

F R E E L Y

S O B E R

R E T H I N K I N G A L C O H O L
T H R O U G H T H E L E N S O F
———— FA I T H ————

E R I C K A A N D E R S E N



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ONE

LET'S COME CLEAN

EVER FEEL LIKE SOMETHING IS OFF with your alcohol consumption? It's *fine* (most of the time), but you have a nagging sense of discomfort. You flip open Scripture and see that drinking alcohol is within our liberties as Christians, but still—what is it about drinking that makes you feel bad sometimes? What is that inexplicable yet gnawing sense that refuses to disappear?

I know that feeling all too well. I lived it for at least fifteen years, and ignored it most of that time. If it feels familiar, you're in the right place. Step number one is beginning to think more deeply about what *could* be a problem, or what might be better for your life as a Christian woman when it comes to alcohol.

That quiet nudge—the one urging us to examine why alcohol doesn't sit right anymore—isn't something we should ignore. It's not random. Often, it's a nudge from God inviting us to take a closer look. Or it's a nudge from the body, pointing us in a wiser direction. The body holds more wisdom than we give it credit for; soon, we'll investigate exactly how alcohol affects the brain, the gut, the immune system, and more.

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven,” says Ecclesiastes 3:1. Maybe now is the time to think about alcohol consumption deeply. It took me fifteen years

to find the right time, but when that anointed interval came, things finally began to change.

I'm not asking you to quit drinking. That's not what this is about. It's also not about chasing the perfect amount of alcohol—some magical number of drinks per week that keeps you safely on the right side of an invisible line. I'm asking for your commitment to listen with an open heart and mind to what God wants to reveal to you in the next two hundred pages or so. So, we can remove the pressure to make drastic changes with alcohol right now. Instead, let's settle into the comfort of curiosity, knowledge, and exploration. In the meantime, I've got a story, some of which may be relatable.

This is how it always started.

After a long day of work, I'd pick up my one-year-old and three-year-old, wrestle them into car seats, soothe their end-of-day irritations with snacks and sippy cups, and return home to a sink full of dishes, a filthy carpet, and my cat's vomit on the kitchen floor.

My husband would be working late, meaning dinner was still mine to figure out. Who knew feeding children three meals a day could be such a monumental task? It wasn't something I'd considered before family life. It was a lot for a woman who doesn't enjoy cooking or meal planning.

Once we'd unload from the car, the baby would take a short nap. She often struggled to sleep, while my toddler loudly blared *Cocomelon* downstairs. As often as not, I'd have gotten into an argument with my husband over a text message (never a good way to converse!) and my job as a self-employed writer would feel overwhelming. In this season, I was postpartum, tired, and trying to do too much: write a book, host a podcast, and work full-time,

all while dealing with undiagnosed ADHD. Looking back, I see how my self-deprivation led to a search for a fix. It's no wonder I sought relief from the chaos of a good, but overstimulated, life.

Most nights followed the same pattern. I'd reach instinctively for the wine after work. It was the norm. Too normal. Too frequent. Too much. I knew it—but couldn't seem to stop. As a devout, church-going Christian, it felt at times as if I was living a double life. The weight of it all had been building for years, but I couldn't think of one safe person to talk to about it.

I entirely blamed myself for giving in, thinking my habit was due to a weak character and limited faith. When it comes to the why and how of an unhealthy attachment to alcohol, there was so much I didn't know. I didn't know then that, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), more than twelve million American women struggle with alcohol in some way. That data said I wasn't alone. But in these days, I didn't feel that way.

I also had no idea how drinking alcohol had chemically affected my brain. These daily drinking habits were basic training for future addiction—or unhealthy dependence at a minimum.

Consistent consumption, I later learned, had fooled my brain and body into thinking alcohol was *necessary* to survive the day. That may sound silly because, of course, we don't need alcohol to survive, but that sensation is entirely real within the body. *The Handbook of Clinical Neurology* describes what's called the “incentivize sensationalization theory,” which speaks to this feeling of “need.” The theory suggests that “chronic drug (e.g., alcohol)-related neuroadaptation sensitizes the reward circuit . . . significantly promot[ing] greater wanting, or the craving response, and increases risk of chronic alcoholism.”

