



Little of Wine

ΟΥΚΟΥΖΙ ΉΗΡΠ

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

Question: Is there a verse in the Holy Bible that says, “A *little wine is good for the stomach*”. Does this particular verse encourage the drinking of alcoholic beverages?

Answer: There is no verse in the Holy Bible by this wording, but this is a common distorted saying among the people.

St. Timothy, the bishop and disciple of St. Paul the Apostle, suffered from many ailments of his digestive system, and it was also said that he had “dropsy” (common medical term is Ascites, a collection of serous fluid in the abdominal cavity or “dropsy” of the peritoneum). The apostle prescribed to him not to drink much water and take as a treatment for his special condition, a little wine, so he said to him, “No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities.” (I Timothy 5:23)

We notice here that we are before a specific patient, who has a particular disease, needing a special treatment suitable for his condition. In a time medical sciences had not developed as it has today, and at that time wine was used as medicine. Therefore, the Holy Bible did not give a general ruling that a little wine is good for the stomach but the apostle recommended a treatment for a specific condition.

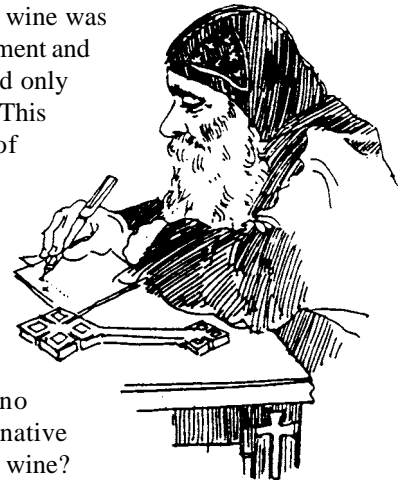
So, if you had the same condition as St. Timothy, and were in the same time period, this advice would be suitable for you.

Nowadays, even if you have the same disease as St. Timothy, medical science will offer you the most recent advances in remedies.

Note, in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, that when he found a wounded man by the road, “he bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.” (Luke 10:34). The alcohol in the wine was used as an antiseptic.

So, what we can conclude from the advice given to St.

Timothy is that, the wine was prescribed as a treatment and not as a pleasure and only for a special case. This is also a matter of conscience: does everyone who would partake of wine today, take it only as a treatment for a particular disease process and with their being no other suitable alternative treatment except the wine?



We are speaking about wine as a treatment. The subject of wine and alcoholic beverages in detail is not the question. ✠

Isn't It Strange?

- Isn't it strange how a 20-dollar bill seems like such a large amount when you donate it to Church, but such a small amount when you go shopping?
- Isn't it strange how 3 hours seem so long when you're at Church, and how short they seem when you are watching a good movie?
- Isn't it strange that you can't find a word to say when you're praying, but you have no trouble thinking what to talk about with a friend?
- Isn't it strange how difficult and boring it is to read one chapter of the Holy Bible, but how easy it is to read 100 pages of a popular novel?
- Isn't it strange how we need to know about an event for Church 2-3 weeks before the day so we can include it in our agenda, but we can adjust it for many other events at the last minute?