

**A 40-DAY ALCOHOL FAST TO REDISCOVER
YOUR JOY, IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH,
AND RENEW YOUR MIND**

**Love
Life
Sober**

**SNEAK
PEEK**



**SAMPLE
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PROOF**

CHRISTY OSBORNE

Love · Life · Sober

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ALCOHOL FAST TO
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Christy Osborne



WATERBROOK

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For Chris, Ella, and Carter.
I thank God for you three every single morning.

And for my mom.
*I can't wait to tell you all about
what happened after you left for heaven.*

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Introduction

MARCH 9, 2020. I WAKE UP WITH A HEADACHE, PAR FOR the course over the last two years. I reach over and grab my phone to check the time while keeping one eye closed. I still have on yesterday's makeup. It isn't even the makeup from the night before; it's makeup from lunch at a little Italian restaurant in Clapham, where we celebrated my children turning eight and ten with close friends.

I take a second to rate the category of my hangover. Darn. It's a bad one. I immediately try to think of what I must do today and when I can lie down again. It's a Monday morning. I'm used to this predicament because I face it routinely: Mondays mean I have to get the children to school. But I can come home and nap after that—all alone, in an empty house. I can nurse my hangover in peace.

I pick up my phone and see a text from my cousin Katie in Los Angeles: "Missing our beloved Terry. I love you. [Heart emoji]" My heart sinks into my stomach, and I feel like I might vomit. Terry—my mom. Today marks the second anniversary of her death.

My cousin's message isn't the only one that has popped up, but I don't feel like responding to even my closest friends'

condolences. They don't understand how I'm feeling. How could they? They all have their moms still. The loneliness overwhelms me. I put my phone back on my nightstand and roll over, hoping my husband, Chris, will volunteer to take the children to school this morning.

I spend most of the day in bed, wallowing in grief. I scroll through social media and try to distract myself with Netflix, but mainly I just feel sorry for myself. The hangover is real, my stomach is churning, and my only aim is to just get through this awful day. I purposely ignore anyone calling to check on me, and when flowers arrive from Chris in the afternoon, I want to roll my eyes. The beautiful pink and red bouquet from my favorite florist in Chelsea won't bring back my mom, so what's the point?

Two. Years.

What had I done in the past two years? Absolutely nothing. It felt like I just had been drinking—drinking, drinking, drinking.

I look back on my Instagram posts from the last two years. How did I look so happy when I was so sad and broken? There are photos of my trips to Ibiza, Saint-Tropez, and Paris. Skiing in the Italian Alps. A photo of me at brunch with Posh Spice herself; I have a big smile on my face. *How?*

I eventually scroll back to posts from 2018, right after my mom died—the royal wedding. Sky News, the UK-based news network, needed a peppy American to cover the wedding who could represent the excitement people felt in the USA. I watch my interviews from that time. I should've been given an Emmy for appearing that happy on screen when I was so miserable inside. There were so many days like this when I didn't want to get out of bed. There are comments on

the post that say things like, “Your mom would be so proud.”

As we all know, Instagram is zero reflection of reality. So, what had my life really looked like in the past two years? It looked like waking up with a headache, planning what I had to do to get through the day, hoping there was a lunch in my calendar so there was an excuse to have a glass (or three) of cold white wine at noon and, if there wasn't a lunch, trying to get to the afternoon as quickly as possible so I could open up a bottle of wine when the homework books came out after school.

Everything looked so glossy and pretty on the surface. But it just wasn't. When the afternoon wine bottle popped open, I felt relief. I could go fuzzy again. I didn't have to handle all the painful stuff. I didn't have to think about the fact that I wasn't being a great mom. I didn't have to think about my collapsing marriage to Chris. I didn't have to think about how I didn't have a mom anymore, that my children no longer had their “Grammie.” The wine became a total and complete escape for two years.

Two. Years.

I wonder where I will be in another two years if I keep drinking like this? My mind pings back and forth between Oh, come on, I'm fine. Not one person has called me out on my drinking, and This has to stop.

Then, in an attempt to shut up the internal battle in my head, I quite literally shout to God, “Jesus, I can't do this anymore!”

