

DISTILLED LOGIC

DRINKING



BIG IDEA: Students face immense pressure from their culture to drink. A large percentage of social activities in college involve drinking. Students are bombarded with mixed messages from the media and peers: “Know when to say when,” “It’s the right beer now.” Who will they listen to?

Unless they are challenged to consider their lifestyles and make deliberate choices regarding alcohol use, students will “conform to the pattern of their world” (Romans 12:2). God’s Word is effective at challenging them in this way. This study will enable you as the group leader to help them begin that process.

Using both biblical principles, and contemporary examples and research, the student will be led to consider the motives for and consequences of alcohol use (and abuse). They will consider what has influenced their decisions in the past and be challenged to choose what they desire to be the prime influence in their life in the future—the world or the Word of God.



DESIRED LIFE CHANGE: As a result of this study, group members should recognize the potential costs and consequences involved in drinking, and reconsider how they make their decisions. They should desire to be influenced by God’s Word rather than conforming to pressures around them.



AUDIENCE: This lesson is designed for both unbelievers and spiritually young students who are willing to: 1) examine their motives, and 2) explore their views and biblical perspectives on drinking. The assumption is that many of the students who do this study are currently involved in drinking alcohol.



LEADER'S PREPARATION: Read through the entire leader’s guide to get an overview. Familiarize yourself with the flow of the discussion. There are four objectives of the Bible study:

- 1) Identify reasons and motives for why people drink.
- 2) Show the Bible’s relevance to a current issue like drinking.
- 3) Examine some biblical references to drinking.
- 4) Have students identify the primary influence in their behavior and choices.

Certain parts of the study are designed to create suspense. Therefore, unless you know where the study is going, you’ll end up frustrated, and discussion will be stifled. Be prepared to share your story related to this topic. Let your group see how these truths have changed your life.



AT A GLANCE

As your group interacts in this study, they will think . . .

This is my **WORLD:** Drinking pervades student culture. But why?

This is my **NEED:** The choices I make about drinking will have consequences.

This is my **ANSWER:** The Bible offers relevant insights into the decisions I make about drinking.

This is the **DIFFERENCE:** If God’s Word influences my life more than my world, I will avoid some potentially serious consequences.

This is what I’ll **DO:** I will consider my lifestyle and make a definite choice about who will influence me most.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - WHY IS THIS STUDY IMPORTANT?



Alcohol abuse is often identified as the number one problem on college campuses. Because of this, it is essential that the students we influence have the opportunity to consider what the Bible has to say about this issue. For specific biblical and practical reasons, Campus Crusade for Christ expects its staff members to refrain from consuming alcohol.

However, because the audience targeted in this study may be either non-Christians or young believers often involved in alcohol use, the objective is limited to simply challenging them to consider their choices and the potential consequences. We desire to demonstrate that the Bible is relevant to the issue.


1 SUGGESTED INTRO STATEMENT: Today we've gotten together to talk about drinking—a topic that's familiar to all of us. We may all have different perspectives, but whatever your current beliefs and life choices are, I think you'll find our discussion helpful. Let's start by taking a look at why people do things.

2 STATE: There's often more than one reason people choose to do something. Let's look at what some students have said about why they drink.

Have group members read each quote. Group members should record these answers in the box and any other reasons they can think of.

3 ASK: What are some reasons people don't mention for why they drink? Discuss and record answers.

OPTIONAL: The leader may relate the statistics from "Why College Freshmen Drink." Refer to the back page of the student piece.


VERSION 2.1

DISTILLED LOGIC

There's often more than one reason people choose to do something. Why do you think people drink?

TOOLBOX
 THINK
 OBSERVE
 CLOSE-UP
 WRITE
 DISCUSS
 FEELINGS
 BRAINSTORM
 REFERENCE
 PASSAGE
 ARTICLE
 BIG IDEA
 CROSSROAD

A WHAT DO PEOPLE SAY?

