 9



## **Acknowledgment and Enjoyment of the Beauty of God in Creation**

The beauty of God is revealed in creation and man in his worship should acknowledge and enjoy it. To acknowledge this beauty of God's creation, man as the center of all creation should recognize the unique position and privilege that God has given to him. Anthony Hoekema reiterates this by stating that man should acknowledge such beauty when he notes,

...man, while standing below God, stands above nature as its ruler, as the one who is summoned to admire its beauties, discover its secrets, and explore its resources...But man - that is, we -must rule over nature in such a way as to be its servants as well ... We must be concerned to be stewards of the earth and of all that is in it, and to promote whatever will preserve its usefulness and beauty to the glory of God.<sup>48</sup>

Enjoying the creation of God which Hoekema sees as admiration of its beauties, discovering of its secrets that points to God as the one that puts it in place, upholding, sustaining it, and exploring its resources are ways to show forth the glory of God in them. As he stresses further, “being faithful steward in controlling and preserving them will go a long way in humbling us to the grace that God has extended to man to be in charge.”<sup>49</sup> The result of such grace must acknowledge the ownership of God and accord him the due praise.

Therefore, the biblical and theological foundation that opposes alcohol abuse, that will not disrupt God’s design for young adults as His image-bearers will first, understand who God is, and the purpose of giving Him due worship. It will include knowing him personally and living daily with the consciousness of worshiping Him always. Second, as God’s image-bearer, man will not disrupt His design because living a faithful and obedient life will lead him to acknowledge his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. That obedience will defy life, similar to sexual immorality that Paul warned

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<sup>48</sup> Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 80.

<sup>49</sup> Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 80.

against, that disrupts and destroys God's temple. Lastly, it will acknowledge and enjoy the beauty of God's creation by seeing it as a privilege that comes from God's grace to the believer in Christ. Such beauty cannot be seen in alcoholic drinks that intoxicate like in Proverbs 23:29ff, but in non-alcoholic drinks. The believer should not allow intoxicating alcoholic drinks that lead to abuse and disrupts the image of God that is in him. Rather, the enjoyment must be controlled by faithful obedience and acknowledgment of his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

### **People Were Made for Meaningful Work That Contributes to Their Community**

Another theological foundation that will oppose alcohol abuse is the understanding of God's design for work that will contribute to meaningful progress in the community. Such progress will help young adults to engage in work or activities that will not jeopardize God's image in their community. The theme of work was mentioned in the Bible before the fall in Genesis chapters 1-2. Work being a good gift from God is made difficult because of human rebellion at the fall. Man, according to God's plan, cannot avoid work, but ought to cherish it and engage in it by glorifying God. This section will explore ways that people are made for meaningful work. This will be through an understanding of God's purpose for work and contributions towards the good of our community.

#### **God's Purpose for Work (Prov 23:29-31)**

An understanding of God's purpose for work reminds man of the curse of the ground because of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:17-19 states it this way:

And to Adam he said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you should not eat of it, cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles, it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you should eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. (ESV)

The passage recognized that work came into being because of man's rebellion against God's command not to eat the forbidden fruit. Based on that rebellion, man will make his living by working on the ground to eat until his death. M. D. Chenu in his book, *The Theology of Work: An Explanation*, in his view of man and the purpose of work, has a different idea about work that is positive, in nature. He believes that in Genesis 1:26-27: "Man fulfills himself by dominating, through his discoveries, reason, strength, and virtue, that Nature, which is his Kingdom, and out of which he creates a new world, a human world. God has appointed him Lord of creation."<sup>50</sup> The idea of Chenu is that man has now arrived at an important stage in his work enterprise, and it should be a major stage in his self-fulfillment. What should be taken into consideration on the dominance of man over the creation should be a divine appointment that engages him to be part of a creative instrument in the hands of God.

Paul Enns in *The Moody Handbook of Theology* acknowledges that God's purpose in creating man as established in Genesis 1:26 is for man to "rule" over God's creation.<sup>51</sup> He further observes that Adam, by virtue of his ruling, then becomes "God's mediator" that is "placed on earth to dispense his will on earth."<sup>52</sup> This role he observed is further expressed in Psalm 8:6-7 that states, "Thou doest make him to rule over the works of thy hands; Thou has put all things under his feet, All sheep and oxen, and also the beast of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the pass of the seas" (KJV). To Enns, as man exercises the authority assigned by God to him, as the apex of creation, such authority expects him to have fellowship, glorify, rule over God's creation, and be answerable to a holy God.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> M. D. Chenu, *The Theology of Work: An Exploration*, trans. Lilian Soiron (Chicago: Henry Rigney, 1966), 11-12.

<sup>51</sup> Chenu, *The Theology of Work*, 12.

<sup>52</sup> Chenu, *The Theology of Work*, 12.

<sup>53</sup> Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 40.

Therefore, one can recognize that the purpose for work in man's life centers on an assigned rulership role that will aim at bringing glory to God. As man engages in work on the earth, he should be mindful of God's ownership of creation and handle it with a sense of holiness and care. One of the things that God would like him to rule over and have firm control is alcohol. In as much as God has given him the ability to work, dominate and rule over the works of God's hand, such works should not be misused to the extent that it will lead to man's destruction.

### **Contribute to Community (Prov 23:32-35)**

Another important aspect that relates to the purpose of work is for man to recognize that through his God's given assignment to rule over the creation, his contribution toward the good of our community is important. In other words, man will be able to provide actions that will create a conducive environment for the community to grow and become a better place for all to live. Ross West in his book, *How to Be Happier in the Job You Sometimes Can't Stand*, admits that it may be hard most times to recognize how one's job helps others "immediately or eventually."<sup>54</sup> He notes,

Admittedly, getting this perspective on our work is a little hard for many of us. All too few people today are able to see the results of the work they do. They sometimes are not able to see the results of their job directly benefits anybody living and dead, Workers on the assembly line or in the office often do not see the finished product of the work they do. They certainly don't see the person actually getting benefit of the parts of the product she has assembled or completed the paperwork on. That's unfortunate. We will get more joy out of our jobs even the jobs we can't stand, if we will focus on our works value to others as well as to ourselves.<sup>55</sup>

Work that values others are jobs that will engage us to see beyond wages but focus on adding values to the community. As West further observed, such work has a purpose, he states that "somebody you may never see will benefit from what you do....

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<sup>54</sup> Ross West, *How to be Happier in the Job You Sometimes Can't Stand* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 14.

<sup>55</sup> West, *Happier in the Job*, 15.

For whom are you making “the light come on?” give yourself to the task of “making the light come on” for someone. When you do, you likely will find your joy increased.<sup>56</sup>

The joy of every person is to contribute to making the “light of God come” in the community they live in through their work. That is the expectation that should be pursued as one lives daily with others. This will fulfill Christ’s injunction that says, “let your light shine so that others will see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16). The righteous man's light that glorifies God will avoid the path of the wicked that will make someone stumble, rather, as the writer of Proverb stresses, “the path of the righteous is like the light of the dawn that shines brighter and brighter until the full day” (Prov 4:14-18). The joy of every young adult is to make this light shine brighter and brighter daily for the community to see. This will be made possible through engagement in community projects that honor God.

The second part of Proverbs 23:32-35 expresses some of the consequences that are obvious that alcohol can produce in an abuser’s behavior. Such behavior is in contrast to work or light that shines to honor God and blesses one’s community. All the behaviors that the writer of Proverb emphasized in the text present the negative effects observable in the personality of an alcoholic.

Duane A Garrett in *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* sees this Proverb 23:32-35 passage as a masterpiece poem that lampoons and laments the sorry state of the drunkard. He argues that “the precise meaning of a few phrases is uncertain,”<sup>57</sup> but acknowledges that “the text describes with profound accuracy and bite the pathetic

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<sup>56</sup> West, *Happier in the Job*, 17.

<sup>57</sup> Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, New American Commentary, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 197. Garrett further expresses effects of alcoholic drinks in verse 32 as “the bite of a serpent” that could simply be a metaphor referring to the “effects of alcohol” or it may allude the frightening hallucinations found in some alcoholics. See also verse 33. According to him, verse 34 that describes the alcoholic as someone that is at the “top of the mast of a ship or the rigging” is a metaphor expressing an unsteady nature of an alcoholic. All these descriptions showed the effects of alcohol in an addicted person’s life.

physical and emotional decline of those addicted to alcohol.”<sup>58</sup> He thinks that “wine” like illicit drugs in modern society, “brings physical pain and debilitation, exhausts one’s resources, takes away mental acuity and yet leaves one craving for more of the same.”<sup>59</sup> To him, the side effect of alcohol in verses 32-35a, is that “it only leaves people more confused and in deeper pain than ever before.”<sup>60</sup>

Garrett’s observations on the pathetic physical and emotional effects of alcohol in the abuser’s behavior must be commended. Alcohol can render the life of an abuser useless; for his entire life, he will be miserable and helpless. Considering the type of life that this alcohol abuser is living, in the society to which he belongs, he cannot contribute meaningfully to building his community. By so doing, he disrupts the image of God in himself. One may disagree with Garrett’s suggestion that wine is referring to illicit drugs. The writer of Proverbs was specific about strong drinks in verse 29 that its use results in “bloodshot eyes” as “blackened eyes” or as “dull eyes” (blurred vision) as cited by Garrett.<sup>61</sup> These expressions are the effect that alcohol can produce in a person’s life. They may not be different from illicit drugs of modern times, but the actual product in this passage can be interpreted as alcohol or strong drinks.

Fox explains the dangers that an alcohol abuser faces that are described in v. 33 and the results. He believes that such wine, “will make you hallucinate and cause your heart to “speak” – that is, imagine – perverse and crazy things.”<sup>62</sup> He explains that the Hebrew word, *Talpiot*, could mean “perversities” or “distortions” ... “the opposite of honesty.”<sup>63</sup> In other words, one that indulges in alcohol consumption falls into the risk of

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<sup>58</sup> Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastics, Song of Songs*, 197.

<sup>59</sup> Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastics, Song of Songs*, 197.

<sup>60</sup> Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastics, Song of Songs*, 197.

<sup>61</sup> Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastics, Song of Songs*, 197.

<sup>62</sup> Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 741.

<sup>63</sup> Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 741.

not being himself. He speaks perversely and may not be honest or even trusted in his or her behavior. The confused state of an alcoholic, he further expresses, is in his interpretation of verse 34 with the phrase, “lies (in bed) in the heart of the sea.”<sup>64</sup> Fox notes that the Hebrew meaning of that phrase is, “like one who lies in the heart of the sea.”<sup>65</sup> He thinks that the person is not drowned because a drowned individual cannot hallucinate nor wake up in the morning, but it should be a picture of a “probably a landlubber lying seasick in a rolling ship.”<sup>66</sup>

The description that Fox gives is the behavior that alcohol consumption can produce in a person that indulges in it. I agree with him that it will give the person a sensation lying seasick in a rolling ship that is possibly going to drown. The sad aspect is that the addict has already sold himself into it and he may not know where and what is happening to the ship. The state of confusion that the alcoholic is experiencing, as Fox believes, contributes to what is happening to him in v. 35. He sees the beating, in this case, not a physical fight because the epigram is describing the evils that the drunkard incurred as a result of his choice and actions. This, Fox says, supports the phrase in v. 29 that described the wounds without cause.<sup>67</sup> Fox’s explanations of v. 35 describe a confused person that is no longer in control of his life and the situation gives a vivid picture of the effect of alcohol and its abusive tendencies. This person cannot contribute anything that will bring progress to others or that will bless others in the community.

Horne has a divergent opinion of verses 31-35. He believes that the “modern reader does not understand every nuance of the language used in the description; it will be unwise to equate these descriptions with behaviors of modern-day alcoholics.

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<sup>64</sup> Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 741.

<sup>65</sup> Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 741.

<sup>66</sup> Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 742.

<sup>67</sup> Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 742.

Nevertheless, readers' imaginations are provoked by the extensiveness of the portrayal."<sup>68</sup> One can disagree with Horne because the behavior that is being expressed by the writer of Proverbs is similar, if not exact, to what modern-day abusers exhibit. Rather, the passage helps its readers understand the perverse life of an alcoholic that usually lands him or her in trouble. The outcome of such behaviors, as Proverbs explains, has always been devastating and hopeless for the abuser. Based on these behaviors examined from Proverb's point of view, an alcoholic cannot contribute meaningfully to the good of his community.

### **People Were Made to Have Self-Control over Their Minds and Bodies (Eph 5: 18-21)**

God's purpose of making man in His image and likeness also involves giving him the freedom to operate as a person. This will also involve having the ability to know his limits and restrictions as not to abuse the privilege that has been given to him. These freedoms, limits, and restrictions help man to understand the importance of self-control in handling certain issues in life and living. Paul in Ephesians 5:18-21 gives two imperatives that will support good Christian living. The two are contrasting imperatives with the first describing a life controlled by wine or alcoholic drink and the other imperative describing a life that is filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter T. O'Brien in his Commentary, "*The Letter to the Ephesians* maintains that Ephesians 5:18-21 passage is a two-fold exhortation that addresses "the Christian readers to live carefully and wisely."<sup>69</sup> He maintains that this passage should connect with verse 15. The first admonition is about the prohibition against getting drunk while the positive admonition is to be "filled by the Spirit."<sup>70</sup> He believes that the later received the main emphasis that forms the core and the directions

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<sup>68</sup> Horne, *Proverbs-Ecclesiastics*, 289.

<sup>69</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians: Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 386.

<sup>70</sup> O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 386.



of the other passages, which is Paul’s primary aim of urging believes “to live by the Spirit continually.”<sup>71</sup> The two imperatives will be discussed after an understanding of the meaning of self-control is established in this work. Therefore, young adults can exercise self-control by learning from these Paul’s imperatives in three ways: through the biblical concept of self-control over food, through self-control over what inhabits one’s mind, and through self-control over habits and attitudes formed.

**Biblical Concept of Self-Control over Food: The Imperative That Prohibits Drunkenness (Eph 5:18)**

The Bible addresses the issue of self-control regarding eating foods. Bernard Adeney-Risakotta sees “self-control or temperance” as “fundamental to Christ in spirituality.”<sup>72</sup> He again argues that most of our spiritual disciplines like “fasting, meditation, prayer, silence, solitude, and chastity, require it.”<sup>73</sup> He defines self-control as an inner disposition or virtue that enables a Christian to restrain “the flesh” to concentrate on higher goals.<sup>74</sup> Adeney-Risakotta again acknowledges that “self-control is a gift of grace to be developed through discipline into a habituated pattern of response.”<sup>75</sup> He understands self-control as one of the four cardinals of virtue and in Titus 2:2, it is known as sober-minded.<sup>76</sup>

While defining self-control, John Street in his lecture notes on Marriage and Family Counseling Seminar, Summer 2019 defines it as “restraining passions and

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<sup>71</sup> O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 387.

<sup>72</sup> Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, “Self-Control,” in *Zondervan Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen G. Scorgie et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2011), 743.

<sup>73</sup> Adeney-Risakotta, “Self-Control,” 743.

<sup>74</sup> Adeney-Risakotta, “Self-Control,” 743.

<sup>75</sup> Adeney-Risakotta, “Self-Control,” 743.

<sup>76</sup> Adeney-Risakotta, “Self-Control,” 743.

appetites” or “is that great quality which comes to a man when Christ is in his heart, that quality which makes him able to live and walk in the world, and yet keep his garments unspotted from the world.”<sup>77</sup> The definitions emphasize that self-control has to do with one restraining from some attitudes, habits, or foods to keep his life unspotted by things that will corrupt which are common in the world today.

According to John MacArthur in his book, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, he notes that Paul’s admonition in 1 Corinthians 3:17, commands believers not to defile their bodies which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. As he further states, such admonition will include, “the injunction to take proper care of the body.”<sup>78</sup> He observes that such proper care will include “good sleep, daily exercise, and disciplining ourselves to maintain a balanced weight.”<sup>79</sup> Maintaining a balanced diet that will not injure or defile one’s body is important to MacArthur’s view. Therefore, a Christian should be mindful of what he consumes because his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Frank Thielman agrees that the Ephesian’s passage that addresses Paul’s imperatives can be divided into two parts- verses 15-18 and 19-20. He believes that verses 15-18 continue the contrast that exists between the believer’s way of life and the unbeliever’s character that Paul addressed in 5:3-14. He states that

the prohibition (*me methyskesthe oino*) do not get drunk with wine, together with the contrasting command to be filled with the Spirit, has seemed jarring and off-topic to a number of interpreters. Paul has been speaking in general terms of acting wisely or unwisely, and so a specific admonition to avoid drunkenness seems out of place.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> John Street, unpublished class notes for Marriage and Family Counseling Seminar (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Summer 2019).

<sup>78</sup> John MacArthur and The Master’s College Faculty, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, John MacArthur Pastor’s Library (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 96.

<sup>79</sup> MacArthur, *Counseling*, 96

<sup>80</sup> Frank Thielman, *Ephesians, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 357.

He suggested that the reason for this prohibition that is seemingly out of place was that it was prompted by a corresponding specific problem that is found within the context of his writing or possibly that the prohibition is associated with the activities of the cult of Dionysius “which involved ritual drunkenness and frenzied behavior.”<sup>81</sup> It must have been a reminder to Christians on the incompatibility of Christian worship that is Spirit-filled v. 19 with that of “wine-induced behavior of Bacchic rites.”<sup>82</sup> A third possibility discussed by Thielman was that it emphasizes living in evil days (5:16) or a libertine morality being promoted by an over-realized eschatology that led to drunkenness. Thielman then submits that it is most likely that the author is simply reflecting on a common problem that deals with “drunkenness in the ancient literature of moral exhortation.”<sup>83</sup> The three interpretations that Thielman suggested may likely fit the context of the letter, but the third interpretation is most in line with what Paul has in mind because he must be addressing a major problem that made him associate what is going on with evil days and being wise in their daily living.

Furthermore, Clinton E. Arnold in his *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, mentioned that Paul was commending these believers in Ephesus on the need to be wise using the vast Old Testament teachings that centered on the wisdom books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. He posited a possible reason for Paul’s negative imperative of “do not get drunk with wine.”<sup>84</sup> Thielman in his idea connected this negative imperative phrase to the Hellenistic Jewish context and the Greek translation of Proverbs 20:1 and that of Proverbs 23:19-21 that warns believers on getting

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<sup>81</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 357.

<sup>82</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 357.

<sup>83</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 358.

<sup>84</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 331.

into the use of mixed wine and outrageous drunkenness that will make them unwise.<sup>85</sup>

Arnold then notes that

wine and drunkenness were central features of the worship of Dionysius (also known as Bacchus). In the frenzied and ecstatic Dionysiac ritual, intoxication with wine was tantamount to being filled with the spirit of Dionysus. It is therefore conceivable that some of the new believers in Asian Minor were carrying this form of worship with them into the church by associating wine with the filling of the Holy Spirit. Paul repudiates such a notion by denouncing drunkenness and associating the filling of the Spirit with other activities. The problem of drunkenness, however, went far beyond the practices of one cult. It was a social problem. Paul's comments on drunkenness denounce intoxication for any reason.<sup>86</sup>

One may agree with Arnold when he states that drunkenness forms the central feature of the worship of Dionysus. The ecstatic style of worship that is propelled by intoxicating wine must have been copied by the church he was addressing. This argument agrees with the major issue that Paul has been concerned about, that is, living like a wise person. Therefore, the imperative that Paul is driving at is for the believers to live wisely and not like the unwise. One of the actions that can lead them to a wise living is to reject the life of drunkenness. Again, the passage is suggesting that they should not imitate the ritualistic cultic, cultural, and social influences that are associated with wine or intoxicating drinks. Such imitation will lead them to fake worship that will not be Holy Spirit-filled. The young adults, as taught in this passage, must refrain from joining the crowd-like Dionysus syndrome by engaging in drinking that will lead them to alcohol abuse. This will in turn tarnish the image of God in them. Paul is admonishing the church against such acts of false worship in this passage.

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<sup>85</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 358.

<sup>86</sup> Arnold, *Ephesians* (ZIBBC), 331. Thielman further stresses that Paul warnings to the Ephesians with this phrase which is possibly from Proverbs 23:31 LXX also resurfaces in T. Jud 14:1 "with reference to the impact of wine on the mind's ability to make good decisions: Do not be drunk with wine, because wine perverts the mind from truth, arouses the impulses of desire, and leads the eyes into the path of error," Thielman, *Ephesians*, 358.

## **Self-Control over What Inhabits Our Minds: The Positive Imperative That Supports a Holy-Spirit-Filled Life (Eph 5:19-21)**

The Scripture's reference to the mind was through Jesus' response to a young Pharisee lawyer's question about the commandment. Jesus' response which states, "You should love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37) (ESV), makes the mind an important aspect of man's body.

*The American Heritage Dictionary*, Fourth Edition, defines the mind as "the human consciousness that originates in the brain and is manifested especially in thoughts, perception, emotion, will, memory, and imagination."<sup>87</sup> The emphasis of this definition regarding self-control and what goes on in the mind should be one's thoughts and perceptions. David Powlison in his book, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture*, maintains that what goes on in one's mind deals with the individual desires. Such desires he notes happen in man's thoughts. This he expressed in the following words:

With all his heart, soul, mind, and might, the sinful man "feels" his lust to be good. The Bible tells us that sinners yearn for money, pleasure, security, significance, health, food, self-righteousness, worth, power, knowledge, happiness ... every sort of blessing squandered at the Fall. New people in Christ also desire intensely. But the objects of our desire are all transformed. God is never made the errand boy of our wandering desires for good things. The Bible says that God's children should seek, long, and thirst for God himself (Ps 42; Luke 11:9-13).<sup>88</sup>

Powlison's assertions best describe how the mind is filled with different issues and such matters are what every human mind that is not controlled by the Spirit of God yearns for daily. Therefore, there should be control of it so that the mind can focus on reasonable things that will benefit him.