In other words, these habits are practice drills for addiction and dependence. Cravings, which make us feel that compulsive pull to drink, are self-created feelings driven by repeated exposure to an addictive substance like alcohol. This feeling only intensifies thanks to “increased sensitivity” to the brain’s reward systems. We were built this way—it’s a scientific fact.

In his book *Addiction and Virtue*, Kent Dunnington writes that we can capitulate to cravings when “hurry, strong appetite or an abnormal bodily state wrecks the deliberative process that is needed to arrive at a right judgment.” He calls these addictive desires, or cravings, “indefatigably persistent,” something that “pits a force of seemingly inexhaustible resources against a limited power, the human will.”

Yeah, that hits.

There’s a common acronym that helps people assess why they may act or feel a certain way: H.A.L.T. In a vulnerable moment, it’s helpful to ask if I’m *hungry*, *angry*, *lonely*, or *tired*. Recognizing these categories can help clarify decision-making around alcohol, even if it doesn’t make the destructive desire disappear.

I felt intense cravings every day, like clockwork—relentless and compulsive urges that felt nearly impossible to resist. My thoughts were loud, intrusive, and obsessive, almost like a sinister being whispering internal lies. They often drowned out God’s quiet comfort, which might have drawn me out of the invisible prison I’d made. But I couldn’t get these internal thoughts to cease. I needed some method or strategy to shush the oppressive chatter.

One thing about God: He never forces us to listen. As the Good Shepherd, he loves us enough to let us choose whether to accept his help. He doesn’t shout or beg for our attention—he simply

waits, gently and patiently. God once told the prophet Elijah to stand on the mountain and wait for him to speak. Elijah did as he was told, standing on the mountain and waiting for. . .what? He wasn't sure. He witnessed a wind and a fire and an earthquake, but Scripture says God was *not* in that wind or fire or earthquake.

After this environmental chaos ended, Elijah likely felt as if the world had turned upside down around him. And then he heard “the sound of a low whisper”—and *this* was the voice of God (1 Kings 19:12).

Like Elijah's moment on the mountainside, my life had gotten loud. The noise came from babies, work, marriage, anxiety, family turmoil, and so much more. It was so loud that I don't think I could hear what God was saying to me. This was the life I had always dreamed of, so why did it feel so hard? Why did I *want* to run to alcohol? Guilt for feeling this way consumed me and made everything even darker.

In a world that demands us to be and do so much, Christian women may particularly feel this pressure. After all, we're more harshly judged for our behavior and moral character. When we mess up, we're more likely to be called hypocrites, or even accused of causing doubt in others. Higher expectations seem to naturally exist for us, and with them comes an extra layer of shame when we fall short.

We carry a multitude of positions in life: mentor, mother, volunteer, wife, daughter, role model, or Bible study leader. Not only must we maintain societal appearances, but those same duties often get tagged as spiritual positions within the church. Everyone's watching—or so it feels that way. Although the church is meant to be a place where we can bring our burdens—and often

is—it’s easy to understand how the one little problem of drinking is something we’d rather keep to ourselves.

Recovery and sobriety groups like AA emphasize anonymity, which can be beneficial. However, there’s a darker side to the promotion of anonymity. It can reinforce a sense of embarrassment about our struggle. It can reinforce the idea that revealing ourselves will just bring shame.

Unfortunately, shame has a way of compounding. One night, once dinner was done, diapers changed, and the day was behind us, things at home took a turn. I suddenly remembered a pair of mini wine bottles hidden behind the bathroom towels in the master bedroom. I literally salivated at the thought of them. Soon, I was frantically rummaging through the closet, pushing aside an old shower caddy, a nail kit, and scattered toiletries, praying the bottles were really still there.

They were there, stashed discreetly behind layers of terry-cloth. I locked the bathroom door, turned on the faucet, unscrewed the cap, and gulped the bitter, lukewarm liquid without regard for taste. The warm, unsavory tanginess soon melted into a buzzy warmth in my chest. Watching myself in the mirror felt like viewing a documentary of someone else’s life. Was this red-faced woman pathetically chugging hidden alcohol behind locked doors really me?

