

October 26th – The Use of Alcohol

“No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities.”
(1 Timothy 5:23)

The alcohol industry does big business in the United States of America. Each year the liquor industry spends almost \$2 billion dollars on advertising and encouraging the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Apparently the advertising works because Americans spend over \$90 billion dollars on alcohol each year. Unfortunately, over 15 million Americans are dependent on alcohol, and 500,000 are between the ages of 9 and 12. To put it bluntly, our nation has a serious alcohol problem.

Some people have pointed to today’s verse as evidence that God has no problem with the use of alcohol. In fact, some would say God actually encourages consumption. To make sense of this verse, we need to know to context Paul was writing in. In the ancient world, water was often polluted and carried many diseases. Thus, Paul urged Timothy not to risk illness – not even for the sake of abstaining from alcohol. Drinking small amounts of wine would keep Timothy from continuing to get sick.

We need to ask ourselves, “Do we have the same problem with disease-laden drinking water in our culture?” Unsafe drinking water is a tremendous problem for many people all over the world. Many relief organizations dig wells for the underprivileged in an attempt to alleviate the problem. But in our modern culture of sewers and clean drinking water, we don’t have those troubles. So then, if we don’t need to drink alcohol to avoid sickness, why do we need to drink it at all? It’s clear that Timothy wanted to abstain from alcohol – I think we’d be wise to do the same.