

(Through the Bible) 1 Corinthians 9-10

by Chuck Smith

Paul emphasizes the importance of living by the law of love and exercising self-discipline in the Christian life, lest one be disappointed.

Duration: 1:10:21

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness. He emphasizes the importance of not being satisfied with mediocrity and encourages the listeners to strive for excellence in their walk with Jesus Christ. The preacher also highlights the significance of the rock that Moses struck, which provided water for the thirsty Israelites. He connects this rock to Jesus Christ, who offers living water to all who are thirsty. The sermon concludes with an exhortation to live a disciplined life, keeping the body and its desires under control, and to walk in fellowship with the Lord.

Transcript

So we turn now in our Bibles to 1st Corinthians chapter 9. I could do a lot of things I don't do. The reason why I don't do them is I do not want to be an offense unto a weaker brethren and destroy his relationship with God because of my own liberty in Christ. This is essentially what Paul is saying to the Corinthians.

And he is telling them that they should be careful in their exercise of their own freedom in Christ that they would not use it in such a way as it could be a stumbling block to a weaker brother. Now, as Paul is continuing this line of thought and this argument, he gives an example from his own personal life. Being an apostle, he could make many demands as an apostle that he refuses to make because he doesn't want to cause offense to anyone.

So, as he is getting into this apostleship now and his rights as an apostle, he's only showing from his own personal experience how he puts into practice the principle that he has just sought to teach them. And that is, yes, you have liberty. You have the rights, but you don't have to always insist on your rights or exercise your liberty, especially if it hurts someone else.

So, the law that governs me is the law of love. My love for my brethren in Christ, especially those who might be weaker in the faith, my love for them is the law that governs my activities, not whether it is right or wrong. And so Paul said, am I not an apostle? Am I not free? That is, free to do whatever I want as an apostle.

And have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? So he is using as a sign of his apostleship, first of all, that he had seen Christ the Lord. One of the requirements of apostleship in the early church was the ability to bear witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ by being an eyewitness of His resurrection. Now, there are those today within the church who are seeking to claim the authority of apostles.

And they have... Well, one of them died the other day. But they do have men who have claimed the authority of apostleship. From a New Testament standpoint, it would be a difficult kind of a claim to make for one of the requirements was the ability to bear witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ by being an eyewitness.

Paul declares that he saw Jesus. He also refers to the proof of the apostleship, their changed lives. They are his epistles of commendation known and read of all men.

He said, If I be not an apostle unto others, doubtless I am to you. For the seal of my apostleship is your being in the Lord. My ministry among you.

The fruit of the ministry. The proof of my ministry. The fact that you are in the Lord.

You are the seal of my apostleship. And my answer to them that do examine me in this. So, he's saying actually this is my defense to those who would cross examine me.

He's using in the Greek a couple of legal terms and evidently the divisions in Corinth led to the place where they said, well, we're of Apollos. And they began, as they did in many places, to challenge Paul's claim as an apostle. Paul said, I'm an apostle not by the will of man, but by the will of God.

But they challenged his claim. They said, oh, he says he's an apostle, but you know, he's not really an apostle. So, they were challenging his apostleship and so he said, My defense to them that would examine me in this issue is that I have the power, or have I not the power to eat and to drink? Have we not the power to lead about a sister, a wife as well as other apostles and as the brethren of the Lord and also of Peter himself? Or I only am Barnabas.

Have we not the power to forbear working? We don't have to work. We have the power not to work as an apostle. For those who preach the Gospel have every right to live by the Gospel.

He said, who goes to war at any time at his own expense? If you're going to war, they provide you. You don't go out and buy your gun and buy your boots and buy your helmet and buy your ammunition. Those things are provided for you if you're in the military.

You don't have to buy your own F-15. So Paul said, who goes to war and pays his own expenses? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit from it? Or who feeds the flock and doesn't drink the milk? Say I these things as a man or sayeth the law also. Am I just founding off as a man? Or does the Bible confirm this? And using as a scriptural basis for this premise, he said, it is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn.

Does God take care of the oxen? So that was a part of the law, the ox that treaded down the corn. You weren't to put a muzzle on his mouth as he was going through, pulling the plows and all. He could eat as he went through.