I certainly don't want to look or feel like this anymore. I don't want to spend every March 9 for the rest of my life nursing a hangover and hiding in my dark bedroom. I need this day to mean something else. And so, on March 9, 2020,

in honor of my mom, I decide to try to be better for my little family—to take a break from alcohol.

...

IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS AND MONTHS, I STRUGGLED TO remain alcohol-free. I battled cravings and felt terrified to tell friends what I was doing. I didn't have one friend who didn't drink. I worried my social life would suffer. I had no idea how to navigate life without alcohol. I felt scared and alone.

I kept returning to 2 Corinthians 12:9, which says, “‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.” God’s power was made evident to me in my weakness around alcohol. He would take this struggle of mine and turn it into something I could never have imagined. Verse 10 says, “That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses. . . . For when I am weak, then I am strong.” When I finally surrendered to God, I felt more powerful than ever before because of His work in me. I knew I had a story and a message to share with other women struggling with alcohol.

Throughout my drinking days, I constantly prayed to Jesus, asking for His help. I now know He was with me during my darkest days and had a significant plan for me. He heard my prayers, and I felt His presence. The year I let go of alcohol, I researched everything I could about alcohol use disorder and addiction while also growing closer to Jesus than I had ever been. Finally, I felt God call me to be vocal about my sobriety journey, and so I did just that. I started documenting my day-to-day learning on my Instagram during Covid lockdowns. It was scary to be that open and vulnera-

ble, but the response I got was overwhelming. So many friends, old and new, reached out and asked how I had found freedom from alcohol. I tried to help in any way I could and recommended books, podcasts, and resources that had helped me.

I felt God nudging me to explore more ways to help others, so at the end of 2020 I enrolled in my first life coaching certification program with a focus on sobriety. I've since become certified in multiple programs and have been blessed with a flourishing private coaching practice where I'm blessed to support women around the world.

Coaching is all about listening and allowing another person the space to discuss their struggles. As I listened and asked thoughtful questions over the past few years, I heard from ladies who had also lost their faith or felt far from Jesus due to their drinking. I longed to create a resource that combined practical coaching based on neuroscience with biblical support and encouragement. God has blessed me with making that dream a reality through this book.

I am excited to spend the next forty days with you on this alcohol fast that is packed with grace, compassion, and a sprinkle of science. I know taking a break from alcohol is hard, and it can seem overwhelming. I've been right where you are. But the fantastic news I have for you is that Jesus is with you right now and will show up for you, just like He did for me.

If you stick with this alcohol fast for the next forty days, you may experience some incredible benefits, including better sleep, brighter skin, improved hydration, and reduced brain fog. Damage to your stomach lining will repair itself. You may also decrease your cancer risk, reduce your resting

heart rate, lower your cholesterol, and improve your blood pressure. You will give a healthy boost to your liver and gut health. You will save tons of time, money, and energy.

My hope is that you will also feel closer to Jesus. Being stuck in the drinking cycle put a barrier between me and God. When I started my own fast and began to make space for Him with a clear head, my spiritual life transformed. The ability to pray with a sober mind, to take time to meditate on His Word, and to surrender my disordered drinking to Him brought us closer than ever.

God made us all so different, but if you're anything like me, after forty days of not drinking you will feel better than you've felt in years and your relationship with Jesus will take on a whole new meaning. I'm so excited for you.

I'd love to connect with you and cheer you on. If you're documenting your journey on Instagram, make sure to tag @lovelifesoberwithchristy and use #LoveLifeSober40DayFast. I've also created a celebration tracker so you can have a visual representation of how far you've come. You can find your personal tracker at lovelifesober40dayfast.com.

1

DAY ONE

Starting with Grace

*I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.*

— PSALM 34:4–5

WELCOME TO YOUR FORTY-DAY ALCOHOL FAST! EVERY morning that I've sat down to write this book, I've prayed God would use my story and the lessons I've learned to bless you. The goal of this book is to help you decide how big of a role you want alcohol to play in your life. Maybe you know it's time to give up for good because you already know alcohol is taking more than it's giving. Or perhaps you only drink a few times a week, but you've realized your sleep and energy levels are suffering and you need a reset. Whatever your reason, you've picked up this book because a part of you knows it's time to take a break from booze.

