

1 Corinthians Chapter 10

V: 1 “*Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware...*” other versions use the phrase “ignorant” - when Paul says he doesn’t want us to be unaware or ignorant it is because generally at that moment we are.

- He’s giving us a clue, making us aware of something.
- Our fathers, our ancestors were under the cloud... that pillar of cloud that led the children of Israel by day.

Exodus 13:21 “*And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.*”

- I guess you could say that they had it made in the shade...

- The two chapters before this related to exercising our Christian liberties or not, and he will continue with that again later in this chapter - so this passage is somehow connected to that discussion in some respect.

V: 1b-5 Paul is looking back and recognizing that all their fathers, the Patriarchs, and their ancestors were all under that cloud, and that all passed through the sea, meaning the Red Sea

- They drank from the same spiritual Rock which was Jesus, He was their - and is our refreshing:

John 7:37 “*... If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.*”

- They were in a sense all baptized into Moses through their experience with the cloud and crossing through the Red Sea, that all were partakers of the same spiritual food that God provided, they all drank of that spiritual Rock which was Jesus - but they weren’t all pleasing to God, in fact most weren’t.
- Out of approximately 3 million, only two made it into the promise land.
- Another way to put it is that they all went through the motions, the process, had the same experience - but they weren’t all impacted the same way or even in the intended way.
- People can experience the same exact thing but draw completely different conclusions, as was the case between those who were pleasing and those who were not pleasing to God.

Hebrews 3:14-4:3 “¹⁴For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, ¹⁵while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” ¹⁶For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? ¹⁷Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? ¹⁹So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. ^{4:1}Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. ²For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the Word which they heard did not profit them not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. ³For we who have believed do enter that rest,...

- These scriptures point out that there was a legitimate wilderness experience and an illegitimate wilderness experience.
- The legitimate wilderness experience would have lasted somewhere between 2 weeks to a month - the time needed to walk from Egypt to the promised land had they just walked by faith as they were led by the pillar of cloud.

Deuteronomy 1:2 “²It is eleven days journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea. ³Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them.”

- The illegitimate wilderness experience lasted 40 years because they walked by sight, not by faith. It took that long for the disbelieving generation to die off.
- In the same way there is a “legitimate faith” and an “illegitimate faith” - the legitimate faith that Paul has described over the last 2-3 chapters is the faith that dies to self, a faith that lives for Jesus in part through self denial.
- The illegitimate faith is that which is lived for self, in the flesh.

Galatians 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

- Paul expresses this same sentiment to the Romans as he has the Corinthians:

Romans 8:1-10 ([Turn to / read](#))

- I believe that Paul goes on to affirm this thought as we continue through the chapter

V: 6 These things, the negative example we have in those who displeased God - we should learn from their mistakes - not lusting after the things of the flesh.

Psalm 106:13-15 “¹³They soon forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel, ¹⁴but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tested God in the desert. ¹⁵And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.”

- Paul goes on to list some of the things to avoid:
- This is a reference to when they lusted after meat because they were tired of and despised the mana that God had given them.

Numbers 11:4 “Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: who will give us meat to eat?”

- So, not lusting after what we don't have means that we should be content with what we have.

1 Timothy 6:6 “Now Godliness with contentment is great gain.”

Philippians 4:11 “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.”

V: 7 Paul is admonishing Christians not to become idolaters - as were some of that mixed multitude. Why would he see the need to warn us about this? Because it's an issue that needs to be dealt with!

- He may be speaking about issues or practices that later became evident in the Roman Catholic church, like praying to saints or statues etc. (2nd commandment) Or the things that we've made into idols, like people, or buildings, etc.
- Paul's reference is to when Moses went up to receive the 10 commandments and came down to find the people dancing around the golden calf.

V: 8 Avoid, do not commit sexual immorality - as some of them did. He's using the “fathers” as negative examples because the fruit doesn't fall too far away from the tree.

- This is referring to when king Balak hired the prophet Balaam to curse the children of Israel and wasn't able to, but instead enticed the men of Israel to commit fornication with the women of Moab.
- The bottom line here in this warning; make sure your liberty and your freedoms don't lead to immorality.

V: 9-10 Let's not tempt Christ as some did when they were destroyed by serpents:

- This is a reference to Numbers Ch. 21 when the people murmured against God, and against Moses complaining about being brought out of Egypt only to die in the wilderness, they also at that times loathed, or despised the bread from Heaven.
- So God sent fiery serpents into the camp, and a lot of people started dying.