You weren't to muzzle his mouth because he's laboring, he's working. Now he's saying, does God take care of oxen? Is he more interested in oxen than he is in men? So Paul goes to the Old Testament to show that a servant has the right or the ox has the right to eat the corn that it is treading. Now did the Lord say it all together for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he that plows should plow in hope.

That is the hope of the harvest. And he that threshes, threshes in hope that he might be the partaker of his own labor. Now if we have sown to you in spiritual things, is it some great thing if we shall reap from you the carnal things? If others are partakers of this power over you, are not we even more? Nevertheless, nevertheless, we have not used this power, but we suffer all things lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

Now again, talking about the liberty to do things, the right to do things. Paul is pointing out that as an apostle, as being the instrument that God used to minister to these people spiritual life, having brought to them the Word of God and the things of the Spirit, as an apostle, he had every right to be supported by them. He had every right to receive material benefits from them.

However, he said, I did not do it lest I would hinder the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that they which minister about the holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? The priest who offered the sacrifices got a certain portion of the meat. He got a certain portion of the flour and these things that were brought as sacrifices from the people to sacrifice to the Lord.

The priest got a share of those things. And he lived by these things that were brought in. Now, Paul is saying, I have every right to receive from you material recompense for my labors among you.

Even so, he said, the Lord has ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things, neither have I written these things that it should be so done unto me, for it were better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void. Now, Paul said, yes, I have every right, but I'm not exercising it.

I'd rather be dead than to take a penny from you. Why did Paul have this attitude? Because unfortunately in Paul's day, as it is in the present day, there are many ministers that abuse this right. There are many ministries that are constantly seeking gimmicks, methods, ways of extracting more money from the people.

If you ever get on the mailing list of some of these evangelists, there is no end to their imaginations and the development of gimmicks to try and get you to send in your support for their ministries. You go to a lot of these services and you're exposed to a lot of the gimmickry. The Lord has revealed to me that there are 10 people here tonight that are going to give \$1,000 for this ministry.

The Lord has revealed there are 50 people going to give \$500. That's not so. That's putting it mildly.

That is gimmickry. That is deception. That's terrible.

Now, because of this, many people have been turned away from the Gospel of Jesus Christ and they say, all they want is your money. And, unfortunately, that is true in many places. That is the reason why here at Calvary Chapel we never have pledges.

That is the reason why here at Calvary Chapel we never make any appeals for the offerings. Nothing more is ever said than the ushers will come forward to receive the tithes and the offerings, but it's up to you whether you give or not and no one will ever ask you to give. That is why we here at Calvary Chapel love to give to people.

To just blow the minds of people who say the church is only out to get. That was the same with Paul. He didn't want to be accused of being a mercenary.

Of just being after the people's money. He didn't want that to be an offense. And, you know, years ago when the Lord called me into the ministry, I had seen a lot of this begging for Jesus bit.

I had seen these various types of offering appeals. In fact, in college I was even taught how to make a strong appeal for money. Taught how to develop drives and solicit pledges and things of this nature.

But when the Lord called me to the ministry, I said, Lord, I'll make you a deal. I'll serve you in the ministry as long as you provide, but I'm never going to solicit my support from people. You take care of me.

I'm not going to ask people. I'm not going to beg people for money. Money will never be an issue in my ministry.

I feel that it is criminal and manifestly wrong for these ministers who are constantly begging people for their dollars. And you know, it's almost as bad as the time in the Roman church when they sold indulgences. You want to get your prayer answered? Send your offering in to us, you know.

You've got an unsafe son? Send your offering to us and God will save him. You can buy salvation for your son. You can buy healing for your mother.

You can buy, you know, all kinds of indulgences. It's made out to be that way in these phony fundraising drives. If those who were soliciting those funds would live very simple lives, not live in a lavish style, then I could accept it.

But when these same ones who are begging these poor little widows to sacrifice from their Social Security checks to send in to them and they themselves are living a very high style of life, I find it intolerable. Paul the Apostle, I think I really identify and love this guy because he had much the same attitude that I have as far as money is concerned. He said, hey, I don't want your money.