Casey, a college sophomore, said, "Drinking is like academics. It's part of the college experience. It's social. You learn something that you don't learn in books."

It's a social experience.
 It's expected of you.
 For escape; to help them relax.
 To be rebellious—just go against society's rules.
 To be accepted.

"From my point of view," said a Creighton freshman, regarding drinking and raising the legal drinking age, "it's something to do, it's against the law—so why not?"
 — from the *Omaha World Herald*, April 20, 1992.

Partying is "the only thing you can do to keep your sanity," according to Joe, a University of Nebraska sophomore. Classes are tough and drinking helps him relax.

B WHAT PEOPLE DON'T SAY

To be cool.
 To feel more confident.
 To numb themselves to pain.
 To make themselves feel better.
 Feel depressed.

Humorist Dave Barry offers insight into beer commercials:
 "Lately I've been feeling very patriotic, especially during commercials . . . If you want to talk about *real* patriotism, of course, you have to talk about beer commercials. I would have to say that *Miller* is the most patriotic brand of beer. I grant you it tastes like rat saliva, but we are not talking about taste here. What we are talking about, according to the commercials, is that *Miller* is by God an *American* beer, 'born and brewed in the U.S.A.,' and the men who drink it are American men, the kind of men who are not afraid to perspire freely and shake a man's hand. That's mainly what happens in beer commercials: Burly American men go around, drenched in perspiration, shaking each other's hands in a violent and patriotic fashion."
Dave Barry's Greatest Hits (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1988) p.85.

1 ASK: If you drink alcohol, have you ever thought about why you do?

Group members should complete this list on their own.

OPTIONAL: Did you know? "90% of college students consume alcoholic beverages. A majority of college students get drunk between 60 and 100 times a year." *National On-Campus Report*, August 6, 1990, p.2.

2 READ

3 STATE

4 ASK & DISCUSS: Ask the multiple choice question. C is the correct answer.

5 ASK: What are some other problems created by drinking? List these on your sheet.

6 STATE: Listen to two students describe their experience with drinking. Ask two group members to read these stories aloud. After the stories have been read, have the group members write the sources and dates in the spaces provided.

OPTIONAL QUESTION: What's the difference between today and 2,700 years ago? Briefly discuss if members have some observations.

Have you ever thought about why **you** drink?

TOP 5 REASONS I DRINK

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

MULTIPLE CHOICE:
How many Olympic-size swimming pools could you fill with the amount of beer, wine and liquor consumed by American college students each year?

A.35 B.350 C.3,500

Sometimes, drinking can become a problem.

YOUR EXPERIENCE

Can you think of a situation involving a friend or acquaintance where drinking created a problem?

LIST OF PROBLEMS

20/20

The following is an excerpt of a "20/20" television program aired May 7, 1993, entitled "Blitzed, Ripped and Wasted":
At the Addictive Behaviors Research Center they serve student volunteers drinks for about 40 minutes, and then a research scientist asks them about the effect.
DR. PARKS: How are you feeling? Yes?
STUDENT 1: Sleepy.
DR. PARKS: Is that typical for you after a few beers?
STUDENT 1: Yes. I always fall asleep when I drink.
STUDENT 2: So maybe when we stand up we're just going to be really feeling it, but just sitting here not moving--
DR. PARKS: Why don't you try it?
STUDENT 2: No.
DR. PARKS: No, go ahead.
NARRATOR: Usually about half the people in the group say they feel some effect from the drink.
STUDENT 2: Well, I feel it more when I like stand up.
DR. PARKS: What do you feel? Tell me the sensations or the--
STUDENT 2: My legs feel funny, kind of.
NARRATOR: Then the researcher tells them--
DR. PARKS: None of the beverages you consumed tonight had any alcohol in them.
NARRATOR: It was non-alcoholic beer they'd been drinking, yet again and again half the students tested say they feel woozy or sleepy or happy.
DR. PARKS: So you see, it isn't just the beverage, it's your psychological set or your expectations and the setting you're in. So it may be that alcohol doesn't make the party. It may be that you and your friends make the party.

