

## Fathers & Alcohol

25 June 2026

### Introduction

Comment from Noah Sweat, the one-time state rep in Mississippi, who gave a famous speech in the 1950's during the prohibition debates.

### General Principles

- Psalm 103, 15: God gave wine to gladden the hearts of men
  - [Drink because you are happy, but never because you are miserable. Gilbert K. Chesterton](#)
  - Our Lord's first miracle was to turn water into wine at a wedding; and spectacularly so
- Dangers
  - Drunkenness
  - Alcoholism
  - Impurity & Fighting
- Causes of excessive drinking
  - Bad habits from youth
  - Using as a consolation
  - Companions who are not virtuous. Drinking buddies

### Purposes and Appropriate Manners of Drinking

- False purposes of drinking
  - Mere pleasure
  - Consolation
  - Escape from difficulties
  - False "Catholic" spirit
- Purposes of drinking
  - In itself
    - To facilitate human companionship & friendship
    - To nourish conversation
  - In family

- To promote joy at right time and in right context
  - To strengthen bonds between
    - Husband and wife
    - Father and children
- Moderate
  - Frequency of drinking
    - Wise not to drink on a daily basis. Indeed, this can easily be an early warning sign of alcoholism.
    - Perhaps better to aim at a minority of time during the week
      - Self-denial
      - Spirit of poverty
      - Sacrifice for children
  - Amount of drinking
    - Need to avoid undue tipsiness (which can be a venial sin) and drunkenness
    - Good to make clear decisions about how much to drink beforehand
      - Perhaps a point to discuss with wife to see what she sees.
      - She can also help with accountability.
    - Wise to do an audit to see how much we actually drink
  - Circumstances of drinking
    - Better to connect to regular meals.
      - Not to make drinking the heart and center of any event.
      - Also, we should avoid merely drinking to drink; e.g., just sitting and drinking.
    - Should be tied to moments of joy and happiness as much as is possible.

### **Additional Reasons to practice moderation (even intermittent abstinence)**

- So as not to be a burden on family budget
- So as to be able to attend to other duties
- So as to give good example to children
- So as to avoid being open and inclined to other sins

### **Kinds of Drink & their character**

- General principles
  - Prioritize quality of quantity. Both as to kinds of drinks as to within one class. Why? Tied both to spirit of nobility and to poverty – can help not to drink excessively.
  - Respect different occasions with different kinds of drink
- Classes
  - Wine.
    - Serious argument that this is the most noble of all. Only one used by Our Lord in a sacrament and only one specifically mentioned in Holy Scripture
    - Uses: Meals
  - Beer
    - Excellent for social gatherings
  - Hard liquors
    - Can facilitate more elevated discussions
    - Good for after dinner conversation
  - Cocktails
    - Good for preparing a meal on a special occasion.

### **How to educate children**

- Effects of alcohol abuse on children
- Furthermore – and more importantly – he must educate children on why, how, and when to drink
  - Why?
  - How?
  - When?

### **Challenges**

- Talk to your wife. Is she happy with your relationship with alcohol? Why or why not?
- Do an audit
  - Temporal
    - How often do you drink?

- Volume
  - How much do you regularly drink?
    - In a day?
    - In a week? A month?
- Financial
  - How much money do you spend on it? What percentage of your monthly budget is this?
- Social
  - Do you find you cannot hold a conversation apart from having a drink in your hand?
- Practice abstinence
  - I would recommend at least 2-3 days a week of abstaining entirely from alcohol.
    - If you find this impossible, this could be a serious sign you are on the road to alcoholism.
  - Why?
    - Example of moderation for your children
    - Economy
    - Mortification and spirit of penance
      - Offer this up for your family.