I won't take your money. I glory in the fact that I was able to provide for myself and the needs of my party while I was there and we didn't take anything from you. And I'd rather be dead than to lose this bit of glorying that I had that I did not take money from you.

Though, as an Apostle, I had every right. God has ordained that those that minister the Gospel should live of the Gospel. That is right.

The ox is not to be muzzled. If He takes care of the ox, surely He takes care of His servants that are out preaching His Word. The priest lived by the things of the altar.

I had every right to, but yet I didn't because I didn't want to be an offense. I didn't want to stumble somebody to think that I was trying to enrich myself through the preaching of the Gospel. I have used none of these things, neither have I written these things that it should be done unto me.

I'm not trying to make an appeal now, Paul said. That's not the purpose for my saying these things. For it were better that I be dead than some man make my glorying void.

For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is me if I preach not the Gospel. I'm not preaching it for the glory or for the money. There's a necessity laid on me.

There's a burden on my heart. Woe is me if I don't preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For if I do this thing willingly, then I have a reward.

But if against my will, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me. So, Paul said, I'm doing this willingly. Thus I have my reward because I'm doing it willingly for the Lord.

What is my reward then? Verily that when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge that I abuse not my power in the Gospel. I love that. Jesus said, freely you have received, freely give.

Oh how I thank God that our radio ministry does not depend upon the listeners for the support. How I thank God that we can go on the radio around the country and not have to spend 15 minutes a day in urging the people to support us this week or we won't be on the air next week. I thank the Lord that we can just freely minister the Gospel to people around the country, blowing their minds because they wonder how in the world is this program supported? It's supported because God has laid upon the hearts of the people here to give and it's more than we need so we just use the excess to get the Gospel out around the world.

And you know what? The more we give, the more the Lord sends in. That's the amazing thing. We've been trying to out-give God.

And every time we take on new stations and put more money into the radio to spread the Word out further, the more God blesses, the more the supplies come in. And so we have seen the radio ministry expand from the original 25 to over 120 stations and over 100 stations on Sunday broadcast only. Plus cable television around the country.

And we can do it without charge. And that's the glorious thing. Not looking for the support of the people, but just looking to God for His supply.

Paul said, For though I am really free from all men, you know, I don't owe you anything. I haven't taken anything from you. So I am free of all men.

Yet have I made myself the servant unto all that I might gain the more. I'm really free from you. But I've made myself a servant that I might gain more.

Unto the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the law as under the law that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law as also without law, yet not without the law to God, but under the law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law.

To the weak became I as weak that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men that I by all means might save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake that I might be a partaker thereof with you.

So Paul, seeking to identify with people. Not setting himself above people and preaching down to people. But coming down on their level.

Seeking to understand where they are. Seeking to identify with them in such a way that they could identify with Paul so that he could lead them to the strength and the power that they might know through Jesus Christ. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receives the prize? So run that you might obtain.

And so again, Paul sees the Christian life as a race. He said to Timothy, I have fought a good fight. I have finished the course.

The idea of the race. If Paul was the author of Hebrews, and I personally feel he was, he also made reference to the race. Wherefore, laying aside every weight and sin which doth so easily beset us, let us run the race with patience, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith.

Now, life is as a race. But Paul says run to win. I like that.

I have enough competitive spirit in me. I don't play to lose. Whenever I go out in any sport, I go out to win.

That's almost a fault. It has been a real fault in my life. My desire to win is so great that if there's any place I can lose my composure, it's when there's been a bad call.

I'm out to win. Hey, Paul said, be that way in your life for Christ. Go all out.

So run that you might obtain the prize. Every man that strives for the mastery, that is a term for the wrestling. The Olympics were held in Athens, but they had also the second largest athletic events in the world were held in Corinth.

And so those in Corinth were very familiar with the athletes who would be training for the games of Corinth. A fellow who is working out wrestling is temperate in all things. That is, he lives a very disciplined life as he is getting his body into shape.

And they are doing it, he said, for a corruptible crown. They are putting their bodies through torturous exercises in order that they might develop their athletic skills. They are watching their diet.

