

# Alcohol & Drug Abuse

By David Caskey

David Caskey has been preaching the gospel for more than thirty years. Much of his life has been spent in the mission fields of South, Central, East Africa and in the islands of the Caribbean and the Bahamas.

Although he has preached for congregations in Denton and Baytown, Texas, and Monroe, Louisiana, his heart has been in those fields where people have never had access to the gospel of Christ. His work has been to convert these people to the Lord and start congregations in these virgin territories.

In recent years he has used the radio in his initial effort to open the door of opportunity, make contacts, distribute New Testaments and Bible lessons and then follow up by visiting the towns and communities where people showed an interest and a desire to become Christians. During this process he would distribute, with help from national preachers and Christians-and even townspeople who were not Christians-thousands of personal Bible study lessons, and other gospel literature in the towns and communities. In this way hundreds of people have been baptized and congregations of the Lord's church begun.

For years he has been teaching young men and women in the Harding University of Biblical Studies in Nassau, Freeport and Eleuthera to prepare them to take the gospel to their own people in these family islands. This may not be the only way to get the gospel to these people; we are convinced that it is one of the best ways.

Being well known in the islands, David Caskey has been asked to serve on the Prime Minister's Drug Rehabilitation Board. This has given him the challenge to study further the question of drug and alcohol abuse and to speak in many places, both in the Bahamas and the United States, on the subject. Some years ago he wrote a book on alcohol abuse, *I Hurt And Don't Know Why*. Tens of thousands of these have been printed and distributed by Mission Printing to schools, hospitals, large business establishments and service clubs, as well as to churches and individual Christians. This is a further study of this important problem, and it is hoped that it will find a ready reception in a society that desperately needs help in this area of daily life.

-Guy Caskey

## **Alcohol And Drug Abuse**

During the close of the nineteenth century, a new social philosophy, along with its new code of morality, emerged all over the world. This was not just a rebellion against God and the Bible, but a sustained effort to destroy the idea of sin. Those acts and thoughts, which gave sensitive minds feelings of guilt, were no longer to be seen as sinful, immoral or wrong. Any action not criminal or caused by disease might be inelegant, in bad taste, or unpleasant but not categorized as sin. The expansion of these ideas, taken originally from the fields of hypnosis, psychoanalysis, condition reflex phenomena, and the discovery of drugs which alter mood and behavior and changes in scientific methodology of research, have given rise in our day to the idea that no man is responsible for his own actions. Thus, when 25,000 people are killed on our highways each year by drunken drivers, or a drug addict causes a train wreck, or a drinking mob rapes and terrorizes, or a condemned mass murderer confesses that all the gruesome acts were committed under the influence, the defense often argues that the perpetrators are chemical dependents. Supposedly this nullifies and excuses the deeds.

God in His wisdom designed a pattern for living so that we might have purpose, direction, hope and happiness. The man who, out of love and gratitude, seeks to know and do the will of God is rewarded in both this life and the next.

## **The Bible Speaks Plainly**

The word of God speaks plainly about the abuse of both drugs and alcohol. Our society has ignored the warning and now faces the most far-reaching social disaster of all time. Ninety-seven percent of our homes and families are, to some extent, dysfunctional, lives are out of control, unhappiness and bewilderment prevail, suicide statistics are escalating, and crime is at an all time high. In an atmosphere of panic, support groups who offer hope and direction to individuals and families affected by drugs and alcohol are increasing at unprecedented rates. The airways are clogged with talk shows and documentaries, which discuss every aspect of the aftermath of our national tolerance of the very thing condemned by the inspired word. We have sown to the wind and we now reap the whirlwind. Churches across our land are dying, not because the message of the Bible is weak or ineffective, or irrelevant, but because we have not opened our eyes and hearts to the pain and desperation of a baffled society.

Secular support groups borrow, disguise and water down the spiritual message of hope centered in Christ, and give serenity of mind, but not salvation, to a grasping society. They meet several times a day in many borrowed and rented rooms in every town and village and still the numbers grow. We must awaken to the challenge created by the sins of alcohol and drug abuse, learn to recognize the resulting personality disorders, understand the damage done to affected spouses and children, know how they respond and cope, and with compassion lead them to the solution of all of life's woes through both knowing and understanding how to apply the message of Jesus to their own life and soul.

