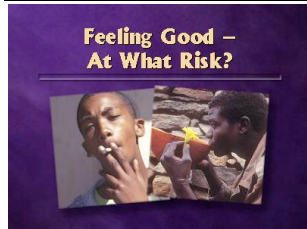


Feeling Good—At What Risk?



Today we want to talk about the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse.



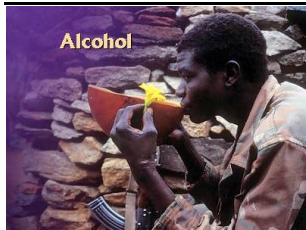
In today's world, so many people find their lives so full of problems, and disappointments that they will do almost anything to feel good!



Sniffing cocaine, glue, or some other substance will make them feel like they are in the clouds on their way to heaven...for about twenty to thirty minutes.

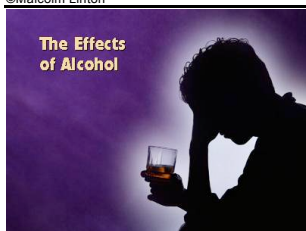


A shot of heroin, or some other drug may last a little longer.



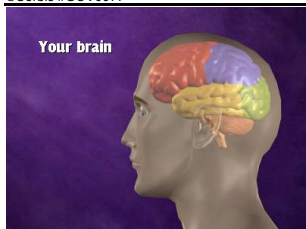
But for most people, alcohol is the drug of choice.

At first alcohol seems so innocent, so comforting. But alcohol is actually one of the most dangerous drugs in the world.

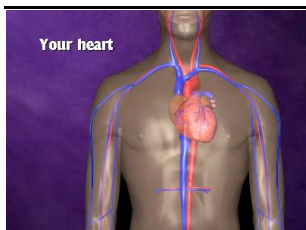


It kills more people, causes more disease, wastes more money and destroys more families than all the other drugs put together.

Consider what alcohol does to your body:

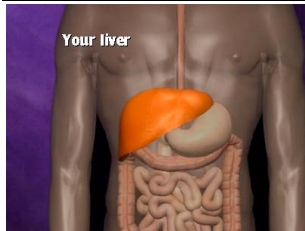


Alcohol affects **Your brain** – Even small amounts of alcohol cause permanent harm to brain cells; some die and others are damaged. Alcohol affects our judgement and weakens our ability to make correct moral decisions. As a result, the people we love the most are often hurt.



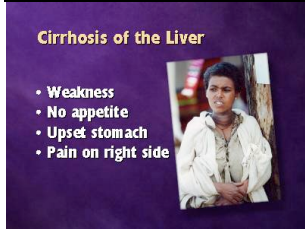
Alcohol affects **Your heart** – Alcohol increases the risk of high blood pressure, stroke, and damage to the heart muscle.

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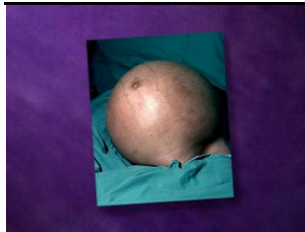
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Alcohol affects **Your liver** – Because your liver must clean alcohol out of the blood, alcohol affects it more than any other part of your body. Healthy liver cells die from alcohol poisoning. Scars replace the dead cells, eventually ruining the liver (this is called liver cirrhosis)



©Robert Eilets

Cirrhosis of the liver starts with feelings of weakness, loss of appetite, upset stomach, and pain on a person's right side below the ribs. As the illness gets worse, the person gets thinner and thinner. He may vomit blood.



