**ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD**

1 Corinthians 10:1-33

Key Verse 31

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

**Introduction**



In the previous passage, Paul gave examples from his own life on how he lives his Christian life. He lived a life that pleased God in every way. And he used his Christian freedom to serve God’s purpose to become everything to everyone to win them over to Christ. After giving examples from his own life, Paul now turned his attention to giving examples from history. We should also remember Jesus Christ who shed his precious blood to make us free in our deep hearts, from sin. Let’s learn today to please God with our freedom.

1. Read verses 1-13. What spiritual privilege did the forefathers of Israel have? (1-4) Why did many of them perish in the desert? (5) What can we learn from Israel’s history? (6-11) In times of temptation, what should we believe? (12-13)

1-1, Read verses 1-13.

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. **2** They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. **3** They all ate the same spiritual food **4** and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. **5** Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. **6** Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.**7** 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.” **8** We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. **9** We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. **10** And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. **11** These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. **12** So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!**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.

1-2, What spiritual privilege did the forefathers of Israel have? (1-4)

***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. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.***

* Paul reminds the Corinthians of God’s grace to Israel in the wilderness. This was just after God delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt, where they had spent 430 long years as slaves.
* They were miserable and without hope. All they could do was cry out to the Lord. Then the Lord had mercy on them and sent Moses to them as a deliverer.
* Through Moses, God broke Pharaoh’s iron grip and set them free. They were no longer slaves of Pharaoh, but became children of God. God had a vision for them to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation and he planted that vision in their hearts.
* However, there was a problem. The Israelites still thought and acted like slaves, even after they were delivered. They needed divine training.
* By faith they passed through the Red Sea as on dry ground (Heb 11:29). Then God led them through the desert. The heat of a desert is unbearable. It was time for them to give up their cravings for the sinful pleasures and conveniences of Egypt, and to live for God’s holy purpose.
* In fact, God provided everything for them. While living in the desert the Israelites needed food and drink. So God provided manna (some flakey, bread like substance) every day for forty years.
* When they needed meat, God provided quail (small chickens) for them. God nourished them and made them strong. God also provided water.
* Paul calls it “spiritual” food and drink. This means that God provided it, and it had a spiritual meaning.

Deuteronomy 8:3 reads,

“God humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”

* Through “manna” training, God taught them that man needs spiritual food as well as physical food. Man is not just an animal. Man cannot be satisfied with physical food alone.

John 6:35 reads,

“I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

* Also, they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Christ was with them, traveling together, even in the desert. When they were thirsty, Christ gave them water.

John 7:37b says,

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.”

* In verses 1-4, the word “all” appears 4 times. They “all” received God’s grace in the desert without exception. God did not play favorites. So there was no reason for them to distrust God.

1-3, Why did many of them perish in the desert? (5)

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

* This refers to the event recorded in Numbers chap. 13-14. The Israelites were at the border of the Promised Land.
* Moses sent twelve leaders to spy out the land for forty days. When they returned, ten of them reported negatively. They forgot God’s mighty work among them in the past. They only saw their enemies, trembled in fear, and gave a bad report.
* However, Caleb and Joshua were different from them. They remembered God’s grace and power. They remembered God’s history. They believed God would give them victory if God was pleased with them.
* But the people did not listen to them. They listened to the bad report. People have a tendency to accept bad news without even examining it, don’t they? Then the whole Israelite community began to weep and wail in fear and distress.
* They grumbled against Moses and Aaron and decided to choose a new leader and go back to Egypt. They totally forgot God’s abundant grace. They became stubborn, rebellious and devilish.
* So God was not pleased with them. God became angry with them and their bodies were scattered over the desert. Only Caleb and Joshua, the men who had faith in God, entered the Promised Land.
* Here we learn that to please God or not please God makes a great difference. It is the difference between victory and defeat, success and failure, life and death.
* When we please God, God blesses us and so often, things seem to go well. When we don’t please God, everything is difficult.
* Though we do our best, we face sudden accidents and unexpected diseases. But one day they get sick and use all of their money to pay medical bills. It happens.
* There are people that worked hard, saving all their money for retirement, ignoring Jesus and suddenly all their retirement savings are gone.
* Some try to build the foundation of their families on the world instead of Christ. Then after a while divorce comes, their spouse takes half and the kids are gone.
* We may try to do many things in this world, becoming great and famous through hard studying and efforts, but if we do not please God, our lives will be miserable. Therefore, with the abundant grace that Christ has given us, we must strive to please God in all that we do (2 Cor 5:9).
* **How can we please God?** The only way to please God is through faith. Hebrews 11:6a says, “...without faith it is impossible to please God.”
* God was pleased with Joshua and Caleb when they had faith in God. They were men of courage and spirit who could see things from God’s point of view.
* They were ready to challenge the impossible by faith. So God was pleased and blessed them with victory throughout their lifetimes.
* Caleb was strong and full of spirit, even at the age of 85. Joshua led Israel to conquer the Promised Land.
* The man of unbelief and the man of faith may witness the same event, yet see it differently. The man of unbelief sees things negatively and says, “It is impossible.” However, the man of faith says, “It is more than possible.”
* The man of unbelief complains about everything. However, the man of faith always thanks God in all circumstances.
* The man of unbelief makes excuses not to participate in the task set before them. But the man of faith builds up the work of God at every opportunity.
* The man of unbelief easily despairs and gives up. However, the man of faith never despairs and never gives up; he can do everything by faith in Christ who strengthens him.
* As he struggles to know Jesus and bring God’s flock to Jesus, the man of faith never despairs and never gives up.
* We are used to following the majority. But the man of faith does not follow the majority. He follows God’s truth. We can please God when we have faith in God.

