

Chapter 11: Do All to the Glory of God

1 Corinthians 10:1–11:1

In chapter 8–9, Paul identified two of the three major issues surrounding whether a Christian may eat food sacrificed to idols. In chapter 8, Paul dealt with the issue of weaker Christians who do not understand the fullness of their liberty in Christ. In chapter 9, Paul acknowledged that liberties are important, and yet love should lead us to relinquish those liberties in order to lead people to Christ. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul now moves to address the third major issue: the question of when and whether eating food sacrificed to idols qualifies as idolatry. Once Paul deals with this final question, he brings all of these themes together, with a plea that *all* things should be done to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), and toward the good of our neighbor (1 Cor. 10:32–33). Finally, Paul points us to Christ as the ultimate example of loving God and loving our neighbor. Thus, in 1 Corinthians 10:1–11:1, Paul urges us to *be imitators of Christ*.

Written Down for our Instruction (1 Cor. 10:1–13)

The little word “for” in 1 Corinthians 10:1 is critical for understanding Paul’s point in this section. By the conjunction “for,” Paul gives the grounds for what he has just written. In this case, Paul is bolstering his case that, while “all” may run, not “all” will win the prize (1 Cor. 9:24; cf. 10:1–5).¹ Moreover, when Paul wrote about the possibility of being “disqualified,” he was deadly serious (1 Cor. 9:27).² Paul seems to suspect, though, that the Corinthians may not understand how serious he is. For this reason, Paul insists that he is writing precisely because he does not want them to be unaware of the danger of disqualification (1 Cor. 10:1).³ Paul often uses the phrase “I do not want you to be ignorant” to introduce a new, important topic (cf. Rom. 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor. 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8; 1 Thess. 4:13).⁴ Thus far, Paul has primarily insisted against eating food sacrificed to idols on the grounds that this might cause a weaker believer to stumble as a barrier to the gospel (1 Cor. 8:9–13; 9:12, 22–23). Now, Paul begins to lay out a broader case against eating meat sacrificed to idols as being tantamount with the sin of idolatry.⁵

To make his case, Paul appeals to Old Testament history. Even though the Corinthians were largely Gentiles, Paul insists that they are intimately connected with this history by referring to the Israelites as “our fathers” (1 Cor. 10:1).⁶ Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Israelites too benefited from lavish grace of God, but that they were nevertheless ultimately “overthrown in the wilderness” (1 Cor. 10:5). Paul’s basic point is clear and powerful: “It is not enough, therefore, to be recipients of extraordinary favours; it is not enough to begin well. It is only by constant self-denial and vigilance, that the promised reward can be obtained.” By closely examining this text beyond this basic message, however, we will come away with a greater appreciation for God’s extraordinary grace toward his old covenant people *and* with a greater fear of the Lord in regard to our own salvation.

One Covenant of Grace Under Various Dispensations

First, though, we must get a preliminary framework of how God established a single covenant of grace with his people that spanned the entirety of redemptive history. To understand the case Paul makes in v. 1–5, we must peek ahead to Paul’s interpretation in v. 6: “Now these things took place as *examples* [*typoi*; lit., “types”] for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.” By calling these a “type,” Paul is explaining that these were shadowy, veiled events that pointed forward, beyond themselves, to a reality that has been illuminated and fully revealed in Christ. Typology is different from allegory, in that typology preserves the historicity of the event, but then unfolds an additional, spiritual significance beyond the bare, brute, historical facts. Allegory, on the other hand, eliminates (or, at least, *marginalizes*; cf. Gal. 4:24) the significance of the historical facts in order to focus *only* on their spiritual significance. In v. 1–4, Paul is appealing to God’s grace toward Israel in the *historical* realities of the cloud, the sea, the manna, and the water that sprung from the rock. Paul does not sideline the historicity of those events, for his case *depends* on their historicity. Far from ignoring their historicity, Paul is building on it. Paul’s point is not that these historical events were unimportant in themselves, but that God’s grace toward his people in those events went even deeper than the Israelites themselves realized.

The deeper reality, of course, points to God’s unfolding revelation of the hidden mystery of Christ crucified, a mystery predestined before the ages to our glory (1 Cor. 2:7). God’s redemption of Israel out Egypt was magnificently gracious on its own terms by relieving their suffering and taking them to be his people under the covenant mediator Moses. Beyond this historical reality, God was also using the exodus out of Egypt to foreshadow the salvation that he would accomplish through the person and work of his Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, God was not pursuing *one* gracious plan with Israel, and then a *different* gracious plan in Jesus Christ. On the contrary, God’s grace toward Israel was laying a foundation for God’s grace to the whole world through Jesus Christ in the covenant of grace: “There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.”⁸

Still, Paul insists that there is still more for us to recognize in God’s gracious dealings with Israel in the Old Testament. It was not merely that God was providing his people a purely figurative foreshadowing of Christ. Much more, Christ offered himself to them through their baptism into Moses and their spiritual Supper:

This covenant [of grace] was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come; which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the old testament.⁹

Certainly, Christ holds himself forth “in more fullness, evidence and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles” in the time of the gospel (i.e., under the New Testament) through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.¹⁰

Nevertheless, the “sacraments of the old testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the new.”¹¹ Just as Jesus Christ signified and exhibited himself to us in baptism and the Lord’s Supper, so also (Paul argues) Christ signified and exhibited himself to his people in the Old Testament in *their* baptism (under the cloud and in the sea) and in *their* Lord’s Supper (by the manna, and the water from the rock).

Certainly, there were only two sacraments in the Old Testament: circumcision and the Passover meal. God explicitly commanded that his people institute these sacraments as an ordinary, ongoing, perpetual ordinance throughout their generations until they were fulfilled in and abrogated by Christ (Gen. 17:9–14; Ex. 12:14).¹² Then, in the New Testament, there are only two sacraments: baptism and the Lord’s Supper.¹³ Nevertheless, these two sets of sacraments from each testament are so closely related to their counterparts from the other testament that Paul can say that New Testament believers have been circumcised through their baptism (Col. 2:11–12) and that Christ *is* the sacrificed Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), knowing that Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper during the Passover as the Passover’s fulfillment (Matt. 26:17–29; Mark 14:12–25; Luke 22:7–23).¹⁴ In the same way, Paul here observes that the Old Testament Israelites had their own typological baptism and Lord’s Supper at the exodus.¹⁵ Certainly, the Old Testament Israelites were not able to discern the doctrine of Christ’s person and work clearly and fully from any of these sacraments before his advent into the world (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10–12).¹⁶ Nevertheless, the Spirit of God used these sacraments to build up his Old Testament people in their faith in the coming Messiah apart from clear knowledge of Christ.

Typological Baptism (1 Cor. 10:1–2)

So, in real history, God manifested his grace to Israel by bringing them under the cloud and causing them to pass through the sea (1 Cor. 10:1). When the Egyptians pursued Israel to the Red Sea in order to reclaim their manumitted slaves, the “angel of God” moved the pillar of cloud to cut off the Egyptians from the Israelites (Ex. 14:19–20). Then, the Lord divided the Red Sea in order to provide Israel a way of escape from the Egyptians, and, ultimately, to crush the Egyptians when they pursued Israel through the Red Sea (Ex. 14:21–29). Clearly, the cloud and the parted sea offered physical, temporal, worldly benefits to a weary group of fugitive slaves who greatly feared the sight of their former captors marching toward them (Ex. 14:10).

Beyond these temporal benefits, however, Paul recognizes a typological sacrament: “For, though God designed to promote his people’s advantage in respect of the present life, what he had mainly in view was, to declare and manifest himself to be their God, and under that, eternal salvation is comprehended.”¹⁷ Much more than a merely temporal redemption, God used this deliverance as a typological baptism to represent Christ and his benefits, to confirm Israel’s interest in Christ, to cut off Israel from her enemies, and to engage Israel solemnly to his service.¹⁸

It is no wonder, then, that Paul calls this event a “baptism” (1 Cor. 10:2)—not the fuller, more efficacious baptism into Christ that we enjoy under the New Testament, but a typological baptism into Moses, who himself is a type of Christ: “This symbolical baptism united the Israelites to Moses as God’s representative to them, the Old Testament mediator, in whom was foreshadowed Christ, the New Testament eternal Mediator, Deut. 18:18. The deliverance from Egyptian bondage through Moses by this symbolical baptism through the cloud and the sea likewise typifies our deliverance from the bondage of sin and of death through Christ by means of Christian baptism.”¹⁹ To Paul, this temporal deliverance qualifies as a typological baptism because “God had, under a temporal benefit,

manifested himself as a Savior.”²⁰

Typological Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 10:3–4)

In the same way, Paul observes that all the Israelites in the wilderness ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink (1 Cor. 10:3–4). Once again, it is essential that we ground Paul’s statements in historical reality. We must not understand this to mean that what the Israelites ate and drank in the wilderness was a figurative, spiritualized meal, since God provided this food and water precisely to meet their physical, temporal, bodily needs.²¹ Furthermore, Jesus himself makes a sharp distinction between the bread that the Israelites ate in the wilderness and the bread that has come down from heaven (John 6:30–35). The Israelites did not eat and drink Christ merely by eating manna and drinking from the rock in the wilderness. Whenever we deal with sacraments, we must not confound, confuse, or conflate the sign (manna/bread, water/wine) with the reality (Christ).²² The sign is distinct from the reality.