©HelpMD.com #Z124-U-1490

In serious cases the feet and stomach can swell with liquid until the stomach looks like a drum. There are no medicines that help much, and most people with severe cirrhosis die from it. The best cure is never drink alcohol again.¹



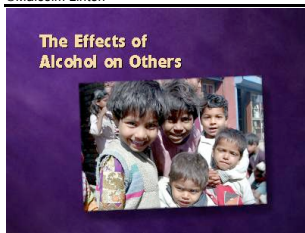
©Curran & Jones, Gross Pathology: Oxford University Press, p. 41

Another disease of the liver is hepatitis. Hepatitis means an inflammation (or swelling) of the liver. Alcohol can cause this disease, making the liver to swell and become inflamed.²



©Malcolm Linton

Alcohol affects **your immune system** – Alcohol weakens the body's defences against infection and disease. This makes it easier to get sick with many diseases, including cancer and AIDS.



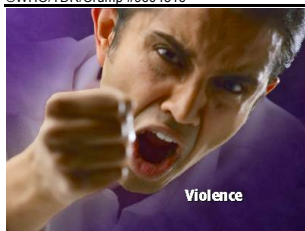
©Wax Visual/Tom Compagnoni

Now consider **the effects of alcohol on other people:**



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Alcohol is involved in higher crime rates. About two out of three people involved in murder are under the influence of alcohol.



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Violence and alcohol go together. Alcohol clouds (impairs) our judgement, it causes people to do things they would normally be ashamed to do otherwise, and it increases aggressive behaviour.

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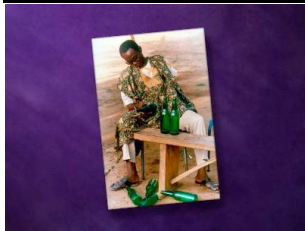
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Alcohol is known to cause mental retardation and many other serious problems in newborn babies.



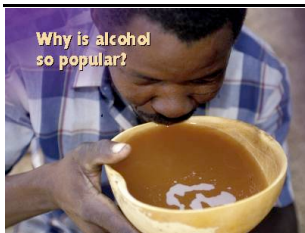
©Diana Barnett/FACES OF TOMORROW

Alcohol destroys families and hurts the community. It is responsible for much physical and emotional abuse. We see this most often with the abuse of children and of wives.³



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How many fathers have spent their last money on drink when their children were hungry? How many sicknesses result because a man spends the little bit of money he earns on drink rather than on improving his family's living conditions? How many people, hating themselves because they have hurt those they love, take another drink—to forget?⁴



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With all of its terrible results, why is it that alcohol use is becoming more popular?



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Advertising is one reason. Alcohol is often linked to the Western way of life and made to seem exciting and attractive. In the past twenty years the production of alcohol has increased by 50 percent in the developing countries of Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Africa. This has helped to cause a rapid rise in alcoholism.⁵



©Malcolm Linton

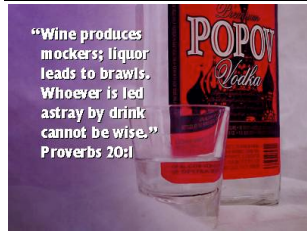
Many times drinkers encourage other people to just try a little. Unfortunately, some people are addicted to want more from their first drink.



©George Sedupane

The only sensible approach to alcohol is the 'no alcohol' plan. Christianity has been far too tolerant of alcohol; Hinduism condemns it, and Islam totally prohibits it.⁶

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Alcohol has so many problems, that we should avoid it entirely. God certainly doesn't approve of alcohol. In Proverbs 20:1, He tells us...



“Wine produces mockers; liquor leads to brawls. Whoever is led astray by drink cannot be wise.” Proverbs 20:1 NLT



©Inter American Development Bank

Once a man realizes that alcohol is harming the health and happiness of those around him, what can he do? First, he must admit that his drinking is a problem. He must be honest with himself and with others.

Some individuals are able to simply make a decision to stop drinking. More often, people need help and support—from family, friends, and others who understand how hard it may be to give up this habit.

Besides alcohol, there are many other addictive drugs.



©Robert Eilets

Many people turn to **tobacco** because they experience relaxation and a good feeling after they smoke. This good feeling has a high price, however.



Smoking kills 10,000 people **every day**; people who otherwise could have lived.⁷ One result of smoking is emphysema, which makes it extremely difficult to breathe and eventually leads to death by slow suffocation.



