

Depravity: Idolatry, part 3

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[0 : 0 0] So we're in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, 1 Corinthians chapter 10, and what I want to do is I want to just bring us back together to kind of big picture, what is this section, what is this chapter going to be about, because chapter 8, 9, and 10 are a section that run together.

And so let me give you an illustration. Now, I just have to say up front, this is a fictitious illustration. I have to say that because last night when I used it, somebody said, did that really happen?

I went, no, that didn't really happen. So this didn't really happen, but I just want you to understand the context from a modern sort of setting of what's going on here at Corinth with these Christians. Imagine when we, well, when we lived in Port Lavaca, we had Mormon missionaries who came to our house all the time, right? You recognize them because they have bicycles, ties, and white shirts. And so they would come by, and they're always in twos, and I would try to take some time to talk to them, you know, and I asked them lots of questions, and I'd bring out chairs, we'd sit on the front porch, I'd give them a bottle of water, and I would just have a good old time talking to them because, you know, I just understand what I believe and what the Bible says, and so I'm good with having a conversation with them.

And the illustration is, imagine for a moment that I have witnessed to one of these missionaries, and he's become a Christian.

[1 : 2 8] And in the process, you know, he's super excited, wanting to share the gospel with other people. He's coming to my house, we're doing some discipleship. In the meantime, I also have another friend who has decided to convert to Mormonism, and he's invited me to his baptism.

So, knowing that they don't really worship any god because whatever god they say exists doesn't exist, I go like, sure, yeah, I'll come watch you get a bath.

That's weird, but I'll do that. And so, I get out of my car at the Mormon steakhouse. Now, in case you don't know, they don't call their church a church, they call it a steakhouse.

S-T-A-K-E, okay? Like you've staked out the land, okay? They call it a steakhouse. So, I get out of my car at the steakhouse, and across the road is the former missionary with signs saying, you don't worship the true god, trying to witness to these Mormons, and he sees me get out of my car to go in the building.

Now, is he going to be confused? Yeah. That's exactly what was going on in Corinth, right? These Christians, some of these Christians who thought that they were super spiritual, they're going to the barbecue to Zeus, while recent converts from Zeus are watching this happen, and they're confused.

[2 : 5 8] And in chapter 8, Paul's already had this topic, already had this conversation with him, and they've written him a letter. And in chapter 8, it's almost like they said to him, well, it's not hurting anybody.

And so, he answers them and says, you are violating the younger, weaker brother's conscience. You don't need to be a stumbling block to them by going and participating in this.

Well, it's like chapter 9. It's almost like they said, well, who do you think you are to tell us what to do? And so, he spends chapter 9 defending his apostleship. I really am an apostle, and you ought to listen to me.

When we get to chapter 10, it's almost as though what they're saying is, well, it's not really what you think it is. And he says, oh, it is exactly what I think it is, and your theology has led you into idolatry. And so, he spends the chapter talking about idolatry, how to get out of idolatry. And he does it by going through and sort of hinting at their bad theology along the way.

[4 : 0 6] And so, he tells them these three things about idolatry. That idolatry is dangerous, demonic, and avoidable. That idolatry is dangerous, demonic, and avoidable.

And so, I want us to take a look at those three things. And along the way, we'll kind of get a glimpse of what their bad theology is as well. So, we're going to start in chapter 10, verse 1.

The first section is through verse 13, and here's the word of the Lord. For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink.

For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not pleased. For they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Now, these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were.

[5 : 18] As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and 23,000 fell in a single day.

We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now, these things happened to them as an example.

But they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Now, therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability. But with the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it.

Now, I've titled this section, Idolatry is Dangerous, and we'll get to that. But we need to look first at their theology. And it won't take us very long to do so.

[6 : 22] But basically, their theology that they have wrong is that they don't think that the Old Testament is applicable to them. If they had been reading the Old Testament, and they had seen these things, the danger of idolatry for Israel, they would have recognized the danger of idolatry for themselves.

But because they haven't been looking at this, Paul's got to go back and recount this and tell them, so that they understand just how dangerous this is. And so that's what he does.

He wants them to understand that the Old Testament is Christian Scripture. The Old Testament is Christian Scripture. Now, here's a couple ways we can understand that.

Number one, you look at verse 1, and he says, our fathers. He's including himself as well as these Gentile Christians in our fathers.

