

11: No Idols (1 Corinthians 10:1-22)

Americans might not bow down to statues, but that doesn't mean we don't have idols - *something* or *someone* (besides God) we seek for security. Today we are reminded that there is no room for idols for followers of Jesus.

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teachingnotes

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VISUAL NOTES

What is Idolatry?

IDOLATRY is following any other God besides Yahweh - the One True God.

☀ **AR Bernard** "Idolatry is seeking security and meaning in *someone* or *something* other than God."

☀ **John Calvin** "For what is idolatry if not this: to worship the gifts in place of the Giver himself?"¹

Americans might not bow down to statues, but that doesn't mean we don't have idols - *something* or *someone* (besides God) we seek for security.

The contemporary Corinthians Paul was writing to - like the ancient Hebrews who had been a part of the Exodus experience out of Egypt - were surrounded by idols. When God set the Hebrews free from Egyptian slavery, He made sure to communicate that He expected their allegiance to Him, and no other.

NO IDOLS

Exodus 20:1-6 (CSB)

Then God spoke all these words: **I am** the Lord [**YaHWeH**] **your God**, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. Do not have other gods besides Me. Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for **I**, the Lord [**YaHWeH**] **your God, am a jealous God**, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commands.

History Repeats Itself?

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 (CSB)

Now I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.

- Yahweh led the people through the desert by a **cloud** in the daytime and a pillar of fire at night (Ex 13:21-22).
- Yahweh's presence was obvious when the waters split and stood up like a wall as the people **passed through the sea** (Ex 14:21-22).
- God provided **food** for forty years! The people would wake up and find *manna* on the ground - small as seeds, but tasty like wafers made with honey (Ex 16:13-16, 31, 35). God also provided quail for them to eat.

¹ John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 4.17.36

- God twice caused a **rock** to gush water for all the people to drink from (Ex 17:6, Num 20:11), at the beginning and end of the Exodus experience.

These people were **baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea** *but what's THAT mean?* God used **the cloud** and **the sea** to lead them and deliver them from their enemies.

And they consumed the **same spiritual food** and the **same spiritual drink...from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.**" Jewish traditions developed that a well of water actually followed God's people during their travels".² Remember, God the Father, Son, and Spirit have always existed so **Christ** - the Messiah - the Lord Jesus - was with the Jewish people, bringing refreshment to their bodies and souls.

- Paul is drawing a clear correlation between the Old Covenant people and the New Covenant followers of Jesus. We have been **baptized** into Jesus - delivered from sin & following our Leader toward the "Promised Land". Further, Jesus has provided the **spiritual food & drink** for our lives by giving His body and blood for us, something we remember together every time we take communion together.

The Water that Gives Life

John 4:13-14 (NIV) Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but **whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.** Indeed, the water I give them will become in them **a spring of water** welling up to eternal life."

✓ Jesus is our HOPE & LIFE! It's through HIM our thirst for purpose & eternal life is quenched.

- But then there's the warning that Paul writes to the Corinthians and to us, that despite God's incredible provision and protection given to our ancient spiritual ancestors, many STILL turned back to false gods - IDOLS. And WE are in danger of doing the same thing.

3 Examples of Idolatry

1 Corinthians 10:5-10 (CSB)

Nevertheless God was not pleased with most of them, since **they were struck down** in the wilderness. Now these things took place as **examples for us**, so that we will not desire evil things as they did. Don't become idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, *The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to party.* Let us not commit sexual immorality as some of them did, and in a single day twenty-three thousand people died. Let us not test Christ as some of them did and were destroyed by snakes. And don't grumble as some of them did, and were killed by the destroyer.

1. When Moses went up the mountain and received the 10 commandments the Hebrew people asked Aaron (brother of Moses) to make gods for them to worship. Aaron took their gold and made it into a golden calf. The next morning they mixed the worship of the idol with building an altar to Yahweh in front of it (Ex 32:1-6).

Ex 32:6 says **the people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to party.** The phrase "got up to party" - also translated "rose up to play" (NET) - is a phrase Jewish rabbis interpreted as sexual play.³ * This is the same term referring to Isaac "caressing" his wife in Gen 26:8.

Evidently, the Hebrew people had some sort of sexual orgy...in the name of Yahweh! How despicable! Because of this idolatry, Moses called down judgment as the priestly tribe of Levites killed 3,000 men (their brothers, friends, and neighbors) with swords (Ex 32:26-28).

2. On another occasion **23,000 people** were killed by a plague from God when the men of Israel **committed sexual immorality** by sleeping with Moabite women and even bowed down and worshiped their false gods (Num 25). God had Moses kill the leaders who allowed this idolatry and immorality (probably accounting for another 1000 people, since Num 25:9 gives the total number who died as 24,000 compared to Paul's mention of 23,000).

3. When the people became impatient and spoke against God and Moses, complaining about the food and drink God provided, God sent poisonous snakes to bite them and many people died (Num 21:4-6). We are to trust Christ [Messiah], **not test Christ** by grumbling, complaining, and being ungrateful.

✗ The Hebrew people were disobedient, impatient, and idolatrous - making God into their image instead of them being made into His image.

² Craig Blomberg, 1 Corinthians, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 191-192.

³ Ben Witherington III, Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 221-222.