Listen to two students describe their experience with drinking:

SENIOR ENGINEERING STUDENT

He requests anonymity, because the off-campus ceremony he participated in a year ago is supposed to be kept secret. During the initiation into the "21 Club," he joined 20 other Princeton juniors, each of whom chugged 21 16-ounce cans of beer, one about every 60 seconds, with a one-minute break in between.
He drank penalty chugs for missing the time limits. And, finally, he helped empty a five-gallon punch bowl filled with even more beer.
Through it all, he kept vomiting so he could consume the most the fastest. Before it was over, he figured he had guzzled the equivalent of 60 to 70 cans of beer.
He finished second.

Source: _____
Date: _____

FOREIGN GRAD STUDENT

Ike Saiah, an international graduate student, comments about the behavior surrounding him:
"Even at this private, religious-affiliated institution, I commonly hear students say, 'Come, we'll get some wine and have a party; let's all get drunk. This is really living; let it go on and on, and tomorrow will be even better!'
"Many get up early in the morning to go on long drinking bouts that last till late at night—like drunken bums," notes Ike. "The 'heroes' are those who when it comes to drinking, boast about the liquor they can hold."
He continues, "The campus is now led by drunks! The most influential people on campus are those who reel and stagger, making stupid errors and mistakes. At parties, the floors are covered with vomit; filth is everywhere."

Source: _____
Date: _____

Source & Dates

"Raising legal age does little to cut drinking at colleges, studies show," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 1, 1992.

Adapted from the Book of Isaiah, written about 700 B.C. This is from the *Living Bible*, Isaiah 56:2; 5:11, 22; and 28:7.

1 READ

2 ASK: What does it mean to mock someone?
Verbal or physical ridicule. Brawling means a noisy quarrel or fight. *The American Heritage Dictionary*.

(Refer to the back page of student piece for more info on "Alcohol and Violence Go Together.")

3 ASK & DISCUSS: How would you paraphrase this verse? **The main point is that a group member would recognize that getting drunk is foolish.** Why does this Proverb say this person is unwise? Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

4 READ

5 ASK: What are some potential after-effects of excessive drinking?
Discuss as a group.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:
Depression;
physical abuse;
bloodshot eyes; physical damage to organs;
addiction (alcoholism);
inability to function

See "What Causes Rape" on back page of student piece.

6 READ

7 ASK & DISCUSS

8 READ

9 ASK & DISCUSS: The *real* problem of drinking communicated by this passage is the problem of addiction (i.e., alcoholism)

10 ASK & DISCUSS

History records that alcoholic beverages and alcohol-related problems date back thousands of years. The writers of the Bible recognized the issue and offered some timeless insights into the problem.

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

What did the writer mean when he said that wine is a mocker? A brawler?

2 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Proverbs 23:29,30

What are some potential after effects of excessive drinking?

3 Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. Proverbs 23:31,32

The writer observes that what appears harmless can be deadly. What are some of the more serious consequences of excessive drinking?

4 Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things. You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. "They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?" Proverbs 23:33-35

What ultimate problem does the last sentence suggest?

ALCOHOL & VIOLENCE

80% to 90% of campus violence is linked to alcohol abuse.

Rebecca Heglin, "21,000 Victims of Campus Crime," (*USA Today*, March 14, 1991).

HANNAH'S STORY

"When I woke up, I had no idea where I was. Even worse I had no idea who he was. I was hung over, lost my virginity and totally depressed. This is not what I wanted college to be like."
—college freshman

GRADES

According to a survey of 105 schools – drinking had a direct correlation with academic achievement, with grades declining almost in proportion to the alcohol consumed.

"Reading, writing and drinking" (*Mobile Press Register*, November 29, 1992).