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<sup>87</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 4th ed. (New York: Dell, 2001), 539.

<sup>88</sup> David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 219.

In their reaction to what the Bible describes as the body and soul, Elyse M. Fitzpatrick and Dennis E. Johnson maintain that a responsible human being comprises “both an outer person, which includes the brain, and an inner person, which includes the heart, soul, mind, or will.”<sup>89</sup> They further argue that Christians understand that the outer person is important, but his inner person is where the real action takes place. They stress that the inner person as the Bible teaches is where man thinks and reasons, (Mark 2:5-6, Luke 5:22, 1 Chron 22:19 and Ps 64:6), emotes (Eccl 7:9, Ps 27:3, Deut 6:5 and Isa 35:4), and chooses his wills (Ps 119:32, 25:12, and 2 Chron 6:38).<sup>90</sup>

Fitzpatrick and Johnson further recognize that the key to refocusing one’s mind on things that will be of benefit is found in Romans 12:1-2. According to them, because of the “mercies of God that we have received, we will have the desire and strength to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to him. Contemplating God’s mercy will renew our minds and subsequently transform our lives. We are transformed by the renewal of [our] mind.”<sup>91</sup> They think that “outward transformation of our feelings and actions is accomplished through the inner transformation of our mind.”<sup>92</sup>

Mark Shaw recognizes that the heart of a man as “the spiritual, innermost part of the human being.”<sup>93</sup> To him, the Greek word that the Bible uses most to describe the heart is “*kardia*” which is figuratively defined as the soul or mind. He affirms that the heart is “the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors.”<sup>94</sup> Shaw states that the spiritual heart of a person is “the essence of

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<sup>89</sup> Elyse M. Fitzpatrick and Dennis E. Johnson, *Counseling from the Cross: Counseling Broken People to the Love of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 131.

<sup>90</sup> Fitzpatrick and Johnson, *Counseling from the Cross*, 131.

<sup>91</sup> Fitzpatrick and Johnson, *Counseling from the Cross*, 133.

<sup>92</sup> Fitzpatrick and Johnson, *Counseling from the Cross*, 133.

<sup>93</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 8.

<sup>94</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 8.

that person and it will live forever in eternity.”<sup>95</sup> Whether the use of the word mind or heart, both are recognized and can be used interchangeably in this project as the center of the will, and desires, and actions in a man’s life. It needs to be controlled by the transformation that comes through the work of Christ in a believer’s life.

Following this argument, Paul’s second imperative supports a Holy Spirit-filled life. According to O’Brien, the structure of the verses 18-22 forms one long sentence, with five participles modifying the imperative, “be filled by the Spirit.” – speaking (to one another) (v.19a), singing (v19b), making music (v19b) giving thanks (v20), and submitting to one another (v21). He claims that these are dependent participles of result, which describes the overflow or outworking of the Spirit’s filling believers. Spirit-filled Christians are people whose lives are characterized by singing, thanksgiving, and mutual submission. Therefore, the structure runs from 5:15-6:9.<sup>96</sup>

This passage corresponds, as he notes with Prov. 23:31ff, where it is believed that Paul introduced this prohibition for four possible reasons. One possibility is an allegation of some misconduct among Asian Minor Christians like that of 1 Corinthians 11:21. Another is the pagan mystery culture of the cult of Dionysius, the god of wine, which the Gentile Christians must have previously been part of before conversion, which Thielman supports. A third possibility is for readers to understand the sharp contrast between unbelieving worldly behavior and that of God’s people (4:17-24). They are to live according to the “new man.” In other words, the rejection of drunkenness in verse 18 is in line with other Pauline letters elsewhere that Paul sees as an antithesis that depicts drunkenness as “the way of darkness” (1 Thess 5:6-8, Rom 13:12, 13). It is a vice that is caused by wine (Matt 24:49; Luke 12:45; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:10; 1 Tim 3:8; Tit 2:3; 1 Pet 4:3). He maintains that drunkenness as Paul addresses it “lay at the center of the destructive

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<sup>95</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 8.

<sup>96</sup> O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 388.

and unacceptable lifestyle that belonged to the readers' past and was not consistent with membership in the new people of God."<sup>97</sup> Finally, a fourth possibility for the command "do not get drunk with wine" may be to serve as a foil to a positive counterpart – be filled by the Holy Spirit which is the apostle's main concern.<sup>98</sup>

Clinton Arnold's argument on alcohol and its biblical understanding in the *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary*, notes that Paul is using the Prov. 20:1 passage to draw the attention of Christians on the problem of wine and its use that leads to drunkenness. He also backs it up with Prov. 23:29-34. He sees drunkenness as "an utter and senseless waste" (dissipation or debauchery)<sup>99</sup> and it aligns with Prov 28:7 which states that "one who tends to debauchery dishonors his father."<sup>100</sup> To him, verbs in use (do not get drunk and be filled) are present tense and they imply a regular condition that should characterize believers. He sees that one should be filled with the Holy Spirit. Arnold then maintains that the preposition should be "with the Holy Spirit" hence it is Christ that is doing the infilling instead of "by" which best interprets the dative case that expresses content which Luke also used in the book of Acts 2:4, (see also Luke 1:40; 2:40 NIV), and Ps 65:4 NIV).

He concludes by noting that "the passive voice of the verb is suggestive of yielding to the Spirit and cooperating with the Spirit, who desires to fill lives of believers in increasing measure," because it is God who gives his Spirit to all believers (2 Cor.5:5, 1Thess. 4:8).<sup>101</sup> The two imperatives that run counter to each other produce different results. But the positive one that suggests to believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit

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<sup>97</sup> O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 390.

<sup>98</sup> O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 390.

<sup>99</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 344-51.

<sup>100</sup> Arnold, *Ephesians* (ZECNT), 348.

<sup>101</sup> Arnold, *Ephesians* (ZECNT), 350-51.



will make them not engage in things that will hamper the work of the Holy Spirit. Again, the paper aligns with Arnold in accepting the preposition of being filled with the Holy Spirit because it is Christ himself that is doing the filling. Consequently, this filling will involve the believer's mind being in full control of the directions of the Holy in his thoughts, actions, and behaviors daily. He will refrain from engaging in acts that will undermine that in-filling of the Holy Spirit like drunkenness that may lead one to abuse.

### **Self-Control over Habits and Attitudes**

People need to check their habits and attitudes and make them conform to the things they believe. This will call for self-control in a world that will demand a lot that is not in conformity to a Christ-like attitude. An understanding of the meaning of habits and attitude is important to any discussion on self-control. This is because there must be an activity or actions that should be controlled by an individual. *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines a habit as “a pattern of behavior acquired through repetition,”<sup>102</sup> The book goes on to describe habit as “a customary practice,” “an addiction,” or “characteristics appearance or manner of growth, as of a plant.”<sup>103</sup> Attitude is defined as “a state of mind or a feeling: disposition.”<sup>104</sup> Considering these definitions, one will recognize that a habit is a behavior that is acquired by an individual even as the definition specifies the issue of abuse. This can be formed through one's mind or feeling even as he engages in such acts of drinking alcohol that can lead to abuse. Therefore, these definitions suggest that a habit or attitude is not an inborn behavior or character, rather, one must have acquired it as he or she grows in such a habit.

These definitions align with the idea of Shaw in his book when he notes that

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<sup>102</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary*, 381.

<sup>103</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary*, 381.

<sup>104</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary*, 56.

a true depiction of the drunkard as a whole person portrays someone who willfully chooses to occasionally disobey God with his thoughts, words, and behaviors; however, those occasional choices increase with more regularity and habitual strength. Eventually, the drunkard becomes so enslaved to the thoughts of drinking and drugging that he has a new identity of a sinner, idolater, or drunkard... Anything short of calling drunkenness a sin minimizes the very sacrifice of Christ and is a sin itself because you are acting rebelliously and foolishly as if you know better than God (Prov 16:25) ... You must change your thoughts about addiction to match God's thoughts so that you will become more like God in your thinking and in your behaviors.<sup>105</sup>

The emphasis that Shaw is making on the habits formed by an addict is on the necessity for change of thoughts and behaviors that will focus and conform to God's thoughts. This will help reshape the attitude of an alcohol abuser's life.

Jay Adams in his book, *The Christian Counselor's Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling*, while suggesting ways to help redirect a counselor on how to handle the problem of anger that is similar to abuse, advocates the biblical idea of putting off and putting on.<sup>106</sup> This can apply to habits. According to Adams,

In *putting off* it is essential to become aware of the wrong practice, to structure the situation so as to impede the old practice, to facilitate the new one, and to seek and obtain help in doing so as it may be available. Commitment of oneself to this change before God and those involved in the problem is important. Above all, he must seek the help of God in the moment of temptation, asking God to use the structures erected and persons assisting.<sup>107</sup>

The key issue that Adams is raising is the commitment of the individual to see that he allows God to bring the needed change and in the case of an addict, align himself on what the Bible says about putting off and putting on. Shaw, while suggesting ways to break habits, emphasizes the same biblical idea that Adams is suggesting. He states that God's instruction to mankind in Ephesians 4-5 and Colossians 3 on how to put off and to put on specific habits and patterns of our behavior should be followed. As Shaw stresses,

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<sup>105</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 148-50.

<sup>106</sup> Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 355, Kindle.

<sup>107</sup> Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 355.

God in these passages “instructs us to replace sinful habits with godly habits.”<sup>108</sup> The reason for this instruction as he continues is that “God knows how you are wired because you have been fearfully and wonderfully made.”<sup>109</sup> He affirms that the Bible does not mention alcohol abuse, but emphasizes thoughts, habits, and behaviors.<sup>110</sup> To him, “physical addiction occurs when you repeatedly satisfy a natural appetite and desire with a temporary pleasure until you become the servant of the temporary object of pleasure rather than its master.”<sup>111</sup> This can relate to the issue of choosing Paul’s imperatives of putting off drunkenness and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **Conclusion**

Therefore, the biblical and theological foundations that oppose alcohol abuse must recognize that people were made to worship God and enjoy his creation. By such worship, people can discover that alcohol abuse can disrupt God’s design as His image-bearers. To overcome the disruption, this establishes that people should have a proper understanding of God’s purpose for worship by knowing Him personally and deeply. Also, through faithful obedience and acknowledgment of our bodies as God’s temple, it is important to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice that will be pleasing to Him. It will also acknowledge the beauty that is seen in God’s creation.

The abuser must consider his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit that is purchased with the price paid on Calvary (1Cor 6:19-20). The body that is the temple of the Holy Spirit contrasts the behavior and activities of the abuser in Proverbs 23:29-31. The biblical and theological foundations oppose alcohol abuse and are based on the teachings of Solomon in the book of Proverbs on drunkenness. By explaining the

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<sup>108</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 26.

<sup>109</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 26.

<sup>110</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 27.

<sup>111</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 27.

character and the behavior of an alcoholic, one will see the redness of the eyes and other physical changes in the body. John Phillip sums it up by saying that alcohol abuse produces an unlovely picture of a person. Again, it should be noted that there are consequences like the physical and emotional decline, perverse speaking, hallucinations, and a state of confusion. Reynolds, O'Brien, and Arnold in their arguments suggest that the two passages under consideration prohibit believers in Christ from drunkenness, but Paul enjoins believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That is the distinctive mark that can separate alcohol abusers from believers and will also help in pointing people to desist its intake that can lead to its abuse. The proper understanding of the true usage of the Hebrew word *ki yith' addam* or "when it makes itself red" is a key to the prohibition and rejection argument that this project maintains.

While addressing such a contradiction, this paper advocates that the young adult should engage in meaningful work that will glorify God in his life and in the community, he lives in. This will show that he is made in the image of God. Furthermore, in fulfilling God's design that will not disrupt God's plan for the young adult, the believer should learn how to exercise self-control over his food. By having a good diet (which includes what he drinks) and control over what inhabits his mind as the center of his will, he will be able to live a profitable life, unlike the alcoholic. Again, the paper believes that biblical behavior that encourages a good attitude that will put off drunkenness and put on the Holy Spirit will make the young adult ready to fulfill God's purpose.

Following the argument of Reynolds that understands the root word interpretation of Proverbs 23:31, *adom* which is not in *qal*, but a *hithpael* in the original Hebrew context, the idea of prohibition of wine when "it makes itself red" is adopted in this paper. Moreover, in Ephesians 5:15-20 where O'Brien identifies Paul's primary aim of exhorting the Christian to be filled with the Holy Spirit, which contrasts with being filled with wine, adds to the absolute abstinence that the counselor will emphasize while counseling alcoholics in the Abia State. These passages (Proverbs 23:29-35 and

Ephesians 5:17-21) will help in addressing some well-known religious effects that support abstaining from alcohol and its abuse. It is often argued in religious circles that drinking of alcohol is not a sin, but one may ask when it becomes a sin, or when it is too much? However, the passages above seem to suggest a position of total abstinence that will produce the following in the life of a believer: worship of God with his body, a worthy character, and good Christian behavior, and always being filled with the Holy Spirit. These ideas support Christ's statement that says, "No one can serve two masters" (Matt 6:24) (see 3 John 11). It is either the choice of a life lived in the Spirit or a life of substance abuse.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL, HISTORICAL, AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO ALCOHOL ABUSE

The theoretical, historical, and practical issues that relate to alcohol abuse will be examined in this chapter. This examination will develop an understanding of alcoholism as a sin. It will examine young adults' development in the hope of providing a biblical counseling response for alcohol abusers in Abia state. Lastly, a practical guide that is designed to help counsel and build leadership skills among young adults' abusers of alcohol in five local Baptist churches in the state will also be examined.

#### **Theoretical: Alcoholism as Sin**

Alcoholism should be recognized as a problem because it destroys God's design of man as his image-bearer and affects man's behavior in other areas of life. Because of this, pastoral counsel that supports biblical interventions for alcohol abuse in the Scripture will be given in this project. The counsel and biblical intervention will examine alcohol abuse in the following ways: An understanding of sin and its implications to the problem of alcohol abuse, an understanding of alcohol abuse as a form of idolatry, and the causes of alcohol abuse. Lastly, it will examine the consequences of alcohol abuse such as deception and seduction, and distortion of the holiness of God among young adults that abuse it.

#### **Definition of Sin**

Michael Mangis and Brian Post in the *Zondervan Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* define sin as "willful acts of disobedience but can also refer to corporate and systematic moral transgressions, to a pervasive part of humanity's condition that leaves

us estranged from God, and to a state of fallenness into which we are born.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Wayne Grudem defines sin as “any failure to conform to the moral law of God in, act, attitude, or nature.”<sup>2</sup> According to him, sin should not be limited to individual acts such as stealing, lying, or murder, but it should include “attitudes that are contrary to the attitudes God requires of us.”<sup>3</sup> The definitions of Mangis, Post, and Grudem, recognize that sin is both acts and attitudes that result in disobedience to the laws of God. Such disobedience as Grudem maintains is manifested as anger, lust, and other acts that work according to the dictates of one’s flesh. This project understands alcoholism as an action that is rooted in the desires of the flesh.

### **A Biblical Perspective on the Relationship between Sin and Alcoholism**

This section of the project will explore how sin relates to alcoholism from a biblical point of view. Stephen P. Apthorp in his book, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse: A Clergy Handbook*, while giving the summary of secularist views notes that the secularist believes that alcoholism is a “biochemical, genetic disease.”<sup>4</sup> He notes that these secularist views include those of LeClair Bissell, a renowned expert in the field of alcoholism, Vernon E. Johnson, the founder of Johnson Institutes who works as a trainer and consultant in alcoholism in Minneapolis. They agree that alcoholism is a disease or illness that is treatable. Apthorp further stresses that American Medical Association (AMA) accepted alcoholism as a disease in 1956.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Mangis and Brian Post, “Sin,” in *Zondervan Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen G. Scorgie et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 753.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 2000), 490.

<sup>3</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 490.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen P. Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse: A Clergy Handbook* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1985), 51-52.

<sup>5</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 55.

Apthorp, while considering the divide in the church on whether alcohol is a disease, an illness, or a sin, lists seven general responses by church leaders as outlined in a study by the Yale School of Alcohol Studies:

(1). alcoholism is a sin and not a sickness from start to finish... “all-sin” views. (2). alcoholism begins as a personal sin and ends as a sickness. (3). alcoholism is a sickness that involves the sin of abuse, that is, it is the sin of excess.... (4) alcoholism is a sickness caused by a combination of factors involving both sin and sickness. (5). alcoholism involves sin in the sense that it has destructive consequences. (6). alcohol is a social sin- such sin is mostly attributed to society, a symptom or evidence of the sinful condition of the society, whatever one’s views of the alcoholic’s responsibility, one can accept that “society greases the slope down which he slides.” (7). alcoholism involves original sin which includes Man’s egocentricity. There is a selfishness at the center of man’s nature that keeps him from doing that which he knows to be good... The selfishness is evident in the alcoholic as a symptom of inner conflict or insecurity.<sup>6</sup>

This project adopts the belief that every human being is born with inherited sin from Adam, and that man in his daily life sins acts, deeds, words, or thoughts. While distinguishing the original sin from actual sin, Hoekema believes that “original sin is the sinful state and condition in which every human being is born.”<sup>7</sup> The actual sin he notes is “the sins of act, word, or thought that human beings commit.”<sup>8</sup> He remarks that actual sin has its source in original sin, but an individual is not exonerated from the repercussions of such sin.<sup>9</sup> Such an observation supports Apthorp’s views and the Yale School on alcoholism survey findings in numbers 1, 5, 6, and 7.

Alcohol abuse is a willful act or deed that has its roots in original sin and has destructive consequences that lead one to various problems. Alcohol abuse, when repeated enough, becomes a pattern of behavior, which affects the body by creating dependence on it. This effect can be described as alcohol abuse. Therefore, this project acknowledges that alcohol abuse is a willful action taken by an individual out of selfish

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<sup>6</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 55-56.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 143.

<sup>8</sup> Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 143.

<sup>9</sup> Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 143.



interest, a behavior, or lust for its taste, or action taken because of societal influence. Again, alcoholism being a willful action should be a sin that relates to the original sin of disobedience of man that has its roots in Genesis 3.

Regarding original and actual sins that find their roots in Genesis 3, *The New American Standard Topical Reference Bible* has references that relate to and support that claim. They include sinful deeds and dispositions (Matt 7: 17-18, Rom 6:12, 7:20-23, Gal 5:17, 24), rebellion (Ps 78:17, Isa 63:10, Dan 9:5, 1 Tim 1:9), disobedience (Josh 22:22, Eph 2:2), and lust of hearts (Matt 5:28, Rom 1:24-25).<sup>10</sup> Hoekema further describes various types of sins which are also called seven deadly sins to include the following; vainglory or pride, covetousness, lust, usually understood as inordinate or illicit sexual desires, envy, gluttony, which usually include drunkenness, anger, and sloth.<sup>11</sup> He gives other classification of sin as “sin against God, the neighbor, or ourselves; sins of thoughts, word, or deed; sins that have their roots in ‘the lust of the flesh’ ‘the lust of the eyes or the pride of life’ (1 John 2:16) (RSV), sins of weakness, ignorance, or malice; sins of omissions or commission; secret sins or open sins; private sins or public sins.”<sup>12</sup>

The identifications that Hoekema is making openly recognize that drunkenness and others that associate with it like, the sin of deeds, lusts of the flesh, eyes, sins of ignorance, omission or commission, secret, open, private, and public sin should be grouped as original sins related to alcohol abuse. The abusers in action, deeds, or thoughts engage in either of these sins that are against God’s will and plan for one’s life. Sins of deeds, lusts of eyes, and others are common to what has been identified with the original sin.

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<sup>10</sup> *The New American Standard Bible: Topical Reference Bible* (La Habra, CA: Lockman Foundation, 2010), 209.

<sup>11</sup> Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 176.

<sup>12</sup> Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 176.

## **Alcoholism as a Form of Idolatry**

Alcoholism must be viewed as a form of idolatry. According to Michael Lawrence in the *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry*, “Everyone is struggling with idolatry in one way or another.”<sup>13</sup> He again observes that “our hearts are idol-factories.”<sup>14</sup> His observation that further sees human hearts as idol factories relates to today’s culture that takes the forms of “power, pleasure, pride, security, wealth, and so forth.”<sup>15</sup> One needs to agree with Lawrence’s views as it relates to alcohol abuse because of the two forms that are among what he listed. They are idols of pleasure and pride. The abuser’s intention of taking alcohol might be for enjoyment and/or for egocentric or other selfish purposes. Therefore, an understanding of alcohol abuse as a form of idolatry will be examined in these ways: The meaning of idolatry, the causes of idolatry, and some examples of idolatry practices.