## **Relevant Bible Passages**

The **drinking of alcohol** is mentioned in fifty-five verses of scripture. One passage in the New Testament specially addresses **drug abuse**. Many of the passages prohibit those in positions of secular or spiritual leadership from the use of strong drink. Aaron and his sons were not to drink while rendering service to God (Leviticus 10:8-11). Officials with responsibility for human life should not imbibe (Proverbs 31:4, 5). The nation is blessed with leaders who refrain from drunkenness (Ecclesiastes 10:17). Spiritual leaders became incapable because of their drinking (Isaiah 28:7).

Church leaders in the New Testament must not be given to wine (I Timothy 3:3, 8). The Nazarite vow excluded strong drink ((Numbers 6:3; Luke 1:15). Various forms of immoral sexual behavior are associated with drunkenness. His youngest son, Ham, accosted Noah, in a drunken and naked state, (Genesis 9:22-25). Lot's incestuous relationship with his own daughters was a result of drinking (Genesis 19:30-38). King Ahasuerus tried to subject his queen, Vashti, to the immoral gaze of drunken princes (Esther 1: 5-22). Drinking fills minds with impure and perverse thoughts (Proverbs 23:33). Carnal living and immorality go hand in hand with drinking (Isaiah 22:13 & Hosea 4:10, 11). Young women were sold for the price of a drink (Joel 3:3). Drinking is an attribute of rebellious, disobedient sons (Deuteronomy 21:20).

David's drinking led him to murder. Others died at the hands of those who were drunk (II Samuel 11:13; I Samuel 25:36-38; II Samuel 13:28, 29; I Kings 16:8-10; I Kings 20:13-21; Isaiah 18:3). Drinking alters a personality and deceives a man (Proverbs 20:1). It produces sorrow, woe, contentions, babbling, wounds without cause (Proverbs 23:29, 30).

Drinking gives a man a false sense of invincibility (Isaiah 56:12). Drinking leads to the profaning of sacred things (Daniel 5:3). Drinking makes one scornful and selfish (Hosea 7:5 & Amos 6:3-6). Arrogance is inflamed by drink (Habakkuk 2:5). Those who drink are not alert (Matthew 24:48-51). Rioting and drunkenness are shown opposite of honesty (Romans 13:13).

The addictive nature of drinking and its progressive destructiveness are discussed (Proverbs 23:35; 23:32; 23:24; Habakkuk 2:16; Proverbs 21:17; 23:21. God's people are forbidden from setting the wrong example for others (Habakkuk 2:15 & Romans 14:21).

The seriousness of the sin of drunkenness is shown in these passages that teach that drunkards are not prepared for the Judgment Day and shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Luke 21:31; I Corinthians 6:10; Galatians 5:21); Christians are commanded not to be drunk (Ephesians 5: 18), or to keep company with drunkards (I Corinthians 5: 11).

Paul gives a list of the sins of the flesh in Galatians 5: 19-21. He lists both *drunkenness* and *witchcraft*. The New Testament word is *pharmakia*. This is the same word from which we derive our English word *pharmacy*. The word deals specifically with the abuse of drugs. The use of hallucinogenics in practicing witchcraft in its various forms is and was so common that the words were synonymous.

We should not be amazed that God delivered warnings thousands of years ago that in recent times are being *discovered* for their timely applications to people. The modern psychological

profile of the chemically dependent personality does not differ from the passages in the preceding paragraphs.

These people have low self-esteem, tell the truth or keep promises with great difficulty, think irrationally, estrange themselves from all but drinking or *using* partners, deny that they have a problem, are forgetful, disorganized, late, addictive and compulsive. Sexual abuse and looseness are common. Intolerance is the trait that does not allow for the delay of the gratification of personal desires. This, in turn, leads to progressive involvement, and often crime, to support the habit.

The thought and behavioral traits of the dependent personality adversely affect family members, and are uniformly passed on to the next generation. In this way almost every family has been touched, and we have lost sight of personal interaction that is *normal*, and the *ideal* of the family as God intended it to function.

God in His love set a standard, and blazed a trail with His own Son, that would provide purpose, service, happiness, hope and peace. He intended that children be brought up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord", with both a father and a mother to guide them. Forty-five percent of our children are raised in a single family home, and one in four children has at least one alcoholic parent, and is thus between four and ten times as likely to become addicted as other children.

## Chemical Dependence

The dependent personality exists even among those who have never had a drink or a smoke, or a sniff. Those traits, which are character flaws, may express themselves in other fields. Groups are now formed to help deal with workaholics, food-oholics, sex-oholics, and even neg-oholics- people who are addicted to negative thinking.

These recognized additions are treated in much the same way as alcohol and drug dependency. Treatment is also needed for **families** of all these addictions, because they too have been caught up in a senseless *merry-go-round*, proceeding nowhere.