At another level, Paul explains that “they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4). While the food and the drink were not Christ, Paul explains to us that Christ was the one providing them with food and drink. The word “spiritual” most commonly means, “derived from the Spirit.”²³ In this case, Paul insists that these gifts were provided spiritually by Christ himself, the Rock who “accompanied” (a better translation than “followed”) them throughout their journey.²⁴ So, while we may not equate the food and drink with Christ, Paul himself teaches that there is a close connection between the two.²⁵ Christ himself was personally providing for the physical needs of his people; however, he was doing more than that. Christ was also personally providing for their spiritual needs, by holding forth himself to them in this typological Lord’s Supper.

In this way, “the Rock” upon whom Israel depended (cf. Deut. 32:15; Ps. 18:2) was none other than Christ himself.²⁶ The Israelites did not fully understand it, but God was beginning to teach them to trust in Christ as their Rock as Christ fed and watered them in the wilderness. God’s grace toward them in Christ was deeper than they could possibly have recognized at the time.

Overthrown in the Wilderness (1 Cor. 10:5)

It is good and right for us to work through the theological implications of what Paul writes here. Nevertheless, what Paul reveals about the sacraments is only a secondary consideration of this text, not Paul’s primary point. Paul writes about the extraordinary grace of God toward his people in the wilderness not to celebrate it, but to warn the Corinthians from it. Five times in v. 1–4, Paul wrote about how Christ had held forth himself to “all” the people in their baptism, their spiritual food, and their spiritual drink. Now, Paul contrasts the word “all” with the word “most”: “Nevertheless, with *most* of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness” (1 Cor. 10:5).²⁷ As Leon Morris writes, “*Most of them* is a masterly understatement. Of all the hosts of Israel only two men entered Canaan; the rest perished in the wilderness.”²⁸ If the Old Testament people of God so clearly experienced God’s grace, but then displeased God by their faithlessness and disobedience so as to fall dead in the wilderness, why should we think that we will be any better off if we similarly disbelieve and disobey?²⁹ Their “corpses...[were] strewn over the wilderness” because of God’s judgment.³⁰ Why do we expect that we will do better if we do not repent and believe?

Importantly, we must insist that by no means does this suggest that their unfaithfulness nullified

the faithfulness of God in Christ toward them (Rom. 3:3–4). On the contrary, Christ held himself out in perfect faithfulness toward his people through these typological sacraments. The people experienced Christ’s protection, nourishment, and quenching of their physical thirst, but because of their faithlessness they did not benefit spiritually from Christ himself. John Calvin helpfully explains their failure in this way:

Here again it is objected: “If it is true, that hypocrites and wicked persons in that age ate spiritual meat, do unbelievers in the present day partake of the reality in the sacraments?” Some, afraid lest the unbelief of men should seem to detract from the truth of God, teach that the reality is received by the wicked along with the sign. This fear, however, is needless, for the Lord offers, it is true, to the worthy and to the unworthy what he represents, but all are not capable of receiving it. In the meantime, the sacrament does not change its nature, nor does it lose anything of its efficacy. Hence the manna, in relation to God, was spiritual meat even to unbelievers, but because the mouth of unbelievers was but carnal, they did not eat what was given them.³¹

Paul’s warning is clear: let none of us live so as to be disqualified. Not every member of the visible church will be saved, but only those who have been made members of the invisible church by true, saving faith in Christ.³² While good works from self-control do not earn us anything before God, “good works, done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith.”³³ It is not that we must do good works to earn something from God; rather, Paul spurs us on to good works as the fruit and evidence of whether our faith is true and living.

That We Might Not Desire Evil (1 Cor. 10:6)

Paul continues to make his warning by way of appeal to Old Testament history in v. 6, but the point he makes is surprising. As mentioned above, Paul here states that these things (Israel’s baptism and Lord’s Supper) were written down as “types” for us.³⁴ While the ESV translates this word “types” more generally as “examples,” this word describes a “mold” or a “pattern” that subsequent history may follow.³⁵ Of course, to understand Paul’s meaning here, we must observe two warnings. First, by calling these things “types,” Paul is neither undercutting the historicity *or* the spirituality of the Old Testament events.³⁶ He is not spiritualizing these stories by making them mere metaphors for the spiritual life. Neither, though, is Paul downplaying that these were spiritual realities for believers in the Old Testament. It is not as though Old Testament believers dealt with purely physical, bodily, temporal realities, while New Testament believers alone enjoy spiritual realities. Not at all—their baptism and Supper addressed their physical, bodily, temporal needs *and* held forth Christ spiritually to them. Second, Paul offers these typological patterns as warnings to avoid analogous sin, and not as examples to follow.³⁷

The surprising aspect of Paul’s application, then, comes in what Paul warns the Corinthian church to avoid: “so that we might not be desirers [*epithumētas*] of evil, just as those ones also desired [*epethumēsan*]” (1 Cor. 10:6; my translation). Paul writes emphatically and repetitively to warn us about the dangers of *desiring* evil, although our English translations smooth out the repetition of the word “desire”: “that we might not desire evil *as they did*” (1 Cor. 10:6; ESV). In this repetition of the word “desire,” Paul seems to be echoing the Septuagint (Greek) translation of Numbers 11:4: “Now

the rabble that was among them had a strong craving [LXX: *epithumēsen epithumian*]....”³⁸ In this story, the people of Israel complain that they have only manna to eat in the wilderness, a dissatisfying substitute for the many delicacies they had while they lived in Egypt (Num. 11:4–6). This story became the most infamous story of the Bible, a fact reflected by the name the Israelites give to the place where it took place: “Therefore the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah [LXX: *Mnēmata tēs epithumias*; Hb. and Gk. lit., ‘Graves of Desire’], because there they buried the people who had the craving [LXX: *epithumētēn*]” (Num. 11:34).

Paul identifies an issue that is perhaps more problematic than we often realize. Commenting on this passage, Anthony Thiselton writes, “Too often human sin is portrayed more as a matter of committing wrong acts, or of failing to live up to some standard, than of misdirected *desires* that then find expression in these wrong acts and in wrong *attitudes*.”³⁹ Indeed, the same Hebrew word for “desire” that becomes part of the name of the Numbers 11 setting (*ta’āvah*) played a role in enticing Eve in the original sin (“...a delight [*ta’āvah*] to the eyes...”; Gen. 3:6). Even more, the verbal form of this word “desire” is explicitly condemned in the Tenth Commandment: “And you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. And you shall not *desire* [*tit’aveh*] your neighbor’s house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s” (Deut. 5:21). In this light, we see why the Heidelberg Catechism extends the scope of the Tenth Commandment to forbid any desires contrary to God’s word: “not even the slightest thought or desire contrary to any of God’s commandments should ever arise in our heart. Rather, we should always hate all sin with all our heart, and delight in all righteousness.”⁴⁰ Paul warns us in 1 Corinthians 10:6 of a message that is reinforced throughout the Old Testament: God not only cares about what we do, but also about what we desire.

Learning from Israel’s Idolatry (1 Cor. 10:7–10)

We should not lose sight of Paul’s particular purpose for pointing back to these Old Testament texts, though. Paul is warning the Israelites not to desire the idolatrous food of the pagan temples.⁴¹ Indeed, Israel’s specific complaint in Numbers 11 is that they did not have *meat*, but only manna, which forms another parallel to the Corinthian desire for the meat sacrificed to idols.⁴² Just as the Israelites (and Eve) sinned by desiring forbidden food, so Paul is warning the Corinthians not to desire evil, lest they too should be disqualified from receiving the prize of eternal life (1 Cor. 9:24, 27). Paul continues, demonstrating more parallels between Israel’s sin that displeased God in the wilderness, and the sin that is ensnaring the Corinthians.