YOUR EXPERIENCE

Do you have a friend or acquaintance for whom you think alcohol has become an addiction? Do you think they recognize it?

1 TRANSITION: Let's look at one more truth from the Bible about drinking.

2 READ

3 ASK: This question might create discussion about whether the writer is referring to drinking in any amount or getting drunk. The point is that getting drunk is a waste of a person's time.

OPTIONAL: Depending on the spiritual interest or maturity level of your group members, you could ask, "This verse tells us not to do something. What does it tell us to do?" *Be filled with the Spirit.*

Does anyone know what, "be filled with the Spirit" means? *Let your group brainstorm answers.*

4 STATE: In general, it means to let God control your life. *Use this definition to clarify the meaning.*

5 READ

6 ASK: What do you think about drinking in general, in light of all that we've read and talked about today?

This is meant to be a broad question. You want your group members to feel free to give a variety of answers. Hopefully they will mention some new insight they've learned. In case they seem confused or reluctant to talk, you might ask: "What surprised you most from this lesson? What weren't you surprised by?"

7 READ (Context of passage is to not have immoral behavior control you. Drunkenness is mentioned specifically in 1 Corinthians 6:10)

8 STATE: As you consider your own life, where would you put yourself on the scale of personal experience? Put an X on the scale where you think you are. Circle what you would like to be true of you.

If you desire that which is helpful rather than hurtful, it's essential that you recognize the key thought.

9 CLOSING

REMEMBER: This study is designed to help students identify their own views about drinking and then evaluate them in light of biblical truths. The goal is not for them to simply fill in the boxes. Be flexible to let members do these application

6 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit Ephesians 5:18 (NASB)

What is the writer's chief observation about drinking?

DEFINITION
Dissipation: a waste of time

FACTOID

College students spent \$5.5 million last year on alcohol.

90% of all rapes involved alcohol.

60% of women infected with sexually transmitted diseases had been drinking when infected.

"Booze No Longer A Macho Thing; College Women Closing The Gap" (Sun News, Myrtle Beach, SC, June 8, 1994).

DAN'S NIGHT OUT

N.C. State University student Dan Johnston doesn't remember much about that night at Pantana Bob's bar. He does recall a blur of Kamikazes—a chilled concoction of vodka touched with Triple Sec and Rose's Lime Juice.

Johnston's friends told him later they did their best to get him back to their car after he passed out, but they were drunk too. "They kept dropping me," he said.

"Colleges seek to cut alcohol use" (News and Observer, Raleigh, NC, April 20, 1992).

Every person is faced with the choice between that which is helpful (beneficial) and that which is hurtful (being mastered by—addicting).

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Helpful Hurtful

KEY THOUGHT

A person is wise to do those things that are helpful or beneficial, and to avoid those things which are harmful or wasteful.

Additional Facts:

Alcohol and Violence Go Together

Murder: Alcohol involved in at least 34% of cases.

Rape: More than half of rapists had been drinking.

Child Abuse: Mothers convicted are 3 times more likely to be alcoholic; fathers, 10 times more likely.

Suicide: Up to 36% of victims were drinking just before.

"Alcohol and Violence Go Together," Prodigy Services Company, March 3, 1992.

Why College Freshmen Drink

	Men	Women
To relax	53%	49%
To feel less tense in social situations	40%	37%
To get drunk	39%	34%
To keep friends company	23%	17%
To forget problems	19%	20%

Suzy Parker, "Why College Freshmen Drink," (USA Today, March 14, 1991).

Alcohol a Factor in Half of Accidental Deaths at Home

Former Surgeon General Antonio Novello reported at a conference on alcohol:

- Alcohol is a factor in 50% of accidental deaths in the home.
- Drunk pedestrians are 4 times more likely to be hit by cars.
- Emergency room traumas: 20% to 25% involve alcohol.
- Falls causing death are more common as alcohol use goes up.
- An alcoholic is 16 times more likely to die in a fall than a non-alcoholic.

