

# The Old Paths

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## “Let Us Also...”

Jarrod Jacobs

**I**n Hebrews 12:1, we read the statement that draws Hebrews 11 to its conclusion. By my count, I found at least 20 distinct instances (but more than 20 people!) of those God says were living by faith. After listing these, the statement is made, *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us”* (Heb. 12:1). What can we learn from this statement, and specifically, those three words, *“Let us also”*?

*“Let us also”* means that those reading this letter are included in what was said in the previous chapter. In other words, the Holy Spirit is saying that after reading the examples of these “great faith heroes”, then let everyone reading this letter do the same.

### Let us also ....

... *“Lay aside every weight”* (Heb. 12:1). What does this mean? It means we have to let go of things that are holding us back from growing as we should (II Pet. 3:18). It means letting go of things that we know are keeping us from a right relationship with God! In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to pluck out an eye or cut off an appendage if these things cause us to offend (sin) in Matthew 5:29-30. No, Christ was not teaching self-mutilation. Rather, His point was the same point made in Hebrews 12:1 — lay aside the weights keeping us from living right. This

could be grudges, sinful habits, or any number of things. Let them go so you can run the race!

... *“Lay aside every ‘sin’ that besets us (Heb. 12:1)*. The word “beset” means to cling, or stand close by. What sins “cling” to us? Lay all those aside! To what sins do we return often? Is it lying? Is it cursing? What? Lay those things aside and leave them! Paul gave us a remedy for sins which beset (cling to) us in Romans 13:14 when he reminds us to not *“make provision”* for the flesh to fulfill its lust. Lay it aside!

... *“Run ... the race set before us”* (Heb. 12:1). Our race needs to be run with endurance (patience). In other words, we have to run with the view of the future, and not just the immediate. When (not if!) we fall (Rom. 3:23; I Jn. 1:7-10), we must get up again! Those of old had to do this (see: Heb. 11), and so must we!

... *“Look to Jesus”* (Heb. 12:2). He is the origin and completion of our faith! Just think, even those in Old Testament days were aware of the promised Messiah and they looked forward to His coming (Jn. 8:56; Heb. 11:26; I Pet. 1:10-12). We now look to the Resurrected Messiah, knowing of His life, death, burial, and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-11). We now look to Him and walk in His footsteps (I Pet. 2:21; I Cor. 11:1).

*“Let us also”* (Heb. 12:1) means we are included in this text of Hebrews 11-12. Do the things those faith heroes of old did! Live by faith! When we do, we will be blessed as they were, and be people of faith as they were. Are you doing this? If not, why not? We can do it!

## Will Homosexual Defenders Defend Bestiality?

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**I**n a letter to the editor of The Brazil Times, Chad and Brandy Foster wrote: “Homosexuality is a lifestyle that most people don’t understand and that scares them. Why? Who made us the judge of this behavior? Think about when you fell in love, if you are one of the fortunate people who have. Didn’t you want to shout it from the rooftops? Didn’t you want to take it to the next level by getting married? Didn’t you want the whole world to know that this is the person you wanted to be with for the rest of your life? Why do some people think that homosexuals should be denied this? We are not saying that everyone should like it, but that doesn’t mean they should be denied this joyous union.”

I wonder if the Fosters would be consistent and go to bat for those practicing bestiality (sex with animals)? Bestiality, like homosexuality is sexual immorality. The same questions asked in defense of the homosexual could just as fairly be asked of the man in love with his sheep, dog, cow, sow, etc. Should the one desiring to take his love for his pet “to the next level” be denied this “joyous union”?

The Fosters are right to imply that men are not “the judge of this (homosexual) behavior.” But God is, and His word clearly condemns such (Gen. 19:1-7; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-32; I Cor. 6:9-11). Furthermore, God’s plan for marriage is and always will be one man, for one woman, for life (Gen. 2:18-22; Mt. 19:4-6). “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil” (Isa. 5:20).

# The Deceit Of Alcohol

Jarrood Jacobs

**T**he consumption of alcohol is a rampant problem in our world. In fact, drinking alcoholic drinks has become a “way of life” for many cultures, where some of the youngest among us are brought up drinking alcohol. In our society, teenagers are encouraged by their peers to drink alcohol, as well as consume other drugs. In connection with the dangers associated with alcohol, including addiction, we can see how alcohol destroys the body, contributes to the failure of marriages, and the break-down of the family environment. Underneath all of this is the very real danger of self-deceit. When drinking alcohol, people deceive themselves into thinking that the alcohol is harmless to them and others, and any harm they are feeling is the result of other things.

The other day, a friend and I were talking about the dangers and the deceit associated with alcohol. In this discussion, I was reminded of Solomon’s words, *“Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler: and whoever is led astray by it is not wise”* (Prov. 20:1). In addition to this, Proverbs 23:29-35 explains the results of drinking alcohol in great detail. People who justify drinking alcohol are deceiving themselves! With all the harm alcohol can do to a person, perhaps deception is the worst harm it brings! Solomon says it best when he writes that those who drink alcohol say, *“I must have another drink”* when they come off of their drunken stupor (Prov. 23:35). So long as one has deceived himself by denying the true reason for his troubles, he will continue to drink and ruin his physical health, his family, his life, and worst of all, he will jeopardize his soul!

We know one jeopardizes his

soul in the drinking of alcohol when we read passages like I Peter 4:3-4. There, the apostle Peter wrote, *“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.”* In I Peter 4’s context, Peter contrasts the people’s old way of life with the new way of life in Christ (see also: II Cor. 5:17). In so doing, Peter equates the drinking of alcohol with *“lasciviousness, lusts ... abominable idolatries ... excess of riot”!* We know these sins are not “harmless pleasure,” or ways to “relax.” Why then would we say the consumption of alcohol is? Truly, we have deceived ourselves when we treat the drinking of alcohol as “nothing”. Alcohol will maim and destroy lives. In addition to these passages, let us add I Corinthians 6:10 and Galatians 5:21 to our study. Yes, the consumption of alcohol will jeopardize our soul.

Someone has said: “A man takes a drink, the drink takes a drink, and then the drink takes the man.” How true!! Beware of alcohol!

In closing, read this great contrast of the myths of alcohol and realities of alcohol, written by Mark Simons. Let us heed the warning and not be deceived by alcohol.

“We drank for happiness, and became unhappy.

We drank for joy, and became miserable.

We drank for sociability, and became argumentative and unsocial.

We drank for friendship, and made enemies.

We drank for sleep, and awakened without rest.

We drank for strength, and felt weak.

We drank “medicinally,” and acquired health problems.

We drank for relaxation, and got the shakes.

We drank for bravery, and became doubtful and cowardly.

We drank to make conversation easier, and slurred our speech.

We drank to forget, and were forever haunted.

We drank to erase problems, and saw them multiply.

We drank to cope with life and invited death.”

*By Mark Simons*

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