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National Prevention Week

“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine. Those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: ‘They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?’” Proverbs 23:29-35

Most of us know of cases involving physical or verbal abuse that are directly related to alcohol or drug abuse. Drunk drivers are still the number one killer in automobile accidents. May 18-24 is National Prevention Week. Here is a little information I received via email:

May 18 through May 24 marks SAMHSA's third annual National Prevention Week: Our Lives. Our Health. Our Future. Why is this important? Consider these statistics compiled by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([SAMHSA](http://www.samhsa.gov)) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](http://www.cdc.gov)):

- In the past year, an estimated one in five (or 43.7 million) people aged 18 or older in the U.S. had a mental illness; including mood, anxiety, and eating disorders.
- Approximately 2.3 million people, about half of whom were under age 18, smoked their first cigarette in 2012.
- Although the legal drinking age in the U.S. is 21, close to one quarter of youth aged 12 to 20 (24.3 percent) drank alcohol in 2012. Each year, 4,700 people under age 21 die from homicides, suicides, car crashes, and drowning related to drinking alcohol.
- In 2012, 17.7 million people aged 12 and older were classified with alcohol dependence or abuse in the past year.
- Since 2006, there has been a 74.2 percent increase in the number of people aged 12 or older who used marijuana on a daily or almost daily basis in the past year.

At school and at home, educators, students and parents are encouraged to affirm a healthy lifestyle and discuss the impact that substance abuse and mental health problems have on communities and families.

I remember taking some groceries to a lady who had contacted the church where I was working many years ago in Oklahoma City. When I arrived at the door she did not invite me in but just took the groceries and thanked me. I noticed some bruises on her face and arms, but was not able to ask her about it at the time. I later learned that her husband had a drinking problem and when he drank his wife and children were subject to abuse at his hands. Naturally these stories are not the ones that you see in television and magazine advertisements. Not everyone who drinks or does drugs is an abuser, but there are rarely any good outcomes from addiction to alcohol or drugs. The Bible warns us about the dangers of such abuse. We pray that those who are suffering from alcohol or drug abuse will find the help that they need to overcome their problems. The world will be better for them and their families when they do. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise” Prov. 20:1.