"Alcohol a Factor in Half of Accidental Deaths at Home," Prodigy Services Company, March 31, 1992.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the *New International Version*, ©1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Published by Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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points on their own if they prefer. Close study by affirming members for taking a look at their personal views.

SAMPLE CLOSING: Thanks for coming to this discussion today. It's easy to go through life never thinking about why we do things. Thanks for being open to considering other views and perspectives. I hope this helped you in the decisions and choices you face about drinking.

OPTIONAL: Are there other issues like this that you'd like to talk about in this sort of format?

L E A D E R ' S R E S O U R C E

ADDITIONAL HELP: This Bible study will give you many opportunities to share the gospel with your group members. The study will cause your group members to identify certain changes they'd like to make in their lives. Good intentions are easy. Making changes is hard.

Think about ways you can share Jesus Christ with your group members as the source of power for change through a relationship with Him. To the right are sample ideas and conversations for ways to share the gospel.



BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Dying For A Drink – Anderson Spickard, MD and Barbara R. Thompson (Word Publishing)

Alcohol– Josh McDowell (Research Almanac and Statistical Digest)

Robert Stein, "Wine-Drinking in New Testament Times" *Christianity Today* (June 20, 1975)



TOPIC CONNECTIONS

Related *InterACTA* small group studies: *Shades of Gray; The New I.D.; A Sure Thing; Extreme Love; Walk This Way; Under The Influence*

Ask your group members to get together for a coke, or drop by their rooms to get to know them better and see if they have any questions about the Bible study.

After answering any questions about the Bible study, transition to the gospel by briefly sharing your own experience with trying to change, but not having the ability to do it.

"You know Michelle, the Bible teaches us that none of us live up to our own standards on a consistent basis. And we certainly don't live up to God's standards. There is a reason for that—the Bible calls it sin. We tend to do just what we want to do, when we want to do it.

But Christianity isn't simply a list of rules to live up to. It's a personal relationship with God through Christ.

Is that a term that's familiar to you? A personal relationship with God or Christ?"

If no seek to share the gospel using the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet.

If yes, say something like this:

"That's great. When did you first hear that phrase? Is that a decision you made at some point in time? How did that come about?"

Ask questions to see if they have assurance of their salvation. If not, go to Revelation 3:20 and John 5:11-13 in the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet.

Perhaps a group member is a believer who isn't familiar with the Spirit-filled life, and is trying to live the Christian life in her own power. In this case say something like the following:

"Even when we have a plan of action, it's not very easy to change ourselves, for any length of time. Christianity isn't just a way to reform ourselves or a set of rules to follow. It's a relationship with God who lives inside us and gives us the power and ability to live the way He wants us to. It's impossible to do it on your own. Are you familiar with the concept of the Spirit-filled life?"

From here you can transition into sharing the Holy Spirit booklet with your group member.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

The topic of drinking alcohol is a sensitive subject to many. Feel free to adapt the content of your Bible study depending on the spiritual receptivity and maturity of your group members. To help determine the content of your discussion time, ask yourself these questions:

Are the people in my group believers?

Are the people in this group drinking alcohol on a regular basis?

Do the people in my group desire to be positive witnesses for Christ?

Are the people in this group exercising spiritual leadership over others?

Does anyone in my group come from a family where alcoholism is a problem?

If people aren't believers yet, or are just casually interested in Christianity, leave the content as is.

If most are believers, consider adding these verses to your study:

Proverbs 31:4-9; Romans 14:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; 8; 9:19-23.

O V E R V I E W O F M E E T I N G T I M E



Planning your group session

Allocating your time

INTERACTION AS A GROUP	INTERACTION WITH THE STUDY & WORD	INTERACTION WITH GOD	UPCOMING INFORMATION	OTHER IDEAS
Ice breaker? Refreshments?	Provided. Add personal story?	Worship / Praise / Prayer time?	Next meeting? Special event?	Music / Video?
_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.

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