First, I want to celebrate this moment with you. You've taken the very first step of becoming aware. Your eyes are open. You're aware that alcohol may not be serving you anymore, and that awareness has led you to take a big action step: opening this book. You're on your way to better physical, mental, and spiritual health, stronger relationships, and so

much more. This is a big move, and I'm so proud of you.

Let's start with a few fundamental principles to prepare us for the journey ahead.

SHUT THE TRAPDOOR

During the next forty days, commit to not drinking alcohol. Here is a visual that I love to use with my clients. Imagine you have a little trapdoor in the back of your brain, an escape hatch of sorts. If that little door is open, you will choose alcohol because it's the easy-button answer that you are used to. But if you shut that trapdoor, you've taken alcohol off the table for the next forty days. You are making the conscious choice not to drink. This might be a good time to get the alcohol out of the house if you feel like it may be too tempting to have it so accessible.

GROWTH POINTS

Try to stick with the fast for forty consecutive days so that you can start feeling better. (That's why we're here, to get you to feel your best.) However, if you do have a drink at any time during the forty-day fast, don't think of it as a slipup or failure. Think of it as a growth point. You are here to learn and grow.

If these growth points happen, don't stop or reset your fast. Instead, take out your journal and consider the following questions:

- Why did you decide to drink? (Was it a particularly stressful morning? Did something happen at work

that overwhelmed you? Was your teenager extra spicy with you?)

- How did you feel in the hours immediately after drinking? How did you feel the next morning?
- What can you learn from this?

Even though growth points can make you feel like you've failed, they are a hugely important part of this journey. Don't fall into the shame trap; instead, get curious and figure out what exactly happened so that you can make a different decision the next time. Think of a little toddler learning to walk. If he falls, do we shout at him and say, "You're a failure! You must have a serious problem; you can't even walk!" No, of course not! We pick him up and say, "You're doing a great job, little guy. Try again." He's learning. Growing. Trying something new and becoming aware of what works and what doesn't. And so are you. This is about grace, compassion, and curiosity.

MAKE THE TIME

Set aside time every single day to complete your daily reading. Piggyback it onto your quiet time or morning routine. Or if you need something to fill the five o'clock wine witching hour, read it then. You will have new information to think about and helpful questions to ask yourself. I recommend revisiting the Bible verses we reference throughout the book and journaling your thoughts and emotions as you read along. The more you put into the next forty days, the more you will get out of it.

AN EXPERIMENTAL MINDSET

You may have done a Dry January or a Sober October before, mustering all your willpower to stay away from alcohol for a month. I did those too. However, when I completed the month, I drank just as much, if not more, afterward. This fast is different. In addition to not drinking, we are going to take the next forty days to learn:

- How alcohol is affecting your life
- Why you sometimes fall into addictive patterns
- Whether or not the assumed benefits of alcohol are even true

If you decide to go back to drinking at the end of these forty days, that is 100 percent your choice. *You* get to decide what kind of role alcohol has in your life. Alcohol will always be around; it's not going anywhere. Most of us know well what it feels like to drink regularly or often. Now's the time to figure out what *not* drinking feels like. This is an experimental reset.

Take one day at a time. You don't have to have the mindset of "I'm never drinking again" right now. And I really don't want you to stress about any parties, vacations, or events in the future, even if they take place in these forty days. Just focus on today. You don't know now how you will feel the day of that event or party; you can cross that bridge when you get to it. As I always say to my clients, there is no point in future-tripping before you even arrive at that date. More importantly, Jesus said in Matthew 6:34, "Do not worry about

tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.”

While writing this book, I’m doing a different kind of experiment: a gluten experiment. A few years ago, I learned I have a gluten intolerance. I thought this was horrible news at the time. How could I go the rest of my life without eating bread, pastries, *pasta*, and all the delicious desserts with gluten in them? But I know I don’t feel good when I eat gluten, so I decided to go on an experimental reset and try a gluten-free diet. I feel so much better: I no longer get sharp stomach pains, and my digestion has greatly improved.