Numbers 21:9 “So Moses made a brass serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the brass serpent, he lived.

- Those who followed the instructions lived, those who rejected the Word given, perished.
- Symbolically, brass represents judgment in the Bible. The serpent being a symbol of sin. So when the brass serpent was lifted up on the tree, the pole - and people looked to it - they were saved.

In the same way:

Hebrews 12:2 “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

John 3:14-15 “¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

V: 11 These things all happened and were recorded as examples for us, so we're to learn from them - to walk with the Lord and not to get involved in some of these things - and ultimately to look to Jesus.

- They say that experience really is the best teacher, but it doesn't say that it has to be our experience! We can learn from other's mistakes!

V: 12 Paul is cautioning the Corinthian believers not to think too highly of themselves, thinking that they've got it dialed in, becoming over confident.

Proverbs 16:18 “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

V: 13 None of the issues and sins described up to this point, or anything else that we deal with is out of the ordinary, everyone deals with these kinds of things.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 “... there is nothing new under the sun.”

- But in the midst of all of that - God is faithful! He won't allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able but with the temptation will also make a way out, a way of escape, that we can bear it.
- He makes the way of escape for us, He gives us the tools we need to get away.
- Now it's up to us to exercise that option, God won't force us, but He always gives us a way out if we'll choose it.

By the power of the Holy Spirit He enables us:

Galatians 5:16 "... walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Psalm 119:111 "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee."

Proverbs 12:28 "In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death."

V: 14 So flee from idolatry or sin. Flee from anyone, anything that hinders your relationship with God!

2 Corinthians 6:17 "Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."

- It's been said that the best defense is a good offense, that is true, but sometimes the best defense is a good set of legs - RUN!

2 Timothy 2:22 "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

James 4:7 "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

V: 15 I'm speaking to the wise:

Proverbs 9:9 "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning."

- Paul is saying that I trust that you are wise enough, smart enough to pick up what I'm saying and to understand it.

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

V: 16-17 Paul now uses the sacrament of communion to describe the unity of the body of Christ.

- The cup of blessing is a reference to the Passover meal / Seder dinner, the cup of blessing which became for us the celebration of communion.

Matthew 26:27-28 “²⁷Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

1 Corinthians 11:23-24 “²³For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

- “**Communion**” (G-2842) “koinonia” - used in this passage referring to the sacrament of communion literally means “fellowship with” or “participation.”
- What is being described here is the true fellowship that we as believers have not only with Jesus but with each other.

1 John 1:3, 7 “³that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” - ⁷But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

- As we all eat of the same bread, Jesus - all partaking of the same loaf - the same Lord we are becoming one in Him. As we partake of His blood, as He flows in and through us we are all again becoming one in Him - truly the body of Christ, corporately joined together - becoming one.
- In that culture; to share a meal with someone was essentially to become one with them. That was why the Jews wouldn't eat with the Gentiles, they didn't want to be one with them.
- This goes beyond the walls of our church, beyond the walls of denominations and so on, this is about the entirety of the church as we partake of our Lord Jesus.
- The point being that if we stumble someone, or do harm to another believer - whether weaker, stronger, mature or immature - we do harm to ourselves in the process because we are one body. It's like deliberately smashing your finger, or shooting yourself in the foot.

V: 18 Looking back to the nation of Israel and the various sacrifices that were brought to the Temple to the altar.

- There were the sin offerings, the burnt offering (sanctification / consecration), the peace offerings (fellowship).
- The worshipper would bring a lamb or a goat - the priest would receive it, and kill it - he would take the fat and offer it on the altar as a sweet savor, a sweet fragrance to the Lord.
- The priest would take parts of the meat to be offered to the Lord, part would be received by the priest, and part would be given back to the worshipper to enjoy a meal with his family in communion with the Lord.
- Partaking of the altar, a meal with God - communing with Him.

V: 19 Now the flip side relating to pagan altars and practices. Paul is addressing the issues with the Corinthian church as some have been exercising their liberty in Christ and at the same time offending some of the weaker believers in doing so, eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols

- We know that idols are nothing, and that things sacrificed to them are nothing.
- Zero multiplied by zero is still zero.

V: 20 When it comes to sacrifices offered to idols, which are really to demons, as much as it's nothing to us, it is something to them.

- We need to be careful not to be perceived as having communion with demons.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 “Abstain from every appearance of evil.”