In v. 7, Paul begins with an explicit warning against idolatry, quoting from the story of Israel’s worship of the golden calf in Exodus 32:6. Importantly, Paul does not directly mention the act of worshipping idols, but the activities connected with idol worship: “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” Notice the emphasis on idolatry as *eating*, a word that strikes right at the idolatrous sin of the Corinthians.⁴³ John Calvin is surely correct when he argues that Paul is subtly rejecting the idea that someone could participate in pagan feasts without necessarily incurring guilt from pagan worship: “He intimates, in short, that no part of idolatry can be touched without contracting pollution, and that those will not escape punishment from the hand of God, who defile themselves with the outward tokens of idolatry.”⁴⁴ The Israelites themselves did not even believe they were committing idolatry, since they were careful to declare that they were worshipping Yahweh, the God who brought them up from the land of Egypt (Ex. 32:4).⁴⁵ The Corinthians also had their

theological justifications for their participation in idolatrous activities (1 Cor. 8:4), but those justifications will not work any better than Israel's did.

In v. 8, Paul identifies another terrible scene of Israel's idolatry from Numbers 25, when the Israelites were yoking themselves in worship to Baal of Peor. Part of their idolatrous worship involved *eating*, which continues to underscore the danger of food connected with idolatry (Num. 25:2). Beyond idolatrous eating, Israel's sin in this event was particularly connected to sexual immorality, and God judged Israel by a plague that destroyed 24,000 of them (Num. 25:9). Paul, however, states that only 23,000 fell in a single day. Now, it is true that ancient people did not give as much attention to specific numbers as we do today, so it is possible that both Moses and Paul are simply giving large, approximated, round numbers.⁴⁶ The problem with simply writing this off as an approximation, though, is that 24,000 is such a more common biblical number, which makes it implausible to think that Paul rounded off to the number 23,000.⁴⁷ Calvin suggests that the precise number fell somewhere in between 23,000 and 24,000, so that Moses rounded up, while Paul rounded down.⁴⁸ Morris suggests that "Paul may be making some allowance for those slain by the judges (Num. 25:5)."⁴⁹

In my opinion, Garland probably offers the best idea, suggesting that Paul is deliberately mixing the (roughly) 20,000 from Numbers 25:9, with the 3,000 who were struck down by the Levites in the aftermath of the golden calf idolatry (Ex. 32:28).⁵⁰ Garland observes that Paul even seems to be picking up the language of Exodus 32:28 when he writes that "twenty-three thousand fell in a single day." This is very close to what Moses wrote: "And that day about three thousand men of the people fell" (Ex. 32:28). Paul is not making a mathematical error; rather, he is using numbers to convey an impressionistic pastiche of disastrous episodes of idolatry from Israel's past. The final product is an impressively somber warning.

In v. 9, Paul alludes to Numbers 21:4–9, when Israel was destroyed by serpents because of their impatient complaining. Once again, however, Paul's application of these Old Testament texts defies simple proof-texting. First, Paul insists that, by doing this, the Israelites put *Christ* to the test. Paul is saying the same thing he said earlier, in v. 4: it was the pre-incarnate Christ himself who accompanied the Israelites through the wilderness.⁵¹ By putting *God* to the test, they were particularly putting the person of *Christ* to the test.⁵² Second, we must ask why Paul categorizes this scene as a *testing* of Christ, since the word "test" appears in many passages about Israel's wilderness wanderings, but not in Numbers 21:4–9.⁵³ Paul may be alluding to Psalm 78:18: "They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved."⁵⁴ Beyond this, the Lord also characterizes Israel's many acts of rebellion against him as putting him "to the test these ten times" (Num. 14:22). Thus, Numbers 21:4–9 is one of the many acts that we should classify as Israel's testing Christ in the wilderness. Third, it is not immediately clear why Paul brings in this story until we remember what the Israelites were complaining about to prompt the Lord to destroy them with serpents: "For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food" (Num. 21:5). Just as the Corinthians were dissatisfied with the food God provided them in the wilderness, so the Corinthians are dissatisfied with the restrictions of Christianity against eating meat sacrificed to idols.⁵⁵

In v. 10, Paul speaks of Israel's grumbling that caused them to be "destroyed by the Destroyer." Early in the wilderness wanderings, Israel grumbled about a lack of water (Ex. 15:24; 17:3) and a lack of food (Ex. 16:2, 7, 8, 9, 12), but in those instances the Lord did not destroy them. On the contrary, the Lord provided for their needs. Later, however, there are two major events in Israel's history

where grumbling led to destruction: Numbers 14:2 (cf. Num. 14:27, 29, 36), when the Israelites grumbled against entering into the Promised Land, and Numbers 16:41 (cf. Num. 16:11; 17:5, 10), when the people of Israel grumbled against the destruction of “the people of the LORD”—that is, the destruction of Korah and his associates, who rebelled against Moses. It is difficult to tell which scene Paul has in mind. In favor of Numbers 14, Fee points out that this is the sin that led to the judgment where the Lord disinherited Israel from the promised land (Num. 14:28–35), which is the overarching warning that Paul is making to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:24, 27; 10:5).⁵⁶ In favor of the Numbers 16, Lenski points to Paul’s emphasis that they were “destroyed by the Destroyer”, which corresponds with “this expression cannot very well refer to the gradual dying in the desert [from Num. 16]. On that day, the Lord sent a plague against Israel that destroyed 14,700 of them (Num. 16:49).”⁵⁷

We do not necessarily need to choose between these two stories, however, As we have seen already, Paul does not always have only one story in mind for each reference he is making in this passage. Here especially, we should note that the word “Destroyer” does not occur in either Numbers 14 or Numbers 16, but is a reference to the tenth plague sent against Egypt (Ex. 12:13, 23). Then, in both Numbers 14:37 and Numbers, 16:46–50, the Lord’s judgment to strike down faithless, disobedient Israelites is classified as a “plague,” which suggests that the same Destroyer who went through Egypt to strike down all the firstborn in that country is again active. In these two events, however, the Destroyer is bringing his plague not against the pagan, foreign, outsiders, but against the Lord’s own, faithless people.

Neither Numbers 14 or Numbers 16 has an explicit reference to food, so there are a couple of possibilities for why Paul would include this reference. Calvin, who argues in favor of the Numbers 16 passage, thinks that Paul is appealing to Moses’ authority in the face of Korah’s rebellion: “Let us, accordingly, bear in mind that we have to do with God, and not with men, if we rise up against the faithful ministers of God, and let us know that this audacity will not go unpunished.”⁵⁸ It is also possible that Paul has in view the plague-like judgment that has broken out among the Corinthians because they have eaten the bread and drunk the cup of the Lord’s Supper in an unworthy manner: “That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died” (1 Cor. 11:30). Regardless, Paul’s general point remains clear: Not all who begin the race by professing faith in Christ will receive the prize of eternal glory. Some, rather, will be disqualified, just as the Israelites were overthrown in the wilderness because their faithlessness and disobedience.

The Paradox of Perseverance (1 Cor. 10:11–12)

In v. 11, Paul once again tells us that “these things” happened to God’s people in the Old Testament as an “example.” This is almost identical to what Paul wrote in v. 6, but with some important differences. First, Paul does not say that these things were *examples* (“types”), but that they “happened typologically” (*typikōs sunebainen*; my translation). The verb “happened” is in the imperfect tense, giving a sense of ongoing, continuing, incomplete action. By the imperfect tense of “happened,” Paul draws our attention to *all* the events narrated through the whole of Scripture, rather than just a few individual, isolated events. By insisting that these events happened “typologically,” Paul teaches us that what the Israelites experienced is representative of what professing Christians experience today, especially when professing Christians apostatize from their faith.⁵⁹ Israel was a *type* of the Church, but at the same time Israel *was* the Church in the Old

Testament.⁶⁰

Still, Paul insists that there is an important difference between Israel and the New Testament Church. The difference is not of kind, but of degree. What Israel experienced was not ultimately or even primarily for them, but for us. Specifically, their experiences were “written down for our instruction” (1 Cor. 10:11). While God revealed himself in at many times and in many ways in the Old Testament, those former means of revelation have ceased now that the Scriptures have been completed to bear witness to God’s Son, Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1–2).⁶¹ God has given us the typological examples of Old Testament Israel for “our instruction”—that is, to strengthen us “against temptations and corruptions.”⁶² While God’s people in the Old Testament lived in anticipation of the coming of Christ, we live by looking back at the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Therefore, when Paul says that upon us “the end of the ages has come,” he means that we are living in the last period of human history: “One series of ages terminated with the coming of Christ; another, which is the last, is now passing.”⁶³ Or, as Gordon Fee puts it, “the old is on its way out, the new has begun (2 Cor. 5:17).”⁶⁴

Therefore, Paul insists, anyone who thinks he stands must beware, lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:12). Paul is confronting the brash confidence of professing Christians who see no problem with participating in the feasts of the pagan temples. These professing Christians may take too much confidence in themselves because they are members of the visible church, or because they believe themselves unquestioningly to be among God’s elect.⁶⁵ Still, it is difficult to tell precisely what Paul means by “fall.” On the one hand, the word “fall” may simply refer to a “fall” into sin.⁶⁶ If this is the meaning, then Paul is encouraging believers to remain vigilant in their ongoing struggle against sin. Those who believe themselves to be strong in themselves may begin to take their eyes off of their deep need for Christ. The first side of the paradox of perseverance is that confidence in our own strength is actually weakness, since it sets us up to more easily slip into sin. (We will see the second side of the paradox of perseverance below, as we study v. 13.)