Just then, my daughter’s cries rang out from her room, breaking the trance of my personal reality show. I walked in, scooped her out of the crib, and began to rock her again, temporarily relieved of my discomfort. I reveled in her little body snuggled against mine and sang her “Jesus Loves Me” until her eyes closed. Even after she was asleep, I stayed put in what felt like a perfect moment,

there in the dark, holding onto the sweet feelings of the buzz from both alcohol and being heart-to-heart with my baby. The feeling was fleeting.

With wine in my system, everything felt lighter, faster, more manageable. The room was dark, but the buzz illuminated my mood. That first rush of intoxication is like flipping on Christmas lights inside your body. Everything felt dull and cold before, but with alcohol, the atmosphere shifted from gray to color, optimism, and relief. I achieved the feeling I sought, but it wouldn't last long—it never did.

My thoughts soon accelerated: Why did bedtime with little ones feel so hard? After tucking my daughter in, I was rattled out of my euphoric state by a shot of momentary panic. My mind raced:

What was I doing?

Who *does* this?

What kind of mother am I?

I had a beautiful baby girl to rock to sleep, and I needed alcohol to get through it?

I sang “Jesus Loves Me” while working up a buzz. It was gross, pathetic, embarrassing, disgusting. That’s what I told myself, at least.

Looking back, I get emotional that I fogged up those priceless moments with a buzz, creating a barrier between myself and one of the most precious memories a mother can have with her child. The demons of shame circled my mind with raised pitchforks. Here’s a literal thought that cropped up in my mind over and over again: “You’re a big, fat piece of garbage.” (Satan always throws “fat” in there for good measure.) The arrows pierced my head and

heart. I knew it wasn't true, but I felt God had turned his face on me at that moment because of my bad decisions. I didn't put that on him; it was all on me. What a disappointment I was—again.

I'd forgotten the gospel of grace, which says that as believers, we “have now been justified by [Christ's] blood” (Romans 5:9). We are justified and covered, but our earthly minds can convince us otherwise in these moments. The truth is that our mistakes don't disqualify us. Jesus' blood perpetually cleanses, offering us a fresh start day in and day out. This undeserved grace, though often hard to grasp, is the bedrock of Christian hope, empowering us to choose a better path. It's part of the privilege of being a Christian. Thank God for that.

In my confusion, all I knew was that I wanted—*needed*—to escape this mental and spiritual assault. Obviously, more alcohol wouldn't solve the problem. Nevertheless, my feet moved forward as if guided by an unseen force. After laying my daughter back down, I returned to the bathroom and took another, shorter, chug from the second bottle. Then, I restored it to its hiding place behind the soap and shampoo, tiny soldiers guarding my precious resource. Sufficiently tipsy, I changed into pajamas and grabbed my phone for some blissful scrolling, hoping my husband wouldn't notice I never came downstairs to hang out.

Before dozing off, I chugged an obligatory glass of water and took two Excedrin, hoping to ward off a morning headache. I reasoned that *real* drunks would never remember to wash their face, brush their teeth, or drink water before passing out. These small routines helped me continue avoiding the reality of my problem.

Hours later, I lay in bed, consumed with guilt and anxiety, sleep slipping further away in the chaos of my mind. I thought about

how alcohol was like a secret, abusive lover I couldn't seem to leave. Like a man who promises to leave his wife for his mistress, alcohol's assurances *always* returned void. What kind of weak woman returns for the lies? Again, self-hatred enveloped me as I considered how I might, somehow, someday, quit drinking for good.

As the minutes on my green-lit clock ticked by, I spiraled further into a mental hole of depression and shame. I had to do *something* to make myself feel better in the moment. Eventually, I got out of bed, grabbed the last bit of wine from the bathroom cupboard, dumped out the bottle, wrapped it in plastic bags, and trashed it. I chugged another glass of water and vowed I would quit drinking tomorrow. Everything was possible tomorrow.

The next day, the headache appeared despite the two glasses of water. Regret, fatigue, and a weak commitment to quit drinking again were also present. Like every other time I'd made the promise, it only lasted a few days. But things were coming to a head and I was one day closer to finally coming clean with myself and what it might take to quit drinking.

WHAT I LEARNED THAT CHANGED THE GAME

Scratch beneath the surface of alcohol's cultural veneer, and the revelations come quickly. Any romantic and nostalgic notions we had about alcohol's role in our lives quickly crumbles. We'll talk more about the historical and cultural narratives surrounding alcohol in later chapters.