- And we need to be careful not to have fellowship with demons by eating in their house.
- It's one thing to just be eating meat and not being concerned with where it came from, not asking, not telling. It is another thing to be eating meat that people around them knew where it came from and had an issue with it.
- We don't want to have or to be seen or be perceived as having fellowship with demons.

V: 21 Paul is describing two mutually exclusive relationships, we must choose between the two because they don't go together.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 “¹⁴Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” ¹⁷Therefore “come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” ¹⁸I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.”

- It is one thing to eat meat bought in the market place; it was something else to go into the pagan temples and eat the meat then and there. To sit at someone’s table is to have fellowship with them, to be in agreement with them - Paul is saying you can’t partake at both tables.

Jesus said:

Matthew 6:24 “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

James 1:8 “... a double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

V: 22 We don’t want to provoke God. Are we stronger than God? Are you prepared for what might happen - we certainly couldn’t stop Him.

- We may be stronger than our weaker brother, but are we stronger than God?

Deuteronomy 32:39 “Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.”

V: 23 While all things may be lawful, not all things are helpful or beneficial.

- There are things that while they’re lawful at the same time can hinder or impair my walk with the Lord.

Previously:

1 Corinthians 9:24, 27 “²⁴Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.” - “²⁷But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

2 Timothy 2:3-4 “³You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who enlisted him as a soldier.”

- All things may be lawful, but we need to be careful because some of those things will lead to slavery.

1 Corinthians 6:12 “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”

V: 24 We're to be looking out for the welfare of others more than ourselves.

Philippians 2:3-4 “³Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

- Simply being considerate of others and seeking to meet their needs, putting them first.

V: 25-26 Most of the meat sold in the market places had in fact been offered to idols at one point or another - Paul is saying just buy the meat without any questions, take it home and enjoy it.

- He says don't ask any questions for conscience sake, he means the buyer - for your own conscience, don't worry about it.

Jesus said:

Matthew 15:11 “Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what come out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”

“For the Earth is the Lord's and all it's fullness.” - it all belongs to the Lord anyway.

V: 27 If you get an invitation and want to go - they serve up some meat, steaks, or a nice roast - don't ask a bunch of questions, just enjoy the meal - again for your own conscience sake.

V: 28 But if they tell you outright - “this was offered to idols” - they're making a point, they're testing you in some way - now it's different - don't eat it - for the sake of the one who told you, for your witness and testimony before them - for conscience sake, now both for his and yours.

Jesus said:

Mark 8:34 “... whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

Again:

“For the Earth is the Lord's and all it's fullness.” - it all belongs to the Lord anyway.

V: 29-30 Re-iterating - it's not just about our conscience, but about the other person's.

- You may be fine with it, having understanding and all of that - but now we're thinking of others.
- You might be asking or thinking "Why is my liberty judged or determined by their conscience...?"
- Or "why would they speak or think evil of me after I sanctified it with prayer?" Meaning it's been re-dedicated to the Lord, why should it matter?

V: 31 The answer: what ever you do, do it for the glory of God - not for our own benefit or enjoyment, these things need to take a back seat to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:20 "For you were bought at a price therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

- It we eat or drink, or whatever we do, if we can do it to the glory of God then we're on solid ground.

Colossians 3:17 "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

V: 32 Is this always possible? It seems like we're always likely to offend someone.

Romans 12:18 "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."

Romans 14:13 "Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to stumble in our brother's way."

V: 33 Paul isn't doing this or teaching us this way of life just to be man pleasers, he's looking farther up the road - the motive is that more men might be saved!

- Walking in love, preferring others ahead of myself, trying not to cause offense, trying not to stumble others - all that they might get saved.
- Out of these chapters come several "tests" we may apply to our own decisions and activities.

"All things are lawful," BUT—

1. Will they lead to freedom or slavery? (**1 Cor. 6:12**)
2. Will they make me a stumbling block or a stepping-stone? (**1 Cor. 8:13**)
3. Will they build me up or tear me down? (**1 Cor. 10:23**)
4. Will they only please me, or will they glorify Christ? (**1 Cor. 10:31**)

5. Will they help to win the lost to Christ or turn them away? (**1 Cor. 10:33**)

- The way we use our freedom and relate to others indicates whether we are mature in Christ.
- Strong and weak Christians need to work together in love to edify one another and glorify Jesus Christ.

John 13:35 “By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”