



# gracefellowship

Series: Crossroads: Between Kingdom and Culture  
Title: The Glory of God

Date: May 12, 2024  
Passage: 1 Corinthians 10:1-11:1

## **Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:1-11:1**

**How often are you motivated to do something, or resist doing something, with the glory of God in mind?**

I wonder how many Christians go about their daily lives with the glory of God driving the decisions they make? This morning we are going to see conclude his discussion on eating meat sacrificed to idols and the liberties we have as Christians. For three chapters now we have seen Paul write about the importance of making sure we don't abuse our liberties in a way that causes other believers to stumble. But not only that, we are also an example to the world watching us of what it means to follow Jesus and be set apart from the ways others believe and behave. Today we are going to see Paul wrap up this section by giving warnings not to overlook God's glory to pursue our own desires.

Let's look at the first 13 verses together and see why Paul points back at the history of Israel to discuss how we follow Jesus today.

### **:: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13**

**<sup>1</sup>For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.**

**<sup>2</sup>They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.**

**<sup>3</sup>They all ate the same spiritual food**

**<sup>4</sup>and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.**

**<sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.**

**<sup>6</sup>Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.**

**<sup>7</sup>Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry."**

**<sup>8</sup>We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.**

**<sup>9</sup> We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes.**

**<sup>10</sup> And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.**

**<sup>11</sup> These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.**

**<sup>12</sup> So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!**

**<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.**

Under the Cloud and Through the Sea: Paul is referring back to Moses leading the Israelites out of slavery and into freedom. God released His people from the bondage of slavery and revealed His power and His nature to them. He led them through the Red Sea as they escaped from Pharaoh and He led them by a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. The people saw the very presence of God on a daily, continual basis.

They ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink: Not only were they led by God, they were provided for by God. When they needed food, God sent manna from heaven or quail for them to eat. When they needed water, God provided water- even causing it to come from a rock on a couple occasions! And with all that in mind you may think, “Man, the Israelites probably followed and obeyed God perfectly! The glory of His presence is right there with them and being faithful to God feels like a no-brainer when you have that kind of proximity to God!

But that's not what happened! In fact, verse 5 says, “God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.”

Paul puts context around that and says, “These things occurred as *examples* to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.” Then in verse 11 he actually says, “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as *warnings* for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.”

Paul points at three things that happened while the Israelites were in the desert we should avoid doing as we follow Jesus.

The first example comes from Exodus 32. This is the scene where Moses has gone up on Mount Sinai to get the commandments from God. Meanwhile, the people of Israel ask Aaron to fashion a gold calf for them to worship. There is eating and drinking and revelry (sexual immorality) as they worship something they created.

**Example 1: Their idolatry caused them to misplace worship. Our Christian liberty limits us to the worship of the One True God.**

Paul then tells us there is a second example we should be warned by- this one is recorded in Numbers 25. As the Israelites were camped in Shittim they began to indulge in sexual immorality with the Moabite women, who also invited them to make sacrifices to their gods and to eat the sacrificial meal that had been offered to their gods. For their rebellion, 24,000 people died by a plague that hit the camp of Israel.

**Example 2: Our Christian liberty prevents us from participating in sexually immoral acts. This often leads us to abandon other aspects of our faith. For Israel, what began as sexual immorality quickly moved to the worship of false gods.**

We could find example after example of this in the Old Testament. Solomon was gifted with wisdom no one before or since could match. But he was enticed away from God over and over again through the hundreds of wives and concubines he brought into his palace. As a result, the entire nation was swayed to worship other gods.

You might say, "It isn't fair for God to required me to only worship Him." Well, take that same thought process into your marriage. Imagine going to your spouse and saying, "I love you, but I've also found this other person who meets my emotional, mental, spiritual and physical needs and I want them to be part of my life, too." How do you think that's going to play out? Not well! Our spouses tend not to want to share us with other people! And it's not because they don't want us to be happy. It's that they want us to find our happiness in them! God is the same way. He has rescued us from sin through the death of Jesus on the cross and He wants us to find our joy and contentment in Him. God does not share His glory with others!

That brings us to the 3<sup>rd</sup> example Paul points to. In Numbers 16 the people grumbled against Moses and Aaron because they didn't approve of the way they were leading the nation. God sends another plague against the people and nearly 15,000 people die as a result of their grumbling and complaining.

**Example 3: Our Christian liberty does not give us the right to grumble against God and complain against the leadership of Jesus. He is not only our Savior, He is our Lord and we are meant to follow Him whole-heartedly.**

Paul wraps this section saying, "If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" It's so easy to fall into idolatry, sexual immorality and grumbling. If we are not maintaining a close walk with Jesus we may think we are standing firm in our faith, but something comes along and trips us up and the next thing you know, we are in a huge mess and our dedication to Jesus is pushed to the side.