The road to addiction usually begins with nicotine (*I heard a young addict on a television program, involving hundreds of people, say that this was true always, without exception; he called it the "gate-way drug"- Ed.*), and then advances to beer, hard liquor, marijuana and/or various pills or hallucinogenic, then to cocaine and/or the very potent form called crack. There are exceptions to this procedure but this is the norm. The frightening news is that young people are being *hooked* at increasingly earlier ages.

*Drugs* are illegal for everyone, and although alcohol and tobacco are legal for adults, they are almost always illegal for school-age children. Every state has raised its drinking age to twenty-one. In forty-four states and the District of Columbia, the sale of tobacco to minors is forbidden. The scope of drug use is not confined to particular population groups or economic levels. Thirty-nine percent of urban youth have used drugs by graduation day, as compared to thirty-two percent in rural areas. Female students use drugs at only a slightly lower rate than males-thirty-four percent versus thirty-eight percent.

By age thirteen, thirty percent of boys and twenty-two percent of girls have begun to drink alcohol. Two percent of sixth graders have experimented with marijuana, and five percent of junior high students are daily tobacco users.

By high school graduation, one-quarter of American students are frequent users of illegal drugs; two-thirds are frequent users of alcohol, and one in five use tobacco daily. More than fifty percent have used marijuana; ten- percent hallucinogens, and over ninety percent alcoholic beverages. Seventy percent of child and adolescent suicides can be directly related to depression aggravated by drug and alcohol abuse. The United States suffers the highest rates of teenage substance abuse in the industrialized world.

No family can bury its head and pretend not to be concerned. Statistics show that kids usually get their drugs from a close friend or a relative, and are most influenced by peer pressure. Truly, "Evil companionship corrupts good morals." One-fourth of fourth graders are pressured to try drugs, and the median age for drug and alcohol use is eleven and one-half years.

## **The Slide Into Abuse**

Chemical abuses are closely related, since "drug addiction is seldom if ever isolated from alcoholism." This information was shared by Barbara Starr, First Vice-Chairperson of the National Council of Alcoholism. We note many similar characteristics in all forms of abuse. The slide into abuse can be gradual and subtle. While peers pressure kids, many adults use substances to cope with their daily problems, frustrations and feelings of inferiority. Alcohol or drugs or both become a pattern because of unresolved stress. Over a period of time, a person can become psychologically addicted to chemicals as a method of coping with personal problems.

Abuse has already occurred when one automatically reaches for a drink, smoke or a pill, when difficulties, or emotional stress, are present. By persistently keeping chemicals in the bloodstream, one may alter metabolism and become physically addicted as well. Alcohol or drugs should never be used to escape problems, or to cure loneliness, boredom or depression. The Bible teaches us to resolve our problems through knowledge, prayer, seeking forgiveness, setting our minds on values above, correcting interpersonal wrongs, and understanding our worth as those made in the image of the Maker.

Of the eighteen million known alcoholics in the United States, only three to five percent exist on Skid Row. Most maintain homes and families, and master facades. Thus the greatest roadblock to early and successful treatment has always been its prime symptom-denial. Addicted people use hundreds of forms of attempted control to maintain denial. These include drinking only beer, never drinking alone, never drinking before noon, never drinking during business hours, seeing a counselor, going on the wagon for periods of time, and on and on.

## **Disease Of Denial**

**Denial** is the biggest thing about addiction. Most families make an effort to hide the problem. It is ignored and denied. We know that someone drinks too much, or someone uses drugs,

but we are baffled, ashamed, hurt, and in such pain that the truth is almost never faced. It is a secret that everyone shares. Our attitude and fears only make it worse, and we pass the effects of this destructive *monster* from generation to generation.

The debate rages about calling alcoholism and drug abuse a **disease**. Usage of the term is usually acceptable if properly defined. Over a period of time, abusers alter brain-cell function, induce nerve damage, shrink the cerebral cortex, imbalance the hormonal system and damage vital organs. Life expectancy drops from twenty to forty years below national averages, depending on complications.

Children of abusers do inherit things that make them more vulnerable to the effects of alcohol. We are influenced by our genes, which affect psychological and metabolic functioning, and social environment. One does not inherit *alcoholism*, but a *genetic predisposition*, which renders a person more *metabolically vulnerable*, if drinking is chosen.

Addiction is still created by our world, which fosters careless socially encouraged abusive drinking practices as a means of solving emotional problems. Regardless of background, no one can assume that he or she has **immunity**.