## **Causes of Alcoholism**

Jay Adams in his book, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*, recognizes that the first sin of Adam and Eve was caused by their opting “for the satisfaction of desire rather than for obedience to the commandment of God.”<sup>16</sup> He states that the devil’s appeals in Gen 3:6 cf. 1 John 2:16 were on three things; the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. He again notes that “Over against this was the God’s commandment; You shall not eat.”<sup>17</sup> Adams stresses that “The options given to them are the same options that one faces now.”<sup>18</sup> His views that recognize that sin originated in man because man

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 186.

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 186.

<sup>15</sup> Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 186.

<sup>16</sup> Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 117, Kindle.

<sup>17</sup> Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*, 117.

<sup>18</sup> Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*, 117.

opted for the satisfaction of desires rather than obeying God's commands should be upheld in this project. Similarly, such desire that ends up in disobeying God's commands that leads to lusts of the eyes and flesh are still evident in the case of an alcoholic, and such desires should be recognized as one of the major causes of alcohol abuse. Therefore, such desires that seek to satisfy one's lust or sinful appetites need to be condemned.

Another cause of alcohol abuse that compares to anger comes from Robert Jones' view in his book, *Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help for a Common Problem*. He acknowledges that the cause of anger like in any other sin in man, "comes from the heart."<sup>19</sup> Citing Mark 7:20-23, he believes that "What comes out of a man is what makes him unclean. For from within, out of men's hearts comes evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean."<sup>20</sup> One will agree with Jones on causes of anger that come out of the heart. Similarly, the sin of alcohol shares common traits from a determined heart of disobedience which the passage in Mark reveals such disobedience as greed, lewdness, arrogance, and folly. Alcohol abusers engage or involve themselves in any of the four sins that lead to abuse. Consequently, when such desires grow in one's heart, it becomes an idol or what one worships.

David Powlison poses the question on desire that says: "What do you crave, want, pursue, wish, long for, hope to get, feel you need, or passionately desire?"<sup>21</sup> In his response, he notes that

God has an interpretation of this that cuts to the marrow of who you are and what you live for. He sees our heart as an embattled kingdom ruled either by one kind of

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Jones, *Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help for a Common Problem* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005), 48.

<sup>20</sup> Jones, *Uprooting Anger*, 48.

<sup>21</sup> David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 146.

desire or by another kind. On one hand, what lust of flesh hijacks your hearts from God's rule? On the other hand, what holy passions express your love for God? Our desires are not a given but a fundamental choice. Desires are most often unruly, disorderly, inordinate affection for XYZ, a good thing that I innately need.<sup>22</sup>

Reflecting on Powlison's thoughts on desire and what one passionately yearns for, like in any other sin, one will agree that the sin of alcohol abuse is caused by an individual's strong desire and passion to lust over it. In other words, his heart is being hijacked by such lust and this lust now calls forth an idolatrous lifestyle. Again, such life is not what the person was given as he notes, but it is a fundamental choice that is caused by fulfilling the desires of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or like he mentioned, lewdness.

The argument, that some believe, that alcohol is a sickness calls for the question that Apthorp is proposing when he asked, "Well if it (alcoholism) is a sickness, how does it get started and why does the alcoholic continue to drink?"<sup>23</sup> As he continues, the questions lead to the root cause of alcohol abuse. He maintains that "The alcoholic has a choice whether he gets sick or not; he doesn't have to drink!"<sup>24</sup> Apthorp sees the importance of the question as something that theologically relates to the exercise of free will. To him, from an etiological point of view, the question of alcoholism as an illness "cannot be answered. There is no single cause."<sup>25</sup> He believes that the causes are complex, but "at some level, the social drinker becomes both physiologically and psychologically"<sup>26</sup> attached to alcohol and its abuse.

While explaining the physiological aspect, Apthorp is of the view that an alcohol abuser involves himself in the following problems: "tissue adaptation, cellular

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<sup>22</sup> Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes*, 146.

<sup>23</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 60.

<sup>24</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 60.

<sup>25</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 60.

<sup>26</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 60.

changes, autonomic processes, tolerance changes, and withdrawal reaction.”<sup>27</sup>

Concerning the psychological factors, he mentioned the following: response to stress, conditioning by reward and punishment, compulsive behavior, habit formation, sociocultural conditioning, and denial.”<sup>28</sup> All these factors he believes, contribute to the illness’s unique pathology. He goes on to state that “addiction creates its own progression; that is, it becomes its own cause for drinking.”<sup>29</sup> Again, on destructive misuse and abuse of alcohol, he expresses his view by noting,

But no one sets out to drink with the intention of becoming chemically dependent. “Alcoholics do not choose to be alcoholics” as the saying goes. Drinking for the explicit purpose of getting drunk—the reason so many of today’s youngsters give for drinking—is morally wrong. If it is not a willful act to destroy personhood, it is an intentional effort to diminish selfhood. And in most instances, it is premeditated. Free will and choice are a matter of the ability to consider all sides of the question and to choose among alternatives. Up to a point the chemically dependent person does have a choice—he or she needn’t ever start to drink.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, it is the willful act of an individual, taken on his own, to engage in alcohol abuse. The views of Apthorp, can be adopted in this project, noting that alcoholism is not an illness, rather it is a choice that the person has willfully taken as he abuses alcohol. Again, one should note that being his choice, he is responsible for the cause of any outcome that comes from it. The alcohol abuser also caused it because he has alternatives to either engage in it or reject it.

## **The Consequences of Idolatry**

**Deception and seduction.** One of the consequences of idolatry is the deceptive and seductive nature by which it takes hold of the individual who engages in it. Most often, the idolater may not recognize that he is engaging in idol worship. John

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<sup>27</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 60.

<sup>28</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 60.

<sup>29</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 61.

<sup>30</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 61.

MacArthur understands this in Jonah's prayer at the belly of the fish when he prayed, "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies" (Jonah 2:8, KJV).<sup>31</sup> He stresses that the Hebrew verb that is translated as "observe" could mean "to give themselves up to," or devote themselves to" that is suggesting an idea of "dogged determination or clinging to something despite influences to do otherwise."<sup>32</sup> He continues by saying that Jonah was clinging to the "false love for his country" against God's desire to preserve Nineveh, an enemy of his country.<sup>33</sup> According to him, lying vanities could be "all things which man makes into idols or object of trust."<sup>34</sup> He recognizes the deception and seductive nature of sin by recalling these experiences in biblical history:

Human devices contrary to the will of God are "lying vanities;" empty, they bring no satisfaction; lying, they promise peace and safety, but bring misery and horrible troubles. So, Eve found, so Pharaoh, so Israel when they went after the ways of the heathen. So, Jonah himself. So, all who forsake the Fountain of living waters and hew out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. Worldly devices to get happiness apart from God are indeed "vanity of vanities."<sup>35</sup>

One cannot help but agree with MacArthur on the deceptive and seductive consequences of the sin of idolatry and the devastating effects on those who are engaged in it. They forsake the fountain of living water for a broken cistern.

**Distortion of the holiness of God in man.** Idolatry distorts the holiness of God. This is seen in the case of the priest and his sons. The Lord God's injunction to them was not to drink wine or strong drink while in the service of the Temple is found in Leviticus 10:8-11:

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<sup>31</sup> John MacArthur and The Master's College Faculty, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, John MacArthur Pastor's Library (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 57.

<sup>32</sup> MacArthur, *Counseling*, 57.

<sup>33</sup> MacArthur, *Counseling*, 57.

<sup>34</sup> MacArthur, *Counseling*, 57.

<sup>35</sup> MacArthur, *Counseling*, 57.

The LORD then spoke to Aaron, saying, “Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of the meeting, so that you may not die—it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations—and so as to make a distinction between the holy and profane, so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses”

Kenneth L. Gentry in his book, *Christian and Alcoholic Beverages: A Biblical Perspectives*, argues from the immoderate view upholds that the injunction given in this Levitical text was only to the Israelites priest and their sons while they were in the service of God in the temple. He rejects the prohibition and abolitionist views of Stephen Reynolds and Gleason L Archer respectively.<sup>36</sup> Gentry notes that the passage “Apparently... was enacted as a safety valve for the priesthood, to prevent any accidental profanation of the tabernacle service” relies on his argument from the context of verses 2 and 3.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, as he points out, this argument is different from Reynold and Archer’s observations that see the prohibition and absenteeism from the New Testament period’s view. Reynold as Gentry notes had argued that Paul’s statement in Ephesians 5:18 and his interpretation in John 2:1-11 passage. He maintains that Reynold “speaks of wine as something evil itself,”<sup>38</sup> and that he misinterpreted and misapplied the governor’s statement about wine.<sup>39</sup> Archer, an abstentionist has argued that based on the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in the New Testament, 1 Peter 2:9 he notes, suggests that believers “may be seriously handicapped in carrying on the work of soul-winning if they, intentionally, indulge in the use of alcohol.”<sup>40</sup> Their view expands this injunction to all “kings and priestly” passages of 1 Peter 2: 5, 9 and Rev 1:6 with a corresponding Old

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<sup>36</sup> Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages: A Biblical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), 56.

<sup>37</sup> Gentry, *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages*, 57.

<sup>38</sup> Gentry, *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages*, 47.

<sup>39</sup> Gentry, *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages*, 51.

<sup>40</sup> Gentry, *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages*, 58.

Testament passage of Proverbs 31:4-5. Gentry rejects that interpretation by stating that such a decision “would witness against our High Priest and King of kings, Jesus Christ that partake of wine.”<sup>41</sup> He further maintains that in the Old Testament, the Israelites “were permitted to drink wine” even though they were a kingdom of priests, and the prohibition for the kings and priests have implied limitations i.e., the prohibition was in effect during the actual exercise of the powers of office.<sup>42</sup>

From the holiness point of view in the Leviticus text, one may disagree with Gentry’s views and position because the aim and purpose of the priest and the kings as the case may be, not to drink wine or strong drink was to make a distinction that would keep them holy as exemplary religious and political leaders. Limiting the drinking when the distinction will be needed, that is, on official duties only makes a mockery of the service of the priest both in private and in public. The reason for this is that the office is meant to be an example for others to emulate; therefore, prohibition and absenteeism will check such ridicule at all any given time. Besides, a priest, his sons, or a king who engages in such drinking exhibit a life that the public would abhor; so, he should practice absenteeism like the Nazarene.

Also, the next phrase that states “between the unclean and clean” gives the idea that engaging in drinking will lead to uncleanness and one will not be healthy enough to pass the knowledge of the statutes of the Lord to the sons of Israel and this teaching can take place in the public or private gatherings like homes (Deut 6:1-9). The argument that extends this holiness view to the New Testament period or New Israel is important. The Bible is progressive in nature and points to the New Testament. The listing of the sin of drunkenness as one of the sins of the flesh (Gal 5:20ff) that will deprive one of the

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<sup>41</sup> Gentry, *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages*, 58.

<sup>42</sup> Gentry, *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages*, 59.



kingdom of God shows how serious indulging in it is. So, there is a need to avoid drunkenness that will lead to alcohol abuse in order not to miss the kingdom of God.

### **Historical, Socio-Cultural, Economic, and Health Perspectives on Alcohol Addiction in Nigeria**

This section will examine alcohol addiction in young adults in Nigeria from different perspectives. It will look at the historical development of alcohol use and the socio-cultural, economic, health, and educational effects of alcohol addiction in Nigeria and Abia state in particular. Alcohol and its addiction will be examined in a broader perspective even as it relates to its abuse.

#### **Historical Development of the Rise of Alcohol Consumption in Nigeria**

Theresa I. Myadze and Apollo Rwomire in their article, “Alcoholism in Africa during the Late Twentieth Century: A Socio-Cultural Perspective,” recognized that there is a substantial increase in consumption of alcohol in Africa and Asia within the period under review.<sup>43</sup> They attribute the increase to “relaxed religious sanctions against consumption and increase in supply as modern industries produced alongside local distilleries and breweries” as reported by WHO in the 1980s.<sup>44</sup> They stressed that alcohol “is thought to be the most commonly abused substance in Nigeria. Possession was and is legal and access readily available.”<sup>45</sup>

According to their findings, the period from the 1960s through the early 1980s saw a dramatic increase in the number of breweries in Nigeria which rose from 10 to 60. Furthermore, Myadze and Rwomire observed that “The pattern of consumption was no

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<sup>43</sup> Theresa I. Myadze and Apollo Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa during the Late Twentieth Century: A Socio-Cultural Perspective,” *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 5, no. 2 (February 2014): 1-9.

<sup>44</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 2.

<sup>45</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 2.

longer restricted to the middle-aged, but had widened to include the young adults and adolescents, with a narrowing male/female ratio that cut across religious groups.”<sup>46</sup> They note that a reliable statistical report, that may help ascertain the percentage of abuse of alcohol in Africa, may be difficult to compile, but acknowledged that the magnitude of the problem can be known through a glance at the following: medical/psychiatric records, welfare complaints, traffic accident reports, school reports, work reports, police and court reports. The other method that can be used, they suggest, could be through observation of “individual in rural and urban drinking places, ceremonial gatherings, or in the homes of those whose entertainment centered around alcohol consumption.”<sup>47</sup>

According to Emeka Dumbili in his article, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption in Nigeria. An Exploration of Responsible Factors and Consequences,” writes that “Alcohol consumption among different ethnic groups in Nigeria has a long history, especially among those groups where it was not forbidden by religion.”<sup>48</sup> He further recognizes that alcohol is “as old as human history and its consumption in different socio-cultural milieus extends beyond the last ten thousand years.”<sup>49</sup> Dumbili notes that drinking alcohol is acceptable in most ceremonial situations, but it is most commonly consumed by adult males in social gatherings. He states that in this era, local alcohol is sometimes “consumed immediately after production, or a few hours after production,” the reason being that the beverage serves as the staple food in some communities.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 2.

<sup>47</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 2.

<sup>48</sup> Emeka W. Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption in Nigeria: An Exploration of Responsible Factors and Consequences,” *Medical Sociology* 7, no. 1 (February 2013): 20-33, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236175879\\_Changing\\_Patterns\\_of\\_Alcohol\\_Consumption\\_in\\_Nigeria\\_An\\_Exploration\\_of\\_Responsible\\_factors\\_and\\_Consequences](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236175879_Changing_Patterns_of_Alcohol_Consumption_in_Nigeria_An_Exploration_of_Responsible_factors_and_Consequences).

<sup>49</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 22.

<sup>50</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 22.

In the West African region, he notes, the trend of alcohol usage changed with the “influx of European slave traders and their ‘trade spirit’ in the fifteenth century.”<sup>51</sup> This influx he claims, popularized the sale of liquor to the indigenous people and this trend was sustained during the colonial era and beyond with the establishment of the first brewery (Nigerian Brewery) (NB) in 1946, with its first brew in 1949. He again mentions the rapid growth experienced in the brewing industry with the coming of Guinness brewery in 1962 and records show that as of 1984, each of the then 19 states in Nigeria had their own brewing company.<sup>52</sup>

Dumbili acknowledges that the growth trend of alcohol industries in Nigeria was precipitated by the economic boom of 1970. He continued by saying that in recent years, there have been striking changes in the patterns of consumption due to the socio-political and economic structural development in Nigeria. Another thing he sensed that made such changes to be possible is because the customs and traditions of the people are no longer regulating its usage as alcohol is “no longer reserved for social gathering or entertainment of guest alone.”<sup>53</sup> As he further notes, “the patterns of use, the users and reasons for consumption are changing rapidly, especially among young drinkers.”<sup>54</sup>

He again points out that currently, there exists an “alcohol contest among youths in bars, restaurants, drinking joints, hotels, and nightclubs that are strategically located near various schools in Nigeria.”<sup>55</sup> Dumbili observes that this competition is among boys and the winners are judged based on two standards 1. The ability to drink large quantities without showing any sign of intoxication and 2. The ability to drink faster

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<sup>51</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 22.

<sup>52</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 22.

<sup>53</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 23.

<sup>54</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 23.

<sup>55</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 23

than the opponent. To him, the winner goes home with the large sum of money contributed by these competitors or the alcohol marketers. He gave an example of a youth collapsing and dying in a drinking competition in Lagos in Feb 2012.<sup>56</sup> Dumbili's discoveries on the changing pattern of alcohol consumption especially among the youth paint a daring case that needs urgent attention in Nigeria. This pattern of consumption sees alcohol consumption as not for "pleasure as it used to be, but for a prize."<sup>57</sup>

The other recent development he observed in alcohol drinking among the youth is consuming it as a way of "showing off in public places."<sup>58</sup> Although he adds that the normal drinking age is 18 years, young people buy and drink freely in public places. This is different than in the traditional era when "youth were restricted from drinking by the norms in most communities."<sup>59</sup> The reason for this change(s) in consumption he mentioned was 1. erosion of communal values, 2. familial socialization, and 3. peer influence. In other words, he states, "African traditional societal values of brotherliness is increasingly fading away due to globalization."<sup>60</sup>

He believes that people are now becoming individualistic as they are hardly their 'brother's keeper' as in the past where adults from one's community applied punitive measures to wayward adolescents on behalf of their parents (in return they received a commendation from the latter). Another new trend is large-scale consumption by young people that contributes to Nigeria ranking among thirty countries with the highest per capita consumption of alcohol globally according to the WHO 2004 report.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Dumbili, "Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption," 23.

<sup>57</sup> Dumbili, "Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption," 23.

<sup>58</sup> Dumbili, "Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption," 23.

<sup>59</sup> Dumbili, "Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption," 23.

<sup>60</sup> Dumbili, "Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption," 23.

<sup>61</sup> Dumbili, "Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption," 24-26.

Myadze and Rwomire believe that the increase in proliferation of breweries in many African countries has given rise to a greater number of people having access to alcoholic beverages, using them, and abusing them.<sup>62</sup>

### **Socio-Cultural Development of Alcohol Consumption**

Victor O. Lasebikan and Bolanle A. Ola in “Prevalence and Correlates of Alcohol Use Among a Sample of Nigerian Semirural Community Dwellers in Nigeria,” write that “Alcohol consumption is a well-known part of the Nigerian culture and frequently part of festivals and celebrations and, within the past decade, there are indications that there has been a rapid increase in alcohol production and importation as well as its consumption across all age group.”<sup>63</sup>

Dumbili identified that alcohol consumption in Africa is considered normal when taken without intoxication. The drinks he identified include wine, beer, spirits, and other fermented alcoholic beverages. He acknowledges that they have been used in most traditional societies, but they are now being used in this modern era for different purposes. He observed that in Africa, palm wine and fermented local gin from palm wine that is tapped from a palm tree, also known as *ogogoro*, *kai-kai*, *akpuru-achia*, or *Sapele water* are mostly consumed for pleasure immediately after brewing or tapping from the tree. He notes that excess consumption is not tolerated and its abuse “attracted negative sanctions as recorded in the biblical Old and New Testament.”<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, Dumbili states that “alcohol was culturally tolerated as part of ceremonial lives of many ethnic groups in what is now known as Nigeria, especially in

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<sup>62</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 2.

<sup>63</sup> Victor O. Lasebikan and Bolanle A. Ola, “Prevalence and Correlates of Alcohol Use Among a Sample of Nigerian Semirural Community Dwellers in Nigeria,” *Journal of Addiction* 2016 (2016): 2. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2016/2831594>.

<sup>64</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 2.

communities where it was not forbidden by religion before the advent of colonialism.”<sup>65</sup> Dumbili states that there was no written prohibition for females and adolescents from drinking during the traditional era, but that “consumption was the reserve of men.”<sup>66</sup> He stresses further that its intake played an important role in the “political, religious, and socio-economic relationships” among cultural groups in Nigeria.<sup>67</sup> Currently as he observes, “alcohol played complex roles in religious and communities’ rituals and served as a conduit for social cohesion.”<sup>68</sup> Other ceremonial functions around alcohol are listed as follows: it is expected to be served to the adult by the youth, it’s a key requirement for the bridal price to be paid as it helps to consummate marriages in villages, it is consumed in most ceremonies like cultural festivals, chieftaincy enthronement, child dedications, and even funerals.<sup>69</sup>

According to Dumbili, patterns of alcohol consumption in Nigeria have changed. This he claims is due to the following reasons: development in socio-political and economic structure in Nigeria, lack of regulation by the custom and tradition of the people, alcohol no longer restricted for a social gathering or entertainment of a guest alone, patterns of use the user and reason(s) for consumption changing rapidly especially among young drinkers. Others he mentioned include engagement in alcohol contests among youths in bars, restaurants, drinking joints, hotels, and nightclubs, and youth drinking as a way to show up in public places.<sup>70</sup>

In their contribution on social effects of alcohol, Myadze and Rwomire observed that major issues that are noticeable in Africa on alcohol consumption are that

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<sup>65</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 2.

<sup>66</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 2.

<sup>67</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption.” 3.

<sup>68</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 3.

<sup>69</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 22.

<sup>70</sup> Dumbili, “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption,” 23-25.