Let me say it another way. The Jews, in Moses' time, are called the fathers of these Christians in this Gentile church.

[7 : 32] Those Jewish fathers are not just fathers for the Jews, but they're fathers for the Gentiles as well. What happened to them, he goes on to tell us in another verse down below, that this was written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages has come.

So, the Old Testament is Christian Scripture. And what he does is he takes them through the story of what happens. He just makes reference to things in order to show them the danger.

Do you all recognize some of these stories that happened? What is being under the cloud? Do you know what being under the cloud is? What's that story? Or what's that making reference to?

Right. Yeah. That's right. Right. A pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire led them as they went, because sometimes they walked in the nighttime, right?

So, that's what that's making reference to. What about pass through the sea? Red Sea. That's right. That's crossing the Red Sea. Okay. Let's skip the baptized into Moses for just a second.

[8 : 47] Let's talk about they ate the same spiritual food. That's the manna. And what about drank the same spiritual drink? And the water and the rock?

Okay. So, now there's two parts to that story, right? First time he hits the rock because God tells him to. The second time God tells him to speak to the rock and he doesn't.

He hits the rock. And that's what made it so that Moses didn't go into the promised land, right?

Okay. So, the point is that he's making reference to all these things. He even talks about being baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

And I think what he's referring to is just how they became one, one nation or one underneath Moses' leadership. Moses is talked about in the book of Hebrews as being a mediator of a covenant like Christ.

And so, because he's a mediator, he is then the representative of God's people. So, when they went through the sea and as they're in the pillar of cloud, that was an emblem of baptism and being joined up with him, right?

[9 : 56] Because baptism is this idea of identification, right? We know that it means to dip. But I just want you to think of it this way. I can have ketchup and I can have a fry.

But when I baptize that fry, I have something completely different and wonderful, right? So, it's that oneness. It's that identification, right? Coming together.

So, that's his point. Now, he goes on. And the reason he builds all of this is because he wants them to understand, you don't need to follow what they did.

Instead, you need to follow them as an example, which is the word for type. A type is like a shadow and substance, right? He's just saying this was an example for you to watch so you would know how to live.

And look how many are destroyed because of idolatry, right? All of these sins are idolatry in some form or fashion. 23,000 destroyed by the serpents, destroyed by the destroyer.

[10 : 56] So, the point is that they should have recognized that idolatry is very dangerous to us. But because they don't believe the Old Testament was applicable to them, they didn't have that information to be able to see.

And there are so many Christians out there today that because they don't think the Old Testament is applicable to them, they miss a ton of things that we're supposed to know and understand because the New Testament is built upon the Old Testament.

Let me just illustrate it this way. And I've done this before, but if this room were just full of tables and chairs and you couldn't see any light coming from outside, you know, a real pitch black kind of place, like, you know, the Natural Bridge Caverns or something like that, when it's completely dark, you can't see anything.

You take one candle and you put it in the middle of the room. And eventually, you'll be able to see some things, but you won't be able to see everything, right?

What you need is for someone to walk over there and flip on the switch. The Old Testament is the candle in the middle of the room. The room doesn't change from being dark to being having the candle to full light.

[12 : 16] The truth is the truth. The Old Testament lit up some of that truth. And when the New Testament comes, when Jesus comes, somebody flipped on the lights. And everything that was sort of dark and whatever and not a mystery now becomes fully revealed in the New Testament.

So as Christians, we need to have both the Old and New Testament as a part of our diet as we read Scripture. And I know reading the Old Testament can be difficult, but I want to give you three things that I think will help you read the Old Testament.

Okay? The first is that you must believe it applies to you. You got to believe it applies to you. If you don't believe that the Old Testament applies to you, you're not going to work as hard to read it.

If you think that's just for the Jews, you're just not going to read it as diligently as you should. The second thing is that you need to understand it like a Jew. In other words, you got to understand it as the audience that it was originally written to.

Moses wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and he wrote it to God's people. Why did they need to know these things? They experienced these things. He was wanting them to have a record so they could go back and look at it.

[13 : 31] And for subsequent generations to go back and look at it. Why? Well, because he's going to reveal to them God's character, God's plan, and God's purposes. It shows God's plan, God's character, and God's purposes throughout.