On the other hand, by “fall,” Paul may mean “perish.” Just as the Israelites in the wilderness perished, so Paul is warning the Corinthians against perishing. Indeed, this was the meaning of the word “fall” just a few verses earlier in 1 Corinthians 10:8 (cf. Ex. 32:28; Num. 14:3; Heb. 4:11).⁶⁷ If “fall” means “perish,” then Paul may have in mind the idea of eternal condemnation of professing believers who do not have true, active, living, saving faith, and will thus be disqualified from receiving the prize of glory (1 Cor. 9:24, 27; cf. Rom. 11:11–12). Their confident assurance arises not from their humble dependence on the promises of God by faith, but on their own prideful, careless negligence.⁶⁸ From this false confidence, they rush unthinkingly into sin, without any concern, not realizing that they are sealing their doom. As David Garland writes, “They did not sit down and coolly calculate the potential consequences of their idolatry and reach the theological conclusion that they were immune to any spiritual repercussions. They did not think that there was any danger at all—like thirsty hikers who drink from a mountain stream, unaware of the debilitating giardia that might lurk in the crystal-clear water.”⁶⁹ By this, Paul certainly does not mean that Christians should subject themselves to endless, morbid introspection.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, true Christians must pay close attention to what Paul is saying, asking if they may be carelessly wandering into sin. Of the two options for interpreting “fall,” this latter interpretation about a warning of condemnation seems to fit most with the context.

A Way of Escape (1 Cor. 10:13)

After providing so many dire warnings, Paul pauses in v. 13 to encourage the Corinthian believers about God’s faithfulness.⁷¹ The temptations that the Corinthians are facing are serious, and the consequences for falling into these sins could be severe; however, these temptations are not impossible for the Corinthians to withstand. In particular, the Corinthians may have been worried about the social and even financial consequences they could face if they refused to take part in the feasts of pagan worship.⁷² Just as Christians today may be ridiculed, boycotted, and even sued for failing to affirm the culture’s values of sexuality, Christians in Corinth faced even greater pressures for failing to take part in their culture’s values of idolatry. Corinthians must not, however, look to their own strength in order to stand firm in the faith. Rather, Christians must look to the Lord’s faithful to sustain us in the midst of temptation. Charles Hodge writes this: “Here, as in 1, 9, and every where else in Scripture, the security of believers is referred neither to the strength of the principle of grace infused into them by regeneration, nor to their own firmness, but to the fidelity of God. He has promised that those given to the Son as his inheritance, should never perish.”⁷³ The second side of the paradox of perseverance is that we are strongest when we are quickest to confess our own weakness, so that we look only to the power of God rather than depending on ourselves.

Participation at the Table (1 Cor. 10:14–22)

From this extensive case from the Old Testament, Paul summarizes the main lesson, and applies it: “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry” (1 Cor. 10:14). This is the second time that Paul has instructed the Corinthians to flee something, after warning them earlier to flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:18).⁷⁴ Just as sexual immorality uniquely entangles us spiritually with another *person*, so also does idolatry entangle us spiritually with another *god*—or, as Paul will clarify later in this chapter, with *demons* (1 Cor. 10:20–21). Paul has not been on a tangent or a digression up to this point in chapter 10, but everything he has written in this chapter has been background to this imperative he issues to the Corinthians.⁷⁵ It is noteworthy to observe that Paul calls the Corinthians “my beloved,” an affectionate touch that softens the blow of Paul’s exhortation, while not in the least softening the seriousness of what Paul has to say.⁷⁶ The imperative “flee” is written as a present tense (as also in 1 Cor. 6:18), which has a durative sense: “continue to flee.”⁷⁷ This imperative is of the utmost importance, so there can be no relaxation from this duty at any point in the Christian life. Nor can there be, as the whole context of this passage makes clear, any dabbling in outward expressions of idolatry, such as by eating food sacrificed to idols. We not only owe God love, adoration, and worship from the depths of our hearts, but we also owe him alone all the outward expressions of our worship.⁷⁸

Participation in Christ (1 Cor. 10:15–17)

Why, though, is food such a concern in this area? In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul appealed to the Corinthians not to eat food sacrificed to idols for the sake of weaker Christians who might be led back into idolatrous worship if they misunderstood the liberty that stronger Christians exercised. In 1 Corinthians 10, though, Paul has been building a case that eating food sacrificed to idols is categorically wrong, even if there are no “weak” Christians to lead astray. Finally, Paul begins to

explain the true problem with such an action. Paul begins with an analogy to the Lord's Supper. So, when Paul urges them to judge for themselves what he is saying, he is not offering them a legitimate opportunity to disagree with his inspired words as an apostle. Rather, by his appeals to the Old Testament and by the analogy to the Lord's Supper he is about to give, he wants them to come to understand the issue for themselves.⁷⁹

So, in v. 16, Paul appeals to the participatory nature of religious feasts: "Each meal creates a relation of *koinōnia* ('fellowship') among the participants and between the participants and the deity honored in the meal. Paul takes this as a commonplace interpretation of such cultic meals. Once the point is granted, his argument is nearly irrefutable: the God who demands exclusive allegiance will not tolerate cultic eating that establishes a bond with any other gods or powers."⁸⁰ To prove this reality, Paul points to the nature of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is not merely a symbolic representation of Christ's broken body and shed blood. Much more than that, to drink the cup and to eat the bread is to *participate* in Christ's broken body and shed blood in some way. This does not mean that we eat Christ's body and drink Christ's blood "carnally and corporally but spiritually, receive, and feed upon, Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death."⁸¹ That is, when we eat the bread and drink the cup, we feed on Christ spiritually, by faith.⁸²

As we study v. 16–17, we must see that Paul is not giving an extended reflection on the nature of the Lord's Supper, so we must not ask these verses to do too much.⁸³ Paul will have more to say about the Lord's Supper even in the very next chapter of this letter. Instead, Paul is making a passing appeal to one aspect of the Lord's Supper to underscore how serious he is that the Corinthians must flee even the idolatry of eating food from the pagan feasts. Still, in this passing appeal, Paul does state a few things that we should carefully observe. First, Paul describes the wine as "the cup of blessing that we bless" (1 Cor. 10:16). This is language borrowed from the Passover Feast, where Jesus originally instituted the Lord's Supper, and it means that the cup is a "cup of blessing" *because* it is consecrated, or set apart from common purposes as a common drink, to holy purposes as a holy drink.⁸⁴ So, this language reflects that the *cup* is blessed, not that the cup blesses those who partake. Furthermore, this in no way teaches that the cup is transformed into the physical blood of Christ, but only that the cup is set apart, according to Christ's instructions, as a sign (i.e., symbol) and seal (i.e., confirmation) of Christ's blood, shed for us.⁸⁵ By partaking of this cup, we share in the *benefits* of the blood of Christ—that is, we are cleansed from our sins, purified from our unrighteousness, and sanctified as holy to the Lord. This is the sense in which we have *fellowship/participation* (*koinōnia*) with Christ's blood.⁸⁶ The cup not only *represents* Christ and his benefits (sign/symbol), but it also confirms (seal) our interest in him.⁸⁷

Second, Paul says that the bread that we break gives us a *participation* in the body of Christ. At the institution of the original Lord's Supper, Jesus himself broke the bread (1 Cor. 11:24). For this reason, the early church often referred to the Lord's Supper as the "breaking of bread" (cf. Acts 2:42; 20:7).⁸⁸ As with our participation in the blood of Christ through cup of blessing, Paul insists that the bread gives us a participation in the body of Christ—that is, a personal interest in all the benefits of Christ's broken body at the cross. Third, Paul appeals to the unity forged between worshipers as they partake together of the Lord's Supper in v. 17. The *many* become *one body* through partaking together of *one bread*. Negatively, this means that, if some in the church are defiled through idolatry, their pollution defiles the whole body as they partake together in the Lord's Supper.⁸⁹ This is where we see most clearly the similarities between the two sins that Paul urges us to flee from, sexual

immorality and idolatry. In both cases, the defilements of a few can pollute the whole body of Christ—that is, the whole church. Just as sexual immorality in even one member of a church acts as leaven to corrupt the whole “lump” of bread (cf. 1 Cor. 5:6–12), so idolatrous eating corrupts the one body of Christ, especially as the body gathers to eat from the one bread of the Lord’s Supper.