Learn the Lesson Others Didn't

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 (CSB)

These things happened to them as examples, and **they were written for our instruction**, on whom the ends of the ages have come. So, whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to fall.

Have you ever thought that YOU have the strength to overcome the temptation...on your own? Or do you think that you are somehow immune to the impact of idolatry & immorality? Watch out! We must learn from the **examples** of others who compromised. The same God who punished them for disobedience CAN punish us too. **Whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to fall.**

No One Immune. No One Alone.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (CSB)

No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But **God is faithful**; He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation **He will also provide the way out** so that you may be able to bear it.

Many people misquote & misapply this passage to say, "God won't give you more than you can handle."

➡ *Yes He will! That drives us TO Him and TO other believers. You and I need help!*

The temptations you are facing are NOT brand new to mankind and you aren't the first to face the struggle. Every **temptation** is **common to humanity** - pride, lust, lying, & greed - have been around a LONG time, despite the different applications of today. But...despite the tug of the temptation that we all face, **God is faithful to provide the way out!**

The next time you are tempted to sin...stop and remember - **God is faithful to provide the way out!**

1 Corinthians 10:14-17 (CSB)

So then, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. I am speaking as to sensible people. Judge for yourselves what I am saying. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the Blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the Body of Christ? Because there is One Bread, **we who are many are one body**, since **all of us share the One Bread**.

Flee from idolatry.

- Don't STAY in the situation. Look for the life boat or fire escape and get out!
- Stop thinking & acting like Jesus' death isn't enough to forgive you and FREE you from your sin! Jesus' **blood** was shed and **body** was brutalized to PAY for your sin! Every time you partake of Communion this is a visual reminder that Jesus forgives and frees us from our sin!
- Remember that we're in this TOGETHER! We are **one body** because **all of us share the One Bread** - Jesus & His forgiveness! *"Sista and brotha, we need each otha! I'm here for you!"*

Stop Flirting With Idols & Sit Down at the Lord's Table

1 Corinthians 10:18-22 (CSB)

Consider the people of Israel. Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? What am I saying then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but I do say that what they sacrifice, **they sacrifice to demons and not to God**. I do not want you to be participants with demons! You cannot drink **the cup of the Lord** and **the cup of demons**. You cannot share in **the Lord's table** and **the table of demons**. Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

Are we provoking the Lord to jealousy by thinking that we are **stronger** or smarter than Him?

❓ Have we somehow convinced ourselves **that it's okay to worship the One True God while we bow down to idols?**

"Idolatry is seeking security and meaning in someone or something other than God."

❓ Is there anyone or anything besides our God & Savior Jesus Christ that is sitting on the throne of your heart?

❓ Are you FLIRTING with idolatry or FLEEING from it?

✱ **Augustine** (354-430) "You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless till they find rest in You."⁴

Augustine read this and he turned from idolatry & immorality

Romans 13:13-14 (CSB) Let us walk with decency, as in the daytime: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy. But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

Augustine wrote: "I had no wish to read more and no need to do so. For in an instant, as I came to the end of the sentence, it was as though the light of confidence flooded into my heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled."⁵

Lord Jesus, what do you want me to do with what I heard today?

- Start weighing the reality of WHO or WHAT you are finding security and meaning from.
- Lay your sin at the feet of Jesus & trust HE is the One who brings meaning, purpose, hope, & LIFE to your soul!
- Ask God for another same-sex Christian to help you find a way out of temptation.
- As always, you are welcome to touch base with our STAFF and DEACONS/wives for help!

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (850-464-6188), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? Explain your answer.
2. Why is it that so many Americans would say they don't have idols? But if, "Idolatry is seeking security and meaning in someone or something other than God," then what are some IDOLS we have worshiped?
3. **Read 1 Cor 10:1-6**. Why did Paul refer to Hebrew history and how do the Israelites serve as examples to us?
4. **Read 1 Cor 10:7-12**. What evil actions cost many of the ancient Hebrews their lives & why should we care what happened to them?
5. What have you learned about God from this history of the Hebrews? What warning should we recall when tempted to participate in idolatry, sexual immorality, testing the Lord, or grumbling?
6. **Read 1 Cor 10:13**. What are some common temptations we all face? What is God's promise to us & what are some practical ways to escape from falling to temptation?
7. **Read 1 Cor 10:14-17**. How can other Christians help us with temptations? Why are so many Christians unwilling to ask other Christians for help? Are YOU accountable to another same sex believer - who prays daily for you, asks the hard questions, celebrates with you, and picks you up when you fall? If not, why not? How can we help each other?
8. **Quote to Consider** - Read & discuss the significance of this quotes: "You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless till they find rest in You."
9. **Read 1 Cor 10:18-22**. Share some ways you have seen people who claim Christ attempt to 'ride the fence' by participating in sin while also attempting to follow Jesus. What is Paul's warning to people who attempt to "drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons"?
10. What other questions has this teaching or discussion prompted for us to talk about?
11. **Share prayer needs and pray for one another.**

⁴ Augustine of Hippo, "The Confessions of St. Augustin," in The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustin with a Sketch of His Life and Work, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. J. G. Pilkington, vol. 1, A

⁵ Confessions VIII, 12, translated by R. S. PineCoffin [New York: Penguin, 1978]