“social sanctions against alcohol consumption in Africa appear to be weakening, especially for females and adolescents.”<sup>71</sup> Again, they mentioned that some religious taboos about drinking are no longer taken seriously and increased government investment in the brewing industry in Africa encourages its use as they see such action as “an implied stamp of approval by the ‘gatekeepers’ of society.”<sup>72</sup> Continuing on the socio-cultural effects of alcoholism, they identified the following reason for people engaging in alcohol use 1. search for sociability 2. conviviality, and 3. conventionality. They note various categories of drinkers – including those who take three or more bottles of liquor that leads to occasional intoxication, those who consume it more than ordinary dietary requirements, heavy drinkers, and lastly, chronic drinkers that can be referred to as compulsive drinking that leads to “serious general physical deterioration.”<sup>73</sup>

According to them, persons in the last two categories are “likely to display violence while intoxicated; experience difficulty in attending and performing at work, school, etc., encounter legal problems due to arrest for intoxicated and have traffic accidents while intoxicated, and have arguments or difficulties with family members or friends because of excessive alcohol use.”<sup>74</sup>

They stress that “concern over young drinkers had become especially acute with references to college or university students in African countries during the latter half of the twentieth century.”<sup>75</sup> Myadze and Rwomire observe these are young people between ages 18-23 leaving home for the first time and being newly freed seeking ways

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<sup>71</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 2.

<sup>72</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 2.

<sup>73</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 3.

<sup>74</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 3.

<sup>75</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 4

to socialize with new mates. They maintained that in most cases, “Drinking patterns are learned” while others “have come as an inheritance from previous generations.”<sup>76</sup>

Myadze and Rwomire then suggest some measures that can be used to check the increase of alcoholism among African youths which can be caught across socio-cultural, economic, health, and other areas that will address the problems as follows: 1. legal restrictions and enforcements against the sale and purchase of alcohol by minors in rural and urban settings; 2. more stringent policy on alcohol distributorship; 3. educational campaigns aimed at informing rural and urban youths about the use and dangers in the abuse of alcohol; 4. introduction of the subject as part of health science at primary school level as it will serve as an important starting point for children that are sometimes being socialized to drink at an early age; 5. creation of more leisure activities which do not center around drinking; 6. improved opportunities for employment training, housing, etc. and 7. production of counselors to help counsel youth on alcohol.<sup>77</sup> This project will adopt their measures to understand the socio-cultural problems that alcohol can cause among the youth.

### **Economic Effects of Alcohol**

Economic problems are part of the effects of alcohol abuse in a young adult. Abusers will be spending their earnings on buying or purchasing alcoholic drinks to satisfy their longings. In their background findings, Opayemi Abiona, Mojisola Oluwasanu, and Oladimeji Oladepo, in “Analysis of Alcohol Policy in Nigeria: Multi-Sectoral Action and the Integration of the WHO ‘Best-Buy’ Intervention,” discovered that the economic, as well as the health and social costs of “alcohol-related harm and

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<sup>76</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 4.

<sup>77</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 7.



diseases, are well-documented.”<sup>78</sup> According to them, the worldwide record shows that “over 3 million deaths have been attributed to alcohol intake every year” as stated in a WHO report in 2014.<sup>79</sup>

They further state that in Nigeria, “alcohol is the sixth leading risk factor contributing to most death and disability” across all sexes.<sup>80</sup> Abiona, Oluwasanu, and Oladepo in the findings also acknowledged that “the alcohol-attributable deaths on both sexes for liver cirrhosis, road traffic accidents and cancer in 2016 was 42,120, 15,365, and 4787,” in Nigeria.<sup>81</sup> The other impact of alcohol is reported in the number of cases of drunk driving accidents that resulted in major injuries and several deaths in Nigeria. They believe that Nigeria has one of the largest fatalities of road traffic accidents with an estimated level that stands at 21.4% per 100,000 population every year.<sup>82</sup>

The other associated cost of the damage they observe is in the infrastructures and medical treatment. In all of these from their background findings, the Nigerian adult ranks 27th globally in alcohol drinking which begins at age 15+ in liters per year. This result puts the country as one of the leading alcohol consumption countries in Africa.<sup>83</sup> These data show the economic impact of deaths, sicknesses resulting in medical treatment, injuries, and damage to infrastructure that alcohol consumption can cause Nigerians. Money that could be channeled to other activities of life by families of the victims, government, and the private sector are used in handling these costs.

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<sup>78</sup> Opayemi Abiona, Mojisola Oluwasanu, and Oladimeji Oladepo, “Analysis of Alcohol Policy in Nigeria: Multi-Sectoral Action and the Integration of the WHO ‘Best-Buy’ Interventions,” *BMC Public Health* 19, art. no. 810 (2019), <https://bmcpublikehealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-7139-9>.

<sup>79</sup> Abiona, Oluwasanu, and Oladepo, “Analysis of Alcohol Policy in Nigeria.”

<sup>80</sup> Abiona, Oluwasanu, and Oladepo, “Analysis of Alcohol Policy in Nigeria.”

<sup>81</sup> Abiona, Oluwasanu, and Oladepo, “Analysis of Alcohol Policy in Nigeria.”

<sup>82</sup> Abiona, Oluwasanu, and Oladepo, “Analysis of Alcohol Policy in Nigeria.”

<sup>83</sup> Abiona, Oluwasanu, and Oladepo, “Analysis of Alcohol Policy in Nigeria.”

Furthermore, Abiona, Oluwasanu, and Oladepo report that Nigeria lacks a comprehensive alcohol control policies as their report indicates that 39 of the 44 interviewees of policymakers (Bureaucrats and Policy Makers) in public and private sectors note that “comprehensive policies to control the production, advertisement, marketing, and availability of alcohol in Nigeria in line with WHO recommendation are not available.”<sup>84</sup> This shows a failed policy that helps to encourage the drinking of alcohol without regulation or basic control in the country. The result of such failures one can imagine will be enormous.

Ebirim I. C. Chikere and Morakinyo O. Mayowa observed some problems caused by introducing alcohol to children. As they note, from WHO’s European Regional office report, an “estimated 4.5 million young people lived in families adversely affected by alcoholism.”<sup>85</sup> Some problems they identified that come from such effects on young people include 1. instability and collapse of marriages and family structures; 2. increased risk of physical or sexual violence; 3. neglect; and 4. strain on family finances. They further observe that such problems could lead to the development of a greater risk for anti-social behaviors, emotional behaviors, and problems in the school environment.<sup>86</sup> There is no doubt that these risk factors and other economic challenges that include death, sicknesses that lead to medical expenses, losses in infrastructure, and problems in school environments that lead to drop out and end of careers, are some of the economic effects on young adults. These economic strains are affecting Abia state currently

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<sup>84</sup> Abiona, Oluwasanu, and Oladepo, “Analysis of Alcohol Policy in Nigeria.”

<sup>85</sup> Ebirim I. C. Chikere and Morakinyo O. Mayowa, “Prevalence and Perceived Health Effect of Alcohol Use among Male Undergraduate Students in Owerri, South-East Nigeria: A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study,” *BMC Public Health* 11, art. no. 118 (2011), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49847294\\_Prevalence\\_and\\_perceived\\_health\\_effect\\_of\\_alcohol\\_use\\_among\\_male\\_undergraduate\\_students\\_in\\_Owerri\\_South-East\\_Nigeria\\_A\\_descriptive\\_cross-sectional\\_study](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49847294_Prevalence_and_perceived_health_effect_of_alcohol_use_among_male_undergraduate_students_in_Owerri_South-East_Nigeria_A_descriptive_cross-sectional_study).

<sup>86</sup> Chikere and Mayowa, “Health Effect of Alcohol Use.”

Furthermore, alcohol abuse places a strain on the families of abusers as they are the ones who deal with the economic strain caused by death, illnesses, and medical care. Nigerian families, especially those from Abia state, operate in a communal living system where they depend on each other for daily provision and sustenance. Death or health issues of these young adults who mostly double as breadwinners affect the economic state of these families and their society at large. Instead of the young adults contributing to the well-being of their families and society, the bulk of the economic impact now falls back on parents and other family members. Resources that would have been used to feed and care for families are wasted on alcohol or must be channeled into medical treatment; most of these young adults were trained to alleviate the poverty level of their families and communities but their abuse does not allow them to do that. Alcoholism in young adults causes economic harm to families who bear the price.

### **Health Effects of Alcoholism**

Alcohol abuse has side effects on abusers. Research has shown that alcohol abuse can cause a variety of illnesses. The survey by Chikere and Mayowa, on alcohol use among undergraduate students in Owerri, Imo State, a neighboring state to Abia, recognized the health problems that are associated with alcohol use and its abuse. In their findings, they observed that the perceived health impacts of alcohol use among current users record above fifty percent of the alcohol-related health impact that include the following: 1. the enhancement of pleasure during moments of sex (51.1%); 2. alcohol causing drowsiness and weakness (63.8%); alcohol precipitating defective memory and impaired perception (64.3%) and 3. alcohol serving as a risk factor for most chronic diseases (68.5%).<sup>87</sup> What one should notice from their findings are the negative effects that are above 60% of health challenges that alcohol use can cause its users among young

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<sup>87</sup> Chikere and Mayowa, "Health Effect of Alcohol Use."

adult students. Another thing that can be observed from their result is that these students are incurring these problems as they are entering the expectant age that they need to contribute to the well-being of their families and society.

Chikere and Mayowa note that “alcohol consumption has health and society consequences via intoxication (drunkenness) dependence (habitual, compulsive and long-term drinking), and other biochemical effects.”<sup>88</sup> In most cases, they believe that alcohol also contributes “to traumatic outcomes that kill or disable one at a relatively young age, resulting in the loss of many years of life to death or disability.”<sup>89</sup> Specifically, they mentioned that “Alcohol is estimated to cause 20-30% of worldwide disease of esophageal cancer, liver cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, homicide, epilepsy, and motor accidents.”<sup>90</sup> These estimates may not be far-fetched from the area as they note that it may not be visible among young adults until late in life as they observed that “intentional and unintentional injuries are far more common among younger people.”<sup>91</sup> The reason for these diseases may be a result of a lack of education on harmful effects to young adults.

Commenting on the health risks that are associated with alcohol consumption and its abuse, Myadze and Rwomire believe that alcohol has become “the drug of choice among youths.”<sup>92</sup> They further state that “young people drink too much and at too early ages, thereby creating problems for themselves, for people around them, and society as a whole.”<sup>93</sup>

Similarly, in related research that was conducted in another state, Oyo State, Nigeria, which has few cultural differences, Lasebikan and Ola observed in their findings

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<sup>88</sup> Chikere and Mayowa, “Health Effect of Alcohol Use.”

<sup>89</sup> Chikere and Mayowa, “Health Effect of Alcohol Use.”

<sup>90</sup> Chikere and Mayowa, “Health Effect of Alcohol Use.”

<sup>91</sup> Chikere and Mayowa, “Health Effect of Alcohol Use.”

<sup>92</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 2.

<sup>93</sup> Myadze and Rwomire, “Alcoholism in Africa,” 2.

that current alcohol use was more prevalent among the following: the young adult age group, male gender, unmarried, low educational level status, low or low average level socio-economic class, unemployed, and Christians.<sup>94</sup> In comparison to the two cultures among the two states in Nigeria that apply to Abia state, there is a need to observe the high prevalence rate of alcohol consumption among young adults in Nigeria and the dire health consequences affecting their future life and development.

### **Practical Guide to Counseling and Building Leadership Skills in Young Adults on Alcohol Abuse in Local Churches in Abia State**

The project in this section will put forward some practical guides for young adults in Baptist churches by developing skills that will help them to teach alcohol abusers. These skills will involve discipleship, the spiritual disciplines of Bible meditation and prayer groups, instilling hope in abusers, and the development of accountability groups.

#### **Discipleship**

One way to check the problem of abuse is by forming discipleship groups among the young adults within a church. This group will instruct the young adults on the importance of discipleship and provide instruction on teaching others. Richard V. Peace in the *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* describes disciples as “followers (students, apprentices, pupils) who were committed to a particular pattern of life, whether by living in a certain way, passing on the teaching to others, or engaging in political or religious activities.”<sup>95</sup> Jesus and his disciples exemplified the teacher and disciple relationship. Craig Ott and Gene Wilson in *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best*

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<sup>94</sup> Lasebikan and Ola, “Prevalence and Correlates of Alcohol Use,” 5.

<sup>95</sup> Richard V. Peace, “Discipleship,” in *Zondervan Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen G. Scorgie (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 406.

*Practices for Multiplication* define disciples as “those who follow Christ and His teaching to become progressively more like Him and accomplish His will for their lives.”<sup>96</sup> The keyword that should be noted is “progressive” which indicates that the disciple must diligently walk on the path of becoming like Christ and accomplishing his will. To Ott and Wilson, the process of disciplining involves “helping new Christ-followers become, established, grounded, stable, and secure in him and their practice of obedience to Him.”<sup>97</sup>

The goal of a disciple is to purposefully reflect in his daily personal life the character and life of Christ — for the individuals’ spiritual growth and for others to see and emulate. Kevin Carson in “The Personal, Private, and Public Ministry of the Word” expands such goals when he notes that

God’s goal is for every believer to become like Christ (Romans 8:29). Becoming like Christ involves the whole person—all one’s character and conduct. This means when the believer makes personal choice (where responsibility is evident) or personally responds to difficult circumstances (being sinned against, personal illness, financial difficulties, among various other pressures), the believer consciously chooses to respond as one who is set apart unto God.<sup>98</sup>

In other words, Carson believes that the individual will be able to practice what he has received from the teaching and training and apply it when facing difficult situations. This idea that Carson is emphasizing is important when considering an alcohol abuser. He will be able to make personal choices on what is the will of God for him, and such will must reflect in his character and daily conduct.

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<sup>96</sup> Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 231.

<sup>97</sup> Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 231.

<sup>98</sup> Kevin Carson, “The Personal, Private, and Public Ministry of the Word,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God’s Changeless Truth*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kelleman, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 257.

## **Spiritual Disciplines: Bible Meditation and Prayer Groups**

Another leadership skill that the trainers will develop is that of spiritual disciplines that will engage them in Bible meditation and prayer groups. These spiritual disciplines will aim at filling the hole that alcohol abuse creates and the time the abuser uses to engage in it.

Maintaining a time of Bible meditation after the abuser has been confronted with the gospel truth and personal acceptance of Christ will help check alcohol abuse among young adults in churches. The spiritual discipline of meditation will help fill the vacancy that withdrawal from alcohol abuse will create in the individual's life and should address four main characteristics of applying the Scriptures, according to Heath Lambert. They include the authority, clarity, necessity, and sufficiency of the Scripture.<sup>99</sup> For instance, the abuser must recognize the authority of the Scripture and allow that authority to guide and control his decisions, attitudes, and daily life. Similar actions should be taken regarding the other three characteristics of the application of the Scripture.

This application of the Scriptures will be effective through constant meditation on God's word. David Saxton in his book *God's Battle Plan for the Mind: The Puritan Practice of Biblical Meditation* states that present-day Christianity has devolved into "a superficial religion."<sup>100</sup> Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp in their book *How People Change* stress the importance of God's word as a law that should dwell in people's hearts by noting that it

is not psychological, (low self-esteem or unmet needs), social, (bad relationship and influences), historical (my past) or physiological (my body). They are insignificant influences, but my real problem is spiritual (my straying heart and my need for Christ), I have replaced Christ with something else, and as a consequence, my heart

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<sup>99</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundation of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 36.

<sup>100</sup> David W. Saxton, *God's Battle Plan for the Mind: The Puritan Practice of Biblical Meditation* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015), 1.

is hopeless and powerless. Its responses reflect its bondage to whatever it is serving instead of Christ. Ultimately, my real problem is worship disorder.<sup>101</sup>

Superficial religiosity replaces Christ with something else that is hopeless and powerless; in this case, the replacement is alcoholism. That is what is creating the bondage and worship disorder. Saxton believes that the church or the individual can return to true biblical spirituality by engaging in “a serious focus on putting God’s Word to practice in one’s own experience.”<sup>102</sup> To him, meditation will teach a disciple that “A Christian enters into meditation as a man enters into the hospital, that he may be healed. Meditation heals the souls of its deadness and earthliness.”<sup>103</sup> He goes on to state that a disciple will need a dosage of God’s word each day to be able to withstand, overcome, combat, and conquer all forms of deadness and earthliness in his life today. He believes that meditation is necessary because it will enhance the disciple’s growth and make him healthy in the Lord.<sup>104</sup> Daily meditation on God’s word is a necessity for the addict to conquer his urges and taste for alcohol. David confirmed this when he stated, “I have stored up Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11, ESV).

Regarding prayer groups, the trainer should understand the importance and power of prayer for any abuser. Jesus demonstrates the need for prayer in overcoming sin in Luke 22: 31-32 when he prayed for Peter in this way; “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and you when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (NASB). Aphthorp while expressing the role of trainer or counselor on how to lead an abuser into wholeness cited Sharon Wegscheider prayer guide that states,

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<sup>101</sup> Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008), 134.

<sup>102</sup> Saxton, *God’s Battle Plan for the Mind*, 1.

<sup>103</sup> Saxton, *God’s Battle Plan for the Mind*, 5.

<sup>104</sup> Saxton, *God’s Battle Plan for the Mind*, 5



Help me to create a setting for risk, As each new person comes to visit me, Help me to recognize and accept The fear and pain they bring with them. Let me show them that I am not afraid, Let me use my sensitivity and courage To mirror back to them all that I see and hear That keeps them in their bondage of pain and loneliness Give me the care and perception To show them their gifts and their power. Let me reach out and touch—Then let me leave them alone. Let me trust in their strength and courage. Let me let them make their own decisions and choices. Help me lead people to wholeness By being whole.<sup>105</sup>

The trainer has been able to mirror back and see all the pains and agonies and loneliness of the victim's bondage and is praying for a fresh new beginning for the abuser. This type of prayer comes out of compassion, love, and a desire for restoration.

### **Instilling Hope**

The shame and guilt an alcoholic face in the African cultural context can result in ostracization and abandonment. There is a need for training that will help to bring hope to abusers who have been rejected in their society. The reason for this hope is that God does not abandon anyone in his trespasses or sins as Peter stated, "...He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9) (NIV). Considering the ostracization and abandonment that the individual faces, hope can be instilled by pointing out the potentials that lie ahead for the person if he gives up abuse.

John Bradshaw in his book, *Healing the Shame that Binds You*, views "shame as the core and fuel of all addiction."<sup>106</sup> He describes guilt and shame in this way, "Guilt is developmentally more mature than shame. Guilt does not reflect directly upon one's identity or diminish one's sense of personal worth. It flows from an integrated set of values."<sup>107</sup> He goes on to see guilt as "a painful feeling of regret and responsibility for one's actions."<sup>108</sup> On the other hand, Bradshaw sees shame as "a painful feeling about

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<sup>105</sup> Apthorp, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse*, 71-72.

<sup>106</sup> John Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You* (Deerfield, FL: Health Communications, 1988), 15.

<sup>107</sup> Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You*, 17.

<sup>108</sup> Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You*, 17.

oneself as a person.”<sup>109</sup> He further states that “the possibility for repair seems foreclosed to the shameful person because shame is a matter of identity... not of a behavioral infraction. There is nothing to be learned from it and no growth is opened by the experience because it only confirms one’s negative feelings about oneself.”<sup>110</sup>

What one can understand from the thoughts of Bradshaw is that shame puts the individual in a perceived hopeless situation. One of the ways to seek repairs for shame is in what Bob Kellemen and Greg Cook explained in “The Ministry of Soul Care for People Who Suffer,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God’s Changeless Truth*, believes that the trainer should view and approach such abuser as a sufferer, sinner, and saint. According to them, “We do not need to choose between sinner, sufferer, or saint, but rather, we can readily embrace the biblical reality that we all sin, we all suffer, and those who have been regenerated are all saints with a new identity in Christ.”<sup>111</sup> Therefore, as they stress, the emphasis should be compassion that comes through this new identity (2 Cor 5:17, 2 Peter 1: 3-8; 2).<sup>112</sup> This should be the trainer’s emphasis.

### **Developing Relationships**

Accountability partner relationships are one means that can be used in fighting alcohol abuse among young adults. According to Tripp in the process of restoring people to where God wants them to be, we tend to “carry each other’s burden” (Gal 6:2).<sup>113</sup> That process as he further explains involves loving people “more than expose wrong,

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<sup>109</sup> Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You*, 17.

<sup>110</sup> Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You*, 17.

<sup>111</sup> Bob Kellemen, and Greg Cook, “The Ministry of Soul Care for People Who Suffer,” in MacDonald, Kellemen, and Viars, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, 278.

<sup>112</sup> Kellemen and Cook, “The Ministry of Soul Care,” 278.

<sup>113</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People in Need of Change, Helping People in Need of Need* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 268.

pronounce right, and walk away.”<sup>114</sup> He believes that “Accountability requires a willingness to roll up our sleeves and get alongside people as they fight the war between sin and righteousness.”<sup>115</sup> Helping people in their fight against sin is as important to an abuser as some have gone into such habits because of the influence of others or issues around them.

He goes on to add that accountability will provide help in the following ways: structure, guidance, assistance, encouragement, and warning. The vital questions for the one providing accountability include: (1) what kinds of ongoing help will this person need? (2) How often will I need to be in contact with the person for change to continue? (3) Are there other resources in the body of Christ that would be helpful during this period? (4) And how to connect the individual with these resources?<sup>116</sup>

Forming peer groups as we have in the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) will go a long way in providing help that an abuser can plug into easily. This project suggests that the teenage group's fellowship that is newly introduced by NBC can be the foundation for accountability partners. The groups admit teenagers starting at age thirteen. These groups can be a formidable background for sensitization of the ills of alcohol and the abuse that is associated with it.