1-4, What can we learn from Israel’s history? (6-11)

***Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.***

* Israel’s history teaches us not to set our hearts on evil things. The Israelites made a golden calf, bowed down to it, and said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of Egypt” (Ex 32:6).

Colossians 3:1-2 reads,

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

* It is what God wants of every Christian— to set our hearts on heavenly things and not on earthly things.

1 John 2:15-17 reads,

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world–the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does–comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

***7 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.”***

* There are many idols in our hearts. But here the people sat down to… Nowadays, television or the internet or smartphone has become a venue for idol worship.
* The direct television occupies the place where the family altar should be, the place where the family should be gathering to offer up their prayers to God.
* But even the most faithful churchgoers are in front of a screen too long although they could read the Bible or pray. It is no wonder that evil images occupy our minds and hearts.

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

* Paul warned them that we should not commit sexual immorality, That ancient society was not much different from ours.
* Sex was not big deal. As long as two people consented to it, they were free to do as they wished. But it is not God’s way.
* To God sexual immorality is a huge sin mainly because the body belongs to God, and God wants the body to be used for his purposes. Honor God with our bodies.
* God was so sorry that they had defiled themselves with these women. But the Christian should be different.
* We have a Christ who has promised us his Holy Spirit, and promised to help us in our temptations.

***9 We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. 11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.***

* **We should not test the Lord.** The Israelites tested the limit of God’s patience and love, just as a child tests the limits of what he or she can do before the parent intervenes.
* The story here goes that they complained about their food. It seems as if it is something small, but to the eyes of God who had done everything imaginable to free them and to provide for them, this complaining about the food was the limit of what God tolerated.
* It really hurt God that they complained about the food. Rather than being filled with thankfulness, they complained. We must resist it. We must fight it night and day. We must choose to thank God for his love and grace.
* We must decide to open out mouth and train this mouth of ours to say thank you Lord. And thank you dear brother and sister and coworker and friend, for all that you do. A complaining heart is a diseased heart— corrupted to the core which needs severe healing.
* **And we should not grumble.** We don’t usually think of grumbling as a serious matter. But here, the grumbling is against God and his servants.
* Moses told the Israelites, “You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord.” (Ex 16:8; Nu 16:11). Grumbling in this way is the sin of rebellion and it spreads like a wildfire to contaminate communities and even nations.

1-5, In times of temptation, what should we believe? (12-13)

***12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!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.***

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* Paul warns those who have strong faith and are able to eat food sacrificed to idols. They think that they stand firm. But they must be careful that they don’t fall.
* There is a danger that those with strong faith may not rely on God absolutely through prayer. They think, “No problem. I can handle it.”
* In that moment they become vulnerable. We must be aware of Satan’s work. We must depend on God and pray to God. We should not be proud, but humble before God.
* Even though we depend on God, Satan tempts us. So we face many difficulties. We must choose to pray— choose to read the word of God— choose to recite it in our hearts— we must choose to believe that “God is faithful— that he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear”— “that he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”
* Again God is faithful. God provides a way out so that we can bear up under it. If we are not proud, but humbly depend on God, he will take care of us.
* He will help us not to fall into temptation. Then we can make glorious history as individuals, a community, and a nation.

