

First Corinthians 10:1-12

REVIEW: Paul has privileges and rights. Paul has a calling and purpose in ministry. Paul must use his knowledge and love.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

- Competing without following the rules can be compared to knowledge without love.
- Running aimlessly or beating the air can be compared to love without knowledge.
- “The Games” refer to the Isthmus Games held at the Isthmian Festival at the sanctuary of Poseidon at Isthmia.
- The “crown” at Isthmus Games was a pine wreath. The “crown” at Olympia was an olive wreath
- The race:
 - Original race was the **stadion** which was the length of the track - 630 feet, or 210 yards, or 192 meters. Basically, our 200 meter dash (1/8 mile).
 - The **diaulos** was added which was two lengths of the track (420 yards, 384 meters)
 - The **dolichos** was the long distance run.
 - In 69 AD a man named **Polites** won all three events!

POINT: Guarantee of privilege or position does not guarantee final blessing or production

10:1

“**For**” picks up where verse 9:27 ended. Paul had privileges but he could be disqualified if he didn’t follow the rules.

In 9:27 Paul makes a distinction between his:

- 1) success in the ministry
- 2) success in his personal Christian Life

The theme for chapter 8, 9 and 10 is incomplete knowledge or knowledge that is not balanced with love. Chapter 10 continues the discussion on knowledge that is bent on self-service.

“**do not want you ignorant**” is a formula used when Paul is teaching something new or is giving information that if it is misunderstood would lead to wrong or even destructive conclusions. This formula is also used at:

- 1) Romans 1:13 concerning his plan to visit Rome
- 2) Romans 11:25 concerning the mystery of Israel
- 3) 1 Corinthians 10:1 (here) concerning overconfidence in baptism and the Lord’s Supper
- 4) 2 Corinthians 1:8 concerning the hardships Paul and his team faced
- 5) 1 Thessalonians concerning the dead, the resurrection and the orders of resurrection

10:2-3

OT Examples

- 1) Under the cloud (Exodus 13:21-22)
- 2) Passed through the sea (Exodus 14:21-22)
 - These are the OT examples Paul uses for Christian baptism
- 3) Ate food – Manna (Ex. 16:4, 13)
- 4) Drank spiritual drink –water from rock (Ex. 17:1-7)
 - These are the OT examples Paul uses for the Lord’s Supper
 - Notice how he points out that the Rock was Christ

10:4

“**Nevertheless**” is a strong reversal.

The Exodus generation had every reason to be confident but they still failed because of their failure to fully understand (knowledge) and the failure to live in line with the truth (love)

10:5

“**scattered**” is καταστρωννυμι or “katastronnumi” and it means “to strike down like a hurricane.” Translation: “their corpses littered the dessert”

Their sins:

- 1) idolaters (Ex. 32:6)
 - 2) Sexual immorality (Nu. 25:1-3)
 - 3) Testing the Lord (Nu. 21:5-6; Ps. 78:18) –try to see how far you can go and God still allow it or not punish you.
 - 4) Grumble (Num. 16)
- These four sins are a sample of the many sins of the Exodus generation. But, the reason they are listed here is that they are four of the sins that the Corinthians where repeating.
 - The Corinthians were involved in **idolatry** and **sexual immorality** as already mentioned in First Corinthians.
 - They were also trying to see how far they could live in the world and still be “Christian”. This **is testing God**.
 - Finally, they were **grumbling against Paul** and his consistent voice that was calling them back to the apostolic revelation and godly standard.

10:6

“These things happened as examples” could read “These things happened as a type of us”.

In other words, this could be saying that what the “fathers” of our faith did in the wilderness is exactly what we do today.

The pattern or typology is presented in three levels:

- 1) Spiritual Food and Entrance into Baptism
- 2) Sinful actions
- 3) Judgment

The result was that they did not fulfill God’s plan (entering Canaan) and so they did not receive any eschatological rewards.

Israel in Wilderness	Corinthians in Church Age
<u>Spiritual Food and Drink:</u> Manna and Water from Rock <u>Baptism:</u> The Cloud and The Sea	<u>Spiritual Food and Drink:</u> The Bread and The Cup <u>Baptism:</u> Water and Into Christ
<u>Sin:</u> Idolatry, Sexual Immorality, Tempted Lord, Grumbled	<u>Sin:</u> Pagan Temples, Sexual Sins, Tempting the Lord, Talking against Paul
<u>Judgment:</u> 23,000 Died, killed by snakes, killed by the destroying angel	<u>Judgment:</u> ????
<u>Reward:</u> None	<u>Reward:</u> ????

10:7

“Do not be” is γινεσθε present middle imperative. The present imperative with the negative is often used to stop an action in progress. It would then be translated as “do not continue” and would mean “stop doing this.”

