

NO THANKS, ANYTIME

A frequently-seen bumper sticker depicts a cocktail glass and the message, "No thanks, I'm driving" (I once saw one of these on one of "our" church vans!). This message is intended to warn other drivers of the multiplied tragedies that are daily caused by drunk drivers, a warning direly needed by the general public. However, the bumper sticker falls far short of what needs to be said about drinking, implying that there is no harm done and that it is acceptable to drink when one is not behind the wheel (as it did on the church van, as a matter of fact). This is hardly the case, as even a casual observer must admit. For example:

1. The crime rate and alcohol consumption are inexorably linked. It is rare to find one convicted of any kind of crime who does not have a history of alcohol consumption. Often one is so drunk when he commits a crime that he literally has no memory of it. Likewise, alcohol is frequently used by those who have planned a crime to give them a "shot" of "courage," which actually only lowers their inhibitions against doing what they know is wrong. The places where alcohol is sold and consumed are routinely the scenes of violent behavior. The cliché, "a bar-room brawl," has become a part of our language.

2. Alcohol consumption is a major source of problems in the home. If one spouse drinks, he or she brings financial and emotional hardship on the other. The drinking partner often physically assaults the other spouse due to drunkenness. Children in such a household may suffer more than the parents in such cases. If both spouses drink, problems are compounded, both for themselves and for their children. Drinking has destroyed many homes and emotionally scarred many children for life.

3. Drinking has a major effect on the economy of our nation. Industry loses billions of dollars every year because of employees who are too drunk to work. Those who drink have a shorter life expectancy, which raises the life insurance rates of all. Drinkers are more susceptible to various major diseases (certain types of cancer, liver disease, mental illnesses, etc.), increasing health care and insurance rates for all. Auto insurance rates also reflect the heavy costs of repair and replacement made necessary by drunk drivers. The tax burden is made heavier on all of us to clean up the messes made by those who drink.

Solomon's strong warning against strong drink needs to be heard by all. Indeed, it may "sparkle in the cup" and "go down smoothly," but "at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder" (Pro. 23:31–32). The bumper sticker **should** read, "No thanks, **anytime**"!

—Dub McClish
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