

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Verses 1-5:

--(1) **Moreover** ties this back to the last section where Paul was exhorting this church to recognize the necessity of self-denial and self-control. He is going to point out the Israelites in the wilderness as an example of those who lacked!

--Notice the various **all's** in these verses that tie back to the **all's** in **9:24-25**. *All* the Israelites had certain privileges and *all* the Corinthians were runners in a race that requires self-control in *all* things.

--What Paul does is he begins to list the spiritual privileges of the ancient Israelites. There are obviously allusions to baptism and communion here but I don't think Paul is trying to pull out exact types or an allegory.

--Paul is simply making the point that they were given incredible spiritual privileges—like the Corinthians and us today—but that didn't mean they couldn't be *castaway* or *disqualified*.

--The abuse of "rights" or "liberties" is the abuse of spiritual privileges. That is why this is such an important section for us today! Especially those of us who have grown up in solidly Biblical circles.

--(1) **Under the cloud, all passed through the sea**: Under the salvation, guidance, and protection of God.

--(2) **All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea**: Moses was uniquely connected with God (the cloud) and the voice of God. Therefore to be baptized into Moses just means that they were put into a place of allegiance with God through Moses (like the baptism of John the Baptist)—they became a people, community, and nation with purpose.

--(3) **All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink**: Paul is simply saying that they received their food from spiritual sources.

Psalm 78:23-25: Yet He had opened the doors of heaven, had rained down manna on them to eat, and given them the bread of heaven. Men ate angels' food; He sent them food to the full.

Nehemiah 9:15: You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger, and brought them water out of the rock for their thirst.

--(4) **For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ**: Here Paul literally ties their provision to Christ—making the rock that gave them water a type of Christ.

--There are questions as to whether the rock actually "followed" them all through their journeys. The Jewish tradition is that it literally rolled after them.

--Or did the water from the rock just follow them like a river? Either way, their provision was miraculous.

--If I had to guess I would say the water followed them because of this verse but who knows!?

Psalm 105:41: He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it ran in dry places like a river.

--(5) Yet despite all this provision from God we are told **with most of them God was not well pleased!**

--They had been slaves in Egypt, they were set free and saw Egypt's power broken, and they were brought to the very presence of God. Yet what happened? They turned to idolatry so quickly!

--Despite all their incredible privileges—**with most of them**—God was not pleased. *Joshua, Caleb, the younger generation pleased Him*

--God is not moved by majorities. He does not change His Word or His character because **most** of a crowd doesn't agree with Him.

--What happened? **Their bodies were scattered in the wilderness!**

--**Scattered** means *to spread out*. . . they were strewn like wreckage across their journeys.

--Where? In the **wilderness**. The wilderness is halfway between Egypt and the Promise Land. This earth is our current wilderness where we are traveling like strangers and pilgrims.

--So this becomes a warning to those that think their spiritual privileges will guarantee their successful race: Going to church, baptism, communion, etc.

Verse 6:

--Having laid out the general warning, Paul makes it clear we should take wisdom and understanding from their specific examples. **Now these things became our examples.**

--What are we to understand? **That we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted!**

--Lusting after evil things is being controlled by desires for things that are outside of God's will and God's provision. Sometimes, to teach us what is truly good for us, God will even give us what we desire!

Psalm 106:14-15: But they lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tested God in the desert. And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.

--Think of all the evil desire—desire for things God has not given you and does not want to give you and never will give you—in our culture. Think of all the evil desires that are stirred up through media and social media!

Verse 7:

--Here Paul warns against the desire toward idolatry.

--His quote of **Exodus 32** is actually very interesting as he focuses on the middle portion of the section that mentions eating and drinking and playing (which had sexual connotations) which would have all been tied to the idolatrous feasts he still has in mind with the Corinthians.

--When it comes to idolatry you would think Paul would have emphasized their making offerings to this false God but he emphasizes the actions after the offerings:

Exodus 32:5-6: So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD." Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

--It is so easy to "form a god" that will allow us to eat and drink and play and then call that golden calf of ours Jesus! God is who He is—not who we might like Him to be. *Think about Aaron's lame excuse—"I cast it into the fire and this calf came out!"*

Verse 8:

--Here Paul warns against sexual immorality.

--This is a reference to the sin of the people with the Moabite women sent into the camp at the instruction of Balaam to Balak.

Numbers 31:15-16: And Moses said to them: "Have you kept all the woman alive? Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD."

--This sexual sin took a religious tone with it (See **Num. 25**).

Psalm 106:28: They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices made to the dead.

--We are told 23,000 **in one day** are judged (24,000 in the story but other thousand must have died after the first day).

--This is the evil desire to create a god that allows you to live out your sinful sexual desire. You sin and abandon the true God for a false idol in the process. *That false Jesus is out there if you want to worship him!*

--Things do not change their nature before God according to our thoughts about them. Only God's thoughts on something matter and His thoughts are not our thoughts! We all must bring our lives into conformity with the thoughts of God.

Verse 9:

--Here Paul warns against tempting or testing God.

--Paul references the story of **Numbers 21:4-9** and that of the bronze serpent. The people were testing God by their complaints.

Numbers 21:5: And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."

--There are so many things wrong with this complaint! There were so many miracles all around them: Cloud, Red Sea, God's Voice, Manna, Water, their clothes and sandals, etc. and still they complained that God and Moses were trying to kill them.

