

# WHO HAS WOE?

Proverbs 23:29–24:2

No doubt most all of us have painful stories of family and friends whose lives have been damaged by alcoholism. Many of you have been deeply wounded by an alcoholic parent, spouse or child; I know, because you've shared your stories with me.

By now, most all of us understand that God does not forbid the drinking of alcohol; He forbids drunkenness (**Ephesians 5:15-21**). When you are drunk, you are out of control of your mind, your emotions and your bodily functions. When you are drunk you are extremely vulnerable to the forces around you and to the evil inclinations within you.

Proverbs describes being drunk in **Proverbs 23:29-24:2**.

Drunkenness and alcoholism go hand in hand. It has become "cool" among younger evangelical Christians to practice the freedom to drink alcohol; to show they're not uptight, legalistic Christians. But I warn you, you're playing Russian roulette.

It is Russian roulette because you don't know if it's your first drink or your sixth drink that will trigger your dependence upon alcohol. All of us are biologically susceptible to alcohol addiction. According to a 2017 study by the Journal of American Medicine Association Psychiatry, 13% of the American population meet the criteria of being alcoholics. One in eight people are alcoholics. Do you think these people want to be alcoholics? Do you think they set being alcoholic as a personal goal? Do you think they woke up one morning and said, "I want to be an alcoholic!"? Do you think their lives are better for being alcoholics? Is it enhancing their relationships with their wives, their husbands, their girlfriend, their boyfriend, their children?

Addiction to alcohol is something that happens to you for a variety of biological, psychological, social and spiritual reasons.<sup>1</sup> It starts as a decision to drink that can then become a disease. Because of neural plasticity, the brain of the alcoholic is rewired so that the urge for a drink, primarily in response to stress, bypasses the conscious decision-making part of the brain and goes right to the fight or flight survival part of the brain.

Have you ever counted the high cost of alcoholism?

## COUNT THE POTENTIAL COST OF DRINKING

**a) Emotional costs of alcohol addiction:** living with daily feelings of fear, anger, sadness, shame, guilt, paranoia, loss of pleasure, boredom, emotional instability, self-loathing (disgust with oneself), loneliness, isolation, and feelings worthlessness.

**b) Social costs of alcohol addiction:** disruption or damage to important relationships; decreased ability or interest in forming meaningful connections with others; and limiting one's social sphere to other unhealthy, addicted persons.

**c) Physical and health costs of alcohol addiction:** poor general health; poor personal hygiene; lowered energy and endurance; diminished enjoyment of sex or sexual dysfunction; poor sleep; and damaging the health of an unborn child.

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<sup>1</sup> For helpful articles related to alcoholism cf. <https://www.gracepointwellness.org/1410-alcoholism/>

**d) Intellectual costs of alcohol addiction:** loss of creative pursuits; decreased ability to solve problems; and poor memory.

**e) Work and productivity costs of alcohol addiction:** decreased productivity in all aspects of life; missing important deadlines and failing to meet obligations; impaired ability to safely operate tools and equipment (including driving); and lost time due to accidents arising from being impaired (e.g., falling and breaking a leg).

**f) Financial costs of alcohol addiction:** money spent on the addiction itself; money spent dealing with the consequences of addiction (healthcare costs, legal costs, etc.).

**g) Legal costs of alcohol addiction:** legal costs because of what someone did while engaging in their addiction (DUI, bar fights, domestic violence, divorce); or did not do (failing to care for children properly).

**h) Lost time due to alcohol addiction:** Time is a limited resource. Time spent while intoxicated is no longer available to spend in meaningful, life enriching activities. Meaningful, life-enriching activities are of two basic types: 1) love - time spent in relationships with others, and 2) work - time spent being productive including employment, learning, working on personal projects, volunteering, and helping others.

**i) Diminished personal integrity due to alcohol addiction:** Most people have a strong sense of morality. This includes a sense of what is right and wrong; what one ought to do (and not do); how others should be treated; and a sense of responsibility toward one's family, community, employer, and to society as a whole.

As addicted people gradually lose their moral compass, they begin to disrespect the rights and needs of other people. They even mistreat the people that matter to them most. This initially begins by failing to meet certain responsibilities, commitments, or obligations. Examples of these failures might be, failing to show up for things; becoming dishonest by failing to disclose information; or making excuses rather than making a sincere apology. This type of disregard will evolve into more obvious forms of disrespect and mistreatment as addiction progresses. This progression might include flat-out lying and deception; stealing from loved ones; and threatening these same people if their demands are not met. ...people who once had a moral compass experience tremendous feelings of guilt and self-loathing as they break their own moral code.

**j) A life that is absent of meaning and purpose due to alcohol addiction:** This cost is perhaps the ultimate one. For some, this loss takes the form of experiencing a separation and estrangement from their religious or spiritual beliefs. It might be a feeling that one has failed by not fulfilling a higher purpose in life. For others, it means losing the meaning and purpose of life. This meaning and purpose is ordinarily derived from our loving involvement with other people and a sense of purpose that occurs from our productive activities (work, learning, achievement, contribution to others, etc.) In either case, addicted persons have traded away these essential ingredients to life satisfaction for the sake of pursuing momentary pleasures, and/or momentary relief from emotional suffering."

## **IT'S NOT WORTH IT!!!!**

Why even take the chance that this becomes you?

Don't drink alcohol at all; don't take the chance. Just because you played Russian roulette and survived, would you recommend playing to others?

## You will never regret not drinking alcohol!

What kind of life do you want to live? You have a choice as the Apostle Paul lays out in Galatians 5:16-24.

Will alcohol in anyway help you walk in the Spirit?

Will alcohol help you become a person full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?

So, don't drink alcohol at all.

It does not help, but has the potential to destroy your life and the lives of those you love. It does not help you follow Jesus; it does not help you serve Jesus.

So, don't drink alcohol at all.

If you're an alcoholic and want to be free, please know we love you and want you to be free. There will be no condemnation from us; only the desire to be as helpful and supportive as we can be. Reach out to your Home Group leaders, the Deacons, Elders or Staff. We will do everything in our power to help you get on the road to recovery.

May God give you the courage to get the help you need.

Now to Him who loves us and has freed us from  
our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom,  
priests to His God and Father, to Jesus Christ  
be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen