**DO IT ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD**

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

***“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (v. 31)***

Chapter 10 is Paul’s continuation on the issue of eating food sacrificed to idols. He had previously stated that since idols were nothing of substance, it didn’t matter if believers ate meat that had been sacrificed to idols. But he had added warning to avoid anything that would create spiritual difficulties for immature and growing Christians and provided and extensive argument for voluntarily suspending the exercise of Christian freedom for the good of others. He now continues his train of thought, and by using Israel’s history, he warns of the danger of temptation for those who take too much pride in their freedom. He ends the passage, with a clear purpose for every Christians’ use of their freedom, to do all things for the glory of God. May the Spirit teach us what it means for us to do all things for the glory of God.

1. **Lessons from the Past (10:1-13)**

Just before I begin this passage, I would like us to keep in mind the key verse ***“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”*** Apostle Paul continues to speak about Christian freedom, but as a warning, he turns his focus to a history lesson. Look at verses 1-2, ***“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. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”*** Paul takes the readers back in Bible history to the generation of Israelites whom God delivered out of slavery from Egypt. The LORD guided them by a cloud during the day and a pillar of fire by night in order that they could follow God’s leading both day and night. This cloud led them to the shores of the Red Sea according to Exodus 13:18. On that shore God Almighty performed one of His most historically memorable saving acts.  The LORD Almighty told Moses to touch the Red Sea with his staff. When he did God opened the Red Sea using strong winds to hold the sea back both on the right side and left side carving a dry path through the sea. On this dry path the entire nation of Israel by faith in God could walk through this mighty sea. This was only half of God’s great saving act that day. The grand finale happens to be the destruction of the greatest army of its time. As the Egyptian army pursued the Israelites, God commanded Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea. Then the water flowed back and covered the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived (14:26-28). By closing of the Red Sea on top of the Egyptian army the LORD proved that He is the God who saves. It also shows that He is fearfully mighty in His power to destroy the enemies of God’s people.

Now, Paul moves on in recounting the provisions of God for those He saved from Egypt. Look at verses 3-4, “***They all ate the same spiritual food*** ***and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.”*** The LORD God led Israel into the desert wilderness. Finding food and sustainable drinking water in the desert wildernesses is almost impossible. But God provided the Israelites with manna from heaven for every day for forty years. When they needed meat, God provided even quail. Finally, when they thirsted, God provided water, even water from a rock.

Paul calls this "spiritual" food and drink. Even though God provided the food and drink, it had a deeper, spiritual meaning to it. In Deuteronomy 8:3, Moses clearly tells them: *“[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 and water training, God taught them that not only does man need food and water, but man also needs spiritual food and water. Man is not just an animal. Man cannot be satisfied with physical food and water alone. When we eat spiritual food and drink the spiritual drink, we can be truly satisfied. So, Jesus said in John 6:35, *“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever 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. So Jesus said in John 7:37b, *“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.”*

Notice the word “all”, it appears four times in verses 1-4. They “all” received God’s grace without exception. So, they had no reason for grumbling against God, or even to distrust God. But the encounter of God’s supernatural privileges in the lives of Israelites did not produce automatic victory. Look at verse 5, ***“Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.”*** Except Caleb and Joshua, the first generation of Israelites of the Exodus were stopped from entering the Promised Land and died in the wilderness because God was not pleased with them. Why was God not pleased with most of them? For the Israelites did not remember God’s grace, and they misused God’s grace after their physical and spiritual freedom from tyranny in Egypt. In verses 6-10, Paul explains in what way, they misused God-given freedom. They set their hearts on evil things (6). Rather than glorifying God and giving thanks to him, they craved for the old pleasures that they enjoyed in Egypt. They fell into idolatry and sexual immorality (7-8). They tested God and grumbled against Moses and God (9-10). As a result, God pour out severe discipline by cutting short the lives of many Israelites. They were all in the “race” (9:24), but almost all were disqualified (9:27) in spite of their advantages.

God’s dealings with Israel are more than a matter of historical curiosity for us. They were examples and warnings for the Corinthians and Christian brothers and sisters everywhere in every generation, including us (11). History is living. God is the same God who disciplined the Israelites and would do so again. Many of us have experienced God’s saving grace, forgiveness of sins and freedom from the power of Satan through Jesus’ suffering and death. We have experienced God’s guidance, protection, and spiritual nourishment through fellowship with Christ, our true Bread of life and the source of living water. In the time of such grace and blessing, Paul warns each of us. Look at verses12-13a. ***“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind….”*** We must be humble and prayerful because we are so vulnerable and weak. The temptations that seized the Israelites already devoured some Corinthian Christians. The same temptations can devour us, too. Satan, like a roaring lion, is looking for someone to devour all the time.

Therefore, rather than seeking to gratify the desires of our flesh, we must try to actively please God. Our Christian freedom was not meant to lead us into self-indulgence but into pleasing God. Here we learn that to please God or not please God makes a huge difference. It is the difference between victory and defeat, success and failure, life and death. When we please God, God blesses us. When we don't please God, everything is difficult and can be a struggle. We may try to do many things in this world apart from God. 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 overcome temptation and please God? The only way to overcome temptation and live a life to please God is to rely on God alone. Look at verse 13b. ***“…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.”*** We are weak, but God is faithful. Temptations can be met at any time due to our evil desire (Jas 1:13-14) and Satan’s continual work (1Pe 5:8). However, they can be defeated when we depend on God, who is faithful. God always provides us a way out from temptations. The perfect way to defeat temptation is our Lord Jesus’ Christ himself. Jesus showed us the perfect example to defeat the devil. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus defeated him by the word of God: *“It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Mt 4:4)*. When Satan tempted Jesus to avoid the cross, Jesus prayed at Gethsemane by submitting his will to God’s will (Mt 26:39). Jesus crushed the devil’s head on the cross by shedding his blood and giving his life for our sins. Therefore, whenever Satan tempts us, we can remember our Lord and rebuke Satan by depending on the name of Jesus, who already won the victory on the cross. Whenever we repent of our sinful desires and even committed sins based on the blood of Jesus, Jesus’ blood cleanses our corrupted consciences, and purifies us. God’s forgiving love strengthens us to confidently serve God in holiness and righteousness. Praise God, who is faithful and gave us the perfect way to overcome temptation and enable us to live a life to please him in Christ Jesus.

1. **Do it all for the glory of God (10:14-11:1)**

After giving them a history lesson, Paul gives direct advice in verse 14, ***"flee from idolatry."*** This means to run away like Joseph did. We need to flee from everything that stimulates our sinful nature and lustful desires. 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 demons at the same time. The Bible says that we cannot serve two masters (Mt 6:24). We must worship God alone. These days many people worship many different gods, like money, sex, fame and self. People also are trying 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 people to worship them through human pride and self-glory seeking. We must have spiritual discernment to recognize the work of demons and avoid it.

Verses 23-24 reiterate that we have freedom. But we must use this freedom for the good of others. Verses 25-30 are an example. We are free to eat everything. We can freely eat and drink with unbelievers. But if our dinner companion says, "This 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.

Look at verse 31. ***“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”*** This is the general principle of Christian life, and one of our fundamental purposes in our life, ***"Do it all for the glory of God."*** Paul tells us that giving glory to God begins with eating and drinking. These are everyday activities that we don’t give much thought to. So, what Paul is saying, even in the simplest and mundane things of this world, we need to give God all the glory. If we can render glory to God in simplest and most ordinary things of the world, we can do everything for the glory of God.

Therefore, 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. Sometimes we don't know if something is right or not, or what to do when several options arise that conflict with each other. But when we do everything for the glory of God, God gives us spiritual insight to know what we should do and what we should avoid. That is why Paul encourages us to "...find out what pleases the Lord" (Eph 5:10).

Why should we do everything for the glory of God? Man was created to glorify God. This is our purpose of life. When we live to glory of God, our lives become absolutely meaningful, happy and free. If one does not live for the glory of God, one’s thinking becomes futile and one’s foolish heart becomes darkened (Ro 1:21). Eventually he or she 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. Also, if we are the center of our lives, we cannot have in mind the things of God and we become dry and empty. We must ask ourselves. Is it for the glory of God, or for our own glory? In the end, Paul denied himself to please everyone in every way, and most importantly, to glorify God.

How can we glorify God? We glorify God when we love Him ([Mt 22:37](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2022.37)), trust Him ([Ro 4:20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.20)), give thanks to Him ([Ps 50:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2050.23)), and obey Him ([Mt 5:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%205.16)). Also, we glorify God when we participate in saving souls to fulfill God's world salvation plan. This gives great glory to God (32-33). There is a reason why God wants us to glorify Him.

You see when we glorify God, we become truly satisfied. God is love. God created us for His glory, He also created us for our joy. How so you may ask? Because the way He seeks to be glorified in us is by making us satisfied in Him. The good news for us is that God is the kind of God who is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.

That’s why God created us for His glory. Therefore, the duty of every man and woman and child—to live for the glory of God. And the wonderful thing is that this duty is not a burden. Actually, it is freedom and joy. You glorify God's beauty and excellence by loving and delighting in God. You glorify God's power by trusting Him even when we are faced with all the hard and threatening things in our lives. You glorify God's provisions and generosity and kindness and grace by overflowing with gratitude. And you glorify God's wisdom by obeying His counsel. And everybody knows that this is no burden. This is no heavy law. This is our love to the Creator God who made us in His image.

Apostle Paul was not the only one who glorified God. One great Biblical figure was King David. When we look at his story, it is filled with rendering God all the glory. His story started when God wanted to choose David as the next King. Why? God saw David’s heart who loved Him and would glorify Him. When David went to fight Goliath, David said to King Saul, *“Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.” (1 Sa 17:36-37)* David could not endure when God’s name was defied and challenged Goliath, even by risking his own life.

But David was just a shadow of Jesus, the One, who perfectly loved for God and loved for every soul. The very purpose of our Lord Jesus’ life was to fully glorify the Father. In his every step, and every moment of his life, he lived for God’s glory by fulfilling God’ will to die on the cross to save perishing souls. At the very last night of his life on earth, he prayed to the Father, *“I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do” (Jn 17:4).* Apostle Paul followed Jesus’ example. So, in verse 11:1, he urges the Corinthians, ***“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”***

Through this passage, I learned that in everything I do, I should give glory to God. To me, giving God glory starts with the smallest and most trivial things of this world that we often take for granted, like eating and drinking. Giving God all the glory is important because He created all things for His good purpose, and I am part of that. I confess, I grumble way too often about my situation. I realized I am just like the Israelites. God has blessed me with many great things, and I complain about the things I don’t have. I have made a decision to give God all the glory from this day forth.

Through this passage, Apostle Paul warned about the pride of self-confidence that leads to sin of self-indulgence. That sin is because people do not glorify God. Let’s remember God’s grace and blessings upon each of us and use our freedom to glorify God and love our neighbors by following our Lord’s example.