

## WHY PEOPLE DRINK

Why does alcohol destroy one person and not another? Why is it that one person can confine his/her drinking to once-a-day cocktail or an occasional beer while another's occasional drink develops into a demon that ultimately destroys him/her? Medical science cannot give a precise answer. No single cause for alcoholism exists. Studies have pinpointed certain items which contribute to alcoholism. Physical, mental, social and spiritual factors are involved.

**PHYSICAL** – Our bodies have certain basic needs to function properly. If something is ignored we may create artificial desires and cravings. We need pure air to breathe, adequate amounts of water, good nutrition and sufficient exercise and rest. If something is missing, our body craves that element. Exercise reduces stress and tension remarkably. Too many people use alcohol to relax their tensions instead of exercise and rest. The tensions return and more alcohol is consumed. There is also evidence that some people cannot metabolize or assimilate alcohol as effectively as others. These persons are more prone to have a drinking problem.

**MENTAL** – Psychological factors are possibly the strongest reasons why people drink. The unwanted, unloved, frustrated, unsuccessful, angry, fearful person may try to escape the painful feelings through alcohol. One alcoholic said: "Alcohol gives me a warm feeling in the tummy and says 'you're loved.'" Some emotional and mental traits can predispose a person toward alcoholism – emotionally immature, isolated, dependent, unable to withstand tension or frustration and deep feelings of guilt aggravate their feelings of inadequacy. Some of these people see alcohol as an escape from reality and drinking alcohol begins to predominate over all other behaviour. Alcohol is a mood changing drug. It releases normal inhibitions and allows a person to act out his unfulfilled wishes or needs.

**SOCIAL** – Great social pressure to drink alcohol exists in many countries today. It is a well known fact that liquor advertisers use several times more money for advertising their product than is used for advertising all temperance activities combined. In many circles business and social relationships are so interconnected with alcohol that the pressure to conform can become almost overwhelming. Parental example is an important factor in the cause and prevention of alcoholism.

**SPIRITUAL** – The decrease in society's spiritual and moral values troubles the majority of the world today. Alcoholism can be found in every economic, educational and religious level of society, yet those who have a strong spiritual experience are less likely to have a problem with alcohol. The person who believes that God created the body and expects us to maintain it in the best possible health has a built-in protection against the false insinuations of the alcohol promoters. Love for God will be demonstrated by refusing to allow the body to be impaired through drinking. To have a clear mind to serve God, one will refrain from drinking alcohol. Since alcohol is so associated with crime, dishonesty, abuse, destruction and death, the person with a strong spiritual sense refuses to become involved in something which could lead to these situations.

**SUMMARY** – The reasons why people drink are many. A variety of reasons exists as stated above. It is an established fact that 1 out of every 10 persons who take that first drink will become an alcoholic. Although millions drink, no one expects to become an alcoholic. But people do and the only way to be certain is never to drink at all. With the causes of alcoholism so complex, why risk being that 10<sup>th</sup> person who becomes a victim of alcohol?

*Condensed from "Why People Drink", Fight Against Alcoholism magazine, Philippines, 05, Joy Butler*