

A Sober Lifestyle

Please read Titus 2:2, 11-14; Luke 21:34-26.

When I drive toward or in Michigan, I am bombarded every half mile or so with billboards either advertising sources of alcoholic beverages, or places legally selling marijuana. One recent article says that Hoosiers are a prime target for southern Michigan dope dispensaries. Think of it—the legal promotion of genuinely harmful substances that impair thinking and judgment, and along the highway! Then there is constant promotion of the “you only live once” mentality, which lures us to spend money we don’t have on things we really don’t need.

When we speak of a “sober” lifestyle, it means that **we engage in moderation or self-control**. It is saying “No” or “Wait” to self. We say no because we recognize the risks and dangers of harmful behaviors. We say “wait,” as we also understand the idea of delayed gratification, or that something good can be put off until we are in a better position to enjoy it, whether because of time, finances, or health situations. Sobriety means saying “Yes” to God—to His sovereign providence, His direction, and ultimately to His very Word.

Being sober means that **we persevere through challenges**. A good many folks agree with the idea of moderation. Yet the issue is that it does not come easily. It means saying “no,” or “wait” repeatedly and over time. A little boy was asked what his name was. He said, “My birth certificate says, ‘John,’ but my mommy calls me “No, no.” Sometimes we may think so much of “No” that we think it is our real name, or that is all sobriety is about. Yet, it is really seeking to attain mastery rather than being mastered.

A sober lifestyle **finds us constrained under obedience to Christ**. In other words, we ask ourselves the question: “Can this be done to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31)?” This is to be a serious question, not one we can laugh off. If the focus is to answer a selfish desire, then the answer is plainly no. If the activity or action honestly can be said to promote the well-being of self, of others, of our witness, of God, then it can be considered.

Sobriety is sustained as **we build up faithfulness and endurance**. Instead of engaging in harmful or instant gratification, we develop realistic and godly goals. Our faithfulness to Christ is then built up, and our endurance to overcome temptation is strengthened.

Moderation is related to all areas of living. In our labor and recreation. At the risk of sounding like a Greek philosopher, there is something to striving toward balance. Some folks live to work, far beyond the necessity of providing for themselves and their families; others live “for the weekend,” in that their minds are on the fun they are planning rather than on the essential work that is before them. We want to practice moderation in food and drink; that is, to enjoy a variety of foods that supply our bodies’ needs, and to avoid those things which are downright harmful. Sobriety relates to the necessities and luxuries of life. In the West, most folks live better than the medieval kings and Roman emperors, so we understand that the relative definition of “luxury” changes. For example, an automatic transmission, a car radio, and air conditioning were once considered luxuries, yet now are technologies that are over a century old (in the case of radio and air conditioning, well over a century!). Yet our focus now seems to be on self rather than on God.

A sober lifestyle is rewarded as **it greatly frees us to serve Christ and others**. That is, moderation grants us both time and resources that we may worship God more, tell the Gospel more, and enable the propagation of the Gospel to other lands more.

So, you see that moderation, or a sober lifestyle, is a reflection of our life in Christ. It demonstrates our desire to glorify Him, and our confidence in a place called Heaven, where eye has not seen, nor ear has heard, nor has it entered our imagination what awaits for those of us who love Christ.

If you say, “But I NEED this,” wait a moment. Why do you need it? What is your goal in fulfilling your need? Friend, are you looking to Christ? He is the answer to your real need. Trust Him today!