While Paul warns against the danger of corporate defilement of the church if members eat food sacrificed to idols, Paul’s words in this verse also point to a more positive aspect of this doctrine. Namely, that as the church partakes of the Lord’s Supper together, God uses that spiritual feast to unite the church together. The fundamental doctrine Paul is teaching is that spiritual feasts are always entangling—not only with the deity being worshiped, but also among the worshipers. When we entangle ourselves with forbidden people or other gods, we sin grievously. When, however, we entangle ourselves with those whom God has given to us, we are blessed. So, while the sexual immorality that entangles believers with a prostitute is something from which we must flee, God commands believers to engage in regular sexual intimacy with their spouses, even if those spouses are unbelievers (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:1–5, 12–16). In the same way, eating food sacrificed to idols entangles us sinfully with not only pagan gods, but also pagan worshipers. Eating the Lord’s Supper, on the other hand, entangles us obediently with our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, in holiness and joy. We are “many,” but the Lord’s Supper is one of the means Christ uses to unite us together as one body in Christ (1 Cor. 7:17; 12:12–31).

Participation in other Sacrifices (1 Cor. 10:18–22)

To underscore this point, Paul instructs the Corinthians to “consider” or “look at” the people of Israel—literally, “Israel according to the flesh” (1 Cor. 10:18). As Paul assumed it obvious that those who partake of the Lord’s Supper participate in the broken body and shed blood of Christ, Paul assumes it obvious that those who partake of Israel’s sacrifices become participants of that altar. Under the Mosaic Law, not all the meat from sacrifices was burned up to the Lord on the altar, but some of the meat was held back for priests and worshipers to eat (Lev. 7:15; 8:31; Deut. 12:18).⁹⁰ This was particularly true of the peace offerings, where the sacrifice did not have to do with seeking atonement for sins (as did the burnt offering, sin offering, and guilt offering), but with celebrating communion with God (Lev. 3; 7:11–36).⁹¹ Thus, when Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel ate and drank as God graciously provided them with a vision of himself, they were celebrating their communion with him by a peace offering (Ex. 24:9–11). Of course, this meal conveyed no sense that they were *eating* God, but only that they were eating *in fellowship* with God. Old Testament worshipers who took ate the peace offerings were participants of true, living, vibrant worship of God.

At this point, Paul recognizes a possible objection: if eating the Lord’s Supper is a fellowship with Christ, and if eating the peace offering in the old covenant was a fellowship with God, then does this mean that eating feasts to idols implies that the gods of the idols are just as real as God and God the Son, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:19)?⁹² Paul quickly rejects this idea with a strong word, the sense of the whole phrase being, “On the contrary, what I claim is this....”⁹³ Specifically, Paul’s claim is that these idolatrous gods are not gods at all, but demons (1 Cor. 10:20a). The language of “demons” may come from the language of the Septuagint (Greek) translation of Psalm 96:5: “All the gods of the nations are demons.”⁹⁴ Beyond this, Paul is making a clear reference to the language of Song of Moses: “*They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that*

had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded....*They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols...*” (Deut. 32:17, 21).⁹⁵ This is a fitting allusion, since Paul warned the Corinthians not to follow in the footsteps of Israel’s extensive idolatry in the wilderness throughout the first half of 1 Corinthians 10, and Moses taught Israel the Song of Moses in order to warn them not to fall back into idolatry when they crossed over the Jordan into the Promised Land (Deut. 31:16–29; 32:44–47). These idols are no gods, for they are, in fact, demons.

Paul, then, insists that the Corinthians must *not* become participants with demons (1 Cor. 10:20b). They “cannot” drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons, and they “cannot” partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons, in the sense that the Lord does not permit it (1 Cor. 10:21). Whether they intend to or not, participating in both tables will provoke the Lord to jealousy.⁹⁶ The word for “provoke...to jealousy” (*parazēloumen*) also comes straight out of the Song of Moses, as seen clearly in the Septuagint (LXX): “*They have made me jealous [LXX: parazēlōsan] with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols...*” (Deut. 32:21, emphasis added).⁹⁷ The Lord makes it clear that idolatry provokes his jealousy in the Second Commandment itself (“for I the LORD your God am a jealous God”; Ex. 20:5), as well as in several other places throughout the Old Testament (Ex. 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 6:14–15; 29:18–20; 32:16, 21; Josh. 24:19–20; 1 Kgs. 14:22–23; Ps. 78:58; Ezek. 8:3–6).⁹⁸ The phrase evokes the idea of a wounded husband, whose bride has been unfaithful to him, “the fiercest of all human passions.”⁹⁹ Paul’s question is haunting: Are we really stronger than the Lord, to withstand the fury of his jealousy over the people he has purchased by the blood of his only Son?

Do All to the Glory of God (1 Cor. 10:23–11:1)

After decisively ruling out participation in pagan feasts as idolatrous, Paul turns his attention to a different set of questions: Under which circumstances may Christians ever eat meat? How does what we eat relate to our Christian liberty? Must Christians be as scrupulous as Jews under the ceremonial law to ascertain the origin of the meat they purchase and eat? In other words, must Christians become “meat inspectors”?¹⁰⁰ To begin to answer these questions, Paul returns to the Corinthian slogan that he addressed in 1 Corinthians 6:12, that “all things are lawful.” As earlier, Paul is affirming the Christian liberty championed in this slogan, but then he gives limitations so that Christians might not abuse their liberty. In the exact same language from 1 Corinthians 6:12, Paul first states that, while all things may be lawful, “not all things are helpful” (1 Cor. 10:23a). Then, where Paul had observed back in 1 Corinthians 6:12 that no Christian should be dominated by anything, Paul now observes that “not all things build up” (1 Cor. 10:23b).

We should notice, then, that Paul does not want to dismantle Christian liberty. Throughout this section, Paul affirms that the Christian’s liberty is never abolished by anyone or anything. Rather than limiting Christian liberty itself, Paul only limits its use to situations and settings where exercising one’s liberty will be helpful and edifying to others.¹⁰¹ Modern Americans cherish our liberty, and we pursue the free exercise of our liberties to ever-increasing extremes. As Paul mentioned earlier, though, doing anything and everything that we please is not true liberty, but is actually a form of slavery, where we are “dominated” by our passions and lusts (1 Cor. 6:12). True Christian liberty certainly includes the freedom to live as we please, within the boundaries of God’s

explicit commandments. True Christian liberty, however, also includes deep, spiritual freedom where we are happy to exercise our rights, and also happy to relinquish them in order to help and to build up others. Paul writes regularly about the mandate Christians have to “build up/edify” the church (1 Cor. 14:3–5, 12, 17, 26; cf. Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 2 Cor. 12:19; 13:10; 1 Thess. 5:11).¹⁰² The Corinthians believed that their “knowledge” and “lawfulness” were the only factors to determine how they should live, but Paul urges them to consider love, helpfulness, and edification (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1).¹⁰³ Thus, no one should seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor (1 Cor. 10:24).

Case Study #1: Meat Sold in the Meat Market (1 Cor. 10:25–26)

To illustrate how Christian liberty interacts with love and concern for the edification of our neighbor, Paul gives two case studies. First, Paul argues that Christians are free to purchase and eat any meat sold in the meat markets (1 Cor. 10:25). The ceremonial law required faithful Jews to search thoroughly into the origins of any meat they purchased.¹⁰⁴ If there was anything unclean about the meat—whether by forbidden contact with other foods, failure to drain blood, or by being tainted through sacrifice to an idol—faithful Jews could not eat the meat. Christians, by contrast, enjoy freedom and liberty from the burdens of the ceremonial law, including the burdens of these food laws.¹⁰⁵ Remember, Paul has just finished arguing that it would be idolatry to eat foods sacrificed to idols *during* the pagan religious feasts.¹⁰⁶ Now, Paul argues that once those idol foods leave the sphere of idol worship and is sold in the common meat market, Christians are free to eat it.¹⁰⁷ The reason is simple: “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (1 Cor. 10:26). Paul quotes Psalm 24:1, which the Jews commonly used as their prayers before meals to acknowledge the Lord’s ownership of all food, and his generosity to share that food with them.¹⁰⁸ Ironically, Paul is using this prayer precisely to justify eating meat that Jews would consider to be ceremonially unclean.¹⁰⁹ In terms of private purchasing and consumption of meat in the common markets, Christian liberty is absolute.