For so many, we've depended on and misused alcohol because it's masked by a misnomer of fun and celebration. Singular moments and memories, often ones that are profound or magical, tend to be paired with drinking. A wedding, concert, vacation,

holiday, or party—most every fun thing we do can and often does involve alcohol. That means we can cling to fond memories and easily ignore alcohol’s harmful effects.

At the time of my deepest struggle, the supposed benefits of alcohol often came to my mind. Things like buzzy comfort after a long day, a socially acceptable escape from hardship, help in falling asleep, and at times, what felt like the only moment of relief in a trying day. It was hard to imagine letting go of the solution to so many temporary issues.

I wasn’t comfortable calling myself a “problem drinker” or “alcoholic.” Labels repelled me and kept me from working toward better choices. Many women feel the same way, unable to reconcile such a stereotyped categorization. But what about gray-area drinkers, those getting by but still questioning their dysfunctional relationship with alcohol? Where could they go without feeling stigmatized?

Those other descriptions seemed terrifying, final, ugly, and life-ruining. Nothing really bad had happened as a result of my drinking—yet. However, I knew that it could, that I played with fire every time I drank too much. I’m inviting you to consider your alcohol use without labels. You may be just a bit uncomfortable with your drinking; don’t let labels stop you from exploring what could be different or better for you.

Don’t just think about moments when you’re drinking, perhaps attending a fun event. Rather, consider the entirety of the alcohol ecosystem and how it reverberates in wider ways for your body, spirit, and psyche. Recognizing the negative parts of alcohol won’t erase the perceived positives—both can coexist. All I ask is for honesty about your full experience.

It took me some time to be truthful with myself. Even though I wasn't an "alcoholic," I told myself, something wasn't right.

If I could just not *want* to drink, everything would be fine. But there was no way to snap my fingers and make that happen.

I felt I couldn't share what I was thinking with anyone because that would mean I'd *have* to quit—or face being judged forever if anyone saw me drink again. This thought kept me from opening up for years. I also worried that if I *did* quit drinking, people would make untrue assumptions about me (and why I *had* to quit) as a woman, mother, and Christian. There seemed to be no good answer.

Growing up, I believed alcoholics and drug addicts lacked morality and self-control. They chose to indulge, and that was their fault. Those with "real" addiction issues were homeless, jobless, and faithless. They lost custody of their kids, drove into telephone poles, and drank liquor with breakfast. They walked around in a stupor each day before passing out on the couch.

I was so naive.

These created caricatures of those who struggle with alcohol or drugs are damaging and alienating. They also indicate that a struggle with substances is a moral failing that reflects the strength of one's faith, character, and potential.

When we see our battle with alcohol as a moral failing or write it off exclusively as sin, we discount the many nuances and realities of dependence and addiction. (I will discuss the question of alcoholism and sin in a later chapter.)

You will only find peace with this part of your life if you accept the reality of what it is for you—the good and bad parts. How has ignoring it worked out so far? How has hoping it would just quietly disappear been going? No matter how small or large an

issue this is for you, it won't go away if you don't face it head on. If you need to hide this book with a fake cover or read it on Kindle to keep the topic private, do it. What matters is facing this struggle—for your future, your testimony, God's glory, and the next generation which we pray won't have to fight the same battle.

The path to freedom from alcohol isn't a straight line. It was liberating when I realized this wasn't a battle of wills, in which I could try hard enough and overcome once and for all. I wasn't storing up the nerve to say “no” forever on one particular day. Finally, I realized the real battle wasn't between me and the glass, choosing to pick it up or walk on by. The real battle was in my heart.

You can't fight a spiritual battle with willpower or discipline. It's a holy war requiring supernatural tools found in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only provides the “tools” we need but is also actively at work within us to will and to act.

We know this from Philippians 2:13 (NLT), which reads, “For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.”

Victory doesn't come from the tools alone, but from the Holy Spirit empowering us from within—giving us both the desire and the power to do what pleases God.

As Christians, anything that *might* be an idol will require surrender.

