

# Sobriety



My aunt Clara joined Alcoholics Anonymous with a mission. She never quit thanking God for helping her to sobriety and in turn continued to help others, seriously and happily practicing the twelve steps. She told me of a time, when fed up with a situation, she rushed out of her apartment to find a bar, "Then God stopped me. I sat down on the steps and prayed instead. I've never turned away from Him again," she said.

Churches invited her to speak to women's classes for sharing the newness in her life. Aunt Clara's company was always desired, the spirit within her sparkling with good humor and cheerfulness. An AA chapter in Tampa is named after my aunt in honor of her helping others. She would go to anyone in any part of town at any hour answering a call.

I went to some AA open meetings with her in Tampa and Orlando to derive more understanding of the addiction tormenting those whom I love.

At one open meeting a minister, who had never tasted whiskey, told of his doctor prescribing a tablespoon of whiskey in a glass of milk to help him sleep. He began to crave more. This was the beginning of his long and enslaved journey, losing his self-respect, family, ministry and even spending time in an insane asylum. It was a miracle to see him standing there, freed, and ministering in such a powerful way with his words truly having a sobering effect on alcoholic and nonalcoholic alike. He also was back in his church as a minister.

Medical researchers claim health benefits come from moderate drinking while not considering the possibility of influencing non-drinkers into a life of alcoholism and all the misery affecting not only the individual but all connected to him or her. Didn't I read somewhere that medical science has discovered the healthful advantages of prayer and dark-purple grape juice?

Another case I heard of was about a devoted Christian husband and wife in their old age. The husband died suddenly and his grieving wife, a teetotaler, started drinking whiskey, becoming a drunk in her last years, certainly an age so greatly needing to draw on a faith that should have grown stronger through time. Did someone, she trusted, say to her while in great shock steeped in loneliness, "You need a drink; it will help your feelings?" This kind of influence has to be ignorant of the consequences it may stir up. Did she receive loving support care or indifference and ridicule?

I was invited to supper and to play bridge with a threesome one evening. The host tried to push an alcoholic drink on me saying, "Ann, take it or you'll embarrass me." I retorted, "If you're that easily embarrassed then so be it!" Good hosts and hostesses provide non-alcoholic beverages for those with this preference.

Aunt Clara also told me of the "dry drunk" as one who had quit drinking but had not resolved the problems alcohol was consumed to escape from. She would smile and say, "We often speak of alcohol as old John Barleycorn."

These favorite verses lived in my beloved aunt Clara. "I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13,14.