They are living very careful, disciplined lives in order that they might win their event so that the judges would put a little laurel wreath on their head. A laurel wreath that will soon dry out a corruptible crown. Now if they're willing to put in so much time, so much energy, so much effort, so much discipline to receive a gold medal, how much more effort should we be putting in to gain the incorruptible crown of glory that God has promised to His faithful servants? Run to win.

And Paul said, I run that way. I therefore so run. I run to win.

Not as uncertainty. Not just, well, I hope I finish, you know. Doesn't matter.

No sir, I'm running with the intention of winning. So fight I, not as one who is beating there, not as a shadow boxer, but I keep my body under and bring it into subjection. I discipline, Paul said, my own body, keeping it into subjection lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be disapproved.

Now, Paul talks about the discipline. Keeping his body under. Man is a three-fold being.

Body, mind, spirit. The natural man is body, mind, spirit. When a person is born again, he is inverted and he becomes spirit, mind, and body.

The natural man, body, mind, and spirit, the mind is under the control of the spirit. Beg your pardon. Is under control of the body, which is uppermost.

So the unregenerate man, the sinner, is a man who is aware and conscious of the body and the body needs and the body appetites. And that's all he thinks about. And that, you know, all you have to do is open up your ears in the public and you hear what people talk about.

What are they talking about? Their fleshly experiences. The gal they had last weekend. Some new bar that's opened up.

Some disco. Fleshly body experiences. That is their mind.

That's where their minds run in that area. When a person is born again by the Spirit and he becomes spirit, mind, and body, then the mind is under the control of the spirit and he is thinking about spiritual things, how he may please God. He's thinking about the Word of God.

He's thinking about his walk with Jesus Christ. He's thinking about the Lord. He's thinking about the Lord.

His minds are on the things of the Spirit. Now, the Bible tells us that the person whose minds are upon the things of the flesh is dead. But the person whose mind is upon the things of the Spirit is alive and he has peace and he has joy.

Now, when I am born again and I am now spirit, soul, and body, my body down here doesn't like it in the basement. My body enjoyed sitting on the throne. It enjoyed ruling over me.

It enjoyed its tyranny that it had over me and it doesn't like being underneath. And thus, my body is constantly trying to rise. I'm not dead to the desires of my flesh.

They are there. They are always there as long as I am living in this body. But my desires for the Lord and the things of the Lord are greater than my desires for the flesh.

But I find that I have to keep my body under, for my body would love to come and begin to rule again and put the Spirit under. So, Paul said, I discipline myself to keep the body under, not giving over to the things of my flesh, lest even in this area of having ministered to others, I myself would be disapproved. And there are those who say that Paul is here talking about his service to God put on the shelf, so to speak.

So, it is important for us to keep the body under, to discipline ourselves in spiritual disciplines. If the athletes are willing to go through such discipline just to receive a corruptible crown, how much more should we discipline ourselves for the incorruptible crown of life that the Lord, our righteous Judge, shall give to us and to all those who love His appearing. Paul tells us that the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.

These are contrary. I am in a battle within. And I must discipline myself to keep the body under.

Chapter 10, Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant how that all of our fathers were under the cloud and passed through the sea. Now, he's talking about their forefathers who were delivered out of Egypt. God used the cloud to guide them by day and the pillar of fire by night.

The cloud had more than just a guiding. They were under the cloud. They were going to be spending time in that hot desert.

And so, what did God do? He put a cloud over them that shielded them from that hot desert. And whenever the cloud would move, they would move. And that's wisdom when you're out in the desert.

And so God made a very great way of guiding them. The cloud would move and they would move to stay under the cloud. Now, when they had come to the Red Sea and the Egyptian army came up behind them and had trapped them here in the valley, God took the cloud and He moved it behind them and let it settle between them and the Egyptians so the Egyptians couldn't see what was happening because of the fog, the cloud, that had come down and they couldn't see that the sea had departed and that the children of Israel were all escaping to the other side.

And when God lifted the cloud, they saw what happened. They saw the sea parted. They went dashing into the sea and of course the Lord allowed the sea to come back and they were drowned.

But the cloud had a purpose more than just guiding them. It was a shelter to them. They lived under the cloud walking when the cloud moved, living in the will of God, being guided by God through that wilderness experience.