Consider where you are now. The question remains: Do you want to stay here? Is alcohol worth fighting for? Can you imagine something better? Would your life be better or worse with less alcohol? With none? These are thoughts I reluctantly grappled with in the beginning. I didn't force myself to quit

drinking; I just let myself learn. I needed permission to explore and reach authentic conclusions honestly. I'm inviting you to do the same.

WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW THEN

In my assessments of alcohol's impact, the night with my daughter was one of my lowest. The evening felt familiar—I'd been here before. But this time, a stark awareness cut through the routine, revealing how deeply this problem had taken hold.

In hindsight, I can see God working supernaturally through unspecial, nondescript moments. Paul assures us that even as we feel powerless to change, he can use our weakest areas to begin shaping everything for “the good of those who love him” (Romans 8:28 NIV).

As it was, I struggled in isolation. Therefore, I was ignorant of many tools and resources to help me make changes and relieve my fear.

What I didn't know *was* hurting me:

- I didn't know that you could quit drinking without calling yourself an alcoholic.
- I didn't know that you could share that you *want* to quit drinking even if you haven't quit yet.
- I didn't realize that God wasn't angry with me for drinking, and that I had the freedom to quit without carrying the weight of conditional love.
- I didn't know that, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), over five million American women have alcohol use disorder, and most of them hide it.

I had heard that in AA meetings, you had to say, “Hi I’m Ericka and I’m an alcoholic.” Turns out, you actually *don’t* have to do that. And there are many more programs out there today besides AA.

The standard narrative didn’t turn out to be true. Who knew?

GETTING CURIOUS CHANGED EVERYTHING

It’s remarkable how long I stayed rooted in a problem based on false assumptions and wrong information.

Being “sober curious” was the catalyst for shifting my perspective in a life-changing direction. Being sober curious means asking questions about drinking—yours, theirs, and everyone’s. It means educating yourself about alcohol and asking insightful questions about how drinking affects you and those around you—without judgment.

I was sober curious for years before hearing the phrase. A few public-facing individuals were brave enough to share their stories online, but that was uncommon.

If someone mentioned they’d quit drinking in a blog post or social media share, I would binge their feeds for more insight. Hearing the stories of others who were like me was essential for believing that I, too, could do this. One day, after reading a blogger’s post about her ten years of sobriety, I emailed her. It was the first time I’d ever admitted to anyone that I *might* have a problem.

My heart raced as I typed, each word heavier than the last. When I finally hit send, a wave of uncertainty washed over me, as if I had just exposed a fundamental secret. But I knew it was a necessary first step toward understanding what might be possible for me. As I expressed my fears, my words were cautious, tentative,

and almost apologetic. Her response was kind and encouraging—she reassured me that it was worth exploring if I thought I had a problem. That slight, compassionate nudge felt like a lifeline. It would be years before I'd quit drinking, but looking back, that minor step was ultimately critical.

I had a long way to go. As a Christian, I'd attempted so many things already:

- Aimed to pray the desire away by writing prayers and copying Scriptures like “I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).
- Played a recording of the worship song “Oceans” so often I thought it would *actually* make my faith strong enough to overcome
- Read Brene Brown's *The Gifts of Imperfection*
- Watched multiple TED Talks about sobriety
- Posted notecard affirmations on my computer screens and bathroom mirror
- Gritted my way through a social event or two without drinking (but it was torture!)
- Done a thirty-day cleanse
- Attempted to live by rules of moderation: “only drink on the weekend” or “no more than two drinks at special events (I mean, definitely no more than three)”

Still, the “wine witch” (the name many sober people use for the voice that compels them to drink) remains rooted in our minds, always returning to whisper a justification for “just one drink” in our ear.

You deserve it.

Everyone does it.

Just for tonight.

You only live once.

Life is hard.

You're not hurting anyone.

At times, it felt like I was watching myself make wrong choices. I'd see myself get off the couch, walk to the fridge, pour the glass, and sit back down. I knew I shouldn't do it, but I knew that I would—and felt utterly powerless to stop it.

Romans 7:15 seemed applicable most days: “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”

Paul, you have no idea . . .

Maybe you're like I was, and the strategies and tactics haven't solved your problem. You're still thinking about it, wishing it away, desperate to be a normal drinker who can have fun, stop at one, and not wake up hating yourself or just regretting that you gave in—again.