Great concern is being given, and criminal charges are stemming from the birth of children who are already addicted. *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (and drug abuse)* is one of the three leading causes of mental retardation and is the only preventable one. The safe alcohol consumption level for a pregnant woman is none.

## Home Dysfunction

Chemical dependency follows a familiar pattern. Sometimes the order changes, or the behavior is temporarily suspended, then resumes. The pattern is one of loss of control, alibis, social pressures, grandiose behavior, aggression, guilt, remorse, periods of cessation, changes in drinking or using patterns, the decay of social relationships, problems on the job, increase in the importance of the substance (*I heard abusers say on the television program, **Crack Down**, that they were married to it and moved it above anyone or anything else - Ed.*), seeking counseling, family problems, unreasonable resentments, escape, chain drinking or using, ethical breakdown, loss of logical thought processes, jealousy, decreased tolerance, fears, tremors and shakes, bankruptcy of alibis, admission of defeat and seeking a helping hand.

Most die without getting the spiritual help that will put them in recovery. It is horrible living with an active dependent personality.

The addict is not the only one who is sick and in need of help. The spouses and associates of alcoholics and drug users are labeled as *codependents*. They also become very unattractive people and contribute to the dysfunction of the home. *Codependents*, without a spiritual program of recovery, are barely surviving while they cope with outrageous circumstances. Most do not realize the mistakes they are making. For years they have been doing all the wrong things, even for the right reasons.

Before circumstances can change, they too must be aware and accept their part in aggravating the sad scenario. Most codependents that seek support groups are looking for help in getting the addict to stop. At that point there is the delusion that if the abuse would stop, things would return to normal. However, years of playing games, building defenses and trying to control another's drinking or using have put the codependent in a position to need active and vital spiritual programs of recovery. Codependents are rescuers, caretakers and enablers. They do things for others that keep them from meeting responsibilities and that allow them to continue the abuse without suffering consequences for their actions.

Codependents help increase family anger, anxiety and denial. The codependent rescues and then gets resentful, and begins to persecute the addict. They nag, lecture, scream, cry, beg, coerce, hover over, protect, accuse, chase after, try to talk out of, attempt to induce guilt, entrap, check up on, scold, lock in, lock out and snarl out demeaning names. The methods are endless; the goal is always the same-make someone else do what you want them to do. In time we must learn that neither the drinking nor the controlling behavior is normal.

The most detrimental effect is on the children caught in the middle. The bad and sad news is that the effect of the dysfunctional home on the children is much worse than previously suspected. Twenty-eight million children of alcoholics, of whom seven million are under the age of eighteen, have been identified. Common traits of these children, many of them now adults, have been identified-not all of which have each trait.

These, who are children of alcoholics' guess what normal behavior is, follow projects from beginning to end with great difficulty and lie when it is just as easy to tell the truth. They judge themselves without mercy, struggle to have fun, take themselves very seriously and shy away from intimate relationships. They overreact to changes concerning which they have no control, constantly seek approval and affirmation and feel different from other people.

They are either super responsible or super irresponsible and they are loyal even when it is undeserved and frequently lock themselves into a course of action without giving consideration to the consequences. They become isolated and afraid of people and authority figures. As approval seekers they lose their identity.

Children of alcoholics are frightened by angry people and react to criticism in the extreme. Most become alcoholics, marry alcoholics, or both. Some will find another compulsive personality to fulfill the abandonment needs. They are addicted to the excitement. These people are **terrified of abandonment**.

## **There Is Hope And A Way Up**

When we get so far away from what God in His wisdom has revealed of His path through life that offers hope, happiness, purpose and eternal communion with Him, we must seek radical change. Recovery begins with an awareness of why our lives are chaotic. We must accept blame for our own wrongs. Detach from those things over which we have no control, and be willing to grow with humility and repentance toward the image of God's will. Through study, prayer and meditation, we can move past anger, hate and resentment. We must not only accept responsibility for our life and soul, but must guide our children, and others, to the path

that will lead them up and away from alcohol and drugs with all of its attendant hurt and destruction.

### **Seven Tips For Parents**

Raising drug and alcohol free children in our society does not just happen. These tips are helpful guidelines to reducing a scourge on our society.

