

## Drinking & Holiday Parties?

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by Wayne Goff

*NBC conducted a “social experiment” and reported on their results Tuesday (Dec. 17) on the morning Today Show. The experiment was how safe people felt about personally driving home after drinking at a holiday party, versus the true results from a field sobriety test and a breathalyzer test. We wish to view the material and compare it to biblical truths and warnings.*

First, let’s note a *brief summary* of the five-minute report:

- Drinkers were not as sober as they thought
- Those who felt it was safe to drive discovered they were above the “legal limit” of .10
- Time lapsed before driving is longer than imagined
- NBC reported that authorities state that 40% of all traffic deaths during the holidays involve alcohol

### *The Bible Does Not Endorse Social Drinking*

Contrary to common arguments by Christians, the Bible does not endorse *social drinking*. It is often argued that one may drink moderately so long as they do not get drunk. Even the NBC report showed that one could become *inebriated* with one drink. One of the “*works of the flesh*” is drunkenness (Gal. 5:21). Those who “*practice*” it will not inherit the kingdom of God. But 1 Peter 4:3 goes on to denounce lesser forms of alcoholic consumption: “*For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.*” “*Revelries*” and “*drinking parties*” involve what we often call today “social drinking.” Let’s look at the definitions and be warned.

“**Revelries**” (komois) is often the word we identify with dancing, and rightly so. But *Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament* also says it means “rioting drinking parties.” This word is found here and in Galatians 5:21 and Romans 13:13. *Mounce’s Greek Dictionary* defines it as “a festive procession, a merry-making.” *Strong’s Greek Concordance* says it is “a carousal (as if letting loose): — revelling, rioting.” *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* says: “...from Herodotus down; a *revel*, *carousal*, i.e. in the Greek writings properly, a nocturnal and riotous procession of **half-drunken** and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honor of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before the houses of their male and female friends; hence, used **generally, of feasts and drinking-parties** that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry; plural (revellings)” (emphasis mine, wg). It is easy to see that part of the definition of “revelries” speaks of those who are “**half-drunken**.” Hence, the apostle Peter denounces participating in social drinking parties to that extent.

“**Drinking parties**” (potois): The KJV translates the Greek word as “*banquetings*.” *Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament* says the Greek word means “literally, *drinking-bouts*.” *Mounce’s Greek Dictionary* defines it as “*a drinking; a drinking together, drinking bout*, 1 Pet. 4:3.” Could anyone find a clearer description of “social drinking”? Yet, we find it condemned in Scriptures. Trench’s fine work, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, compares this Greek word with the one for drunkenness, and says of it (potos) “the drinking bout, the banquet, the symposium, not of necessity excessive..., but giving opportunity for excess.”

So when you sum up what we have learned from 1 Peter 4:3, we learn that three things are condemned: (1) drunkenness; (2) being half-drunken; and (3) drinking, a drinking together. Brethren, those who are honest about the matter will not argue for their “right” to drink intoxicating beverages! National authorities on the subject will admit that one can be one-drink drunk, so where can one fit in “social drinking”?

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