--To test God is to try to manipulate or push Him. We are pushing God to act out of character. We say the same thing when others are testing our patience: *Don't try me! Don't push me!*
--So too, we are warned not to allow our evil desires to put God on the spot or force Him to act in any particular way. *God, if you don't. . . He better or I might just. . .*

Verse 10:

--Here Paul warns against complaining against God.
--This is likely a reference to **Numbers 16** where the people first complain about the issues of Korah and then complain ***the next day (16:41)*** about how God handled it (Can you believe it was the very next day)! God then sends a plague and 14,700 people died before Aaron stopped the plague.
--The word for ***destroyer*** is a unique word that is used only here in Scripture.
--Complaining is utter foolishness. It is foolish because God is loving and good and wise and powerful and all of who He is He must also be to us. If we have all His love, power, goodness, and wisdom we would order the world in exactly the same way.
--So in the end, we are only complaining about things ordered to protect our eternal salvation.
What would any of our lives be without His oversight and intervention?

Philippians 2:14: *Do all things without complaining and disputing.*

--Complain *to* God all you want but do not complain *about* God and His works.

Verse 11:

--These are actually God ordained examples for us. They are in the Bible for this very reason. There are plenty of things God did not put into His Word—which makes the things that He did decide to write down important for all time and eternity.
--The Greek words for ***examples*** in **6+11** give us the idea of an impression left after a blow or the prototype model of something. These are not only our examples; they are the best examples for us.

Verse 12:

--What should all this bring us to? The realization that no amount of progress or perceived strength can justify our lack of caution in this Christian life.
--Cant we all remember moments of failure in temptation that would still make us blush to watch on instant replay? *The temptation to be funny, the self-justify, to defend, to get back, to have just a little sin, to live a little more comfortably, to cover the truth, to protect our reputation, to think our tongue (what we say) isn't as important as our actions (what we do), etc.*
--These moments should keep even the most mature believers from sitting back and admiring their own virtues. We must not trust in past or present strength of mind or will. We must only trust in God.

--Satan will seek to hit you even in your strongest point: Moses (Meekness); David (Heart for God); Peter (Boldness); etc.

--Satan is no fool. He has been around for thousands of years and knows humanity better than we know ourselves. He knows never to show the dire consequences of temptation before it is too late. He likes it best when the fall comes like the floor dropping out.

--He will hit you on different levels and at different points of life.

--Dante's *Inferno*: The Sunlit hill the life he wants to live—three wild beasts symbolize temptations at various stages of life:

1) Panther (beautiful but frightening)—Youth: Lust: All things look so beautiful.

2) Lion (terrible and strong)—Middle Age: Pride: In their prime but not taking heed.

3) Wolf (horrible and lean)—Old Age: Desire: Worn down, unalluring and hard to understand.

Verse 13:

--These two verses are meant to get rid of false security and false despondency. Temptation may very well make us despair in and of ourselves but it should not ever make us lose hope in God. Paul wants to make something clear: ***God is faithful!***

--1) ***No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man. . .who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able.*** God is faithful by never allowing you to face invincible temptation. You have faced no superhuman temptations—while Satan wants you to think that you have. *Temptation is tempting—if not, then it isn't temptation!*

--Just know right now, your life is not more difficult than everyone else's! You only face what all of humanity faces. The shape of temptation may change but its degree is governed by God.

--2) ***But with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*** God is faithful and will always make a way to escape it or endure temptation. So that in the end, whether running or standing, we will have proved faithful to Him.

--The Greek word for ***bear it*** or ***endure*** is used only here and in: **2 Tim. 3:11 + 1 Peter 2:19.**

--We have no idea what we can endure or overcome so it is foolish to put ourselves into places of temptation on purpose. God will never do so. You may. He will not.

*Augustine (The Confessions): *"I myself do not know what temptations I can resist, and what I cannot."**

--Thank God that He is my hope and He makes a way for me! But it is important that when God makes a way that I take that way. Many wallow in temptation and failure because they refuse to take the way that God opens for them. God's way may lead through: Confession, Humility, Financial loss, Surrender of job or relationships, etc.

--Why is it so important for us to know about God's faithfulness in our temptations? I think because anyone who actually wants to love God and please Him has at some point, felt that Satan could get them anytime he wanted. They felt like it was only a matter of time before they could no longer endure. Paul wants us to understand that type of thought does not come from our faithful God but from a murderer, liar, and thief!

--In every one of Israel's temptations there were some who escaped! We see Moses, Joshua, and many of the Levites standing up against the idolatry of the golden calf + We see Phinehas step in with zeal for the Lord and stand against the sexual immorality of his people with the Moabite women. ***Because he was zealous with My zeal! (Num. 25:11)*** + Joshua & Caleb & Moses at Kadesh Barnea, etc.

--You and I will face temptations but not without our Faithful God!

*Fenelon (Talking With God): *"We must never be astonished at temptations, however outrageous they may be. On this earth all is temptation. Crosses tempt us by irritating our pride, while prosperity tempts us by flattering it. Our life is a continual combat, but one in which Jesus Christ fights for us. We must pass on unmoved while temptations rage around us, as the traveler, overtaken by a storm, simply wraps his cloak more closely about him and pushes on more vigorously toward his destined home."**