Alcohol Abuse can also be handled through using the NBC's organizations that handle young adult ministries like the Girl's Auxiliary, the Lydia's Group, and the Royal Ambassadors. These organizations can be avenues to teach the evils associated with abuse. Mark Shaw warned against using secular self-help groups for this purpose because they will not help abusers “learn a better way of thinking and acting.”<sup>117</sup> He suggests that

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<sup>114</sup> Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 268.

<sup>115</sup> Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 268.

<sup>116</sup> Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 270-71.

<sup>117</sup> Mark E. Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2008), 182.

in a church setting, Christians can start a small group of three or more, and most like they can be same-sex and growing Christians from the same local church. He believes that the meeting can take the form of “prayer, Bible study, discussion, fellowship, and real accountability.”<sup>118</sup>

To Shaw, “Accountability must be open, honest, and deep so that the other members can pray accurately and help appropriately.”<sup>119</sup> Citing Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:33 that states, “Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals” most children are deceived by joining a bad company that encourages bad morals.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, being in the good company of believers in Christ will encourage good morals rather than corrupt them.

The family also plays an important role in helping the abuser. According to Shaw in his book, *Divine Intervention: Hope and Help for Families of Addicts*, he observes that “Usually, there is one significant relationship that the addict still has left—either with a loved one, family member, or a friend. Everyone else may have given up on him and let him go, except for this person.”<sup>121</sup> Teaching young adults how family members could be a beginning point will be of help. This will start with the early education of children on alcohol and the problem it can cause to anyone that engages with it. They can discuss this as the children grow. Introducing the children to Christ and biblical principles that condemn drugs, and alcohol abuse and allowing them to know the ills associated with it will also go a long way in handling the problem.

Shaw suggests that teenage children living with their parents should be made to know that they are under their parents’ authority. Furthermore, as he states, the parents

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<sup>118</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 182.

<sup>119</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 182.

<sup>120</sup> Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 182.

<sup>121</sup> Mark E. Shaw, *Divine Intervention: Hope and Help for Families of Addicts* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2011), 77.

should make the child understand his/her duties as stated in Ephesians 6:1-3. He emphasizes that in as much as the parents are not leading the child to sin, he/she ought to obey their parents in everything.<sup>122</sup> He encourages parents to engage in parenting their children and not to leave it at the mercies of peers, teachers, youth pastors, and bosses (Deut 6:6-7).<sup>123</sup> Brian Haynes in his book, *Shift: What it Takes to Finally Reach Families Today*, notes in his milestone 4, the commitment to purity, he suggests that the parents could lead their young adults into these listed processes that can be of help. They include helping them understand: 1. biblical standard for purity, 2. biblical perspective on sex and intimacy, 3. identity with Christ, 4. accountability, 5. healthy relationships, 6. leading faith talks on purity, and 7. understanding the commitment to purity weekend.<sup>124</sup> Some of the milestones raised by Haynes like the biblical standard of purity, faith talks, and commitment to purity will help their children reject the life of alcoholism which is in contrast to the purity that he mentioned.

### **Conclusion**

The project in this chapter examined the theoretical, historical, and practical issues that relate to alcohol abuse and discovered some pastoral counsels that will support biblical interventions in the Scriptures. This work maintains that alcohol abuse is a problem that destroys God's design in man as His image-bearer. First, it recognizes that intervention remedies must understand that alcohol abuse is a sin that should be traced to fallen human nature (Gen 3). Such sins are willful acts of disobedience that are aimed at perverting God's laws and distorting God's glory. This observation supports one of the definitions of sin given in this project by Grudem that acknowledges sin as any failure to

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<sup>122</sup> Shaw, *Divine Intervention*, 80.

<sup>123</sup> Shaw, *Divine Intervention*, 81.

<sup>124</sup> Brian Haynes, *Shift: What It Takes to Finally Reach Families Today* (Loveland, CA: Group, 2009), 77.

conform to the moral law of God in, act, attitude, or nature (Ex 20:17, Matt: 5:28, Gal 5:20).<sup>125</sup>

Second, it explored how this sin can relate to alcohol abuse from the biblical perspective. The exploration observed that some secularists see alcohol abuse as a disease or an illness, but this project disagrees because it recognizes as Hoekema suggests that it is an actual sin of acts, words, and thoughts that human beings commit.<sup>126</sup>

This pastoral counsel affirms this sin of abuse as a form of idolatry that anyone can struggle with because our hearts are idol factories. Idolatry in this case is viewed as the preoccupation of one's thinking that can lead to him demanding a temporary pleasure that will gratify self. It notes that what causes the sin of alcohol abuse is opting for a satisfying desire that leads to disobedience to God's commandments (Gen 3:6, 1 John 2:16), sin of the heart (Mark 7:20-23), evil cravings, and free will choices that individuals have decided to make in their lives. Some of the biblical examples of idolatry include Israel's abandonment of national covenant with God as the only God, YHWH, to follow and worship other nations gods (Job 31:26-28, 2 Kings 17:16, 21:3-5 Ezek 8: 9-12) idols of demons and that of spiritual prostitution (Deut 32:16-17, 21, Ps 106:19-20, Isa 2:8, 20, Hab 2:18, and Hosea 4:12, 5:4). The pastoral counsel recognizes the consequences of this sin of idolatry to include consequences of deception and seduction and the distortion of God's holiness in man.

Third, the project suggests some practical guides that can help build leadership training skills for young adults in Baptist churches for abuse. The skills will involve forming discipleship groups among young adults within the Church that will provide instructions. The idea is that Jesus used this method and impacted the twelve disciples, and such impact will go a long way in reaching others with the teachings on the problem

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<sup>125</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 490.

<sup>126</sup> Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 143.

of alcoholism and its abuse. Also, the practical guide is suggesting the practice of spiritual disciplines. The project believes spiritual disciplines that will engage young adults in Bible meditation and prayer groups will be good modeling that will help fill the gap that alcohol abuse has created in young adults. Again, it suggests that instilling a sense of hope will help the abusers overcome the shame and ostracization that they suffer in society. It also proposes the idea of forming an accountability partner relationship that will help check and correct the abuser in love. Peer groups, like the Girl's Auxiliary, the Lydia's Group, the Royal Ambassadors, and the newly formed Teenager's Group that are all young adults' groups in NBC, can be the channel for such accountability partners groups.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT

This chapter will describe the implementation of the ministry project by looking at the details of its preparation and other actions that followed during the six-week training session. The ministry project was six-week training sessions that were conducted through online Zoom meetings. The purpose of this project centered on establishing a concrete biblical resource that would help to train and counsel young adults on alcohol abuse in five Baptist churches in Abia State, Nigeria. The primary purpose of the project was not to address how to give a full counseling ministry to young adults in these churches, but to create awareness in the lives of young adults on the problems of alcohol abuse. Also, the purpose was to see how they can be of help when encountering such issues in their local Baptist Churches, schools, and the environment (society) where they live.

This project had four goals it looked forward to achieving. One was the assessment of the use of alcohol among young adults in five churches. The second was to provide instructions about the effects of alcohol abuse on young adults in five Baptist churches in Abia state. The third was to measure the biblical understanding of alcohol before and the curriculum, based on biblical principle, in five Baptist churches in Abia state. The fourth was to develop plans on how to engage the young adults in teaching and training through young adult structures of the NBC. The implementation of the project began with the selection of five churches from the three (3) senatorial zones that make up Abia State. The churches were as follows—First Baptist Church Aba, (Abia South senatorial zone); Goodnews Baptist Church and Antioch Baptist Church Amibo,



Umuahia (Abia Central senatorial zone), and Alayi Baptist Church (Abia North senatorial Zone).

### **Preliminary Plans for the Implementation of the Project**

The limitations in this project centered on the number of those that will accurately respond to DKPS survey questions. The second limitation was on the responses from pastors and other denominations on issues that were related to alcohol and its abuse. To handle these limitations, the surveys will be anonymous. The delimitation centered on the time frame of the project that was about the twenty-one-week timeframe. Although the work wanted to focus on recruiting young adult volunteers that would engage the researcher in personal teaching in these churches, the possibility of in-person teaching was ruled out due to Covid-19 restrictions and visa problems. The researcher resorted to a virtual or online method that will enhance the teaching sessions. This involved the initial contacts of the pastors of the six local Baptist churches that would be involved for a proper briefing of the project implementation. The initial contact was for the pastors to select 6 young adults from each church to bring the number to 30. The following pastors were contacted through phone calls. They include Rev Dr. Peter Aworinde, Liberty BC Aba, Pastor Dr. Sola Bamiro, Goodnews Baptist Church Umuahia, Rev Jerry Paul Onuoha, Antioch Baptist Church Amibo, Umuahia, and Deacon Eze O. Eze of Alayi Baptist Church. The conference president was contacted and briefed on the survey and project implementation plan. Also, a field coordinator, Rev Justin Anyanwu was contacted and briefed on what to do.

After the approval of the Ethics Committee of the SBTS on March 3, 2021, the following weeks were used to make all the contacts with the church Pastors. A deacon was selected to serve because of the absence of a substantive pastor. Deacon Eze O. Eze helped in coordinating the Alayi Baptist Church participants. Considering the different time zones in Nigeria and the United States, the following time was selected and agreed

upon for the teaching sessions through zoom—11:00 am in the United States Eastern Zone timeline, and 4:00 pm in the Nigerian Eastern Standard time zone each Sunday. The time was chosen because the young adults are involved in their local church worship. This allowed individuals to attend various local church services before they met either in the church or followed the lessons on their phones or other devices. The data for the online lessons were provided for the 30 members by the researcher. Unfortunately, one of the churches that were initially contacted which were supposed to make the number of churches six for the survey implementation pulled out at the last minute of the implementation of the project. The church was Estate Baptist Church, Aba. The pastor called on April 10, 2021, to express the church's withdrawal citing the problem of conflict of schedules. The young adults, he stated, would be engaged in choir rehearsals during the time for their forthcoming conference session and music competition that the church would be hosting. He said the time was conflicting with the teaching time. He tendered his apology for their inability to participate.

### **Ethics Committee Approval and Expert Panel**

While the arrangements of the contacts were going on, the Ethics Committee approval was received. The period between March 3 and 30 was used to write the six lessons and prepare them into slides. The lesson was given to six Expert Panel members (see the Rubrics in Appendix 2 page 129). The expert panel members are individuals that have distinguished themselves in various fields like pastoral ministry and other church leadership, education, secular work. They rated it based on their theological and secular experiences. The curriculum was evaluated using the following rubrics, 1 – Insufficient, 2= requires attention, 3= sufficient, 4= exemplary. The level of rating that is required in the project is based on sufficient = 3 and above. Based on the panel's report in appendix 2, only two panelists rated some as sufficient, others rated the teaching as being exemplary. The following are short descriptions of the evaluators and their ratings. First

was Dr. C.L. Jordan, former Pastor at Bible Community Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, former chaplain to state prison and correction center. He was also a Social Mission Coordinator of Long Run Baptist Association. He rated the rubric = 4 exemplary. The second was Paul Bruce Jr., an Elder in Hunsinger Lane Baptist Church. He was a retired Chief Financial Officer, Farm Credit Mid-America. He also holds an MBA from Washington University, St. Louis. He rated all the criteria 4 with the exemption of box number 3 of the ratings that states if “the material clearly lays out the principle for one to multiply themselves in another believer” =3, which means sufficient.

The third person was Cheryl Singleton, a Sunday School teacher at Hunsinger Lane Baptist Church. Based on her profile, she has taught all age groups in the church, served as a director for youth and adult age groups, and was a Sunday School director. Singleton was also a retired model school record clerk and was a co-teacher in the researcher’s former Sunday School class for almost 4 years. According to her rating, after some minor corrections, she “found the lessons to be exemplary in every way” and evaluated the rubric as 4, that is, exemplary. Pastor Keith Meriwether is the current Senior Pastor at Bible Community Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church and staff of Louisville Water Company. He evaluated the material as relevant to the issue of leadership and counseling training. He also notes that it clearly lays out the principles for multiplying oneself in other believers, which he rated 3 (sufficient), while the other 6 items were rated 4, that is, exemplary. Samson Iwuchukwu is a Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Ethics, and a lecturer at the Baptist College of Theology Obinze, Owerri. This Baptist College of Theology Obinze Owerri is one of the theological schools that supply pastoral leadership in the Southeastern and South-South states in Nigeria, which captures the context of the project. He rated all the 8 rubrics as 3 which is sufficient. He agrees that “a lot of references were made to Scriptures before or after different points were broken down to the understanding of the learners.” The last was Amos Luka, a current Doctoral Student of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He suggested some

corrections that were accepted and rated all the rubrics as 3, that is, sufficient. See appendix 2, page 129 for a summary of the ratings.

### **Research and Teaching Methodology**

The first three chapters of the project centered on the research and teaching methodology. That is also what informed the way the lesson curriculum was prepared. One emphasized rationale was aimed at helping young adults in Baptist churches in Abia live a good and meaningful life, receive solid biblical teaching that would help them avoid or overcome alcohol abuse, and to encourage spiritual growth. Another rationale addressed was to increase Scriptural knowledge through training young adults, with biblical counseling materials that would strengthen discipleship-making goals for churches dealing with alcohol abuse.

Considering the purpose of the project that sought to establish a concrete biblical resource that would help in counseling and care of young adults engaged in alcohol abuse in Baptist churches Abia state, Chapter One laid the foundation for the reason of engaging in the teaching of this project. The following two chapters, Chapters two and three, explored the theological basis for such teaching. Also addressed in these chapters was the awareness that sees that alcohol abuse disrupts God's design for people created in His image and likeness. Chapter three specifically investigated some theoretical, historical, and practical issues of alcohol abuse. Theoretically, it was recognized in the project that alcohol abuse is a sin and a form of idolatry. It stressed that a person may fail to attain the spiritual goal needed in worship that should be given to God when he engages in its abuse. It corrupts one's body and gives Satan room to operate in one's life. These three chapters then closely captured the needs that were addressed in the rationale, purpose, and goals of the project. All these pre-informed the planning of the curriculum.

## **The Teaching of the Curriculum**

The curriculum was taught through zoom by the virtual learning process and with the aid of a PowerPoint. Most participating churches organized it in the church by coming together to listen to the training lectures. Others followed the lessons through their smartphones or laptops. The lessons were intended to be taught in groups as the participants met in the church, but the church in-person meeting plan for all could not be held in most churches due to various reasons, such as Covid-19 restrictions, resumed school sessions, and lack of adequate technology in churches to transmit the lesson virtually. All the sessions were recorded, and the lessons were also provided to those who missed some of them.

To achieve one of the goals of the teaching, which is to raise leaders and make quality discipleship, a kind of on-the-job training was introduced. During the last part of the sessions, three volunteers, selected from the churches that attended the lessons, were appointed to teach any of the training lessons of their choice in a summary form in the class. The aim of this was to assess the level of their understanding, the ability to present the gospel as it relates to alcohol abuse and to show an example of how these materials can be used to disciple those who are facing alcohol abuse. Three young adults, two males, and a female, from the churches, were selected to present. The entire class rated each on-the-job training session high and commended the job training method of the teaching. Some saw it as a good challenge to engage someone using the biblical training materials and skills learned from the lessons on alcohol abuse.

## **Curriculum Development**

The curriculum for the course sessions was developed as six one-and-a-half-hour lessons that were taught through Zoom meetings. The classes were taught on Sundays at 11:00 am US Eastern Time Zone and 4:00 pm Nigerian Standard Time. The time was chosen so as not to conflict with any church worship or other programs of the church that the young adults were involved in during weekdays and weekends. The

curriculum was given to the expert panel for the review of the lessons. After the review, corrections were made based on their suggestions that centered on grammar, Bible passages, and a few theological issues. The lesson's topic was titled, "Ministers of God's Grace." During the introduction, the class members were made to understand that going by the title, the word "minister" does not mean that the lesson is aimed at viewing them as pastors or leaders in the church. Instead, as Baptists, because we believe in the priesthood of all believers, we can be the instrument that God will use to represent Himself, even as we help minister to those with alcohol abuse. It was made clear that there is no certificate associated with the training. All that will be accomplished is to fulfill Christ's mandate of the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations. Therefore, the class was able to understand the context of using the word "minister" in the lesson using the biblical passage of 2 Corinthians 2:12-16 as the basis (See Appendix 3, page 132 for the Lessons Contents).

### **Session Lessons**

Each of the sessions was taught at the scheduled time of 11:00 am and 4:00 pm US and Nigerian time, respectively. Most lessons were well attended except the session that coincided with Mother's Day Sunday that recorded a low turnout in attendance. The reason was the nature of the Mother's Day celebration in Baptist churches in Nigeria that can extend the hours of worship services. Most of the participants complained that they were too busy and fully engaged in helping with the music, drama presentations, and other activities of the day. That affected the turnout. Three pastors of the local Baptist churches that fell in the age range of young adults also participated in the training. Also, a deacon from a local church joined his young adult, in the training session as a volunteer and interested person. One of the pastors that participated is a "Radio Minister" in one of the state's Radios and Television stations. The participants applauded the teaching and training sessions including the materials.

**Session 1.** The first lesson that was taught on April 11, 2021, lasted one hour and twenty-six minutes (1:26 mins). The lesson focused on the general introduction, the lesson aim, and the objectives of the entire training session (See Appendix 3 for lesson notes). Again, it also touched on the understanding of the meaning of alcohol abuse, its effects, and the personal views of the participants on alcohol and its abuse. A definition of biblical counseling and other terms like alcohol and abuse was given using the biblical passages that support such definition. Participants were asked to define these terms from their point of view. The first lesson had a major focus that aims at assessing the use of alcohol and providing instructions about the effects of alcohol abuse among young adults in Abia state. It allowed participants themselves to state some of its uses and the effects of alcohol abuse. Notably, all the participants agreed that alcohol use and its abuse have devastating effects on one's health, education, family, and economy. Also, it has cultural, social, spiritual, and relational aspects of one's life in the state. It ended by discovering that God has given all the grace to live a good and purposeful life (2 Cor 12:9, Eph 2:8). It is up to the abuser to utilize this God's given opportunity to glorify Him. Given this view, lesson one helped to address the first and second goals of the project that aims at assessing alcohol use and providing instructions about the effects of alcohol abuse among young adults in five Baptist Churches in Abia State. The participants recognized that alcohol abuse was highly prevalent in the localities they belonged, and it needed to be addressed. Some of them had engaged in alcohol drinking as Baptist church members although it is prohibited in the Nigerian Baptist Convention Church Covenant, which states that "members will abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage and zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Osadolor Imasogie, *Minister's Manual of the Nigerian Baptist Convention* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Baptist Press, 2005), 20.

**Session 2.** The second lesson, which focused on the biblical perspectives on alcohol and its abuse, stressed the truth that God’s design for creating man in His image and likeness is for man to become His image-bearers. Examining it from the biblical passages from Genesis 1:26-31 and Psalm 8:3-6, the study recognized that “Someone’s actions can hinder him from meeting the spiritual and moral standards of being God’s image-bearer” (See Appendix page 3). The session further recognized that human life is made to worship God and enjoy His creation. The session noted that this contrasts with man’s finding of joy in mere created things (Matt 6:33, Rom 1:18-25). The lesson further observed that intimate knowledge of God is the only way to find this joy that will result in worship (John 17:3, Jer 19:23-24 and Hosea 6:6). Another aspect of the biblical perspective that was taught is the human body as seen as God’s Temple in contrast to alcohol abuse (1 Cor 6:19-20). In other words, as Brian Chapell observes, man will accomplish a fulfilled worship when he faithfully obeys God and acknowledges that his body is God’s temple (Rom 12:1ff, 2 Peter 2:4-5, 9).<sup>2</sup> Lastly in this session, it was acknowledged that faithful obedience in maintaining our bodies as God’s temple contrasts with the characteristic of an alcohol abuser (Prov 23: 29-31). The passage of Proverbs recognizes that an alcohol abuser allows the created (alcohol) to rule over his body even as the writer of proverbs describes alcohol as a “viper’s poison” and instructs his readers not to look at it when it is red.

**Session 3.** The third session was a continuation of the biblical perspective that understands alcohol abuse as a sin as seen in the passage of Genesis 3:1-15. The session maintained that an understanding of alcohol abuse as sin should be linked to the idea of the original sin in the Bible. Sin, in both the Old and New Testaments, is recognized as turning away from God and disobeying His teachings or commandments. It is also known

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<sup>2</sup> Brian Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 109.



as the idea of missing the mark, that is, the righteous standard of God (See appendix 3). The lessons called for an understanding of the root cause of alcohol abuse such as inordinate desires or cravings (Gen 3:6, 1 John 2:16, Eph 4:17-19). The solutions to those cravings are seen in these passages (Isaiah 55:1-3, Hebrews 9:27-28, and Romans 6:23). The lesson also saw alcohol abuse as a form of idolatry that was supported by Michael Lawrence in his book, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry*. He believes that “Everyone is struggling with idolatry in one way or the other” as he sees “our hearts as idol-factories.”<sup>3</sup> The session also looked at the consequences of idolatry on the abuser from its deceptive and seductive nature. It then noted that such idolatry practices distort God’s holiness in man (Lev 10:8-11, 1 Peter 2:5, 9, Rev 1:6, and Gal 5:20ff), and maintained that alcohol abuse is the problem of the heart issues that needs God’s cleansing (Ezek 36:23-27). The two sessions were used to address the third goal that centered on the participant’s measure of understanding of alcohol abuse from a biblical counseling principle. The participant’s understanding was measured before and after the sessions.

