



A LITTLE WINE FOR YOUR STOMACH'S SAKE

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

“NO LONGER DRINK ONLY WATER…”

By this statement we learn that Timothy’s habit had been one of total abstinence from wine until instructed otherwise by the apostle. This is as it should be. Solomon taught, “Do not

look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly” (Proverbs 23:31). Since the appearance of wine ought not to be admired, how could imbibing in the same have God’s approval? Without the exception provided in the passage under consideration, wine should be abstained from.

“...BUT USE A LITTLE WINE…”

In the limited circumstance in which the use of wine is permitted, its quantity must also be limited. The authorization to use wine was not to be construed as a license to become intoxicated, for drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:10), as it is written, "*Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit*" (Ephesians 5:18). Only a slight amount is here permitted for a specific purpose.

"...FOR YOUR STOMACH'S SAKE AND YOUR FREQUENT INFIRMITIES."

The specific purpose for which Timothy was permitted the slight use of

wine was its health benefit. It was not given as a social beverage, but as medicine. In particular, it was given for a remedy, not for prevention. Timothy was already known by Paul to experience frequent stomach trouble when the apostle suggested the use of a little wine to alleviate his ailment. The regular use of wine to prevent illness is not under consideration and is nowhere authorized in Scripture.

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By Bryan Matthew Dockens

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