Case Study #2: Meat Served in the Homes of Unbelievers (1 Cor. 10:27–28)

Second, Paul explains the wise use of Christian liberty in contexts where believers and unbelievers mingle socially. Specifically, when an unbeliever invites a believer to dinner, Paul argues that the believer may eat whatever food is served with full liberty of conscience (1 Cor. 10:27). We should note, though, that Paul casually identifies another area where Christian liberty extends beyond the boundaries of the Jewish ceremonial law, for Jews were not permitted to enter into the homes and to eat with unbelieving Gentiles, who were considered unclean (cf. John 18:28; Acts 10).¹¹⁰ Christians have liberty to *go* where they please, and to *eat* where they please—provided they do not commit idolatry by eating food sacrificed to idols within the idol temples. Sacrificial meats that are served in an unbeliever’s private home, however, have “lost their religious character when sold in the meat market,” so that they are no longer idolatrous foods, but ordinary foods that believers can enjoy as they wish.¹¹¹

Still, the case may arise where a believer should not exercise his Christian liberty. If someone informs the believer that the food has, in fact, been offered in sacrifice, the believer should refrain from eating that food (1 Cor. 10:28). It is not entirely clear who Paul’s imagined informant is, whether the host, an unbelieving guest, or a “weak,” believing guest.¹¹² In my judgment, Paul’s concern seems clearly for the conscience of a weak believer who may be present at the meal. Paul is not considered about his own (“my”) conscience if he himself were at the meal, but for he conscience

of the person for who made note of the idolatrous origin of the meat (1 Cor. 10:29). As Lenski points out, this whole section is written in the context of caring for the “weak” (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1–13; 9:22), and in this section, “Paul says nothing whatever about the exercise of our Christian liberty with respect to pagans.”¹¹³ It is absurd to suggest that Paul is concerned about offending the conscience of a pagan by eating pagan sacrifices, so Paul must have in mind weak believers who do not believe they are at liberty to eat food that was ever used in idol sacrifices.

The Preservation of Christian Liberty (1 Cor. 10:29–30)

Lest we misunderstand Paul to think that he has restricted Christian liberty itself, Paul clarifies that our Christian liberty is not determined at all by someone else’s conscience (1 Cor. 10:29). If we partake of food that belongs to God with thankfulness, we should not be denounced for it (1 Cor. 10:30). Nevertheless, while our liberty remains intact, Paul is warning us that we should not exercise that liberty when it may cause damage to a weaker believer. Thus, Paul is returning to the principle he identified earlier: “Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble” (1 Cor. 8:13). The question is not about the extent of our liberty, but the extent of our exercise of liberty. Christians who insist upon exercising their liberty at every moment, without regard to their fellow believers, are not really *free*. Rather, they are in bondage to whatever they are pursuing in the name of liberty. True liberty retains the freedom, but also freely relinquishes the exercise of that freedom when helpful and edifying to the larger body of Christ.

Do All Things to the Glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31)

In 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul summarizes his whole argument from chapter 10: “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Neither participating in idolatrous worship by eating of the sacrifices, nor causing fellow believers to stumble, brings glory to God.¹¹⁴ Against the slogan, “All things are lawful,” Paul offers a more biblical alternative: “All things for the glory of God.”¹¹⁵ By this, Paul broadens the application of this principle beyond the immediate question of eating food sacrificed to idols, into a statement that includes “all” things, in every area of life (“or whatever you do”).¹¹⁶ The ultimate test to evaluate whether any particular action would be right or wrong is not to ask whether it would please us, but whether it would glorify God.¹¹⁷ In every facet of our lives, our first consideration must be whether what we are doing brings honor and glory to God. Indeed, this is the whole purpose for which we were created: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”¹¹⁸

Do All Things for the Advantage of Others (1 Cor. 10:32–33)

As Jesus taught us, the first great commandment is that we must love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and the second commandment is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:37–40). Thus, while our primary consideration must be to ask whether everything we do glorifies God, there is a secondary consideration of whether what we are doing is to the advantage of our neighbor.¹¹⁹ Paul had made this same point only a few verses earlier (1 Cor. 10:23–24). Now, following his rich statement about glorifying God in all areas of life, Paul reiterates the point to show that the principles of loving God and of loving our neighbor are connected in the tightest possible way.¹²⁰

Lenski’s literal translation of verse 32 helps to see that Paul uses the same word “be” here that he

will again in 11:1: “Be devoid of offense as well for Jews, as for Greeks, as for the church of God.”¹²¹ We must *be* devoid of offense to these groups of people, just as we must *be* imitators of Paul (who, in turn, is an imitator of Christ). Paul is not giving a couple of quick instructions in these verses. Rather, he is describing the character and quality of people that we should *become*. Indeed, the specific word Paul chooses may lean more toward a translation of “become” rather than “be” (γίνεσθε; *ginesthe*). In this, Paul is repeating his claim earlier that he has become as a Jew to the Jews, and as a Greek to the Greeks (“those outside the law”), in order to save some (1 Cor. 9:19–22).¹²²

By adding “the church of God,” Paul seems to be summarizing his emphasis since chapter 8 that he would refrain from eating meat if it caused a fellow believers to stumble (1 Cor. 8:13; 9:22; 10:28–30).¹²³ Paul’s aim is not to obey the ceremonial law, to flout the ceremonial law, or to exercise his liberty at any costs; his aim is to see people come to know Christ, and to grow in him.¹²⁴ Thus, Paul organizes his conduct according to the goal of seeking the advantage of others, that they might be saved (1 Cor. 10:33).¹²⁵ This is what Paul means when he says that he tries “to please everyone in everything” he does—not that he is a people pleaser, or that he is willing to violate God’s moral law, but that he is willing to adjust any unessential aspect of his behavior necessary in order to reach people with the gospel.¹²⁶

Be Imitators of Me (1 Cor. 11:1)

Paul’s closing words in this passage may be jarring to us. Why does Paul tell others to imitate *him*, rather than to imitate *Christ* directly? There are a few points to consider to understand Paul’s point correctly. First, Paul elsewhere instructs his readers to imitate him (1 Cor. 4:16; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9), but he also instructs his readers to imitate God according to the example we have in Christ (Eph. 5:1–2; Phil. 2:5).¹²⁷ Second, we should note that Paul is not calling the attention of the Corinthians to himself so much as he is pointing past himself to Christ: “Be imitators of me, *as I am of Christ*.”¹²⁸ That is, he is calling them to do the very thing that he personally practices.¹²⁹ Paul is not doing something extraordinary, then, but simply offering them a pattern for doing what they ought to be doing as they imitate Christ.¹³⁰ As Lenski writes, “Those who imitate Christ have a right to call upon others to imitate them. The point of comparison between Christ and Paul has already been clearly stated: Christ sought not his own advantage but that of others. He came to seek and to save. Let this mind that was in Christ and then in Paul be also in us.”¹³¹ With Paul, all of us should be living our lives in the imitation of Christ, so that we can call others, without shame, to follow *our* own example as disciples of Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Why was Israel’s eating, drinking, and playing idolatrous, even though they were trying to worship Yahweh, the true God of Israel, who brought them out of Egypt (1 Cor. 10:6–10)? Why were the Corinthians guilty of idolatry by eating meat at the pagan temples, even though they didn’t directly worship the idols? What scenes, involvements, relationships, or other influences in your life may defile you spiritually, even if you aren’t directly worshiping idols?
2. We can learn from the instruction we find in these examples of Old Testament history (1 Cor.

10:11)? What have we learned about the patterns of corruption, the deceitfulness of sin, and the weakness of people from these Old Testament stories? What have we learned about God's unchanging character? What have we learned about how God relates to his people? What is one practical lesson you can apply to your own life from these lessons?

3. What does this passage teach us about the fellowship we have with Christ at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:14–22)? What does Paul mean when he says that we have a "participation in the blood of Christ" and a "participation in the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10:16)? What does this mean in your relationship with God *and* with fellow believers at the Lord's Supper (cf. Westminster Larger Catechism, #168–175)? What does it mean for the Lord to be "a jealous God" (cf. Ex. 20:5)?

4. What two criteria do Paul give to us for evaluating everything we do (1 Cor. 10:31–33)? What does it mean to do something "to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31)? How do you determine what will be for the "advantage" of your neighbor" (1 Cor. 10:33)? Would you be willing to tell a fellow believer to imitate you, as you imitate Christ (1 Cor. 11:1)? Why or why not? How might each of us help one another to imitate the example of Christ?