And how glorious it is that God will guide us, shelter us as we seek to walk after His will. They passed through the sea which is a symbol of water baptism coming out of the life of the flesh in Egypt into a new relationship with God. And they were all baptized you see that symbolism there passing through the sea unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

And they did eat the same spiritual meat. God gave them the manna, the bread from heaven that they all ate. And they did all drink the same spiritual drink.

For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ. And so you remember as the children of Israel came to Moses they're in the area of Rephidim, the wilderness. And they said we're about to die of thirst.

Our cattle and all are about to die. What are we going to do? And Moses went in and cried to the Lord. He said, Lord, help me.

These people are ready to stone me. And God said take your rod that you used to strike the river in Egypt to turn it to blood. And with the elders before the people strike the rock.

And so he took his rod and he smote the rock and water came forth. And the people drank and lived. They were saved.

They drank, all of them, of that same spiritual rock and that rock was Christ who himself said, if any man is thirsty let him come unto me and drink. And he that is a thirst let him come and drink, Jesus said, of the water of life freely. That is the last invitation in the Bible in the book of Revelation.

The last invitation is for all men, whosoever will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely. The rock, smitten, if you partake and drink of him tonight you will have life. But with many of them God was not well pleased.

And they were overthrown in the wilderness. When Moses sent out the twelve spies to spy out the land, ten of them came back and gave an evil report. A report that planted fear in the hearts of the people.

The cities are big and the walls are high and the people are like giants. We were like grasshoppers in their sight. You know, they're huge people.

We're not able to do it. But we can't take it. There were two men, Joshua and Caleb, who came back bearing a bunch of grapes on a rod between them.

And they said, look, the grapes, you've never seen anything like that in all your life. Look at the size of the bunch of grapes. Oh, but we heard there are giants in the land.

Ah, they said, they're bred for us. Oh, we heard we can't take it. Oh, let's go in right now and take it.

But the people listened to the ten and they turned. They didn't have faith in trusting God to deliver the land to them. And so God said, alright, you don't trust Me? You say that your children will be destroyed by them? I'll tell you what.

I'm going to let you wander in this wilderness until this whole generation passes and your children that you say will be prey to them. I will let them go in and take the land. But then began the longest funeral service in the world.

Forty years waiting for all of them to die. Only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to go in of that generation. So, many of them perished in the wilderness.

Now these things were examples to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. They said, let's go back to Egypt. Oh, remember the garlics and the leeks in Egypt.

Oh, they were so good. I haven't had any garlic for so long. Just this mammoth.

It's so bland. It's so mild. I'm sick of it, you know.

Oh, if I only had the garlics of Egypt. And they were desiring after the old life of the flesh. The life of Egypt.

The flesh pots in Egypt. These were written for our examples that we would not lust after the things of the flesh as they lusted. Neither be ye idolaters.

Now, several things here. First of all, they were lusting after the evil things, the things of the flesh. Desiring them.

Secondly, many of them turned to idolatry. Do you remember Aaron made the golden calf and the people were all dancing around the thing? As some of them were, as it is written, the people sat down to eat and to drink and they rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed and fell in one day 23,000.

Now, in the book of Numbers it tells us that there were 24,000, but Paul, no doubt, is writing from memory. And it's probably just a mistake that Paul made as he is writing just from memory. Referring to that time when Balaam gave the evil counsel for the young girls to go down and entice the boys and they committed fornication and the wrath of God was kindled against them and they were smitten by a plague.

Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of the serpents. How did they tempt the Lord? They tempted Him because they were murmuring against God and against Moses and said, they brought us out into this place to kill us and it's terrible. We ought not to be here.

We ought to go home. And the anger of the Lord was kindled and the serpents came into the camp and began to bite them. Murmuring against God.

Neither murmur ye as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all of these things happened to them as examples that they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. So twice here Paul says, now look, this is all for an example unto you.

It's all typical history. You need to learn from their mistakes. You're not to go after the flesh.

You're not to desire after evil things. You're not to commit fornication. You're not to commit idolatry.

You're not to murmur against God. Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he falls. We are not to presume upon the grace of God.

