

# Bible study: Australia, alcohol & other drugs

**Topic:** A Christian response to alcohol & other drugs in society

**Key verses:** Ephesians 5:18-20, Galatians 5:19-21, 1 John 3:16-18

## Question 1

- Warm up question: Australia has had a reputation as a hard-drinking and, more recently, a drug-taking nation ... what have you noticed about our society's attitude towards alcohol and other drugs?

## Introduction

- Alcohol consumption is so embedded in our culture that many Aussies couldn't remember a family or social event without it
- Some say there's nothing wrong with that but consider this ... in 2023-24, there were 146,000 hospitalisations due to alcohol and other drugs, more than 1% of all hospital admissions. In 2024, there were 1,765 deaths due to alcohol and 1,947 deaths due to all other drugs.<sup>1</sup>

## Question 2

- Alcohol and other drugs are a massive issue in Australia with no easy answers. Alcohol is something of a hot topic in the church, so let's look at what we can agree on. The Bible is clear that believers are to obey the laws of the land, which means under-age drinking, drink-driving and illicit drugs shouldn't really be up for debate. The Bible is also unequivocal that drunkenness is not God's will for your life.
- **READ: Ephesians 5:18a** *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.*
- While many people believe that moderate drinking is acceptable, unfortunately millions of Australians simply aren't willing or able to drink in moderation.
- So why do you think God doesn't want believers getting drunk or high?
- **READ: Ephesians 5:18b-20** *Instead be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- What's the beautiful alternative to God's command against drunkenness? What could that look like for you?

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2025) [Alcohol, tobacco & other drugs in Australia](#), AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 19 February 2026.

### Question 3

- **READ: Galatians 5:19-21** *The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*
- Galatians 5:21 contains a strongly worded warning for believers. Do you think there's hope for people caught up in these sorts of behaviours, addictions and lifestyles?

### Question 4

- **READ: 1 John 3:16-18** *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*
- How then should we respond if someone we know is struggling with addiction?
- In the book *Dying for a Drink*, Dr Anderson Spickard and Barbara Thompson shared tips for people who want to help a loved one who is struggling with addiction:<sup>2</sup>
  1. **PRAYER:** People will only seek help when they want to change - we can't make them. But God can change a person's heart and he does listen to our prayers.
  2. **EDUCATION:** It is important to understand the addiction that they're dealing with and what can genuinely help the person. For example, going "cold turkey" can actually be life-threatening for people with significant alcohol or drug dependency.
  3. **FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:** Organisations such as Mission Australia and Alcoholics Anonymous have support groups for people struggling with addiction, and others offer support for their spouses and children. The hardest part is making that first contact, but the support can prove invaluable.
  4. **END THE ENABLEMENT:** As hard as it may seem, family and friends may need to let the person experience and own the consequences of their addiction for themselves. Sometimes it is only then can they see the need to seek professional support to overcome their addiction.
  5. **DON'T GIVE UP:** Continue to love, encourage and support them without sheltering them from the consequences of their actions. Don't give up on them. Keep praying and remember that God is at work.

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<sup>2</sup> Spickard, Anderson, & Thompson, Barbara (2005). *Dying for a Drink: What You and Your Family Should Know about Alcoholism*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## Discuss: other ways you can help with Australia's alcohol and drug problem

- 1. PRAY:** Pray for people struggling with alcohol and other drugs. Pray for organisations such as Mission Australia which assisted 11,529 people across 35 alcohol and drug services in 2024-25.<sup>3</sup> Sign up to receive a prayer diary at [missionaustralia.com.au/prayer](https://missionaustralia.com.au/prayer)
- 2. SERVE WITH US:** By partnering with us, your church can help meet the spiritual, emotional and practical needs of local communities. Together, we can build stronger, more connected and resilient communities grounded in Jesus' love and compassion. For ideas, go to [missionaustralia.com.au/churches](https://missionaustralia.com.au/churches)
- 3. GIVE:** Give of your finances to support the work of God in this area. As Jesus said in **Matthew 25:35** *For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.*

This could be through your local church's ministries or you can donate to Mission Australia securely online at [missionaustralia.com.au](https://missionaustralia.com.au) or by phoning 1800 88 88 68.

## Know someone who needs help?

If they're seeking help, suggest they talk to their GP for referrals.

You can also check if Mission Australia offers alcohol and other drug services or gambling help in your area: [missionaustralia.com.au/find-support](https://missionaustralia.com.au/find-support)

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<sup>3</sup> Mission Australia Annual Report, (2025) [www.missionaustralia.com.au/who-we-are/our-governance/annual-report/](https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/who-we-are/our-governance/annual-report/)