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During the past five years American tobacco companies have increased their sales to other countries by 300%.



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Most adults know tobacco is not good for them, but the saddest fact is that teenagers make up 20% of all new smokers.



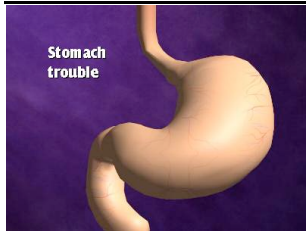
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There are other drugs people use to make themselves feel better; the most popular of these is **caffeine**. Caffeine is addictive, though not usually deadly. Caffeine produces a high, with increased energy and alertness, usually followed by a let down. This causes people to want to drink another coffee, tea, or cola. This is basically how caffeine gets its hold on people.

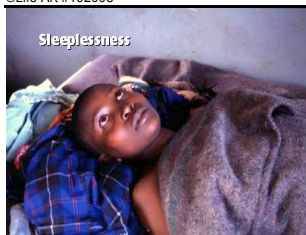
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There are many bad side effects to caffeine; it can increase blood pressure, cause nervousness, anxiety, tremors, and irritability.



It can cause stomach trouble by increasing acid secretion in the stomach.



Many times it also causes a person to be unable to sleep.



You need to be careful even with the **drugs** your doctor orders for you. Even these medicines, can be abused by taking them longer than necessary, taking the wrong amount, or taking them too often. When doctors order drugs, they usually balance the risk with the need. For example, with a serious bacterial infection, the risk you take by using an antibiotic is usually safer than the risk of not taking it. But, if you have a tension headache, you would be better off taking a brisk walk or a nap than taking medicine.

A good rule to follow is to only use drugs for certain problems that can't be relieved by natural methods. In other words, don't use a big-gun medicine like antibiotics for a fly-swatter problem like a head cold.



Today we have learned the hidden dangers of **alcohol, tobacco, caffeine** and **other drugs**.

Many people who live healthy and happy lives don't feel any need for these things.

And by living a healthful life, you will rarely get sick, and hardly ever need any medicine.

Here are some suggestions for living a healthy, drug-free life:

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Eat healthy foods



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Get active exercise every day



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Avoid all addictive drugs, including alcohol



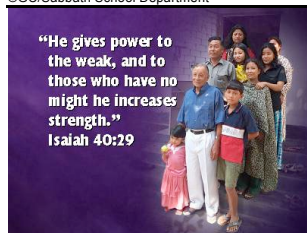
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Keep a normal weight (and)



©GC/Sabbath School Department

Pray to God daily for the strength you need to follow the best way of life.



©Bill Dull

In the Bible, God promises to help us...

It says in Isaiah, “He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.” Isaiah 40:29 NKJV

1 Werner, D. *Where There Is No doctor*, The Hesperian Foundation, 1999 p. 328

2 The Family Encyclopedia of Disease: A complete and concise guide to illnesses and symptoms, Bryan Bunch, 1999, Scientific Pub., Inc. Pub by W.H. Freeman and Co., NY

3 Unhooked Science Readings, Zpdinv 1995 NCADI Inventory No. M1001, www.unhooked.com/sep/alcodome.htm

4 Werner, D. *Where There Is No doctor*, The Hesperian Foundation, 1999 p. 149

5 Alcohol in the Third World, The Cup Runneth Over, Jacques Dupont, <http://idrinforidrc.ca/Archive/Reports/NTRA/pdfs/v15n1e/111060.pdf>

6 Mrs. S. Ranganathan, Honorary Secretary of the TT Ranganathan Clinical Research Foundation, at TTK Hosp., Madras, India, “The Most Sensible Thing is not to Drink, <http://www.unhooked.com/sep/thirdworl.htm>

7 BBC News Online, Health, Medical notes, Friday, 19 Nov. 1999, Smoking increases the risk of a range of diseases, says WHO., http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/health/medical_notes/newsid_473000/473673.stm