For there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. But God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it. The Bible says when a man is tempted he shouldn't say that he is tempted of God.

Every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed and lust when it is finished brings forth sin. Temptation begins with the mind, the desire. What do I do with it? Now, the temptations that we have are common to man.

As I'm living in this body I'm going to be subject to certain temptations. The desires of my flesh, the dries of my flesh. That's common to man.

But with that temptation God is faithful to me. He will not allow me to be tempted beyond my limits. He will provide for me the way to escape in order that I will be able to bear it.

But it is important that I take that way of escape. God's not going to force you away from temptation. God isn't going to force you to be good.

When temptation comes there is always an escape route. God always provides the way of escape. And if you fall to temptation it's because you didn't heed the voice of God.

You didn't take the way of escape that He provided. And I can testify of my own life that in every temptation where I fell there was the route of escape. I had had the Word of the Spirit to my heart.

God said, get out of here. Oh, I'll wait just a little bit longer. No, I should have gotten out when the Lord said, get out.

The way of escape was there. And so it was my failure, not God. My sin is my responsibility, not God.

There are people that would like to throw it over on God. Well, God made me this way and I just can't help it, you know. Boy, you blame God for the worst things.

It's my failure. God is faithful. I wasn't.

Wherefore, dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. Run! Get out of there. Now, idolatry is setting up anything in your life or mine before God.

It's putting something in your life before the Lord. That's idolatry. You are wrong if you think of idolatry as having a little idol that you've carved out or someone else has carved out and you've bought and you kneel in front of it and do your little thing before it as you burn candles around it and you pray to it.

No. That will probably be no problem to any of you. Your idolatry is far more apt to have a shiny coat of paint, beautiful upholstery and a turbo engine inside.

Something that gets in your heart, your mind, your life and precedes your walk with God. It becomes more important to you than your walk with God. Something that replaces God in your life.

That's the idol. Flee idolatry. I speak as to wise men.

Judge what I'm telling you. The cup of blessing which we bless. That is, when we gather together at the Lord's table and we take the cup and we bless it.

This cup of blessing that we bless. Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The word communion there is that interesting Greek word *koinonia*. Is it not the oneness that we share with Christ? The communion that we have with Christ? Or the fellowship that we have with Christ? That oneness that we are sharing with Him.

This cup of blessing that we bless. Whereby as I drink, I am identifying myself with Him. For we being many are one bread and one body.

For we are all partakers of the one bread. For the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? So this communion with Jesus Christ, the blood of Christ and the body of Christ. Whereby we become one with Him and whereby we also become one with each other.

As we all eat of the same bread. As we all drink of the same cup. We are becoming one with each other.

Joined together in communion. Joined together in commonness. Joined together in fellowship.

As we are all of us joined together with Jesus. That oneness in the body of Christ. And surely the communion service symbolizes it more graphically than anything else within the church.

All partakers of the same bread. All partakers of the same cup. Becoming one with Him and thus with each other.

Behold Israel after the flesh. Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? Now the idea of bringing in your peace offering and offering it unto God. The whole idea behind it was that of communion with God.

So you bring it in to the priest. He would take and butcher it and would cut a portion of the meat and give it to you. And you'd take it out and roast it.

And then you would sit down and eat it. Now you've brought it and you've offered it to God. The fat and all was taken burnt on the altar and the smoke went up as a sweet smelling savor unto the Lord.

The priest took his portion. But now you have your portion. And with your family, you're sitting there eating this roast beef or this roast lamb.

And as you're eating together, the idea is, hey, God has received a part of this. And I am receiving a part of this. And so I am becoming one with God.

For their whole concept of eating together was that of becoming a part of each other. You see, I take a loaf of bread. I break it.

And I give you a part of it and I take a part of it. And you eat it and I eat it. It's one loaf, but we are both eating from the same loaf.

Maybe we have a bowl of soup here and we're both dipping our bread in the soup and eating it. Now the bread that is nourishing me is also nourishing you. The bread that is being assimilated and becoming a part of the chemistry of my body is also becoming a part of the chemistry of your body.

So the same loaf of bread is becoming part of you as it is assimilated in your body, but it's also becoming a part of me. Therefore, we're a part of each other. Because we are both being strengthened and both of us are assimilating the same loaf of bread.

And they really saw this and it was to them something that didn't need to be explained. It was just an accepted thing. So, when I offer a part of this meat to God and it is burnt on the altar unto the Lord, it's God partaking of it and now I'm eating of it.

So I am becoming one with God. Beautiful thought. Beautiful concept.

And a beautiful awareness of becoming one with God. Now we have that every time we partake of communion. I am becoming a part of Jesus Christ.

He is becoming a part of me as we commune together and as I receive the cup and as I receive the bread. But also, we are becoming a part of each other as we do it. And so Israel after the flesh, when they eat of the sacrifices, they are partakers of the altar.

They are becoming one with God. What say I then? That an idol is anything? Now we're going back to chapter 8 and the whole thing started as he was talking about them eating meat in the house of idols and some weak brother going by and seeing them eating there and thinking, oh, you know, he can do it, then I can do it. And stumbling because his conscience would bother him.

You say you have freedom. And unfortunately, they were exercising this freedom of eating in the temple of the various gods there in Corinth. I have freedom in Christ.

You know, I have liberty and all. And so Paul is coming back to that now. What shall I say then? That an idol is anything? Or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed to demons and not to God.

That is, the pagan sacrifices in the pagan temples are offerings unto the demons. They're not offerings to God. And I would not that you should have koinonia, fellowship, communion with demons.

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. You cannot be partaker of the Lord's table and the table of devils. Do you dare to provoke the Lord to jealousy? Do you think that you are stronger than

He? And so Paul is really coming down on the practice of some of those Corinthians of eating meat in the idols' temples, in the pagan temples that were there in Corinth.

An interesting thing. In these pagan temples, Paul declared that actually the offerings were made unto devils or unto demons. Literally demons.

In Deuteronomy 32, verse 17, actually he said in verse 16, they provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods. With abominations provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils not to God.

To gods whom they knew not. And to new gods that came newly up whom your fathers feared not. And of the rock that begat thee thou art not mindful.

For He has forgotten the God that formed Him. So, the concept is that the worship of these false gods, the worship of these idols, was in reality the worship of demons. There was in Harper's Magazine many years ago an interesting article called, I Saw the King of Hell.

It was taken from the book Through Forbidden Tibet. And the author talks about going with the religious leaders of Tibet in disguise to a ceremony that is held annually or was held annually, where they called forth the various demons. And he describes these demons as they appeared, their forms.

And then he describes as they called forth the King of Hell. It is a very spine-tingling description. Awesome.

A lot of people say, well, you know, all roads lead to God. And those people are so sincere in their worship. Though they don't believe in Jesus, surely God will recognize their sincerity and all.

Because what difference does it make? Confucius, Buddha, or whatever. Aren't we all seeking after God? Well, that isn't the concept that we receive from the Bible. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No man comes to the Father but by Me. Paul said, they are sacrificing unto devils. And in the same token, as you eat of the sacrifices made to God and you become one with God, if you're eating of the sacrifices made to devils, then you're becoming one with the devil, with the demon that is represented in that idol.

And I would not have you to have this koinonia, this fellowship, this communion, this oneness, Paul said, with devils. Therefore, you cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and of the cup of devils. You cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.

Now, he is no doubt thinking of this 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy, the thing that we just quoted or read to you, because again, it says that they provoke the Lord's jealousy in sacrificing the devils. And he said, do we provoke the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than He? Dare we to oppose Him? Now, all things are lawful for me. He comes back to this refrain.

But all things are not expedient. Yes, you may prove that it's alright, you know, that I am living under grace and I believe in Jesus Christ and therefore, it's alright. And you may enter your argument and yes, it may be lawful, but it isn't expedient.

It's going to slow you down. It's going to hinder your progress if you're running in the race run to win and don't take on extra baggage or weight that will slow you down. It's not expedient.

All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. There are things that tear me down and do not build me up. There are things that take me away from Christ and do not bring me closer to Christ.

And my desire is to get close to Him. And therefore, though it may be lawful, you may prove that it is alright, it is taking me away from my fellowship with Him. It isn't building me up in Him or building Him up in me.