Notes

1. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 170–71.
2. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 139.
3. Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People*, 167–68.
4. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 139.
5. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 446.
6. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 199.
7. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 171.
8. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 7.6.
9. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 7.5.
10. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 7.6.
11. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 27.5.
12. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 19.3.
13. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 27.4.
14. "But we here call attention to an aspect of Scripture data that is often overlooked. The apostle Paul sometimes uses the name of an Old Testament sacrament when speaking about those who have literally received only the New Testament sacrament, or vice versa. He says the Israelites were baptized (1 Cor. 10:2), whereas, of course, they were actually circumcised. He also says the Colossians were circumcised (Col. 2:11), though in actual fact they were baptized. He speaks of the Corinthians as having the Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), though we know that it was the Lord's Supper, and not the Passover, that was observed among them. The Passover became the Lord's Supper once and for all on the night in which our Lord was betrayed (Matt. 26:17–30; Luke 22:15–20)." G. I. Williamson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 2nd ed., (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004), 266–67.
15. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 172.
16. "The interpreter should not make the mistake of supposing that the Old Testament itself interprets these events as sacramental symbols or that Jewish tradition before Paul had conceived of these events as figurative

foreshadowings of future realities. For example, the expression ‘baptized into Moses’ is nowhere to be found in Jewish sources; Paul has coined the phrase on the basis of Christian language.” (Hays, *First Corinthians*, 160.)

17. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 314. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.i.html>>

18. “Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ, and his benefits; and to confirm our interest in him: as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his Word.” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 27.1)

19. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 391.

20. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 314. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.i.html>>

21. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 173.

22. “Farther, when he says that the fathers *ate the same spiritual meat*, he shows, *first*, what is the virtue and efficacy of the Sacraments, and, *secondly*, he declares, that the ancient Sacraments of the Law had the same virtue as ours have at this day. For, if the manna was spiritual food, it follows, that it is not bare emblems that are presented to us in the Sacraments, but that the thing represented is at the same time truly imparted, for God is not a deceiver to feed us with empty fancies. A sign, it is true, *is a sign*, and retains its essence, but, as Papists act a ridiculous part, who dream of transformations, (I know not of what sort,) so it is not for us to separate between the reality and the emblem which God has conjoined. Papists confound the reality and the sign....” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 316–17. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.i.html>>)

23. “One of the most common meanings of the word *spiritual* in Scripture is, *derived from the Spirit*. Spiritual gifts and spiritual blessings are gifts and blessings of which the Spirit is the author. Every thing which God does in nature and in grace, he does by the Spirit. He garnished the heavens by the Spirit; and the Spirit renews the face of the earth. When therefore it is said, God gave them bread from heaven to eat, it means that the Spirit gave it; for God gave it through the Spirit. Thus God is said to renew and sanctify men, because the Spirit of God is the author of regeneration and sanctification. The manna therefore was spiritual food, in the same sense in which the special gifts of God are called spiritual gifts. That is, it was given by the Spirit. It was not natural food, but food miraculously provided. In the same sense, in the next verse, the water is called *spiritual drink*, because miraculously produced.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 173.)

24. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 201.

25. “Papists confound the reality and the sign: profane men, as, for example, Suenckfeldius, and the like, separate the signs from the realities. Let us maintain a middle course, or, in other words, let us observe the connection appointed by the Lord, but still keep them distinct, that we may not mistakingly transfer to the one what belongs to the other.” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 317. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.i.html>>). See also, “There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 27.2)

26. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 140.

27. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 395.

28. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 140.

29. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 497.

30. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary*, 150.

31. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 320. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.i.html>>

32. *Westminster Larger Catechism*, #61.
33. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 16.2.
34. Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People*, 171.
35. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 162.
36. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 328. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.ii.html>>
37. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 499–500.
38. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, trans. John Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 322. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.ii.html>>
39. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 154, original emphasis.
40. *Heidelberg Catechism*, #113.
41. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 176–77.
42. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 460.
43. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 164.
44. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 322–24. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.ii.html>>
45. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 177. The ESV’s translation, “These are your *gods*, O Israel...” is accurate; however, this plural form “gods” is the exact same form used to speak of the one God (*ēlōhīm*), Yahweh, throughout the Old Testament. Therefore, it is probably better to translate the phrase, “This is your God, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” (Ex. 32:4) in light of the fact that they declared the following day to be a “feast to the LORD” (Ex. 32:5).
46. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 204.
47. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 463.
48. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 324. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.ii.html>>
49. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 141.
50. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 462–63.
51. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 504–05.
52. “Nor is it to be wondered that Christ is called the Leader of the Israelitish people. For as God was never propitious to his people except through that Mediator, so he conferred no benefit except through his hand. Farther, the angel who appeared at first to Moses, and was always present with the people during their journeying, is frequently called יהוה, Jehovah. Let us then regard it as a settled point, that that angel was the Son of God, and was even then the guide of the Church of which he was the Head. As to the term *Christ*, from its having a signification that corresponds with his human nature, it was not as yet applicable to the Son of God, but it is assigned to him by the communication of properties, as we read elsewhere, that *the Son of Man came down from heaven*. (John 3:13.)” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 326. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.ii.html>>)
53. The word for “testing” first appears in Genesis 22:1 (“and God *tested* Abraham”), as well as in Ex. 15:25; 16:4 to refer to the *Lord’s* testing Israel, to see whether they would obey: “that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not” (Ex. 16:4). This sense reoccurs after the giving of the Ten Commandments: “Do not *fear*, for God has come to *test* you, that the *fear* of him may be before you, that you may not sin” (Ex. 20:20). (Side note: it is interesting to see how often the word “fear” of the Lord appears as the contrast to testing the Lord, while the fear of man plays such a significant role in leading the Israelites to put the Lord to the test.) Where Abraham succeeded in the test (“...for now I know that you *fear* God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me”; Gen. 22:12), Israel did not. After these stories, it is not Yahweh’s

testing Israel, but Israel's testing Yahweh (Ex. 17:2, 7). Yahweh himself summarizes all the rebellion of Israel as various tests: "...none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have *put me to the test* these ten times, and have not obeyed my voice..." (Num. 14:22; cf., "Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not *fear* the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not *fear* them"; Num. 14:9). Ultimately, Moses declares, "You *shall not put the LORD your God to the test*, as you *tested* him at Massah" (Deut. 6:16; cf. "It is the Lord God you shall *fear*"; Deut. 6:13).

54. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 225–26. My note: I am not sure that Barrett rightly identifies Ps. 78:18 as a proper allusion to Numbers 21, since Ps. 78:10–25 seems to have Ex. 15–17 in mind; however, Ps. 78:26–31 suddenly jumps to Numbers 11, so the psalmist is perhaps, like Paul in 1 Corinthians 10, blending together all these stories. If so, then Num. 21:4–9 would be a legitimate referent of Ps. 78:18, but not the *only*, or even the *primary*, legitimate referent. This, however, gets back to the idea of "put me to the test these ten times..." (Num. 14:22). The various scenes of Israel's rebellion in the wilderness may each be classified as putting the Lord to the test, even if their respective passages do not explicitly identify them as such.

55. "The situation was analogous in Corinth. The Christian profession demanded that the Corinthians should forego the old heathen enjoyments. But instead of rejoicing in their deliverance through Christ the Corinthians were dissatisfied and longed for the old pagan celebrations. It was not so much the participation in pagan sacrificial feasts which tried out the Lord but the dissatisfaction with the restrictions on their new faith." (Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 399.)

56. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 505–06.

57. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 400.

58. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 327. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.ii.html>>

59. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 401.

60. "For that people was a figure of the Christian Church, in such a manner as to be at the same time a true Church. Their condition represented ours in such a manner that there was at the same time, even then, a proper condition of a Church. The promises given to them shadowed forth the gospel in such a way, that they had it included in them. Their sacraments served to prefigure ours in such a way, that they were nevertheless, even for that period, true sacraments, having a present efficacy. In fine, those who at that time made a right use, both of doctrine, and of signs, were endowed with the same spirit of faith as we are." (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 329. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.ii.html>>)

61. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1.1.

62. *Westminster Larger Catechism*, #155.

63. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 180–81.

64. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 507.

65. "False security of salvation commonly rests on the ground of our belonging to a privileged body (the church), or to a privileged class (the elect). Both are equally fallacious. Neither the members of the church nor the elect can be saved unless they persevere in holiness; and they cannot persevere in holiness without continual watchfulness and effort." (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 181.)

66. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 181.

67. "'To fall' in the OT context meant to die (Num. 14:3) and recalls the wretched demise of the desert generation that serves as an enduring warning to the people of God in every age (Heb. 4:11). In Rom. 11:11–12, however, 'stumbling' and 'falling' refer to 'the loss of salvation, not just occasional slips' (Willis 1985b: 157). The Corinthian 'knowers' not only need to watch lest they cause others to stumble and fall (1 Cor. 8:13); they also need to watch lest they fall themselves." (Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 466.)

