

## One Glass of Champagne

I joined the church at age 19 and had just been a member of the church a couple of months when one of my old high school friends – Sharon – called and asked me to be a bridesmaid in her wedding. I said sure and made the dress. I had gained a lot of weight and when I see pictures of me in that big yellow dress I can hardly believe my eyes. I didn't have a lot of self-confidence to say the least. I was intimidated by other people and had a very difficult time standing up for myself. So joining the church meant I had to do a lot of saying "no thanks I don't drink." But at the same time I was full of gratitude to God for pulling me out of the worldly swamp and infusing my mind with truth and light.

So I pushed forward, oftentimes finding myself caught between wanting to be accepted by old friends and acquaintances but wanting to stay true to this wonderful Being of goodness and mercy. Many times I compromised and did the wrong thing only to find myself being fished out of the swamp again by God. I often have thought that I was like a kindergartener being taught little by little, here a bit, there a bit, tiny little lessons of right and wrong, to live by God's standards and not the world's. The Holy Ghost became my lifeline. I was so grateful for being shown truth from error.

I had received no religious training growing up. All the teachings of an LDS home about right and wrong were completely foreign to me. I look back and see how lovingly and gently the Lord led me along, never condemning me but waiting for me to see and understand.

The wedding turned out to be a very interesting experience—one that I have never forgotten. I wandered around not really knowing very many people because most of the people were family relatives on both sides. The reception was held at Sharon's house and a few of my old high school friends were there but I didn't connect with anybody. People were drinking champagne and living it up. I had never been much for drinking so it didn't bother me not to drink. Every time someone asked me if I wanted some champagne I just said no thanks. As the party wore on and I had repeatedly refused drinking and I felt isolated and removed from everyone.

So at the very end of the evening when most of the people had left I happened into the kitchen where an unused tray of full champagne glasses sat. All night I had turned down champagne. Suddenly the thought entered my head—"I can have some if I want." On a crazy impulse I grabbed a glass and downed the whole thing. It wasn't five seconds before the idea came into my mind to go and get rip roaring drunk with some of the old high school friends just leaving; then the thought came into my mind to go and see Virginia and Marie and get high with them. The thoughts just kept tumbling in to sin. Sin! All of a sudden it hit me. The Spirit was gone and I was being bombarded by Satan and his legions to destroy myself. It was crystal clear. I had let them in when I drank the "little" glass of champagne.

I remember turning and just going and sitting down and being blown away by what was happening to me. I was all by myself sitting on a chair in the kitchen having this incredible experience of learning for myself that Satan is very real and uses alcohol, among other things, to ensnare us. By succumbing to what I knew I shouldn't do Satan had the power to fill my mind with his desires for me. His desires, I realized, were so opposite from the love I had so recently felt from God who desired to protect and encourage me. I left that party with an even greater testimony than I had had before because I knew so solidly that Satan and God were real. The Spirit could be driven away by my actions and I did not want to live without the Spirit after having tasted of its goodness. I guess you could say that Satan overplayed his hand, because from that day I knew so surely that I must stay on God's side of the line in order to have His protection.

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