Therefore, though it may be lawful, wisdom tells me don't do it. It will slow you down. It will tear you down.

I'm desiring to win the race. I'm desiring to be found in Christ. Built up in Him.

Let no man seek his own, but every man another's profit. Don't just live for yourself. Don't just think about yourself.

But think about others and live for others. Whatsoever is sold in the market, go ahead and eat it. Don't ask questions for your conscience sake.

Now a lot of the meat that was sold in the butcher shops in Corinth were used first in sacrifices in the pagan temples. So when you went to the meat market to buy meat, you say, I'd like a pound of hamburger. Was that hamburger offered as a sacrifice in the temple? Paul said, don't.

Shut up. Don't ask that kind of stuff. Just buy it, take it home and eat it for your conscience sake.

What you don't know won't hurt you. And so for conscience sake, just don't ask questions. Because really, of course, you know, it doesn't matter.

But if you ask and are asking those kind of questions, then you're going to find yourself tripping over your own conscience. So eat. Don't ask questions for the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

Now, if any unbeliever invites you to a feast and you're obligated to go, whatever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. So he sets before you a big steak. Did you offer this meat as a sacrifice to a pagan God? So Paul said, hey, don't ask those questions.

Just eat it. Eat what's set before you. Don't ask the questions for your conscience sake.

Now, if the fellow when he sets it before you say, we offered this to Zeus, then Paul said, don't eat it. Not that it would hurt you, but it might hurt the guy that offered it to you. Seeing your liberty.

So if they volunteer the information, then say, no thank you, so that you're not stumbling him or offending him. So if any man says unto you, this is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat it not for his sake that showed it to you, and for your conscience sake. Now the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, but conscience I say, not always your own, but that of the other.

For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that which I give thanks? Paul said, hey, everything is sanctified with thanksgiving. Lord, just bless this now. I thank you for it.

Then it's sanctified, but yet it's going to hurt someone else. They're going to be stumbled by it. So again, the law of love, not wanting to be an offense, not wanting to hurt the weaker brethren.

Whether therefore you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God. Here's the principle. Now people who have principles don't need laws.

You know, if you're living by the right principles, you don't need rules, you don't need laws. This is the principle. So now we're getting this is what you want to really take note of.

This is the heart of it. Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. And you're right.

If I can do it to the glory of God, I'm right. If I can't do it to the glory of God, then I better not do it. But whatsoever you do, in word or deed, do all to the glory of God.

And give no offense, neither to the Jews or to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God. Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking My own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. And so as Paul said, don't live for your own profit, but for others.

He says this is the way I live. My desire is that people might be saved. And so I live for their sakes, not for my own sake.

Not to satisfy my own flesh. Not to live after my own desires. But I restrict myself.

I live a careful life in order that I might win others to Jesus Christ. And so if that is the goal of my life, to bring others to the Lord, then that will be the governing factor in what I allow or don't allow, what I do or don't do, what I eat or don't eat, what I drink or don't drink. Not to bring an offense.

Walking in love. Thinking of others, not thinking of myself. God help me to win this race and to live in love.

Walking in love. Serving in love. Shall we pray? Again, Father, we're so grateful for these words of wisdom.

Words of guidance. Help us, Lord, that we might now be doers of the Word and not hearers only. God, we want to come into that full fellowship with You.

That fellowship with one another in Jesus Christ. Lord, let Your Holy Spirit just work a special work in our hearts in Jesus' name. And we thank You for it, Father.

Amen. May the hand of the Lord be upon Your life to guide and to direct in all that we do. May God help us to consider Him.

Not whether or not is it right or wrong, but is it pleasing or would it please Him? Is this the best? God help us not to be satisfied with the mediocre, but that we might run to win. Thus, may the Lord be with you today, this week, as we really seek to live a disciplined life for Jesus Christ. Laying aside the flesh, the things of the flesh, the body and its desires.

Keeping it under in order that we might live and walk after the Spirit and the things of the Spirit. The things of the eternal. And thus, may the Lord reward you and bless you.

As you walk in fellowship with Him, may you experience His touch upon your life. In Jesus' name.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-1-corinthians-9-10/>

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