



A MIGHTY ARROWS GUIDE

Discovering Your Friend Has a Problem With Alcohol or Drugs...

You have been friends with this person since childhood... You have started college and have had to make a new group of friends... You are slowly drifting away from the circle of church friends you have always had and want to explore other friendships... You want to become more involved socially in high school or college activities...

Suddenly you find yourself with a friend who has a drinking or drug problem and you tell yourself it's not that serious... But there is something warning you inside that this is not the friendship you intended or thought it would be.

Know that the warning signs are there:

- + Loses control when drinking
- + Use is creating academic problems, family problems, and/or social problems
- + Begins to make promises to drink less or quit using but doesn't
- + Starts to use at school, college, recreational places, while driving
- + Begins hiding alcohol
- + Gulping or taking large quantities in a hurry
- + Denies there is a problem
- + Blames others for his or her alcohol associated problems

What should I do if it becomes clear that my friend has a drinking or drug problem?



+ Draw immediate limits on your behavior. Stop, and don't ever do anything with another person that makes you uncomfortable or that you know is wrong for you. In the Holy Book of I Corinthians (15:33) it is written, "***Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.***"

+ Don't ever get into a car with someone who has been drinking, no matter the amount. Avoid parties that have the reputation for drinking and attendees who drink alcohol and/or use drugs. Don't let yourself be pressured within the moment to drink and accept another person's drinking. Remember in the year's to come you may not even know the person's whereabouts you are with, but a fatal mistake can be made getting into the car of someone who is drinking, of attending a party where your reputation can be tarnished or you can be labeled as a "partier" or you feel pressured into keeping up with your friend's consumption.

It is easy to fall into the trap of becoming an "enabler"...

+ By going along with your buddies behaviors you are sending the message, "What you are doing is ok, after all, I am here with you aren't I?" The number one rule to remember is do not ever lie or cover up for your friend when he or she gets into trouble. Only when someone who abuses alcohol or drugs (one time or twenty times) experiences the full consequences of their



behavior are you really helping them the best way possible. What do you think support groups do? The Holy New Testament Book of Ephesians 5:11 specifically instructs us, “...***Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.***”

+ Let your friends know that you are concerned about their substance use, what the limits are that you set for yourself, “If you choose to drink, I will not come along.” If they drink and catch you unaware you must leave the situation completely and not return. Your friend has violated the limits you set for yourself. If your friend is addicted there is **no way** that you are going to help him. He needs professional help and seeking it must be his decision.

+ It should be your decision to seek out other friends with values and beliefs more closely related to your own. From the very beginning of the discovery of alcohol or drugs within a friendship you should let go. Most probably this friend will drift to other friends with the same patterns of drinking or drugging and you and they will draw away from the relationship. Letting go of any friendship is difficult and you may find yourself feeling frustrated, angry or depressed. Talk to your parents or your priest about these feelings. Learn from this and make better choices the next time around.

+ Methodius (c.290) an Ante Nicene Christian writer stated, “...*he who has devoted and offered himself to the Lord will not take of the fruits of the plant of evil, for its natural tendency is to produce intoxication and distraction of the mind...*”

What if I have the problem, what can I do....

- + Talk to your parents and ask them to help you seek out help.
- + Talk to your priest, everything will remain confidential and nonjudgmental.
- + Talk to a hotline located in the yellow pages of your telephone book.

- + Visit the National Council on Alcoholism website.
- + Alateen or Alanon are youth support groups you can visit.
- + Alcoholics Anonymous
- + Call a treatment center in your area for an evaluation.

It is written in the Holy Bible, “***Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 5:19)***” Breaking the law in any community or society breaks it down. Anarchy ensues. Whether it is intended or not intended chaos and disorganization develops.

Lawbreakers are a destructive negative force. They are the “least of citizens” in any country. Younger people, it is a documented fact; often model their behavior after those they consider exciting, popular, and successful. Therefore, teaching takes place primarily by example.

Similarly the same can be said about spirituality and its example. An attitude of obedience to God and a willingness to model this attitude to others is considered greatness in the sight of God.

Hearing and doing the Lord Jesus Christ’s teachings is essential.

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall (Matthew 7: 24-27)”