Notice how Paul simply has to allude to these examples and not teach or re-teach the OT stories to an ignorant crowd. In most modern churches in the west these stories would have to be taught first before they could be used as “examples” and “warnings.” How can we say we follow the Lord when we do not even know his style of language or the examples he has laid down for us to follow or be warned by.

In this first example Paul chooses a portion of the golden calf story that includes the part about sitting “down to eat and drink”. This is exactly what the Corinthians were arguing for the right to do. Paul’s issue with them is that they were “eating and drinking” in the temples while participating in feasts for the pagan gods. Paul could have mentioned any part of the story which is 35 verses long in Exodus chapter 32. Paul chose the second half of verse 6 to use as an example for the Corinthians of eating in the presence of an idol.

The result: 3,000 died at the hands of the Levites (32:28) and more died in the plague (32:35).

“pagan revelry” παιζειν “paidzein” means to play, to amuse one’s self, to dance.

- 1) in other OT verses this verb is found in the LXX to refer to cultic dancing:
 - a. 1 Sam 18:7 – The woman of Israel dancing when David returned from battle.
 - b. 2 Sam. 6:5, 21 – David danced or “celebrate” in NIV
 - c. 1 Chronicles 13:8 – David danced (“celebrate”)
 - d. 1 Chronicles 15:29
- 2) in the Exodus 32 story this also included:
 - a. shouting (32:17)
 - b. singing (32:18)
 - c. dancing (32:19)
- 3) in the story of Baal of Peor (Balaam) Numbers 25:1-3 eating before the gods involved sexual immorality.

10:8

Second, sexual immorality is mentioned.

This was clearly one of the problems of the Corinthians:

- 1) 5:1-5
- 2) 5:10-11
- 3) 6:9-10
- 4) 6:12-20

Idol worship that combines eating and sexual immorality is a consistent theme throughout scripture:

- 1) Numbers 25:1-9 – Baal-Peor included both during idol worship
- 2) The above example with the golden calf involved both
- 3) In 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Paul refers to the image of the body being the temple and of it being “joined” to a prostitute.
- 4) Every mention of “idol food” in the NT mentions sexual immorality
 - a. Acts 15:29
 - b. Rev. 2:14, 20

10:9

Third, “test the Lord”

The reference to being punished by snakes tells us that Paul is referring to Numbers 21:4-7 where it says Israel “grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses.”

10:10

The fourth sin mentioned refers to the issue in the wilderness that caused grumbling. God did not provide the usual food but instead provided manna. The people wanted more than the manna.

This may be similar to the Corinthian’s grumbling against Paul and his previous letter that forbid them to participate in the cultic meals in the temple. The food that they had been provided and the food that they could not have caused them to grumble against the Lord and Paul just like Israel grumbled against the Lord and Moses.

10:11

“**on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come**” is saying that God’s plan, the OT and the people of Israel were all pointing to the end and their purpose will culminate in the end.

The “ages” are the successive periods in human history.

“**We**” are that people. We are the people of the end. When history is fulfilled we will still be standing with the Lord.

10:12

“**So then**” means Paul is getting ready to tie up the illustration of Israel’s privileges and their failures.

“**you think you are standing firm**” refers back to verses 10:1-5 of Israelites who thought they were standing firm and they were ***if*** they had heard the word and obeyed. If they think they are secure from baptism and communion they had better start looking at what happened to the examples from Israel’s history.

If they are thinking they can continue with the idolatry and remain in God’s will they had better look at the examples.

The Corinthians appear to be using this line of knowledge for they were eating in an idol’s temple in 1 Cor. 8:10:

“We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.” – 1 Cor. 8:4

10:13

This verse serves two purposes:

- 1) a continuation of the warning
- 2) a word of encouragement and hope

The encouragement is that though the Corinthians face many trials, tests and temptations God will always provide a way. The problem is reintroduced in 10:14, though. For this promise to take affect the people must “flee from idolatry.” In other words, God will provide a way out and strength, but you must use that strength to flee sin, not continue in it and test God.

Two ways of receiving help from God:

- 1) You will not be tested beyond what you can bear.
- 2) When you are tempted God will provide a way out.

In 10:14 Paul gives them a clue as to how to deal with the temptation of idolatry: Flee!!

Αλλά ποιήσει συν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἐκβασιν
But will make **with** **the** temptation also **the** way out

τοῦ δυνασθαί ὑπενεγκεῖν
to be able to endure

Notice that temptations and ways out come in pairs.

We see this from the Greek word συν (with) and the two articles τῷ (one before “temptation” and another before “way out”)

“With” “the temptations” comes “the way out”

This “fleeing” of a public sacrifice would create a tension for public officials who were expected to attend and participate in the sacrifices.