So as you're reading something from the Old Testament, this is not the only thing, but this is just a high-level way to do this, right? Look at and read that and say, what does this reveal to me about God's character, God's plan, and God's purposes?

Because the other thing is that then you're going to go to the New Testament, and you're going to search for that bigger clarity, right? That more fully revealed clarity of God's character, God's plan, and God's purpose.

Let me just give you an illustration that we had from last week. Last week, we're reading about Paul's defense of his apostleship, and he's talking about that it's right for a person who preaches the gospel to live by the gospel.

In other words, it's good and right to pay someone a salary in order to do the thing that they're doing in spreading the gospel. And he quotes from the Old Testament. Do you remember what the verse was that he quoted from the Old Testament?

[14 : 45] It was from Deuteronomy 25, where he spoke about, do not muzzle an ox as it threshes the grain. And then what does Paul say?

Was God concerned about the ox? He says, no, God was concerned about us. In other words, the principle, because you wouldn't do that to an animal, you know, a beast, a bird that you're using, you wouldn't do that to him.

God's purposes, God's character is that he cares for his people. He wants them to be able to prosper, including the oxen. But that principle gets greater clarity as Paul takes and uses it to talk about that people who preach the gospel should be paid.

Does that make sense? It's that greater clarity. Taking something that's kind of like, what? Because if you were to go read Deuteronomy on your own, you'd be like, okay, well, I don't have any oxen, so I don't care.

But if you take your time to think, well, what did that set up? It set up a principle. It set up a kind of a way of thinking. And Paul uses that and gives us greater clarity about how to think about that.

[15 : 52] So I don't know if that will help you or not, but read the Old Testament, okay? Read the Old Testament. The second thing that kind of comes out of this section, and Paul ends this section with this, is dealing with your idolatry.

Fighting against the temptation to idolatry. Verse 12 and 13. Now, this is kind of a famous verse. Let me read it again, particularly verse 13.

He says, no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation will also provide a way of escape that you may be able to endure it.

Now, where have you heard something like that? What have you heard that sounds similar to that? God, that's exactly right.

When people say, God would not give you more than you can handle, generally we're talking about issues of suffering. And that comes directly from this verse.

[16 : 58] But the problem is, this verse is not talking about suffering. This verse is talking about temptation to sin. Because let me just say this. This is a little bit of a rabbit.

I'll just say this, and we'll move on. But if God never gives you more suffering than you can handle, then what good is God to you?

He doesn't help you get through the suffering, if that's the case. You're getting through it on your own. And that's never been in the intention. And I don't even think that's the intention of people who started saying that.

But the point is, the point is, is that God will always give us more than we can handle when it comes to suffering, so that we run to him constantly. Right? But when it comes to temptation to sin, notice what he's saying.

He's saying he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, he'll also provide a way of escape. So here's the way that I sort of lay this out and think about this in my head in terms of fighting against that temptation to sin.

[18 : 01] Because here you got this spiritual Christian at Corinth, and I'm imagining him walking down, and he's hearing the sounds of festivity.

He's smelling the brisket on the barbecue that was just sacrificed to Zeus, and he's tempted to go. Now, he might think to himself, oh, well, I'm not going to actually ever worship Zeus.

I could be in the middle of Zeus worship and not really get caught up in it because I'm super spiritual. Verse 12, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

Right? So you got to realize that you could fall. You got to realize that temptation is not unique. This is the thing that so many of us deal with when something happens in our life and we have this particular temptation that really takes us down.

We have a tendency to think nobody's been through what I'm going through. Nobody's experienced this kind of temptation. And when you think that, then you think that there's no solution.

[19 : 07] But it's not unique. Matter of fact, Scripture teaches us that Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are yet without sin. And so then we have to remember that God is faithful, and that is that he's faithful not to let us be tempted beyond what we can handle with his help, but also he provides

a way of escape.

And so here's this super Christian, right? He's being tempted to go into the barbecue, but then he sees the young Christian walking across his path. He may not realize it, but that young Christian walking by at the same moment is a moment for him to get out of that temptation.

That's the way out. That's the way out. See, when we're tempted to sin, we have to have this knee-jerk prayer that says, God, please help me. And I have seen God in my life over and over and over again that when I've been faithful to look to his faithfulness to provide that way of escape, that way of escape has always been right there.