The key to successfully testing out what my body needs was to approach it from an experimental mindset. I haven’t once said, “I’m never eating pasta again.” If I wind up in Paris and choose to eat the buttery croissant, I will. But now I am armed with that knowledge of how gluten makes me feel.

I want you to approach this fast like that. You don’t have to say forever. Just get curious and be open to learning.

ONE THING AT A TIME

Please don’t try to start a diet, completely cut out sugar, or begin a strict exercise routine during the next forty days. Please don’t start an intermittent fasting regimen. In fact, you’ll want to eat regular meals packed with protein to curb cravings, so please don’t try to restrict food right now. We will talk about incorporating joyful movement and how to handle sugar cravings, but this is not the time to make multiple wellness goals. I have coached so many women who want to simultaneously quit alcohol, lose fifteen pounds, and start working out five times a day. It’s too overwhelming, so they burn out quickly. Researchers have found that people

who set too many goals for themselves fail at all of them.¹
Baby steps, babe, just like that little toddler.

DOCUMENT YOUR TRANSFORMATION

Today is the first day of your fast. I love a good transformation, and I'm sure you do too. After forty days of not drinking, I witnessed a remarkable change in the appearance of my face. The puffiness diminished and the persistent redness faded to the point where I found myself wearing far less makeup than before because my face was so clear. You, also, will be amazed at the difference in the way you look and feel. I want you to have photographic proof and written evidence of how far you've come. I've seen incredible transformations in just forty days with my clients. Their eyes are clear, and they have more clarity of mind and inner peace. The same and much more is possible for you, my beautiful friend. So snap a selfie right now to document your growth. Take notes, either in the margins of this book or in a separate journal, on each win you experience along this journey. Trust me, you will want to look back at how far you've come.

Use the special celebration tracker I created for you to mark important alcohol-free milestones like your first alcohol-free date, first alcohol-free book club, first alcohol-free wedding, and so many more. Every little step is progress. Head to lovelifesober40dayfast.com to download your copy of the tracker.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO COUNT DAYS

There are lots of apps out there that help you count sober days. Use them if they motivate you. However, *please don't reset the counter* if you have a growth point. If you were running a marathon and tripped at mile twenty-three, would you go back to the starting line? If you have ten days alcohol-free and on the eleventh day you have a growth point, you made it ten days; that's amazing. Don't focus on the one; focus on the ten. And start counting again with day eleven on your next alcohol-free day. Another helpful tool could be printing out a monthly calendar and checking off the days you haven't had a drink. At the end of the month, look at the percentage of days you've not had a drink. If you're drinking 25 percent less than before—that's a win! This is about *progress*, not perfection.

Your personal celebration tracker I mentioned also has a way to mark your forty days of not drinking, even if they're not consecutive.

TiNA

AT THE END OF EACH READING, I WILL LEAVE YOU with TiNA, a Tiny New Action. These simple and practical steps will help you gain momentum on this journey, implement what you are learning, and recognize how life without alcohol makes you feel.

Quite a few of your TiNAs will involve journaling.

Don't put too much pressure on yourself with the whole journaling thing. Some women love it, some don't, but the more time you spend thinking (and writing if you can) about the questions I ask you, the more you will learn about yourself.

Today, your TiNA is to take a selfie to document the first day of your alcohol fast.

You're already on your way. Let's do this!

You're Not Alone

*Even when I walk
through the darkest valley . . .
you are close beside me.*

—PSALM 23:4, NLT

IN MARCH 2020—WHEN I WAS SICK OF HEADACHES, HORRIBLE sleep, and feeling anxious all the time—I shouted a desperate prayer: “Jesus, I can’t do this anymore!” I knew then that the next several days were going to be very different. I wasn’t sure what a life without my nightly wine would look like or how my social life would be affected, but I knew I was ready to feel better. And if anyone could pull me off the nightly wine merry-go-round, it was Jesus.

Even though I had grown up in church, it had been years since I’d had a proper relationship with God. I knew He was there, but my drinking had created a divide between us. However, in that moment of clarity, when I knew I’d had enough, I knew He was the one to cry out to.

