

## A Pastor's Heart

### Encouragement from Pastor McGill

#### Avoiding Intoxicating Things

**1 Peter 5:8-9** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

The word of God instructs us to **Be Sober** and then gives the reason we must be sober. We have an enemy who is on the attack looking for prey that's easy to pick off. Satan is often compared to certain animals. Therefore, it is wise to study the animal he is being compared to, so that we see the parallel in characteristics that are shared between Satan and the animal(s). In this text he is compared to a lion, while in the book of Genesis he takes on the form of a serpent. In today's lesson I will focus on the serpent comparison. Solomon was blessed by God with supernatural wisdom and he indulged himself in all of life's pleasures. He knew about intoxicating things. This is what he wrote in **Proverbs 23:29-35** *who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.*

How many lives have been devastated because of intoxicating things? Hospitals, prisons, rehab facilities of every type and cemeteries are full because of a refusal to avoid intoxicating things. Many of us have been blessed by God to escape these places despite falling prey to intoxicants. I could have been in any one of those places. If not but for the grace go I. Don't waste the opportunity you have been given to give glory to God.

The word toxic means to excite or stupefy by alcohol, or a drug especially to the point where physical and mental control are diminished. When we look at the serpent comparison we are able to gain insight into the instruction to be sober. Some snakes are poisonous. They don't just bite you; they inject venom into the victim. The venom is toxic to its prey and will injure, impair, immobilize and even kill its victim. The danger in this type of attack is that many victims are not sober yet they view themselves as being able to continue to function. People who have been caught by the police driving under the influence actually believed in their own mind that they were ok to drive and could function. In essence they have been deceived. The more you listen to the devil the more intoxicated you become. If he can get you to pause long enough he can strike you, if he can get you into a conversation the venom is injected and the longer you linger the worse

your life will get. The only way to recover from this toxicant is to have anti-venom. Jesus is our anti-venom. His blood can wash all the toxicants out of our body and cleanse us from all the damage the enemy has done to our lives. Paul was bitten by an extremely poisonous viper on the island of Melita and the natives thought for sure he would swell and fall down dead. Paul simply shook the viper off his hand and threw him into the fire and showed no effect of being bitten at all. Paul was full of the Holy Ghost and sober. Jesus promised that this would be one of the signs that follow those of us who believe. Once we find Jesus we should remain in his presence, high on Him and avoiding intoxicating things. Make it great day.

### **Blessings and Peace**

*Pastor McGill*