**Session 4.** The fourth session focused on humans as God’s image-bearers. It maintained that Ministering God’s Grace to the community will help them achieve this image-bearers purpose. It recognized that God’s purpose in creating man is to have fellowship with Him and with one another (1 John 1:3 cf., 2 Cor 13:4, 1 John 1:7, Heb 10:24-25). These fellowships create opportunities to engage in services to the church, family, and community around us. It helps believers to contribute meaningfully to the growth of the community they live in through the light of the Gospel. Therefore, this lesson observed that a theological foundation that could be established to oppose alcohol abuse among young adults is an understanding that God’s design for work is for one to

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 186. See Mark 7:20-23 and appendix 3.

contribute meaningfully to the progress of his community. According to Kenneth Gentry, in *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages*, an alcohol abuser disrupts this design of God because his behavior brings about a curse to man, distortion of one's perception of God, and the destruction of his vocational capacity. Other disruptions that an alcohol abuser could experience include weakness in the body and social alienation. It also bars him from church leadership, among others.<sup>4</sup>

**Session 5.** The fifth session saw human beings as God's image-bearers who are made to have self-control as seen in Ephesians 5:18-19. The lesson recognized man's given freedom from God. It also means that man should know his limits and restrictions over such freedom. Man's observation of these limits among the given freedom will help him apply self-control over some of his actions. Ephesian 5:18-21 gives examples of a life controlled by wine or alcohol abuse and one that is controlled and filled with the Holy Spirit. Such self-control can be practically viewed in these areas and passages of the Scripture: self-control over food (Eph 5:18, 1 Cor 3:17), what inhabits one's mind (Eph 5:19-20, Matt 22:37), and over one's habits and attitudes (Prov 16:25). The lesson recognized that the vital answers to these come from Paul's instruction on how to put off the old self and put on the new self. It encourages one not to walk any longer as a Gentile who walks in ignorance, hardens his heart, and becomes callous. It also encourages one not to be sensual, impure, and greedy. Rather, it advocates that the individual should constantly put on a new self through renewing one's mind in righteousness, holiness, and truth. This session helped address part of the third goal of the project that sought to measure the biblical understanding of alcohol abuse before and after the curriculum that

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<sup>4</sup> Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages: A Biblical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), 27. See appendix 3, (p. 138) for Scripture passages that support Gentry's claims.

is based on biblical counseling principles among young adults in five Baptist churches in the state.

**Session 6.** The last session proposed some biblical counseling tips that the class can use to help an alcohol abuser. The tips followed the suggestions of Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju's book on *The Pastor and Counseling: The Basics of Shepherding Members in Need*. Some of these tips include- uncovering how the hearts to worship, reintroducing God through teaching God's characteristics, de-psychologizing the person to make him see primarily that he/she is created as a child of God, contrasting functional and confessional assumptions, reframing the raw data of the individual with a distinctly biblical frame, uncovering the underlying dynamics, confronting, and reorienting the individual.<sup>5</sup>

Other tips that can help are to approach the person with humility and love of God, knowing some biblical doctrines about sin and drunkenness, pointing the person to Christ as the healer of their soul, not condemning, praying, and disciplining within the context of NBC church organizational structures for the young adults. Sessions 5-6 gave practical guides and context that the lesson can be applied when ministering to an alcohol abuser. This lesson successfully addressed the fourth goal that sought to develop a plan on how to engage the young adults in the teaching and training through the NBC young adult's denominational groups.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter looked at the implementation of the project that began with details of its preparations. It highlights various contacts, the approval of the ethics committee of the school, the writing of the curriculum, and an expert panel evaluation. Another focus

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<sup>5</sup> Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling: The Basics of Shepherding Members in Need* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 77-82. See appendix 3, (pp. 141-42).

that the chapter addresses is the Six-week teaching plan that used the lesson session with the team “Ministers of God’s Grace” to train participants from five Baptist churches in the three senatorial zones of the state on how to help alcohol abusers. It also emphasizes how the sessions address various goals of the project. It suggested some biblical counseling tips that could be of help to trainees to disciple young adults in their various contexts.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF PROJECT

#### **Introduction**

Believers in Christ must add value to someone's life by acting as the aroma of God's grace especially to those in trouble (2 Cor 2: 12-16). This project tries to encourage young adults to use biblical counseling and discipleship training material to reach and care for alcohol abusers in their various local church's areas. The primary means that will help achieve this goal is a six-week training class session that aims to equip young adults on the importance of counseling. This chapter will evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of this project. It will begin by evaluating the purpose, the goals, and looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the project. Other aspects of this chapter would include proposed changes that could be made to this project in the future, some theological and personal reflections, and a conclusion.

#### **Evaluation of the Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to provide knowledgeable guidance to churches in the Abia state to address with biblical care and counsel the problem of young adults abusing alcohol. According to the demographic data that was gathered, the summary of those that had interest and participated in the training exercise was encouraging. Looking at the age brackets of those that participated in the training exercise, 63.6 percent of those engaged in the pre-test data belonged to the age group of 15 to 24 years old. There were also participants, in the 25-34 age group, (27.3%) and 35 and above (9.1%). The highest percentage of 63.6 percent indicates a future generation with the age bracket that can engage their fellow youth in issues related to alcohol abuse

in society. This addresses the purpose that looks forward to addressing alcohol abuse between the age range of young adults.

Another insight that can be gained from the demographic data that addresses the main purpose is the level of participant's indication that enquired if the individual at one point or the other has engaged in alcohol consumption. About 54.5 percent responded that they have engaged in alcohol consumption while 45.5 percent said they have not. Question 7 in the data probes more on how individuals were introduced to it. About 71.4 percent of responders indicated that they were introduced to the drinking of alcohol by someone. The other 28.6 percent responded that they were not introduced to it. All the responders believed that a Christian should not engage in alcohol intake because of its negative side effects.

The pre and post were used in assessing the purpose. In the pre-test, 29 young adults participated from the five churches. The pro-test had 20 participants that returned their survey. Out of this 20, 19 participants answered all the questions. One participant missed some of the questions and was dropped. Two questions that appeared only in the post-test were dropped, while 9 completed the pre-test without returning their post-test, and the 9 were excluded from the t-test analysis. For identification purposes, each church was assigned a distinct abbreviation of its church name, like Antioch Baptist Church Amibo, (ANBC) 001-006 or First Baptist Church Aba, (FBCA 001-006). This makes it easy for tabulation as names were not used in the survey and they belonged to different churches that are in different areas.

The first assessment of the purpose addressed the participant's knowledge of the importance of God's word in their lives in survey question 3, and what the Bible teaches about alcohol in the survey question 9, in pre and post-tests. This is important because their knowledge of God's word will determine how to apply the Scripture to the abuse victims. The responses of the 19 in the pre-test and post-test are considered using the mean and median variable tests data methods. The pre-test mean score question 3 was

5.42, with a median score of 6. The post-test score is as follows, the mean was 5.68, and the median is 6. The mean difference from the pre and post-test was 0.26 percent while the median remained at 6. This increase in the result by 0.26 percent showed that the participants have high regard for addressing the problem of alcohol abuse from the Scripture and such increase was seen after the training sessions.

The data in survey question 9 measured the participant's knowledge of what the Bible teaches about alcohol abuse. The data shows a mean score of 4.0 and a median of 4. The post-test result showed some increase mean 5.15 and median at 5. This data shows that participants had significantly low knowledge about what the Bible teaches on alcohol abuse in pre-test but improved at the post-test mean and median results at the rate of 1.15 and 1 percent respectively. This showed that the purpose that was aimed at providing knowledgeable guidance to churches in Abia to address with biblical care and counsel the problem of young adults abusing alcohol was successfully achieved. One possible explanation that contributes to the low knowledge in pre-test could be that the participants have not been fully exposed to issues of alcohol and its abuse through preaching, teaching, and counseling in the pre-test questions of 28, 29, and 30. The pastor's preaching and teaching surveys that were not returned could have given more insights on the low knowledge in the pre-test.

The second assessment of the purpose was on the ability to engage in training and helping alcohol abuse victims on survey questions that state the following: "I believe the people of the church should expose the problem of alcohol" in survey question 25, and "As a Christian, I will consider witnessing to an alcohol abuser" in question 26 of the pre-test and post-tests. In the pre-test for question 25, the mean result was 5.47 and the median 6.0. The mean in question 26 was 5.26, and the median was 6.0. The post-test result in question 25 showed a mean at 5.68 and median remaining at 6.0 showing a mean difference of 0.21 percent increase while the median remained at 6.0 percent. The question 26 post-test showed 4.84 and a median at 6. A shortfall difference of 0.42

percent. The negative difference in the result in question 26 may be because of some that have not decided to make a firm commitment in strongly agree or somewhat agree on the Likert scale although the median stood at median at 6. The participants showed a high rate of being involved when the pre-test and post-test are compared to being trained and willing to help those having problems with alcohol abuse. This may also indicate that alcohol abuse is a major problem that requires urgent attention in the area. Finally, on the evaluation of the purpose, the participants' willingness, and interest in their responses to the teachings, and willingness to request copies of all the lessons taught indicate that the purpose goals were met.

### **Evaluation of the Project Goals**

The evaluation of the project goals centers on the four goals that will assess, provide instructions about the effects, measure biblical understanding of alcohol and its abuse based on biblical principles, develop plans on how to engage young adults in teaching and training using the organizational structures of the NBC such as Royal Ambassadors, Girl's Auxiliary and Lydia's about alcohol abuse in five Baptist Churches in the three senatorial zones in Abia state.

The method that the research used was quantitative and the instrument chosen for the score was the Likert scale that allowed the data to be measured linearly by assigning value to each part of the scale. Each question allowed the members to score from 1-6 points. The post-survey data demonstrate the statistical changes between pre-survey and post-survey. For identification purposes, each church was assigned a distinct abbreviation and identification number of 001-006 using their church name, like Antioch Baptist Church (ANBC) 001-006. In the chat, a number is reassigned for easy tabulation beginning number 1 to First Baptist Church Aba (FBCA 001) - Alayi Baptist Church (ALBC 005). The below chat showed the t-Test: paired Two Samples for Means



Table 1. T-test results

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	132.7894737	146
Variance	184.2865497	434.5556
Observations	19	19
Pearson Correlation	-0.004907926	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	18	
t Stat	-2.309587776	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.016490722	
t Critical one-tail	1.734063607	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.032981443	
t Critical two-tail	2.100922040	

The mean variable in the table above showed variable 1, 132.7, and variable 2, 146. This showed an increase of 13.3 after the curriculum. The variance of the pair, which is 184.2 and 434.5, showed a difference of 250.3. The instrument that was used in the survey was a ‘t-test’ paired two samples for mean with one tail to evaluate the significance of the change. Following the sample size of the survey that stood at 19, and assuming that the population mean is zero changing from the pre-survey to the post-survey, the t-value will be 0.0329814433 and p(t<=t) one-tail will be 0.0164907217. Based on the calculations, the result will be considered significant  $p < 0.001$ . The null hypothesis can be rejected.<sup>1</sup>

A significant increase was seen in the participant's responses that assessed the use of alcohol among young adults in the five Baptist churches. Questions 6,

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<sup>1</sup> Glenn David Dunn, “Developing Awareness of the Value of Biblical Counseling Training As a Means of Obeying the Great Commission at Cornerstone Bible Fellowship, North Ridgeville, Ohio,” <https://hdl-handle-net.ezproxy.sbts.edu/10392/6510> 100. The analysis follows the pattern used by Dunn in his project.

9, 25 asked about passages to use while discussing issues of alcohol, knowledge of what the Bible teaches on alcohol abuse, and the people of the church exposing the problems of alcohol abuse. The average pre-survey showed 13.3, while the post-survey showed 15.5. The percentage increase was about 16.5 percent. This overall increase showed that participants recognized the exposure of the use of alcohol, and its abuse, and willingness to use Biblical passages to let the abuser be aware of its dangers and the ability of God's word in addressing such use among young adults. This percentage increase is important because it is only God's word that can address the heart issue of which use of alcohol and its abuse is one of them

Also, the significant increase in the t-test was seen in the participants' increase that was made in providing instructions about the effects of alcohol abuse in the five Baptist churches in Abia State. The significant increase is shown in questions 25 and 26 of the pre-survey and post-survey averages that asked if the people in the church should expose the problem of alcohol abuse and if a Christian should consider witnessing to an alcoholic. The result showed on pre-survey number 25 a mean average percentage of 5.47, while the post-survey was 5.68. It showed an average 3.8 percent increase of significant changes. On question 26, the pre-survey showed 5.26 and post-survey of 4.84 average percentages. It showed a percentage decrease in negative 6 percent. The shortfall in the average post-survey, in this case, may be as a result of one participant's lack of in-depth spiritual level of commitment or lack of understanding of the question that was asked, or a mistake in answering the question. For instance, in the response of participant ANBC I D. number 003, the pre-survey showed 4 and that of the post-survey was 1 percent, but the median and standard deviation results recorded significance increases.

The median retained its 6 percent in the pre-and post-surveys. The standard deviation in the pre-survey result was 1.04 percent and that of post-survey had an increase of 1.67 percent. This showed an average of 60 percent or 0.6 difference in standard deviation. Therefore, the negative result may not be a thorough reflection of the entire result. The increases post-survey in 25 and increases in average median and standard deviation showed the willingness of the participants to engage in providing instructions on the effects of alcohol abuse in the state. Providing instructions on the effects of alcohol is one of the ways to check its abuse.

Another significant increase was on the measure of their biblical understanding before and after the curriculum which was based on biblical counseling principles in the five Baptist churches. The significant increase was measured by finding the total average in these questions, 2, 6, 9, and 26. The pre-survey average showed 18.1 with a post-survey of 19.9 which was about a 9 percent significant increase. The 9 percent increase in the results showed that the students received and gained significant biblical understanding after the post-survey on how to use biblical principles to address alcohol abuse in the state.

The last significant increase was also seen in the participant's ability to develop plans on how to engage the young adults in teaching and training through young adults' organization structures in the church, that is, leadership and mentoring. Questions 3, 4, 17, and 18. The average pre-survey was 19.3, and post-survey was 21.6 with about an 11 percent increase and 2.3 percent difference. This showed a significant percentage increase and the students' commitment toward teaching, training, and even witnessing to an alcohol abuser in the state. The teaching plan and availability to engage in raising

young adults in teaching, training, and exposing the problem of the use of alcohol abuse are important. This percentage increase is very encouraging as it gives hope to any young adult in the state of using a biblical resource such as these to accomplish the goal of witnessing alcoholics.

The pre-test and post-test were used for the first goal, which assessed the use of alcohol among young adults attending five Baptist churches in Abia state. The other evaluation method is a Sampled Core Group (SCG) of 12 that had good attendance and participation in the curriculum teaching lessons. About seven questions were asked about the teaching and learning sessions. Having mentioned earlier on the assessment of the purpose (see page 99), 19 respondents completed the pre-test and post-test, they were used for the t-test analysis. The outcome of the survey showed that 9 responders only completed the pre-test, and they were not used for the t-test. Two questions appeared only in the post-test; therefore, the 2 questions were dropped from the t-test. Also, one respondent failed to answer all the post-test questions and the individual was also dropped in the t-test.

The first goal assessed the use of alcohol among young adults in five Baptist Churches in Abia state. By assessing the responses through comparing the pre-test and post-test question 25 that states, "I believe the people of the church should expose the problem of alcohol," the responding data showed the following: the pre-test responding data from the participants showed a mean result of 5.47 and median of 6.0 percent. The post-test data showed a mean of 5.68 and a median of 6.0. This showed an increase in the difference by 0.21 percent. This assessment that emphasized the need for the church to expose alcohol abuse that was high in post-test showed its use and the need for Christians

to witness to alcohol abusers among young adults in five Baptist churches in Abia state. Therefore, the first goal was successfully achieved.

The second goal was to provide instructions about the effects of alcohol abuse on young adults in five Baptist churches in Abia state. The pre-test and post-test questions of questions 6 stated, “I know at least three biblical passages to use when discussing the issue of alcohol with others,” 7 “I believe that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit,” 25 I believe the people in the church should expose the problem of alcohol and, 26 “as a Christian, I consider witnessing to an alcohol abuser,” the class teaching recording session one, and responses of SCG group helped to assess the effects of alcohol abuse before and after the curriculum.

In the pre-test, question 6 mean results showed 3.84 with the median at 4.0. Question 7 mean was 5.57 with a mean of 6.0. Questions 25 and 26 had a mean of 5.47 and 5.26 and a median of each 6. The reflection of post-test showed in question 6, mean at 4.84 and median at 5 with an increase of 1.0 percent from the pretest. Question 7 mean and median stood at 5.57 and 6 respectively. This showed that they are aware of what their body is meant for and that it should not be corrupted by anything that goes inside it like alcohol. Questions 25 and 26 post-tests mean of 5.68, which showed a mean increase of 0.21 percent and 4.84 and 6 respectively. The median for both remained high at 6 in pre and post-tests. Another data that supports this increase is SCG chat that showed 66.7 percent in post-test and the two responders noted, “alcohol abuse has many bad effects and it’s not something that believers or an unbeliever should take part in.” The other stated, “It’s a timely lesson, there is need for constant teaching on these lessons.” Also, the robust discussions on the effects of alcohol and its abuse on health, social relationships, economic status, culture, family, education, and other areas of life indicated in this goal were successfully met.

The third goal measured the biblical understanding of alcohol and its abuse before and after the curriculum, based on the counseling principles, in five Baptist

Churches in Abia state. The goal was first met within the 6 weeks of a successful training session (MOGG). About 19 members from each of the five churches participated in the pre and post-test surveys. Using the pre-test and post-test survey on the categories of questions on knowledge of the Bible 2, 6, 9, and 26, leadership, mentoring, and counseling abilities on alcohol abuse 3, 5, 17, and 18, questions were featured in pre-test and post-test.

The summary of findings from the data showed Bible understanding or knowledge: The pre-test no 2. mean- 5.0, and median 5.0, that of post-test, mean- 5.31, and 6.0, with an increase of 0.31 percent, no 6. pre-test mean 3.84 and median 4.0 and post-test-test mean 4.84 and median 5.0 with an increase of about 1 percent on both. No 9. pre-test mean at 4.0 and median, 4.0, and post-test mean at 5.15 and median at 5, with an increase of 1.15 percent. That of 26 was as follows, pre-test mean 5.26, and median 6.0, and post-test mean and median 4.84 and 6.0 respectively. On leadership, mentoring, and counseling, Questions 3, pre-test mean-5.42, median 6.0 and post-test was 5.68 and median 6.0 showing an increase of 0.26 percent in the mean while the median was at 6.0. Question 5, pre-test mean 4.57, and median 5 and post-test mean 5.31, and median 6.0 with an increase of 0.74 percent while the median was at 1.0. Question 17, pre-test mean 5.10 and median 5, and post-test 5.52 and median at 6.0 with an increase 0.42 percent and 1.0 percent. Question 18 showed the pre-test mean of 4.05 and median 4.0 while the post-test mean was 5.15 and median 6.0. The mean increase stood at 1.1 percent while that of the median is 2 percent. Looking at the increases in mean and median with the exemption of number 26 in the post-test that has a shortfall, there was a substantial increase that was made in the curriculum implementation on measuring the biblical understanding, leadership, mentoring, and counseling principles. The third goal was successfully met.

The fourth goal was to develop plans on how to engage young adults in teaching and training through young adult organizations in the NBC churches in Abia state was successfully met as most of them belonged to the group. This will go a long

way to reach the grassroots that will expand the reach of the project. Again, using one of the training sessions for on-the-job training, the participants that taught showed a significant ability to present the lessons in a summary method. Besides, questions 12, 15, and 18 of the pre-test and post-test are reflected the successes. The questions include 12. knowing the importance of biblical fellowship in the church pre-test mean 5.21, median 6.0, and post-test mean 5.73 and median 6.0, showed an increase of 0.52 percent. 15. engaging oneself in training young adults in the church had a mean of 5.21 and a median of 5.0. The post-test was mean 5.26 and median 6.0 with an increase of 0.05 percent with a median increase of 1.0 percent. 18. having adequate training to comfortably serve as a leader in the church had a pre-test mean of 4.05 and median 4.0, while the post-test was 5.15 and the median 6.0 with an increase of 1.1 and 2 percent respectively. The increases showed that the goal was successfully met.

The chart below showed the changes between pre-and post-surveys on individual performances in all the churches.

Table 2. Changes between pre-and post-surveys on individual performances

Nos.	Chu. ID	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	Point Change Diff.
1	FBCA 001	161	158	-3
2	FBCA 002	149	75	-74
3	FBCA 003	135	157	22
4	ANBC 001	117	145	28
5	ANBC 002	120	157	37
6	ANBC 003	137	137	0
7	ANBC 005	132	154	22
8	ANBC 006	125	152	27
9	LBC 001	135	164	29
10	LBC 002	115	147	32
11	LBC 004	114	124	10
12	GBC 001	139	168	29
13	GBC 002	148	137	-11
14	GBC 003	135	158	23
15	ALBC 001	142	165	23
16	ALBC 002	137	139	2

17	ALBC 003	122	136	14
18	ALBC 004	147	159	12
19	ALBC 005	113	142	29

Looking at the chart above, it shows considerable point changes between the pre-and post-surveys on individuals that participated in the survey. About 15 responders had improvement with 10 participants out of the 19 from the t-test having a positive rate of improvement of 20 points and above. The negative results are 3 in number, while one remained neutral. The negative results may be as a result of a level of commitment to the period of teaching and one's spiritual maturity. It showed that there is a significant improvement in their commitment to learn and engage in the assignment of training future leaders that will engage young adults that abuse alcohol. Having seen the successes of the curriculum and its implementation, the project will look at some of its strengths and weaknesses.