At that time, I didn’t have one friend who didn’t drink. Not one. I remember telling a dear friend that I was taking a break from drinking, and one of the first things she said was, “You’re going to need a whole new set of friends.”

I felt alone. I felt scared. Wine was my ultimate reward. It was my treat at the end of the day. It was the thing that made everything more fun and made the unenjoyable stuff tolerable. I didn't know how I'd get through. So let me encourage you, babe. Even if you feel alone, you are not alone. You are *not* the only one thinking about drinking less.

A recent study showed that 52 percent of adult Americans are trying to reduce their alcohol intake.¹ That's over half the country. I'd be willing to bet that every person you know has questioned their drinking at one point or another, even if it's just, *I shouldn't have that second glass*. Most women desire to drink less because they know deep down it doesn't make them feel great. If you want proof that drinking is slowly going out of fashion, look to Gen Z. A study in 2018 reported 28 percent of college students said they didn't drink alcohol, which is up from the 20 percent reported in 2002.²

A 2022 article in *Vogue* observes: "Has everyone stopped drinking? It certainly feels that way. Over the last year, dozens of my former cocktailers-in-arms have leaped onto the wagon for insufferably sensible aims like preserving their marriages or their health—or at least for an extended annual reset in Dry January or Sober October."³ You can't be alone in this if even *Vogue* recognizes the health trend, right?

We also see the trend showing up in the number of nonalcoholic beverage sales. According to data from the International Wine and Spirit Research Company, the market value of the no- and low-alcohol category exceeded a staggering \$11 billion in 2022, a significant jump from \$8 billion in 2018.⁴ This shift in consumer preference has also drawn the attention of celebrities such as Katy Perry, Kylie Minogue, and Bella Hadid, who have all ventured into the nonalcoholic

beverage market by launching their own products.⁵

If you've been out to a restaurant lately, you've likely seen mocktail menus offered alongside standard alcoholic drinks menus.

So even if you feel like you're the only one in your group of friends, your PTA, or your church thinking about changing their relationship with alcohol, I want you to know that you're not alone. The tide is turning, and more and more women are trying to drink less.

JOURNEY WITH JESUS

Most importantly, you are not alone during these forty days (and beyond) because you've got Jesus. He is with you here right now as you're reading this. As Paul wrote in Romans 5:3–4, “We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” Yes, this may be hard, but it also might change your life and teach you incredible lessons about how God can show up for you. As soon as I asked Him to help me, to be with me, and to go on this journey with me, I didn't feel alone anymore. The power of the Holy Spirit gives us peace that surpasses our understanding (Philippians 4:7, ESV).

God also has a plan for you. He already knows how this journey is going to turn out for you. It may just bring you closer to God and your family, as it did for me.

Invite Him to join you on this journey. Take a minute to say a simple prayer and ask Him for wisdom, strength, and direction. Go on, close your eyes real quick and do this now.

SET A
FEELINGS-BASED GOAL

In the beginning stages of my own alcohol fast, I asked myself one question each morning: *How do I want to feel today?*

Almost everything we do, we do to *feel* a certain way. We buy new shoes because of the way we'll feel wearing them. Even certain tasks we may not want to do, like filing our taxes or going to the dentist, give us the feeling of being financially secure and healthy. It's much easier to adjust our behavior when we know how we want to feel. Remember when I told you about my gluten experiment? My goal wasn't to cut out gluten forever but to feel better and see if cutting out gluten would help.

Likewise, you may have picked up this book with the goal of drinking less, but I urge you to reframe your goal into a feelings-based one. For instance, you might aspire to feel better, achieve better sleep, or have more energy. By adopting this approach, your goal becomes about enhancing your well-being rather than simply depriving yourself. It also allows for clear measurement, as you'll know when you've achieved your goal. If you're feeling better, that's a clear win. However, if your goal solely revolves around drinking "less," it can be challenging to determine what "less" truly means. Let's shift our focus to the power of feeling better.

