Repeatedly, I’ve heard that scripture keeps you away from sin and sin keeps you away from scripture. “These words could not be any truer” is always my response to such insights. Indeed, the authenticity of these words is unquestionable, especially for believers.

While doing my study of the word yesterday, I came across something I have never seen in the Bible. I don’t know how this works for other people but for me, such a thing becomes a big deal. Moreso, when the discovery addresses something I have been thinking through and over. Coincidentally, this was one of those things and it’s not even a phrase or a sentence but a word. Funny enough, the word was not in the portion of scripture I was reading through.

For the past week, I have been going through the book of Jeremiah and my conception of the first chapters is a sad God, a heartbroken God, and a justifiably jealous God. The title of chapter 2 in the New International Version (NIV) highlights “Israel forsakes God”. While reading through God’s message of destruction to Israel through Jeremiah, I searched for a commentary on chapter 5, which referred me to the book of 1 Peter 2:8.

Unplanned, I read through the whole book because it’s one of those books I enjoy. One thing that pushed me to read through is the highlights I had made on the sides of my Bible. I became interested to read through again because I wanted to understand what I saw the last time I read through the book. Interestingly, it was a path to a new insight. Just before I share the insight, allow me to ask, ‘what do you know or have heard in regards to what the Bible says about taking alcohol?’

*"For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do--living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry."*

*1 Peter 4:3, NIV*

Trust me, like many of us, I have read this scripture severally. It is one of those scriptures that come up when the question of “Is taking alcohol is a sin?” arises. However, my eyes were narrowed to one of the activities mentioned. While I have always read over it, it has never occurred to me to take time and look up its meaning.

**Carousing**

A quick search on Google defines carousing as “*the activity of drinking alcohol and enjoying oneself with others in a noisy, lively way.”*

In the modern-day world, this is what we’d call clubbing or raving. Numerous times, the question of whether taking alcohol is a sin has stopped at “the Bible only calls out drunkenness (1 Peter 4:3, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:18, Proverbs 23:20, Isaiah 5:11)”, which I believe is true. It goes ahead to mention the effects of drunkenness and even provides examples such as the story of Lot (Genesis 19:30-38). While all this mentioned, I have heard less spoken about carousing even in modern-day society whereby this is an accepted norm even for Christians.

I have to admit, my concern about this is very personal because it is something I struggled with and still struggle with to date. At one time, I had a girlfriend whose idea of fun greatly differed from mine. As we call it today, once in a while “alikuwa anapenda kupiga sherehe”. Sincerely, my heart was never at peace and it brought me to question so many things about myself. It is hard for me to separate the night life from immorality. While I knew that this did not make them bad people but only meant I should learn to accept people with different conceptions of life, it was not enough to get me out of my head. Sadly, this is one of the major things that defined the end of the road for us because we could hardly find a common ground.

In the storm of trying to find perspective and balance, I penned down “*Hate the sin, not the sinner”.* Writing this was a result of introspection, which caused me to realize that I was not perfect and did not have any right to impose anything on them. Instead, I had a greater calling of loving them as they are instead of imposing judgment on them. In my words, I was “continually placing myself on a pedestal of righteousness unknowingly by seeing others as more sinful than I am”.

That aside, coming across this portion of scripture excited me at first because it made me happy to know what the Bible mentions ‘supports me’ Ha! Excitedly, I even called my friend to share with them my discovery. It was a moment of “Hmmm, I knew I did not hate this thing out of no reason at all”. Laughs at that.

***A different insight***

However, as the day progressed, a different conception of that portion of the scripture dawned on me. The question on my mind was “Is the scripture enough to make me turn from my sin?”. This morning I thought to myself, I think ‘a perfect Christian’ is something that exists only in another world.

A few days ago, I stumbled on a vlog on DJ Ruff’s YouTube channel whereby they were discussing whether smoking weed is a sin. Ben Cyco highlighted that if today, we discovered a portion of the scripture that says ‘Consuming tea and coffee is a sin’ then everyone who takes tea or coffee would conflict with God’s word.

**All said and done**

What’s my point? Discovering this portion of scripture made me realize how I fall short in conceiving sin as God does. In many cases, I slightly tweak doctrine to fit my way of life. While it’s not my actions that make me right with God, it’s God’s call to believers, such as me, to live a life worthy of the Gospel. In the words of Hillsong in ‘Hossana’, our hearts should break at what breaks God’s heart. Finally, what the Bible calls sin is final and my opinion about it does not count.

All said and done, I desire nothing else than to love God (John 14:23).

*Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.*