1. SET LIMITS. Know your children's friends. Know where they are and what they are doing. Expect them home on time.
2. TALK ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUGS. Seek information, talk about it together. Discuss peer pressure. Listen to what your child is facing. Be there for them.
3. GET INVOLVED. Join with other parents to fight drugs. Encourage meetings with Christian parents and teens. Learn to recognize drugs and paraphernalia.
4. DON'T DENY. "Not my kid," has become the norm when discoveries are made. By denying the truth when it is presented, parents encourage self-destruction. Catch it early.
5. LOOK FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGES. These changes may be in friends, language, attitude, physical appearance, weight loss, grades, interests. One or two changes may be normal; several are a danger sign.
6. GATEWAY DRUGS. The wrong example with use of prescriptions or tobacco, or alcohol can lead children to abuse. We give out mixed messages when we forbid one thing while using another. Children are not deceived by the behavior of their parents.
7. GET HELP. If you discover the problem, do not delay. Addiction is progressive. It does not get better, only worse. Destruction strikes rapidly. A friend had a delightful 15-year-old son who tried crack over the Christmas holidays. A year later, after ten months of treatment and the exhaustion of medical insurance, he was informed that the next step was three to five years of rigid treatment at \$365 a day.

### **The Most Successful Help Is Free**

There are recovery support groups all over the world to help all forms of addicts and their families. All are based on Alcoholics Anonymous (for the alcoholic) and Al-Anon, Ala-Teen and Young Ala-Teen (for families of alcoholics). There is Adult Children of Alcoholics, Cocaine Anonymous, and many others.

All of these use the Twelve Step approach to recovery, along with meetings to teach and encourage, putting the program to work in daily living. Each offers a telephone list of people to call if you have a tough time between meetings, and an atmosphere of acceptance and belonging. Help is non-judgmental, but relentless as it points to the Steps of the program. Volunteers maintain Twenty-four hour telephone answering services. These are not counseling services; they will only give you the time and location of the next meeting nearest



you, and encourage you to attend. The Twelve Steps are nothing more than a restatement of passages from the inspired Book.

## **Twelve Steps With Scriptures**

1. WE ADMIT THAT WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL - THAT LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE (Proverbs 23:19-35; Romans 6:16; II Peter 2:19; John 8:34; Galatians 5:16-21; Proverbs 20:1).
2. CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY (Philippians 2:13; Psalm 107:27-30; Proverbs 3:5, 6; Psalm 111:10; Galatians 2:20).
3. MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM (Hebrews 11:6; John 7: 16, 17; John 1:10-13; Joshua 25:15; Isaiah 55:6, 7).
4. MAKE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS INVENTORY OF OURSELVES (Proverbs 28: 13; Psalm 32:5; I Corinthians 11:31; Romans 12:3; Galatians 6:3).
5. ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS (James 5:16; John 1:8-10; Ephesians 5:22-24; Luke 5:17-19; Psalm 32:3-5).
6. WE'RE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD TO REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER (Psalm 32:5, 6; Isaiah 5:6, 7; James 4:6-10; Psalm 139:23, 24; Ephesians 2:8-18).
7. HUMBLY ASK HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; II Corinthians 10:4, 5; II Chronicles 7:14; I John 1:7; Psalm 51:1-3).
8. MAKE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED, AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL (Proverbs 16: 17; Ephesians 4:25-27; 4:30, 31; Exodus 20:16, 17; Colossians 3:13; Matthew 5:21-24).
9. MAKE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHENEVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS (Luke 19:8, 9; Romans 12:14-18; Romans 13:6-9; Philippians 2:14, 15; Romans 12:21).
10. CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY AND WHEN WRONG PROMPTLY ADMITTED IT (I Corinthians 10:13; I John 3:1-3; Proverbs 21:2; Psalm 139:23, 24; Luke 6:41).
11. SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM, PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT (Romans 12:1; II Peter 1:2-10; Psalm 1:1-3; Ephesians 1:17-19; I Timothy 4: 14-16).

12. HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS A RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO OTHERS AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS (II Corinthians 1:3, 4; Romans 15:1, 2; Matthew 28:18-20; II Corinthians 5:17-20; Mark 5:19; Matthew 25:40).

## **Summary**

We must have no doubt that the transgression of God's word is sin and will separate us from Him. We need also to know that God loves us and lays down certain commands to protect us from self-destructive ways.

Choosing to disobey carries consequences that reach beyond us to touch the lives of those yet unborn. We can and must repent and turn from our present ways, or the forces of destruction will continue to mount their attack on both young and old.

We in the church cannot continue to ignore the devastation of sin upon our land and allow someone else to satisfy the longing of the sin-sick soul with only a part of the message of hope. We must arise to the undeniable and clarion call of the Captain of our salvation and March against the enemy.

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