1. Read verses 14-22. What did Paul warn them of again? (14) Why is it wrong for Christians who share in the Lord’s Supper to participate in the the feasts of idols? (15-22)

2-1, Read verses 14-22.

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. **15** I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. **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?

2-2, What did Paul warn them of again? (14)

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

* After giving them history lessons, Paul gives direct advice in verse 14: “flee from idolatry.” This means to run away like Joseph did.
* Fleeing is a very deliberate action. We need to flee from everything that stimulates our sinful nature and lustful desires, including evil friends who tempt us.

2-3, Why is it wrong for Christians who share in the Lord’s Supper to participate in the the feasts of idols? (15-22)

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

* Some Corinthians tried to participate in Christian fellowship and at the same time idol feasts.
* But idol feasts lead to demon worship. We cannot worship the holy God and evil demons at the same time.
* We cannot serve two masters (Mt 6:24). We must worship God alone. These days many people try to make their own god, by combining the things they like from all the different religions and philosophies.
* Then they say, “This is my god.” The problem is that demons are real and they actively draw men to worship them. We must have spiritual discernment to recognize the work of demons and avoid it.

1. Read verses 23-33. Why shouldn’t we do everything that is permissible? (23) Whose benefit should we seek? (24) What does it mean to do everything for the glory of God and for the benefit of others? (25-31) What is the goal in doing these things? (32, 33)

3-1, Read verses 23-33.

“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.

3-2, Why shouldn’t we do everything that is permissible? (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.***

* The Corinthian Christians, with their focus on their own "rights" and their own "knowledge," were only asking one question: what's the harm to me?
* Instead of only asking that question, they needed to also ask, what good can this be for others?
* Just because something is permitted does not mean it is beneficial. The Corinthians were not seeking the things that would edify others.
* They wanted to know how much they could get away with and still be Christians. That's the wrong approach!

3-3, Whose benefit should we seek? (24)

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

* Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being. Again, the Corinthian Christians were asking one question: what's the harm to me? They did not consider how their actions were impacting or harming others.
* Just because something is fine for me does not mean should do it. My own "rights" or what I know to be permitted for myself are not the standards by which I judge my behavior. I must consider what is the loving thing to do towards my brothers and sisters in Jesus. We must use this freedom for the good of others

3-4, What does it mean to do everything for the glory of God and for the benefit of others? (25-31)

***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? So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.***

* We are free to eat everything. We can freely eat and drink with unbelievers. But if our dinner companion says, “This cow has been offered to an idol”, it is better not to eat to make it clear that we don’t condone idolatry and to protect the conscience of weaker brothers and sisters that may find out about this.
* Paul then goes on to give a general principle of Christian life and spiritual direction to all Christians.
* Eating and drinking are ordinary activities that most people don’t think too much about.
* Many may say that generally they eat and drink in order to enjoy themselves and be healthy.
* But Paul explains that Christians do these things for the glory of God. If we can do these things for the glory of God, we can do everything for the glory of God.
* How can we eat for the glory of God. During meal time one does not speak to others in order to enjoy the taste of food by himself.
* It was not easy to change his eating habit.Changing his attitude toward eating changed his or her whole attitude toward life.
* We can eat for the glory of God by eating a little something with visitors and having conversations with them, even when we don’t feel like it.
* When we master eating for the glory of God, then we can easily do all other things for the glory of God.
* Paul strongly encourages us that how we use our bodies is important. We must be good stewards of our bodies for the glory of God.
* We must do whatever we do for the glory of God. When we have a clear purpose to live for the glory of God, we can have spiritual discernment. **“...find out what pleases the Lord.” (Eph 5:10).**
* Man was created to glorify God. This is our purpose of life. When we live for the glory of God, our lives become absolutely meaningful and happy.
* If one does not live for the glory of God, his thinking becomes futile and his foolish heart is darkened (Ro 1:21).
* Eventually he becomes an idol worshiper. When Christ is at the center, God is pleased and we are happy.
* If we put ourselves at the center, we cannot please God even if we do many religious activities.

3-5, What is the goal in doing these things? (32, 33)

***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.***

* Practically, living for the glory of God involves participating in saving souls to fulfill God’s world salvation plan. This gives great glory to God.
* For this, Paul denied himself to please everyone in every way. In this way he glorified God.

**Conclusion**

Paul followed Jesus’ example, and so should we. Then we can please God and we can live a victorious life throughout our lifetime. Also, we can leave a good spiritual inheritance to our descendants. **One Word: Glory to God!**