

EXCERPT



Freely Sober *Rethinking Alcohol Through the Lens of Faith*

January 6, 2026 | \$18.99, 224 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-1336-6

"Freely Sober is an invitation to step into more awareness, honest exploration, and inner wrestling concerning your relationship with alcohol. Ericka Andersen has a special way of articulating the nuances Christians feel when it comes to drinking without using legalism, labels, or rules. The message of this book is one of freedom and hope!"

—Jenn Kautsch, founder of the SoberSis Community and author of *Look Alive, Sis*

The Pressures We Face as Women

One thing I know for sure: It's easy to mask a dependence on alcohol as a busy, high-functioning woman who displays outward poise. We wake up early, hit the gym, get the kids to school, work full-time, make dinner, never miss church, volunteer on the weekends, take care of the dog. Surely, *that* woman couldn't have an issue with alcohol.

Our desire to unwind and seek comfort is natural. You often hear this about kids—they hold it together at school, only to unravel at home where they feel safe. Adults do this too, but when alcohol enters the picture, it can be destructive. Yet, even as things spiral, we maintain a polished, public-facing persona. Long term, that outward maintenance merely compounds the problem.

Given the realities of womanhood more generally, it's unsurprising to learn that women in high-stress jobs fare worse when it comes to alcohol abuse.

Up to 15 percent of practicing female physicians will develop substance abuse issues in their lifetimes, according to American Addiction Centers (AAC), with the number rising to 25 percent for female surgeons. Similarly, a Bloomberg Law study found that over 50 percent of female lawyers have dealt with alcohol abuse. These numbers are far higher than the men in the same fields of work. This matches up with the increase in drinking among women more widely across the United States, according to the CDC.

What's going on with the women? In their 2023 "Parenting in America Today" study, Pew Research found that mothers are more likely than fathers to say parenting is "stressful and tiring," feel more "judged," and worry more about hardships their children may face. The majority of mothers and fathers admit that moms carry the burden of managing their children's schedules, cleaning the house, helping with homework, and feeding, bathing, and diaper changing.

We may live in a modern world, but women generally shoulder more simultaneous and consistent daily tasks for the family, often on top of having a full-time job. I don't say this to complain about womanhood or motherhood, but just to convey how women may feel added pressures. "Between being the primary breadwinner, the primary housekeeper, and trying to raise a four-year-old, I have no idea how I'm keeping it together," one woman noted in a private group. "I feel like I'm about to break . . . I go to work for ten hours, come home, clean, get our daughter to bed, and I'm left with maybe two hours, which I spend in pure anxiety and avoidance mode."

I'm not accusing dads of trying to complicate things. But we can be honest that old habits die hard. Some women enjoy some of those extra tasks. For example, keeping track of doctor's appointments and school events doesn't bother me. I like volunteering for classroom activities and keeping my kitchen clean each night. (Maybe I'm an outlier there.) Regardless, those invisible burdens can quietly tax us both mentally and emotionally. "It's so hard to break this habit when I don't know how to handle my problems," writes one woman in a Facebook group. "I go into a deep depression, but if I drink, it just seems so much easier to maintain my life."

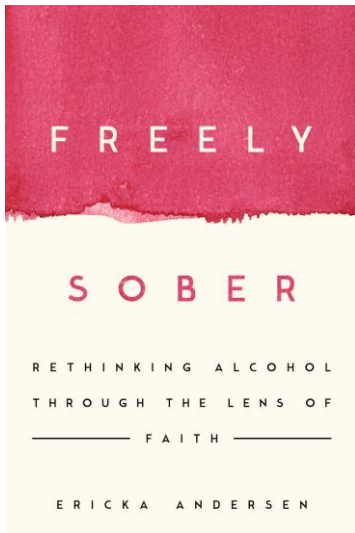


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—**Jenn Kautsch**, founder of the SoberSis Community and author of *Look Alive, Sis*

As high-achieving women, model moms, and ministry leaders, we can put on an Instagram-ready façade that stands up to real life. And it’s easy to excuse an issue with alcohol when no one seems to notice. Just because you’re keeping things in check on the home front, with all the dominoes upright for now, doesn’t mean this status quo glorifies God or leads to flourishing. Nor does alcohol contribute positively to one’s mental or physical health. The health consequences of alcohol consumption are rarely discussed. But plenty of evidence notes the devastation, and the public is finally taking notice.

Only recently did the American Cancer Society change their recommendation for cancer prevention from having one glass of wine a day to entirely abstaining from alcohol. Here’s how they put it in their “Alcohol Use and Cancer” explainer: “Drinking alcohol increases the risk of cancer. In fact, alcohol use is one of the most important preventable risk factors for cancer, along with tobacco use and excess body weight. Alcohol use accounts for about 5% of all cancers and 4% of all cancer deaths in the United States.”

In the *International Journal of Epidemiology*, a team of researchers led by Seungyoun Jung and Molin Wang analyzed twenty studies looking at links between alcohol and breast cancer. They found that drinking alcohol increased the risk of certain types of breast cancer by up to 35 percent. The CDC warns women that drinking alcohol can lead to a higher risk for liver disease, a decrease in brain function, heart muscle damages, fertility problems, and more risk for sexual violence (“Alcohol Use Effects on Men’s and Women’s Health”).

Even without all the other factors that play into drinking, the physical and medical effects alone are enough reason to seriously reconsider.

—taken from chapter three, “The Pressures We Face as Women”

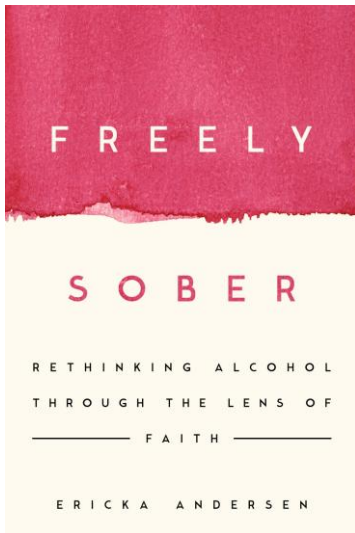


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TALKING POINTS



Freely Sober

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“Freely Sober doesn’t bring shame or deliver ultimatums; it offers a lamp on the path toward freedom. With surgical precision, Ericka blends scientific rigor and scriptural clarity to expose the deeper reasons why we drink and how we heal. Whether you’re rethinking your own choices around alcohol or trying to understand those of someone you love, this book will feel like a long-overdue dose of hope.”

-W. Lee Warren, neurosurgeon and host of *The Dr. Lee Warren Podcast*

Suggested Interview Questions

- What exactly does it mean to “sober curious”?
- What eventually led you to stop drinking?
- What motivated you to write about the topic now, including countless articles and of course the new book, *Freely Sober*?
- According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), more than twelve million American women struggle with alcohol in some way. Why do you think the struggle with alcohol is so often seen as a man’s problem?
- Why do Christians often avoid talking about the struggle with drinking?
- What is the first step to changing one’s relationships with alcohol?
- What mindsets or myths often get in the way of women making changes, or even talking about their struggle alcohol?
- Which questions do you lay out for women to consider with regard to alcohol? Why are these important?
- Loaded question--should Christians drink alcohol at all?
- How did alcohol impact your spiritual life?
- How has your life changed since you changed your relationship with alcohol?



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