Killing the voice in our minds that urges us to drink is more complicated than just saying no. It's part sinful human nature, part neuroscience, part sanctification, and part determination. That's quite the pie chart. And it really isn't about the wine.

Why would a rational person choose to do something they know is ultimately harmful? And how harmful does something need be to be worth quitting? The old debate—whether addiction is a disease or a choice—misses the mark. It's far more complex than having no power or complete control. In approaching the subject of our addictions with nuance and curiosity, we can create

new frameworks and ideas about how to think about them, which will lead us to better choices and outcomes.

But just as quick changes rarely free us from our addictions, neither can information or habit changes *on their own* break the powerful hold of alcohol. Addiction and dependence are heart issues, deeply rooted in our psyches and intertwined with our very beings after years of facing the world with a bottle in hand. Without the inner work, the outer work is another mask, destined to fail when we fall prey to emotional and spiritual downfalls.

That inner work is how we discover why we do what we do, which is what leads to meaningful change. Wouldn't it be great to know why you get these powerful, unwanted feelings?

Learning that we turn to drink because of a desire to achieve joy, fulfillment, and community can help us process things in a healthier way. Those desires aren't bad, in and of themselves. So, how can we seek them out in better ways?

When we understand why we drink within the context of our full, complex lives, we can transform our habits, overcome cravings, and gain a broader perspective on God's purpose for our lives.

Our good desires are valid and can be fulfilled more deeply through holistic solutions that cultivate true human flourishing. Instead of alcohol, we can invest in authentic relationships, raw honesty with God, setting boundaries, leaving toxic situations, healing childhood wounds, and wrestling with uncomfortable truths.



PAUSE & ASSESS

Take a few minutes to ask yourself the following questions and record your answers. Write what comes to mind, and don't judge yourself for your answers.

Physical and Practical Impact: How does my drinking impact my health and other resources?

- Do I often feel physically drained, mentally foggy, or unable to be fully present because of drinking? If so, how does that affect me in practical ways?
- Is alcohol negatively affecting my health in any ways I'm aware of? For example, sleep disruption, sex drive or response, blood sugar, metabolism, dehydration, energy, or headaches?
- How much of my time, money, or resources go toward drinking, and is that aligned with the stewardship God calls me to?

Faith Life: Does alcohol bring me closer to God, or does it create distance in my relationship with him?

- Does my drinking help me display the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control), or does it undermine them?
- How often do I ask for forgiveness related to my drinking—whether for losing control, damaging relationships, or neglecting responsibilities?
- Am I fully convinced that drinking aligns with God's best intention for me, or do I feel a sense of conviction I've been trying to ignore?

- If I prayed, “Lord, show me what you want for my life when it comes to alcohol,” would I truly be willing to follow his answer?
- How do I feel about the idea of being completely free from alcohol? Does that thought fill me with relief, fear, or resistance—and why?

Relationships: How does my drinking affect my role as a sister, friend, daughter, wife, or mother? Does it enhance or hurt my ability to serve and love others well?

- What example am I setting for my children, family, or church community about how Christians handle stress, celebrate, or cope with pain?
- Does alcohol ever cause tension, conflict, or disappointment in my relationships with those I love?
- Have I ever worried that I might make a serious mistake due to being intoxicated that could harm—physically or emotionally—someone I love? How often?

Emotional and Mental Well-Being: When I reflect on my emotional health, does alcohol seem to amplify my burdens or lighten them?

- How does drinking affect my mood in the moment, for better or for worse?
- Do I feel freer, calmer, or more at peace after drinking, or do I feel shame, anxiety, and regret?
- Do I ever use alcohol to cover more profound struggles like stress, loneliness, resentment, or exhaustion?
- If you have any diagnosed mental health struggles: Does drinking ultimately improve my mental health struggles or make them worse?

Professional Life and Calling: Does my drinking help me achieve my purpose in life or hinder me?

FREELY SOBER

- If you work outside the home: Has my drinking ever negatively impacted my performance at work? If so, how? How often?
- When I think about my goals for my life and the legacy I want to leave, how does my drinking fit in? Does it help me achieve those things or distract or even hinder me?
- If I consider my future self, the woman I hope to be in Christ, does she still drink?

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