### **Strengths of the Project**

The strength of the project in the first place is seen in the privilege that I have in connecting to young adults in five Baptists that are in the three senatorial zones of the state. It was a rare privilege that several young adults will indicate interest to learn how to biblically approach and minister to alcohol abuse victims in their various localities. The willingness to make time available, learn, interact, and actively learn some of the biblical counseling tips was a good opportunity. Like some of them mentioned that it should be a continuous exercise, I saw the willingness to study and know what the Bible says about alcohol abuse and the need to address it.

The second strength of the project is the reactions of the participants during the first training session that focuses on the effects of alcohol and its abuse on young adults in the church and society. They were able to mention some of the effects that they have been witnessing outside the suggested ones from the researcher's lesson plan. The



suggested ones include the health, education, family effects, economic effects—lack of productivity, cultural and social effects, relational effect. The participants further analyze the other effects which may relate to the suggested ones that include; No one confides in an alcoholic because he is flippant, it affect the body and the mind, psychologically someone's thinking ability depreciates, the physique structure is also affected, it makes one look older than his age, it affects one's concentration especially when driving, loss of coordination, it raises one's blood pressure, liver disease, heart failure and other.

The third strength of the project is the need to understand that dealing with alcohol abusers will need a compassionate spirit. The need for this understanding is that most people indulge in it because of frustration in life. The class noted that alcoholics in most cases engage in it because of their experiences in life that border on poverty and other situations surrounding them. Therefore, the approach matters a lot, and alcohol abuse victims should be handled with the love and fear of God.

The fourth strength of the project was the biblical and theological aspects of the project that dig into some biblical ideas that addressed alcohol and its abuse. It establishes that alcohol disrupts God's design of people as His image-bearers. It maintains that people were made to worship and find joy in God in contrast to finding joy in creation. Another thing that the project recognized is the human body being God's temple in contrast to alcohol abuse. Biblically and theologically, the project finds out that people were made for meaningful work that should contribute to their community. Therefore, God's purpose for work that contributes to the community that one belongs should not be hindered by one's engagement in alcohol abuse that will negatively affect the community. It suggests the biblical concept of self-control that allows the mind to be inhabited in filling of the Holy Spirit. That will help control habits and attitudes that will check one's indulgence in alcohol abuse.

The fifth strength of the project is seen in the theoretical, historical, and practical issues that relate to alcohol abuse. Having recognized alcohol abuse as a sin, it

also noted that it is a form of idolatry by the victims. It recognized its consequences that include deception and seduction that it led the victims into. Historically, the project traced some trends on the rise and use of alcohol and its socio-cultural developments in Nigeria. It also investigated the health effects to the victims and all these theoretical aspects give a picture that can guide future understanding of alcohol abuse and how to remedy the problem in Nigeria.

The sixth strength of the project was the practical guide that will help build leadership skills among young adults in local Baptist churches in Abia state. Having stressed the need for discipleship skills, spiritual discipline, need to instead hope while ministering to an alcohol abuser, the Ministers of God's Grace (MOGG) training sessions study guide helps one with biblical tips that will help while engaging alcohol abusers.

The seventh strength of the project is the teaching session that engaged three participants that taught the course lessons in a summary form to members of the group via zoom. This served as on-the-job training where the selected individual from three churches summarized how to present the content of the lesson to an alcohol abuser. The class hail the plan and it challenged them to be involved in ministering to those that will need help.

### **The Weaknesses of the Project**

The major weakness of the project is the virtual learning process that was taken because of COVID 19 restrictions and visa problems. The lessons should have been taught in person even as the researcher will personally see the people live and have that interpersonal relationship that will result in more expansions on the work in the future. This aspect made the project suffer much as the zoom communication was not the most effective way in training the participants.

The second weakness is the time difference and the problem of punctuality. Due to time differences, most of the participants and the researcher had to adjust

significantly to each other's demands. Again, we waited for some time as most do log in late. Furthermore, a few technical hitches arose as a result of network problems although they were minimal.

The third weakness of the project is the designing of instruments of the research project. The design that limits communication with email alone had a problem with some participants that did not have an email account. The major means of communication was through their phone number and WhatsApp. This makes the collation of the survey forms difficult as some were done manually. It took the most time to complete.

The fourth weakness of the project is the ability to finance it properly. Since it has to do with buying network data for participants, the control of it was not easy. Most participants used the data provided at the initial stage for two weeks. This was not the participants' fault because the network data set up in Nigeria cannot be easily controlled by the user as the phone can be used frequently for other engagements. This was checked by sending the money for the data on weekly basis.

Lastly, another weakness that is worth mentioning is the inability to get data surveys from pastors and to expand the project to include other denominations' views on alcohol and its abuse in the area. This was hampered by the coronavirus restrictions on travels.

### **Proposed Changes to the Project**

One of the changes that I will propose for the project is the implementation method. Considering the effectiveness of in-person learning activities, this project in the future needs to be taught in person. This will encourage personal interaction with individual churches and one can draw different conclusions on the various topic and approaches. It will make the researcher concentrate the teaching and application method

on a particular context and that will help give a proper assessment of the goals of the project.

Another change that could be made in the project is to limit it to a particular church setting. This will encourage good coordination, concentration, and easy gathering of the participants in a formal teaching session. The three senatorial zones of the state are too broad, and it made it difficult to coordinate. Another possibility is to limit it to Baptist churches that are in urban areas. The available choice may concentrate the project to either Aba town, the commercial center of the state, or Umuahia, the capital city of the state. This will also reduce the cost of the project and create good results.

The other suggestion that could be made in the project is to organize the teaching session into seminar sessions that will run for two to three weeks. This will provide an opportunity of teaching the seminar on weekdays as weekends are fully occupied for other church activities. On one of the Sundays, that is Mother's Day, a few people attended, and some gave the excuse of other commitments that hindered them from participating on some of the days. Furthermore, having it as a weekday seminar will create an on-the-job training session that will allow everyone to try his or her skills.

Again, a proposed change that could be made on the project would be on using names to identify participants instead of identification numbers in the project. The identification numbers made it difficult to have personal interactions, knowing each other as believers in Christ, and identifying who is speaking by name. During the implementation where the participants used phones without names, it was hard to know them by name and call them to speak when needed.

The last proposal that could be suggested in the project is to make it practical. The participants could be taken to the streets or alcoholic centers to have basic interaction and witnessing programs. This can be done at the middle and the end of the training session. This will allow them to engage in soul-winning and thereby have a personal encounter with an alcohol abuser.

## **Theological Reflections**

One of the theological reflections that are outstanding in the project is the idea that establishes that alcohol abuse disrupts God's design of people as his image-bearers. The project believes that God's children that are created in his image and likeness must exhibit good spiritual and moral standards that will reflect God's character in their daily lives. Therefore, in this project, the young adults were exposed to certain theological truths that revealed how God's children will understand the point to an alcohol abuser how he disrupts such God's plan. Three theological basic truths were established to help the alcohol abuser understand how he should not disrupt God's image in him. The first theological truth maintains that all humans were made to worship God and enjoy his creation. This truth upholds that human's life is made to find joy in God in contrast to joy in creation. It recognizes that God desires the best from the man that he created and seeking him first should be the utmost priority of any human being (Matt 6:33). Finding joy in created things as Paul will emphasize in Romans chapter 1:18-25 contrast and disrupts God's plan. Also, such contrast and disruption cannot accord the needed glory that God deserves from anyone that he has created in his image and likeness.

Another theological reflection is the understanding that the project points an alcohol abuser to believe in God. It's for the abuser to understand that his body is God's temple in contrast to alcohol abuse. For a man to accomplish a fulfilled worship, the project believes that he must obey God by acknowledging what his body is meant for. The idea of the body being the temple as Paul viewed it means that it is purchased by God with a price, therefore the individual in his deeds and actions must glorify God with his body (1 Cor 6:19-20). The theological reflection that should be observed is that the individual as a worshipper should know that he represents Christ in all that he/she is engaging the body into. This is well supported in the project with Paul's admonition Romans 12:1 that encourages offering our body as a living sacrifice to God.

Another theological reflection that the project reveals is the idea of God's purpose for work. The idea of work in the project reminds us about its theological background that comes from the curse of the ground because of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:17-19). Therefore, from the theological perspective of work, man is made for meaningful work that will contribute to his or her community. Failure to contribute towards meaningful work because of one's lifestyle and actions, such as alcohol abuse as a young adult, the individual is not making the light of God not to shine through him to the community.

The theological reflection that teaches self-control over one's mind and body is also stressed in the project. It recognizes that being made in the image and likeness of God gives man the needed freedom to operate. The project believes that man's ability to know the limits and restrictions over that freedom will help him understand self-control. Using Paul's imperatives from Ephesians 5:18-21, the theological basis that supports good Christian living was explained in the project. In the two imperatives, a life that is filled with the Holy Spirit will be lived in contrast with life that is controlled with wine or alcoholic drink. Consequently, the theological concepts of self-control will include the food we eat, and what inhabits our minds.

Lastly, the theological reflection that sin, as it relates to alcohol abuse, was emphasized in the project. Having defined sin in various ways especially by Wayne Grudem that sees it as "any failure to conform to the moral law of God in the act, attitude, or nature," sin was a sin as an act and attitude.<sup>2</sup> In the project, alcohol abuse is seen as an action that is rooted in the desires of the flesh and a form of idolatry. It maintains that such actions distort the holiness of God in man. Therefore, it advocates that man as the

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<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 2000), 490.

temple of God should maintain that holiness by not engaging in destructive activities like alcohol abuse.

### **Personal Reflections**

The personal reflection that will be seen in this project is the opportunity to connect and interact with young adults in different Baptist churches in Abia state. It was a rare opportunity to see the zeal in these young adults and some pastors that their age is within the age group learn how to minister through counseling helps to alcohol abusers in their localities. Their contributions, willingness to request for the lesson, and clamoring that the teaching should be a continuous exercise were a thing of joy to me. Their acknowledgment that alcohol abuse among young adults is an issue that needed urgent attention in their areas shows that exercise is a well-accomplished goal. One of the goals is aimed at training those who will reach out to alcohol abusers through biblical counseling.

Another personal reflection is on biblical and theological foundations that establish that alcohol abuse disrupts God's design of people as his image-bearers. Having researched what the Bible says on issues of alcohol and its abusers, the project establishes that man being made in the image of God should see his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. The conclusions that the Old and New Testament draws on man as it relates to his moral life was fully explained. The lessons and the inputs from the class emphasized this truth that humans should maintain that standard that God has intended from creation by not disrupting God's plan for creating man. The practical solutions and the tips that were provided that has biblical and theological counseling helps will deepen the equippers' ability to minister to alcohol abuse victim.

Finally, there may be some works that have been done by some individuals to address the issues of alcohol and its effects like Chikere Ebirim and Morakinyo Mayowa's "Prevalence and Perceived Health Effects of Alcohol Use Among Male

Undergraduate Students in Owerri, South-East Nigeria,” and Emeka W. Dumbili’s “Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption in Nigeria: An Exploration of Responsible Factors and Consequences,” non has addressed it biblically. The issues of alcohol abuse will only be addressed as heart issues that have resulted in idolatry. The alcohol abuser has chosen it as a pattern of life, and it is through the redeeming Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that will provide the needed changes in the victim’s life. This project is a reminder to young adults that engage in alcohol abuse that there is hope and a future in Christ if he will surrender to Him and seek help from the counsel from this project.

### **Conclusion**

The making of disciples of all nations is the key mandate that was given by our Lord in the Great Commission passage of Mathew 28:19-20. To achieve the aim, this project has been able to use biblical counseling guidance to apply that mandate for young adult alcohol abusers to be reached. Its focus of enlightening young adults of some Baptist churches on the need was able to establish its biblical and theological basis. It also covered some theoretical, historical, and practical steps that will be of help for young adults in the churches to engage such victims with the biblical counseling method. By the grace of God, using this biblical tool will help address this destructive way of life that is fast affecting the young adults that forms the future generations of our world. To God alone be the Glory.



## APPENDIX 1

### DISCIPLESHIP KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE SURVEY (DKPS)

The following survey will be used to provide a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of current discipleship knowledge and practice among congregation.

## DISCIPLESHIP KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE SURVEY

### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding of biblical discipleship and the practices of disciple making of the participant. Christopher Uche is conducting this research for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project, and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time.

By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

- I agree to participate  
 I do not agree to participate

### **Section I Demographic Survey**

The first section of this questionnaire will obtain some demographic information.

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

### **Demographic Survey**

1. Do you consider yourself a believer in Christ Jesus?

\_\_\_\_\_ A. Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ B. No

2. Have you at any time given your life to Christ?

\_\_\_\_\_ A. Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ B. No

3. Are you a leader in the church that you are a member (Sunday School Teacher, House Fellowship, GA, Lydia, RA, Worship ministries, etc)? (Circle the one (s) that applied)

\_\_\_\_\_ A. Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ B. No

4. How long have you been a born-again Christian?

\_\_ A. 0-5

\_\_ B. 6-10

\_\_ C. 11-15

\_\_ D. 16-20

\_\_ E. 21-25

\_\_ F. 26 and above

5. What is your age in years?

\_\_\_\_\_ A. 15-24

\_\_\_\_\_ B. 25-34

\_\_\_\_\_ C. 35 and above

6. Have you engaged in alcoholic consumption?

\_\_ A. Yes

\_\_ B. No

7. If yes, were you introduced to Alcohol drinking by an individual?

\_\_ A. Yes

\_\_ B. No

8. Have you experienced any side effects?

\_\_\_A. Yes

\_\_\_B. No

9. Do you believe a Christian should engage in Alcohol intake?

\_\_\_A. Yes

\_\_\_B. No

10. Will you recommend alcohol intake to your fellow young adults?

\_\_\_A. Yes

\_\_\_B. No

## Section II

### Biblical Foundation Knowledge Survey

The following questions are focused on what you currently understand.

Directions: please respond to the statements using the following scale:

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, DS= Disagree Somewhat, AS= Agree Somewhat,

A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

	Biblical Foundation	SD	D	SD	SA	A	SA
1	I am able to present the Gospel effectively.						
2	I am confident in using the Bible to lead someone to Christ.						
3	I know the importance of God's Word in my life.						
4	I pray using God's word to maintain quality spiritual health.						
5	I understand what the Bible teaches about leadership and counseling.						
6	I know at least three biblical passages to use when discussing the issue of alcohol with others.						
7	I believe that my body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit.						
8	I am able to explain what Scripture says about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.						
9	I know what the Bible teaches about alcohol abuse.						
10	I am interested in building God's Kingdom as a Christian.						

	Biblical Foundation	SD	D	SD	SA	A	SA
11	I am able to explain what Scripture says about the doctrine of the Church.						
12	I know the importance of biblical fellowship in my church like Girl's Auxiliary, Royal Ambassador, and Lydia's Group of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.						

## Leadership Training and Mentoring Practice Survey

The following questions are focused on what you currently understand.

Directions: please respond to the statements using the following scale:

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, DS= Disagree Somewhat, AS= Agree Somewhat,

A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

	Leadership Training and Mentoring Practice	SD	D	SD	SA	A	SA
13	I am confident in leading others.						
14	I desire to become a leader to others.						
15	I will consider engaging myself in training young adults in my Church.						
16	I am comfortable making use of leadership skills on behalf of others.						
17	I believe I will reach the world for Christ by becoming an effective leader.						
18	I have had adequate training to comfortably serve as a leader.						
19	I have a strong grasp of what it means to serve Christ.						
20	I have a person in my life I am mentoring.						
21	I am currently counseling someone.						
22	I am comfortable learning from others.						
23	I will be able to work under Pastors and Counselors in my Church.						

	Leadership Training and Mentoring Practice	SD	D	SD	SA	A	SA
24	I love working with counselors in my church.						



**Alcohol Abuse Related Survey**

The following questions are focused on what you currently understand.

Directions: please respond to the statements using the following scale:

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, DS= Disagree Somewhat, AS= Agree Somewhat,

A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

	Alcohol Abuse	SD	D	SD	SA	A	SA
25	I believe the people of the church should expose the problem of alcohol abuse						
26	As a Christian, I will consider witnessing to an alcohol abuser.						
27	I would like to serve in the church by exposing the problem of alcohol.						
28	In the last three months, I have received preaching/teaching about alcohol or issues related to alcohol						
29	In the last six months, I have received preaching/ teaching about alcohol or issues related to alcohol.						
30	In the last twelve months, I have received preaching/teaching about alcohol or issues related to alcohol.						

Personal Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_

## **Baptist Pastors' Demographic/Preaching Survey**

### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding of biblical discipleship and the practices of disciple making of the participant. Christopher Uche is conducting this research for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project, and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time.

By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

I agree to participate

I do not agree to participate

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

1. How long have You been a minister in Baptist Denomination

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 yrs,
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 yrs
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ 11-15 yrs
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ 16-20 yrs
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ 21-25 yrs
- F. \_\_\_\_\_ 26-30 yrs
- G \_\_\_\_\_ 31-35 yrs

2. How long have You been pastoring in your current Church

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ 0-5 yrs
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 yrs
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ 11-15 yrs
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ 16-20 yrs
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ 21-25 yrs
- F. \_\_\_\_\_ 26 and over

3. What is your age in years

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ 25-30
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ 31-35
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ 35-40
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ 41-50
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ 60 and above

4. Do You believe that alcohol intake is a problem to the society.

\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No

5. Do You believe that there is alcohol abuse among Young Adults in the society You belong.

\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No

6. Do You believe that the church has a role to play to stop alcohol abuse in the society.

\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No

7. When did you emphasize in your preaching/teaching on alcohol or related subject.

A. \_\_\_\_\_last 3 months, B. \_\_\_\_\_last 6 months, C. \_\_\_\_\_last 1 year

8. Do you think that alcohol abuse has side effect on our young adults.

\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No

9. What prompted You to preach/teach/counsel on alcohol or related subject.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What are some side effects alcohol and its abuse have on Young adults in the state and the country. Kindly list:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Personal Identification Number\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX 2  
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the disciple making curriculum developed by the author and distributed to the select expert panel described in the goal section of chapter 1.

Curriculum Evaluation Rubric

<b>Disciple Making Curriculum Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>Lesson to be Evaluated:</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The material is clearly relevant to the issue of leadership and counseling training.					
The material is biblical and theologically consistent.					
The material includes vital information for Christian faith and personal development of a believer.					
The material clearly lays out the principal for one to multiply themselves in another believer.					
The points of the material clearly support the purpose laid out in the thesis and are easy to grasp.					
The lesson contains points of practical application.					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the lesson is clear and could be re-taught by another person.					

Example of Completed Curriculum Evaluation Rubric

<b>Disciple Making Curriculum Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>Lesson to be Evaluated: Using Biblical Counseling for Alcohol Abuse Among Young Adults in Baptist Churches in Abia State</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The material is clearly relevant to the issue of leadership and counseling training.				4	The material is a good example of using the Bible to address the impact of sin in people's lives, specifically addiction to substances.
The material is biblical and theologically consistent.				4	Provides sufficient Biblical references
The material includes vital information for Christian faith and personal development of a believer.				4	Information allows a Christian to deepen the knowledge and to understand some basics of the faith such as being image bearers.
The material clearly lays out the principal for one to multiply themselves in another believer.			3		I don't think the materials explicitly deal with evangelism but could be used to disciple someone to the faith.
The points of the material clearly support the purpose laid out in the thesis and are easy to grasp.				4	I feel the materials are clear and easy to use to prepare for teaching sessions.
The lesson contains points of practical application.				4	Materials are laid out for thinking about application.
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.				4	I believe the materials are thorough to understand the primary assertions sufficient that a participant would be ministered to and would understand their position before God and relative to scripture.
Overall, the lesson is clear and could be re-taught by another person.				4	Again, I believe the lessons are straightforward and could be facilitated by anyone with basic presentation skills.

Table A1. Curriculum evaluation rubric results

	INSUFFICIENT (1)	REQUIRES ATTENTION (2)	SUFFICIENT (3)	EXEMPLARY (4)
PA			4 *3	4
JO				4
ME			No 4 *3	4
SA			3	
SI				4
LU			3	

## APPENDIX 3

### STRATEGICALLY PLANNED BIBLE TEACHING “MINISTERS OF GOD’S GRACE” (MOOG) CURRICULUM LESSON PLAN

The following lesson plan was used for the six-week lesson for trainers.

#### **Bible Study “Using Biblical Counseling for Alcohol Abuse Among Young Adults in Baptist Churches in Abia State.”**

**Theme: “Ministers of God’s Grace”**

**Aim of the Lessons:** As God’s people, we are to minister to or help those who are facing a problem of alcohol abuse by offering them the gift of Grace from our Lord for a better life.

#### **Course Objectives**

Help young adults understand who an alcohol abuser is.

Help them know the problem and the effects of alcohol abuse.

Help them understand a biblical perspective on alcohol and its abuse.

Help them understand how to counsel an alcohol abuser through God’s redeeming Word.