Then he says this in verse 13:

**13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.**

These are common temptations for our lives. But God is faithful! He provides exit ramps for us to take so we can escape the temptations we face. Paul is writing about things that happened a couple thousand years earlier than his life- and the same temptations were occurring in his lifetime as they were back then. That's true of us as well. God knows how easily our hearts are enticed away by idols. We may not call them idols, but the things we give priority and value to over God are easy idols in our hearts.

So what is Paul's advice?

**:: 1 Corinthians 10:14-15**

**14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.**

**15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.**

Run away! The only other place in this book he uses language like this is in chapter 6 where he says, "Flee from sexual immorality." The things we are told to flee from are things that are hunting us and want to kill us! In the same way sexual immorality can kill your marriage or your relationship with your kids and close friends, idolatry can kill your relationship with God and do damage to your fellowship with other believers. It's hard to submit to the leadership of God in your life when you are putting other things above Him.

So, flee from idolatry.

**If we train ourselves to avoid sin, we become more capable of withstanding temptation to sin.**

Let's move on to the next part of this passage:

**:: 1 Corinthians 10:16-11:1**

**16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?**

**17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.**

**18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?**

**19 Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything?**

**20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.**

**21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.**

**22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?**

#### **The Believer's Freedom**

**23 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial.**

**"I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive.**

**24 No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.**

**25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience,**

**26 for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."**

**27 If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience.**

**28 But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience.**

**29 I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience?**

**30 If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?**

**31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 33 even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.**

## **11**

**1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.**

Paul is going to begin this section by holding two things side by side- eating the Lord's Supper and eating meat sacrificed to idols. We already know from a couple weeks ago- and Paul says it again here- idols are nothing. They aren't real and they have no power. It's just an object made by a person. What is real and does have power is the demonic forces it represents. Paul says as Christians we can't at the same time take part in the Lord's meal and then the next day go eat at a restaurant where you know the worship of demons takes place.

Today this may look like someone who says all religions are true and all of them point to the same God. So I can attend Christian worship services and I can attend Hindu worship and I can follow the teachings of Mohammad... No! You can't. Those things have no part of Christ!

But Paul knows what his audience in Corinth is going to say in response: "I have the right to do anything!"

Yeah, but not everything is beneficial! Everything is not constructive.

Then Paul gives his final thoughts on this conversation. Remember the context: Most meat in this culture came from temple sacrifices. Paul has already said it doesn't really matter because we know idols mean nothing. So, if someone invites you over and serves meat, eat it and don't worry about it. But if someone says, "This was sacrificed to an idol," then don't eat it.

Why? Because now you know this is more than just meat to them. It's a celebration of idolatry. And now if you eat it then you give credence to that false god. But if you refrain you get to share your beliefs in Jesus as the One True God.

Illustration:

Several years ago in an early season of Survivor they started the season by bringing all the contestants to a Buddhist Temple. To honor the country they were playing the game in they asked everyone to go through a ritual. They made the statement, this is not worship, it's a ritual. There was one woman who you could immediately see this caused her to have angst- it was all over her face that she felt uncomfortable with this. Everyone went into the Temple, bowed to the statue of Buddha and came back out. Everyone except this one woman. She came back outside and it was obvious to everyone that she was frustrated. The host asked her what was wrong and why she wouldn't participate in the ritual; he reminded her it wasn't a worship service. She replied: "It felt like worship to me. I'm a follower of Jesus and I have made a decision to worship no God but Him!"

By not going along with the ritual she not only had a chance to stand for her faith, but to share her faith.

That's what Paul is getting at here. Don't just go along with what everyone else is doing. Make sure it brings glory to God!

**31 Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.**

If we just took this verse and truly applied it to our lives, I feel like we would be in much better shape as followers of Jesus! In fact, over these last three chapters as we've talked about Christian liberty and what we can or can't do, everything boils down to this: Do my actions bring glory to God?

**Does \_\_\_\_\_ bring glory to God?**

If you ever wonder if something is good for you to do or right for you to do, just stop in the moment and ask, "Does it bring glory to God?"

- Can I watch this movie and bring glory to God?
- Can I listen to this music and bring glory to God?
- Does this conversation bring glory to God?
- Do these thoughts I entertain about myself or others bring glory to God?

- Are my business practices bringing glory to God?

Your life is meant to bring glory to God! And here's why Paul does this and teaches us to do this: So no one will stumble and so that many will be saved! Paul's motivation is not to live a good moral life. Somehow our version of Christianity has morphed into this thing where as long as we are moral we are good. But does your faith and the way you live your life help other people meet Jesus? If your life brings glory to God, one of the ways that is proved is that other people are trusting Jesus. Don't be different just to look good around other people; be different to introduce people to Jesus!

Let's close this morning asking God to dedicate ourselves to the pursuit of His glory and to the purpose of sharing the glory of Jesus with those around us.