



[Luke 5:39](#)

(39) And no one after drinking the old wine immediately desires the new; for he says, 'The old is better.' "

A Faithful Version

On the physical level, a finely aged wine is obviously preferable to a new wine. One year at the [Feast of Tabernacles](#), I had the rare opportunity to sample a Bordeaux bottled in the late 1970s or early 80s. Suffice it to say that the wine's depth and complexity of flavors would put to profound shame anything bottled recently.

Curiously, though, in this parable, the *new* wine is the one that is to be preferred! This may seem incongruous at first, until we remember what these things represent. The new wine of Christ's sacrifice, of the New Covenant, and of God's Spirit being poured out on us is infinitely more valuable than anything before [conversion](#). Whether the old wine represents physical abundance or the headiness of what Babylon entices us with constantly, nothing can be compared to the new wine—if we have God's Spirit.

However, because we are still human, and the old man still remains in us to some degree, at times the old wine seems better. The old wine seems more gratifying to the senses. Before conversion, we certainly had no interest in this new wine because the old wine suited us just fine, even if it was making us miserable. Even after conversion, we sometimes reach for the old wine.

When we are under that influence, we do not find the new wine appealing because we are hooked on the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the [pride](#) of life ([1 John 2:16](#)). It requires spiritual sobriety to recognize the true blessing of the new wine, but we cannot do that easily—if at all—when the old wine is on our palate. It is only in abstaining from the old wine that we can truly appreciate the uniqueness and superiority of the new.

— David C. Grabbe

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