68. “The Apostle concludes from what goes before, that we must not glory in our beginnings or progress, so as to resign ourselves to carelessness and inactivity. For the Corinthians gloried in their condition in such a way, that, forgetting their weakness, they fell into many crimes. This was a false confidence of such a kind as the Prophets frequently reprove in the Israelitish people. As, however, Papists wrest this passage for the purpose of maintaining their impious doctrine respecting faith, as having constantly doubt connected with it, let us observe that there are two kinds of assurance.

The *one* is that which rests on the promises of God, because a pious conscience feels assured that God will never be wanting to it; and, relying on this unconquerable persuasion, triumphs boldly and intrepidly over Satan and sin, and yet, nevertheless, keeping in mind its own infirmity, casts itself upon God, and with carefulness and anxiety commits itself to him. This kind of assurance is sacred, and is inseparable from faith, as appears from many passages of Scripture, and especially Romans 8:33.

The *other* arises from negligence, when men, puffed up with the gifts that they have, give themselves no concern, as if they were beyond the reach of danger, but rest satisfied with their condition. Hence it is that they are exposed to all the assaults of Satan. This is the kind of assurance which Paul would have the Corinthians to abandon, because he saw that they were satisfied with themselves under the influence of a silly conceit. He does not, however, exhort them to be always anxiously in doubt as to the will of God, or to tremble from uncertainty as to their salvation, as Papists dream.” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 329–30. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.ii.html>>)

69. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 466.

70. “The warning is not designed to instil terror or to paralyse the Corinthians, nor is it a call to introspection. Paul does not cast doubt upon their spiritual status as believers. Such warnings are not a threat to assurance, for those who heed the warnings grow in their assurance.” (Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 207.)

71. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 331. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.iii.html>>

72. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 467–68.

73. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 182.

74. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 209.

75. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 333. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.iii.html>>

76. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 184.

77. “This injunction in no way implies that the Corinthians are already contaminated with idolatry, but it does imply that they are in danger of becoming contaminated with the gravest of all sins, which strikes directly against God. They must keep entirely at a distance from anything and everything of an idolatrous nature.” (Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 406.)

78. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 333. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.iii.html>>

79. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 185.

80. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 167.

81. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 29.7.

82. “...the body and blood of Christ being then, not corporally or carnally, in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet, as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 29.7)

83. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 476.

84. “The phrase, therefore, *the cup of blessing*, so far as the significance of the words is concerned, may be

rendered either—the cup of thanksgiving (the eucharistical cup), or the cup of benediction, the consecrated cup. The latter is no doubt the true meaning, because the explanation immediately follows, *which we bless*. The cup, and not God, is blessed. To take the phrase actively, *the cup which confers blessing* is not only inconsistent with usage, but incompatible with the explanation which immediately follows. The cup of blessing is the cup which we bless. In the Paschal service the cup was called ‘the cup of blessing,’ because a benediction was pronounced over it. The idea of consecration is necessarily included. Wine, as wine, is not the sacramental symbol of Christ’s blood, but only when solemnly consecrated for that purpose. Even our ordinary food is said to ‘be sanctified by the word of God and prayer,’ 1 Tim. 4, 5, because it is set apart by a religious service to the end for which it was appointed. So the cup of blessing is the cup which, by the benediction pronounced over it, is ‘set apart from a common to a sacred use.’” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 187.)

85. “To *bless the cup*, then, is to set it apart for this purpose, that it may be to us an emblem of the blood of Christ. This is done by the word of promise, when believers meet together according to Christ’s appointment to celebrate the remembrance of his death in this Sacrament. The consecration, however, which the Papists make use of, is a kind of sorcery derived from heathens, which has nothing in common with the pure rite observed by Christians. Everything, it is true, that we eat is *sanctified by the word of God*, as Paul himself elsewhere bears witness, (1 Timothy 4:5;) but that blessing is for a different purpose — that our use of the gifts of God may be pure, and may tend to the glory of their Author, and to our advantage. On the other hand, the design of the mystical *blessing* in the Supper is, that the wine may be no longer a common beverage, but set apart for the spiritual nourishment of the soul, while it is an emblem of the blood of Christ.” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 334–35. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.iii.html>>)

86. “The word *κοινωνία*, *communion*, means *participation*, from the verb *κοινωνέω*, *to partake of*; in Heb. 2, 14, it is said, Christ took part of flesh and blood. Rom. 15, 17, the Gentiles took part in the spiritual blessings of the Jews. Hence we have such expressions in the following: participation of his Son, 1 Cor. 1, 9; participation of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 13, 13. Phil. 2, 1; participation of the ministry, 2 Cor. 8, 4; of the gospel, Phil. 1, 5; of sufferings, Phil. 3, 5. Of course the nature of this participation depends on the nature of its object. participation of Christ is sharing in his Spirit, character, sufferings and glory; participation of the gospel is participation of its benefits; and thus participation of the blood of Christ is partaking of its benefits. This passage affords not the slightest ground for the Romish or Lutheran doctrine of participation of the substance of Christ’s body and blood. When in 1, 9 it is said, ‘We are called into the fellowship or participation of his Son,’ it is not of the substance of the God-head that we partake. And when the Apostle John says, ‘We have fellowship one with another,’ i.e. we are (*κοινωνοί*) partners one of another, 1 John 1, 7, he does not mean that we partake of each other’s corporeal substance. To share in a sacrifice offered in our behalf is to share in its efficacy; and as Christ’s blood means his sacrificial blood, to partake of his blood no more means to partake of his literal blood, than when it is said his blood cleanses from all sin, it is meant that his literal corporeal blood has this cleansing efficacy. When we are said to receive the sprinkling of his blood, 1 Pet. 1, 1, it does not mean his literal blood.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 188–89.)

87. “Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ, and his benefits; and to confirm our interest in him: as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his Word.” *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 27.1.

88. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 189–90.

89. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 211.

90. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 191.

91. Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006), 180.

92. “Now there was a contrast that remained to be made — that if the sacred rites appointed by God sanctify those who observe them, pollution, on the other hand, is contracted from the sacred rites rendered to idols. For it is God alone that sanctifies, and hence all strange gods pollute. Again, if mysteries unite and connect believers with God, it follows, that the wicked are in like manner introduced by their superstitious rites into fellowship with idols. But the Apostle, before proceeding to this, answers by an *anthypophora* (anticipation) a question that might be proposed by way of objection.” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 337. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.iii.html>>)
93. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 415.
94. In the numbering of the Septuagint, this is Psalm 95:5: “ὅτι πάντες οἱ θεοὶ τῶν ἔθνῶν δαιμόνια.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 193.)
95. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 169–70.
96. “A man need not intend to burn himself when he puts his hand into the fire; or to pollute his soul when he frequents the haunts of vice.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 194.)
97. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 417.
98. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 212–13.
99. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 195.
100. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 490.
101. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 341–42. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.iv.html>>
102. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 175.
103. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 526–27.
104. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 240.
105. “...under the new testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected....” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 20.1)
106. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 197–98.
107. “Paul is not a dualist. The whole creation belongs to God, not part to God and part to idols....Idol food loses its character as idol food as soon as it leaves the idol's arena and the idolater's purposes.” (Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 492.)
108. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 198.
109. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 531–32.
110. Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People*, 187.
111. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 199.
112. “Many early commentators suggested that the warning ‘This has been offered in sacrifice’ was uttered by a thoughtful Gentile host, or by one of the Gentile guests, probably out of respect for Christian sensitivities that they may already have encountered. In this case, it would be a thoughtless rebuff to such courtesy to eat, as well as needlessly making the other scrupulous Christians look overly earnest. More recently many have argued that the warning came from a fellow Christian who would be uncomfortable about eating food sacrificed to idols. In this case, the second of the two considerations identified above would still apply. They are not to be shown up or demeaned by some supposedly more ‘liberal’ behavior on the part of the Christian whom Paul is addressing.” (Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 165.)
113. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 421.
114. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 244.
115. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 178–79.
116. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 425.
117. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 500.
118. *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, #1.

119. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 347. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.v.html>>
120. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 218.
121. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 425. My emphasis.
122. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 538–39.
123. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 202.
124. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 244–45.
125. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 166.
126. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 347–48. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xvii.v.html>>
127. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 246.
128. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 147.
129. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 350. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xviii.i.html>>
130. “The *formal cause* arises from following the example of Paul, which he, in turn, derives from the way of Christ (11:1).” (Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 166.)
131. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 428.