TiNA

1

IN YOUR JOURNAL, WRITE DOWN YOUR FEELINGS-

based goals. Write how you want to feel each day for the rest of this fast. More energized? More patient? More joyful? More clearheaded? Take this one step further and write your feelings-based goal on a sticky note for your bathroom mirror or make it the background on your phone. It will remind you of the real reason you're walking this journey.

3

DAY THREE

Rock Bottom Not Required

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

— 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

I’LL NEVER FORGET A CONVERSATION I HAD ONE DAY WHILE standing in line at the school gates, waiting to pick up my two kids, Ella and Carter, from school. A mom I knew relatively well stood beside me. It was the first week school was open since Covid had hit. I had been vocal about my sobriety journey on Instagram, and clearly, this mom had seen what I had been up to. “Oh my gosh,” she said. “You didn’t like, have a *problem* . . . did you?”

I stared at her, taken aback.

The questions came tumbling out of her. “How much were you drinking? Every night? But I’ve never seen you drunk, ever.”

I responded with something like, “I was drinking enough to want to stop drinking. It didn’t make me feel good anymore.”

Her line of questioning took me back to the late nights when I would sit googling rehab centers and wellness retreats.

Did my drinking warrant rehab, or was it more of a wellness detox that I needed? I had no idea where I fell on the spectrum, but it didn't feel close enough to rock bottom yet. After all, I hadn't had a DUI, my marriage was still intact, and my kids seemed okay. My conclusion that my drinking wasn't "bad enough" to warrant needing outside help almost gave me a kind of permission to keep drinking as I was, even though I knew deep down it wasn't serving me anymore. I had this niggling feeling that God was calling me to more and that alcohol was standing in the way of living my best life for Him.

Recently, I had a coaching call with a lovely lady, Jan, who told me how exhausted she was. She never could stop at one drink. After too much wine, she became cruel to her husband and short with her children. And then she added, "But I haven't had a rock bottom or anything. So maybe I don't need to stop drinking yet."

I could relate to every word Jan said. But why do we wait for it to get worse? Why do we believe that drinking must cost us more than it already has before we can justify taking a break?

I went to my doctor recently for my forty-year-old checkup. I hadn't seen her in a while, so I told her about my sobriety journey and coaching practice during our appointment. She looked at me, confused, and asked the same thing the mom at the school gates did. "But, wait, did you have a problem?" This time, I was even more perplexed. This was my doctor questioning me, and I thought giving up alcohol was a wise decision even if solely just for the health benefits. How much of a "problem" did it need to be?

The following week, I tried a new chiropractor and had

the same conversation yet again. I was shocked. Why did even some medical professionals seem to believe that drinking needed to reach a certain level of unmanageability to be addressed? (You'll probably share my level of surprise when you've read through day twenty-nine, which is about all the health risks we now know about alcohol.)

Can I encourage you today, my friend? It's not about how bad or how much. It's not about rock bottom. You don't need to wait for things to get worse when a better way is available right now. Waiting on a rock-bottom moment prolongs the pain you're currently in, no matter the level of pain that is. But here's the excellent news: The present version of yourself, with God's help, is more than capable of breaking free. He is with you and will sustain and guide you through every single step of this journey. He is mighty in you. His strength is made perfect in your weakness.

THE FRUIT TEST


Instead of counting glasses or waiting for a rock bottom, let's turn to the truth. As Christians, we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, whose presence will produce the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22–23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

When I read that passage, I realized wine was getting in the way of my joy and peace. My capacity for patience was laughable; getting horrible sleep meant I was exhausted and never had enough patience for anyone—my children, my husband, the Starbucks barista. I shamed myself constantly for not having enough self-control around wine. So here's my

question for you, babe: Is wine stealing your fruit? If so, I would offer that it might be getting in the way of your relationship with Jesus, just like it was for me.


Isn't this a better litmus test than hitting rock bottom as you decide whether or not you need to make a change?

TiNA

A decorative flourish consisting of a horizontal line with a slight curve at both ends, positioned above the text.

STOP COUNTING GLASSES; START COUNTING YOUR fruit. Take a few minutes today and meditate and pray about the fruit of the Spirit. Write out Galatians 5:22–23 in your journal. How has alcohol stifled the growth of each of these attributes?

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