First Corinthians 10:14-22

Paul brings to an end here the discussion he began in 8:1, “Now about food sacrificed to idols.”

Paul’s conclusion includes these points:

- 1) A cultic meal or the Lord’s Supper is a sacred meal focused on fellowship with the deity.
- 2) The deity who is honored at a cultic meal is present.
- 3) Idolatry is a demonic experience

This corrects the now obvious false teaching of the Corinthians already mentioned:

- 1) Idols are nothing (8:4-6) so:
 - a. It does not matter what you eat (Application: the Corinthians can eat meat sacrificed to idols.)
 - b. It does not matter where you eat it (Application: the Corinthians can eat in the temples of idols)
- 2) Corinthians can eat in cultic meals of the idols as long as they also eat at the Lord’s Table.

10:14 - An absolute prohibition

“Therefore” indicates Paul is going to take all that was just said and bring it to a conclusion. Paul has just stated the following:

- 1) Chapter 8 – The Corinthians have knowledge and freedoms but they are being used in a self-serving way
- 2) Chapter 9 – Paul has rights as an apostle but he tempers those rights with love and concern for others. The rights and positions do not guarantee success or approval.
- 3) Chapter 10 – Example of Israel who had knowledge and position. These proved useless to them because they did not obey God. Their sacred meals and sacred drink did not help them when they disobeyed God.
- 4) Then Paul says in Chapter 10:14, “Therefore . . .”

The conclusion of chapter 8-10 – Flee from idolatry
Notice the use of “dear friends”. Paul is concerned with the Corinthians success.
Fleeing, in this case, was God providing a way out of your temptation mentioned in 10:13.

10:15 – Paul appeals to their own good sense

Verse 14 is abrupt and to the point.

Now Paul begins to support his decision with obvious information:

1. The reasonable basis of chapters 8-10
2. The Corinthian’s Experience with the Lord’s Supper
3. Another OT example
4. Demonic presences
5. The Lord isn’t willing to share

Paul does consider them to be “sensible people”. In 11:13 and 14:20 he tells them to “judge for themselves”. What he means there is they are “sensible” enough to agree that Paul is right! In 4:10 he used this in a sarcastic tone.

10:16 – Paul appeals to their own experience with the Lord’s Supper

We can learn a lot of what Paul believes about the Lord’ Supper in these verses but not everything he believes because the topic here is the cultic meals and not the Lord’s Supper.

The word “**participation**” in the NIV is the word κοινωνια “koinania” in the Greek, which means “fellowship, or participation”. The basic meaning is “to share with someone in something.” The use of this word appears to be suggesting by Paul that there was a kind of fellowship or bonding of the worshipper with the deity at these feasts including the feast of the Lord’s Supper

The “cup of thanksgiving” is the 3rd of four cups of wine drank at the Passover meal.

Also, the deity is assumed to be present at the feast or the Lord’s Supper.

The eating is not causing the fellowship, but is a celebration of the fellowship with the Lord which is seen in the believers being together. In other words the fellowship is with the Lord and is seen in the one loaf and in the union of one group of believers

“The cup of thanksgiving” should be “the cup of blessing.” “The cup of blessing” was a Jewish term that referred to the last prayer of a meal. It was the cup that the Lord used at the Last Supper to introduce the New Covenant

10:17 – Paul appeals to the unity or oneness of the believers as a group.

10:18 – Paul appeals to the OT example of Israel

This comes from the people eating their tithe in the presence of the Lord in Deuteronomy 14:22

“People of Israel” is literally “Israel according to the flesh” and is used to refer to the Jews of Paul’s day who were still sacrificing on the Temple Mount.

This was similar to the pagan meals that followed a sacrifice. The Jewish people would follow the sacrifice with a meal also.

10:19-20 – The same spiritual realities of the OT continue yet in the NT
Idols are not gods, they are demons.

Deuteronomy 32:17 calls idols and pagan feast sacrifices to demons.

There are three groups of worshippers here:

1. Lord's Supper
2. Jewish sacrifices
3. Pagan practices.

10:21 – Participation in one cultic meal makes it impossible to participate in the other

10:22 – A couple of rhetorical questions to show any other opinion is ridiculous
Deut. 32:21 the Lord says, they made me jealous by what is no god....

10:23 – “*Everything is permissible*” but NOT beneficial and NOT constructive

10:26 “*The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.*” This is a quote from Psalm 24:1 and was used by Jews when giving thanks for food.

10:28 – the hosts says, literally in the Greek, “This is sacred meat.”

The pagan has told his Christian guest about the origin of the meat because he is concerned about the Christian's dietary laws which he assumes are similar to the Jewish laws.