#### **Introduction**

Today’s young adults like to indulge in different things in life. Wanting to be independent and moving into the next stage of adulthood, young adults tend to try many things. Unless they have a strong relationship with Christ, according to Paul in Philippians 3:7-11 “But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.... I consider everything loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.... I want to know Christ— yes, to know the power of His resurrection...” (NIV) they are bound to fall prey to certain things or activities of life that hurt them. One of them is alcohol abuse. These six weekly lessons will help trainers understand how to use biblical counseling in helping young alcohol abuse victims. The trainers will be “God’s Readily Ministers of Grace” to alcohol abusers around them, in the church and the society.



## LESSON 1

**Topic: Ministers of God's Grace**

**Text: 2 Corinthians 2:12-16.**

**Lesson Aim:** To understand alcohol and its abuser and to see that we are called as believers in Christ to faithfully minister God's truth to them.

### **Understanding a Minister In this Context**

*The American Heritage Dictionary*- defines a minister as "One authorized to perform religious functions in a Christian church or A person serving as an agent for another- to attend to the wants and needs of others" (p 540). This was exactly what Paul was doing in the focused passage- He described it as "spreading the Aroma of the Knowledge of Christ" vv. 14 and 15. The aroma of God's Grace is what God has offered to believers through Jesus Christ including the alcohol abuser. God has given us gifts or abilities in His house to care for and minister to one another. These gifts can be exercised through helping someone around us who is struggling with alcohol abuse. The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-21) and The Parable of Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) are examples of how we can meet and care for a victim of abuse. As the Father in the passage has interest in the son, and the Samaritan has for the victim, so do we believers in Christ need to have a concern for an alcohol abuser.

Which words in the two passages show signs of care and concern?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1 Cor 12: 25- if the person attends church, or fellowship etc.

### **Understanding the Alcohol Abuse**

Definitions: Alcohol- a colorless flammable liquid C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>OH, obtained by fermentation of sugar and starches and used as a solvent, in drugs, and in intoxicating beverages."

*American Heritage Dictionary* (p. 21). Key terms— "colorless," "flammable," "fermented," "intoxicating."

To abuse: It is "All forms of maltreatment or improper behavior of one person or group by another, whether physical, sexual, behavioral, cognitive, economic, and emotional."  
Samuel T Gladding

*The Concise Dictionary of Frequently Used Terms*- by definition, alcohol abusers engage themselves in improper behavior that they know will affect the physical and behavioral aspects in their daily life. Charles R. Carol sees what constitutes alcohol abuse as being

“Evident in most instances of problem drinking, is the isolated or continued consumption of beverage alcohol in excess of dietary and social customs and tradition of a community.” The term “problem drinking” means “alcohol consumption which results in damage to the drinker, his family or his community.”

Biblical Counseling- Christ-centered, church-based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally-informed one-another ministry that depends upon the Holy Spirit to relate God’s inspired truth about people, problem, and solution to human suffering (through Christian sustaining and healing) and sin (through reconciling and guiding) to empower people to exalt and enjoy God and to love others (Matt 22: 34-40) by cultivating conformity to Christ and the Body of Christ, leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt 28:18-20). Robert Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, p 36.

### Discussion Session

How can you define an alcohol abuser in your words? \_\_\_\_\_

What views do you have about alcohol and its abuse? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the effects of alcohol? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Notable Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Young Adults**

Health effects

Education effects

Family effects

Economic effects- lack of productivity, loss of income

Cultural and Social effects

Spiritual effects

Relational effects

God Has Given Us the Grace to live a Good Life- 2 Cor 12:9, Eph 2: 8. It is up to us to utilize the opportunity.

### **Conclusion**

“Salvation is like a gift wrapped up with our name on it. However, the gift does us no good until we make use of it. He said he had a vision once of a warehouse in Heaven filled with gifts of salvation. Each was neatly wrapped and had a tag on it with the name of a person. However, these individuals had lived their lives, died, and were now in hell because they did not ever put enough faith into Christ to open their gift.” Martin Britt, *Jesus, and Drug: The Bible and Alcohol Drinking*, citing Houston Cunningham, (pp, 84-85)

## LESSON 2

### **Biblical Perspectives on Alcohol and its Abuse (Genesis 1: 26- 31, Psalm 8:3-6)**

#### **Introduction**

Some basic truths must be established about God’s design for creating man as His image bearers. Man must live and maintain this design. All believers must seek or pursue the purpose for which God has made us by maintaining spiritual and moral standards found in the Bible. Someone’s actions can hinder him from meeting the spiritual and moral standards of being God’s image bearer. Alcohol and its abuse can be one of the problems. The two passages identified Man as God’s image bearers:

Which words in the two passages suggest man as God’s image bearers?

1

2

3

4

5

#### **Human life is made to Worship God and Enjoy His Creation**

One outstanding reason that someone should understand about human life is that man’s life is made to find joy and happiness in God. This is in contrast to finding joy in mere creation. Therefore, human life should find joy in God, not in what is created- Matt 6:33, Rom 1:18-25. Intimate knowledge of God is the only way to find this joy that will result in acceptable worship. John 17:3, Jer 19:23-24 and Hosea 6:6. Heath Lambert- “Knowing who God is changes your life. You cannot be the same when you realize that God who fixes stars and planets in place directs his attention to caring for You.” *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundation of Counseling Ministry*, (p. 104) J. I Packer- “To know God is what man is made for.” *Knowing God*, (p. 33)

#### **Human Body as God’s Temple in contrast to Alcohol Abuse (1 Cor 6:19-20 and Prov 23:29-31).**

Man will accomplish fulfilled worship when he faithfully obeys God and acknowledges that his body is God’s temple- 1 Cor 6:19-20. Brian Chapell believes that worship will only be possible when the worshipper acknowledges what his body represents in Christ. He notes that Paul recognizes what that body represents as we offer it as a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1). *Christ-Centered Worship*, (p. 109) See 1 Peter 2: 4-5, 9.

## **Faithful Obedience in Maintaining our Bodies as God's Temple Contrasts the Character of an Alcohol Abuser- (Prov 23:29-31).**

Solomon is believed to be the writer of the book of Proverbs. He knew what life should be and enjoyed it fully, having inherited a prosperous and booming kingdom from his father, King David. He must have tested alcohol and known some problems that are associated with it. He mentioned some characteristics that are found in an alcohol abuser. An alcohol abuser allows the created (alcohol) to rule over his/her body.

What are some of the words that the writer of Proverbs uses to identify an alcohol abuser in vv 29- 30?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

The Writer of Proverbs describes wine (alcohol) as a viper's poison and instructs his readers not to look at it. What did you understand from his instructions in vv 31-35?

### **Conclusion**

The Bible fully acknowledged the disruption and later destruction that alcohol and its abuse can cause in someone. It is being described as a poison that one should run away from. The lesson will help guide us to point out these disruptive tendencies that can lead to the destruction of one's life at the end.

## LESSON 3

### Biblical Perspective that Understands Alcohol Abuse as a Sin (Gen 3:1-15)

#### Introduction

An understanding of alcohol abuse as sin should be linked to the idea of original sin in the Bible. Sin in this case means “Turning away from God and disobeying the teachings or commandments of God.” NIV Bible p. 1333. Another understanding of sin is described in the Old and New Testament as the idea of missing the mark, i.e., “the righteous standard of God” .... Such failure is more than mere weakness as seen in other terms that “signify rebellion and willful violation of the holy” *New American Standard Bible: Topical Reference Bible*, p. 209. The passage under focus gives some steps that Adam and Eve took to disobey the commands of the Lord God. It should be observed that “The effect of Adam’s sin has come to all humans as his descendants, so that all mankind is burdened with sin from birth” (Rom 3:23, 5:12-19) (NASB, p. 109).

What are the steps you can discover that lead to the sin of disobedience from Genesis 3:1-15?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Are these steps observable in the life of an alcohol abuser- see v 6?

#### Understanding the Root Cause of the Problem of Abuse.

To understand alcohol abuse as sin, the idea of original sin and actual sin should be understood. Hoekema distinguishes the original sin and actual sin. He notes that the “original sin is the sinful state and condition in which every human being is born,” the actual sin is “the sin of act, word or thought that human beings commit” Hoekema, *Created in the Image of God*, p. 143. Considering the idea of actual sin, alcohol abuse comes under its category of sin as willful acts (1 John 2:16, Matt 5:28ff, Psalm 78:17-18). Alcohol abuse is not a disease or sickness as some secular psychologists or counselors believed. It is willful sin. Do you agree? - (Discussion Session).

**The Root Cause-** Inordinate Desires or Cravings- Gen 3:6, 1 John 2:16, Eph 4:17-19-  
Solution Isa 55: 1-3, Heb 9:27-28, Rom 6:23.

## **Understanding Alcohol Abuse as a Form of Idolatry**

Another issue that should be understood about alcohol abuse is that it is a form of idolatry. Michael Lawrence believes that “Everyone is struggling with idolatry in one way or the other” and again, he sees “our hearts as idol-factories” He supports this by noting that today’s culture seeks the following: “power, pleasure, pride, security, wealth, and so forth.” Alcohol abuse falls under the category of pleasure and pride (Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry*, p. 186). See Mark 7:20-23.

### **Consequences of Idolatry**

**Deception and Seduction.** One consequence of idolatry is the deceptive and seductive nature by which it takes hold of the individual who engages in it. The idolator rarely recognizes that he/she is engaging in idol worship. John MacArthur understands this when he referred to the prayer of Jonah at the belly of the fish in Jonah 2:8, “They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies.” The word observe in Hebrew could mean “to give themselves up to” or “devote themselves to” and lying vanities could be all things that man makes into an idol or object of trust (MacArthur, *Counseling*, p. 57)

**Distortion of God’s Holiness.** Idolatry distorts God’s holiness. God’s injunction to the priests and their sons is not to drink wine or strong drink while they are in the services of the Temple (Lev 10:8-11). This could apply to all priestly and kingly passages of the New Testament: 1 Peter 2:5, 9, Rev 1:6. In the list of sins of the flesh (Gal 5:20ff), drunkenness is one of those that can deprive one of God’s kingdom.

### **Understanding Alcohol as A Heart Issue that Needs Cleansing (Ezek 36:23-27).**

The problem of an alcohol abuser can be understood from the biblical illustration of the hearts of the Israelites that profaned the name of God. As Luther Boyd and Kathy McReynolds put it, their stony hearts needed to be replaced from “guilt of filthiness and idolatry.... with a new heart and a new spirit” (78). The Holy Spirit is the agent that God is deploying to soften His stone-hearted people and to empower them for obedience to His standards, (Boyd and Reynold, *Truthful Living: What Christianity Really Teaches about Recovery*, 78-79). This is what God wants to accomplish in the life of an alcohol abuser.

### **Conclusion**

Timothy S. Lane and Paul Tripp in *How People Change*, explain the centrality of heart in these ways: “Beneath the battle for behavior is another, more fundamental battle for thoughts and motives of hearts. The heart is the real essential you. All of the ways in which the Bible refers to the person (mind, emotions, spirit, soul, will, etc) are summed up with this one term: heart. The heart is the steering wheel of every human being. Everything we do is shaped and controlled by what our hearts desire. That is why the Bible is very clear that God wants our hearts. Only when God has our hearts does he have you.... That is why the message of the Gospel is that God transforms our lives by

transforming our hearts.... We need a deeper understanding of Proverbs 4:23, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" p. 15.

To an alcohol abuser, it is a battle of behavior and what the heart wants that is going inside him. If he/she allows God's transformation through his Word, it will bring the desired changes in his/her life.

## **LESSON 4**

### **Topic: Human as God's Image Bearers: Ministering Grace to the Community**

#### **Introduction**

God's purpose in creating man is to have fellowship with him 1 John 1:3 cf., 2 Cor 13:14. Another reason is for man to have fellowship with one another 1 John 1:7, Heb 10:24-25. This creates opportunities for us to engage our services to the Church, family, and community that we live in. We are meant to contribute meaningfully to the growth of our community. Believers live in a community as the light of the world through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. His light should be shining forth from us. It will help influence the society that we live in.

#### **Humans are made for Meaningful Work that will Contribute to the Community**

A theological foundation that could be established to oppose alcohol abuse among young adults is an understanding of God's design for work that will contribute meaningfully to the progress of the community. The purpose for work reminds one of the curses at the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:17-19). Man is also made to dominate the earth (Gen 1:26-27).

#### **How Alcohol and its Abuser Disrupt God's Design for Man's Contribution to his Community**

That is the reason the Bible condemned drunkenness- (Eph 5: 18, Rom 13:13, Gal 5:19, 21).

Drunkenness is a curse on man (Jer 13:13-14, Prov 23:21, Neh 1:9-10, Hab 2:15-16).

Drunkenness distorts one's perception of God's world (Prov 23:29-30,33, Isa 28:7, Hos 4:11).

Drunkenness destroys one's vocational capacity (Prov 31:4, 5).

Drunkenness is socially disgusting- an alcoholic's "behavior is at variance with godly and orderly expectations" (Isa 28:7-8, Psalm 107:27, Job 12:25, Prov 20:1).

Drunkenness weakens the body- The body is the handiwork of God (Gen 2:7, Psalm 139:13-15). (Prov 23:30, 32, 2 Cor 6:16).

Drunkenness bars one from Church leadership (1 Tim 3:2-3, Titus 2:3) "leaders are to be an example to the church" (Heb 13:17) and "to the world" (1 Tim 3:7, 2 Tim 2: 24-26).

Kenneth L Gentry, *Christian and Alcoholic Beverages: A Biblical Perspectives*, (pp. 21-27)

#### **Questions and Discussions**

How can God's image bearers engage themselves in meaningful work?

How would such work help our community, church, family, society?

#### **Conclusion**

Alcohol abuse will affect the abusers' ability to work and dominate as seen in the Genesis passage. It will also hinder them from meaningfully contributing to the society they find themselves in because they may not be in the right mind to give the required services.



## LESSON 5

### Humans as God's Image Bearers are made to Have Self-Control (Eph 5:18-19)

#### Introduction

God's purpose of making man in his image and likeness involves giving him the freedom to operate as a person. This involves the ability to know his limits and restrictions as not to abuse the privilege that has been given to him. These freedoms, limits, and restrictions help man to understand the importance of self-control in handling certain issues in life. Ephesians 5:18-21 gives us two examples of a life controlled by wine or alcoholic drink and one that is controlled and filled with the Holy Spirit. This self-control can be viewed in these ways.

1. **Self-Control Over Food (Eph 5:18).** What goes into our bodies matters a lot. Self-control over the type of food we eat, the drinks we take will tell a lot about our bodies. Self-control is an inner virtue that enables a Christian to restrain the flesh in order to concentrate on higher goals- fasting, prayer, meditation, solitude and chastity (Titus 2:2). We need not defile our bodies, which is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, through what we eat (1 Cor 3:17).
2. **Self-Control Over What Inhabits Our Minds.** The Scripture's reference to the mind was Jesus's response to a young Pharisee lawyer's question about the commandment (Matt 22:37). *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines the mind as "the human consciousness that originates in the brain and is manifested especially in thoughts, perceptions, emotions, will, memory, and imagination" (p. 539). Man's mind can be filled with different things, but the Bible gives us the idea of what our minds should always be filled with (Eph 5:19-20).  
What are the things that Paul listed in the passage that will help our minds or hearts to be filled with the Spirit?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
3. **Self-Control Over Habits and Attitude.** People need to check their habits and attitudes and make them conform to their beliefs. This will call for self-control in a world that will demand a lot that is not in conformity to a Christ-like attitude. *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines habits as "a pattern of behavior acquired through repetition," while attitude is defined as "a state of mind or a feeling; disposition." (pp. 381, 56). Therefore, alcohol abuse is a choice of habits

and attitudes that the individual has made in the way he/she lives or acts. The Bible cautions one on these choices of our habits and attitudes (Prov 16:25).

4. **Suggestions on How to Practice Self-Control over Food, Mind, Habits and Attitude.** God's instructions on what to put off and put on are the vital answer to respond and handle issues that concern our food, minds, habits, and attitudes. Eph 4:17-20 - walking no longer as a Gentile, not walking in ignorance, not hardening one's heart, not becoming callous, not giving oneself over to all kinds of sensuality that leads to impurity with greediness. Eph 4: 21-22 - laying aside the old self that is corrupted with lust of deceit. Eph 4:23-24 - to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, putting on the new self that is the likeness of God, created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

### **Conclusion**

Elon Foster in *6000 Sermon Illustrations* on importance of self-control- "If a person mounts a high-spirited horse, it is important that he should be able to control him; otherwise, he may be dashed in pieces. If an engineer undertakes to conduct a locomotive, it is necessary that he should be able to guide or check the panting engine at his pleasure; else his own life and the lives of others may be sacrificed. But it is more indispensable that an individual who is entrusted (intrusted) with the care of himself should be able to govern himself" (p. 580)

God has entrusted mankind like "a person riding a horse" an "engineer conducting a locomotive," with the ability to care and govern himself. It is important that he choose to exercise the needed self-control over his choices in life.

## LESSON 6

### Biblical Counseling Tips to Help an Alcohol Abuser

#### Introduction

Alcoholism or its abuse should be recognized as a problem because it destroys God's design of man as his image bearer and affects man's behavior in other areas of life. Therefore, the counsel that supports biblical intervention is necessary.

The tip that will be followed is the suggestions of Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju in *The Pastor and Counseling: The Basics of Shepherding Members in Need*, (pp.77-87). They suggest that a counseling process should offer redemptive remedies. Having identified the problem of abuse, these counseling remedies can be followed.

**Uncover How the Heart Worships.** This will be done by encouraging the individual to worship God amidst the situation he/she finds him/herself in. Such worship of God comes by faith-(Rom 1:16-32), through hearing the word of Christ (Rom 10:17), while the word of Christ is proclaimed by human agents (Rom 10:14-16).

**Reintroduce God.** This is done through teaching the individual the characteristics of God- (Jer 9:23-24) "A faulty understanding of God will affect how we respond to life" (p. 79).

**De-psychologize-** To de-psychologize means to "Help someone see him/herself primarily as a child of God (*rather than an alcohol abuser -word mine*). The *truest* thing about a Christian is that he/she is the treasured possession of Christ, whatever may be going on psychologically" (Phil 4:3-6) (p. 80).

**Contrast Functional and Confessional Assumptions-** Functional assumptions trick and misguide one to believe how one was treated in the past should identify him/her. Confessional assumptions are "what we know to be true according to the Bible. We can undermine bad functional assumptions by teaching true confessional assumptions" (Ps 73:1-28) (p.81).

**Reframe-** As believers in Christ, we can help people to "reframe the raw data of their lives with a distinctly biblical frame. Help the struggling person consider how God would frame his situation so that he can see the picture of his life a little more clearly" (p. 81) (1 Thess 4:13-18).

**Uncover Underlying dynamics-** See if the individual is wrestling with idols of heart such as expectations, fears, anger, entertainments, apathy, etc. These are underlying dynamics. Direct the person to Christ as "the true object of worship" (1 John 1:8-10, 2:15-17; 3:1-3) (p. 82).

**Show Consequences-** "Every decision in life—whether large or small—has consequences" (Gal 6:7-10)- What a man sows, he will reap.

**Confront and Reorient-** It is normal to confront, and it should be part one's solemn charge from the Word of God (2 Tim 4:1-5, James 5:19-20).

**Suggest short-term and long-term goals-** help the individual to set goals. Start with acknowledgment and confession of sins, asking for forgiveness, Bible intake and others (incomplete thought?)

### **Other tips**

Understand the problems that confront him/her.

Know some biblical doctrines about sin and drunkenness.

Approach the individual with humility.

Approach the individual with the Love of God.

Point them to Christ as the Healer of their soul.

Do not condemn.

Pray for his/her soul.

Disciple them.

### **Conclusion**

God demands that we should be our brother's keepers. It is expected that as believers, we should help those that are perishing around us to see God in the light of His redeeming word. We can act like Christ as responding to the woman caught in adultery (John 8: 3-11) when Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more."

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## ABSTRACT

### PROVIDING BIBLICAL GUIDANCE ABOUT ALCOHOL ABUSE TO CHURCHES IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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This project develops a curriculum that provides biblical guidance about alcohol abuse among young adults and then implements the teaching through a training course in five Baptist Churches in Abia state.

Chapter 1 introduces the project looking at context, rationale, purpose, and goals. Chapter 2 develops a biblical and theological foundation that establishes that alcohol abuse disrupts God's design of people as His image-bearers. The chapter examines several important issues such as these: people were made to worship God and enjoy his creation, find joy in God in contrast to that in creation, the human body is seen as the temple of God in contrast to alcohol abuse, people were made to contribute to meaningful work in their community, and to have self-control over their minds, bodies, habits, and attitudes. Chapter 3 looks at the theoretical, historical, and practical issues related to alcoholism and its abuse in Nigeria. It recognizes alcohol abuse as a sin and form of idolatry and further examines the historical, socio-cultural, economic, and health perspectives of alcoholism in Nigeria. Moreover, it suggests some practical guide to counsel and build leadership and skill training among young adults in Abia state.

Chapter 4 outlines the implementation with a survey and a six-week training session through zoom that aims at equipping young adults with biblical counseling tools that will help engage alcohol abuse victims. Chapter 5 gives an analysis and reflection of the entire project.

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