I've seen it because he provides it. I just have to have my eyes open to see it. And so because idolatry is dangerous, we've got to fight against it, and we fight against it by leaning upon God in this.

All right, that's the first point. That took longer than the other two will take. So let me pause and see if you've got any questions or anything you need clarity on.

[20 : 23] Thank you.

That's exactly right. Anybody else? All right. Well, let's talk then secondly that idolatry is demonic. It's demonic. And Paul's going to say that straight out. Listen to what he says in the beginning of verse 14. He says, Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to sensible people.

Judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there's one bread, we who are many are one body.

For we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel. Are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? What do I imply then?

[21 : 42] That food offered to idols is anything? Or that an idol is anything? No. No, I imply that what pagan sacrifice they offer to demons. And not to God.

I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy?

Are we stronger than he? It seems to me that the problem that the Corinthians had is that they just didn't understand the nature of the Lord's Supper and the oneness that comes about from that.

And because of that, they didn't see any contradiction in taking of the Lord's Supper and eating meat sacrificed to Zeus. They just didn't see the contradiction at all.

And so what he does is he lays out this thought about the Lord's Supper. And I want us to take a look at that because what he says, what he says about the Lord's Supper is that it's a oneness, if you will.

[22 : 50] Right? Back up just a second. The idea that when we take and we take the cup, the cup of blessing, we're participating in the blood of Christ.

That word participating is the word for, that you see in the scriptures elsewhere, partnership, fellowship. It's we have a fellowship because we've committed together.

So there's this unity of mind. There's this harmony. There's this mutual commitment to one another. There's this oneness, if you will. Right? Baptists have often, and for a long time, called the Lord's Supper communion because it means to be one with.

Right? That's the reason that they call it communion is because of this verse right here, that it is a oneness, that when I drink that cup, and I drink that juice, even though it's not real blood.

It doesn't turn into blood or anything like that. It doesn't even, okay, I won't go there. But what's happening is I am refreshing my soul because of faith, and I am seeing in that cup the blood of Christ purchasing for me all the promises of the new covenant.

[24 : 11] And so it becomes a refreshing thing. Now, what happens is that if you don't do this with faith, you're just drinking something. It doesn't really mean anything, right?

And that's what Paul's getting at is that you've got to have a mindset that understands what's happening here spiritually. Talk about eating the bread. You're nourishing your soul upon the death of Christ.

As you look at his death, as you think about what he did, as you think about how he paid for you, when you and I take the Lord's Supper, we're nourishing our souls by faith as we take that in.

Think about being in a Bible study, a Sunday morning service, a revival service, or even maybe in your quiet time, or maybe some, you know, you and two or three other people, and something is

read from the Word, and it's explained in such a way that, like, you can tell the Holy Spirit is just nailing you, right?

And you might even have this moment of, like, ba-da-da-da, you know, your brain opens up, your whole soul opens up, and you're going, like, God! Like, you know what I'm saying?

[25 : 24] You know what I'm talking about? Am I the only one that has that? That moment happens because God in his providence is bringing about truth, and in your heart, the Spirit is bringing your faith to believe, and you are having your mind illuminated by the Holy Spirit in that moment to see such a thing, and those are sweet moments.

Just the same way, the taking of the Lord's Supper is a visual sermon that we should be nourishing our souls on weekly, you know?

Well, weekly or often, you know? A lot of churches do it weekly. Maybe that's a good idea, but... He goes on to talk about that we're all one together because there's one bread, and there's a lot of churches that will use just one loaf, and everybody pinches off of it, right?

I'm okay with it being separate pieces of bread. It all came from one loaf. We just tore it apart ahead of time. But the point of that is that there's a oneness here among us in the similar way that there's a oneness between me and Christ because he uses the same word.

He uses that word for fellowship, the koinonia, right? So I have koinonia with his blood and with his body, and I have koinonia with you, which is why I am not in favor of the Lord's Supper being something that's done just two or three individuals or in somebody's home separately.

[26 : 53] It's something that we should do as a body because it shows our oneness, right? It leans on that oneness. And so Paul, in dealing with that and kind of correcting their theology, then goes on to say, now here's the problem.

The problem is that you're also going to the temple and you're eating barbecue to Zeus and you're being one with really a demon. What's behind the idolatry and the paganism of all these other religions?

It really is demonic. It's demonic. You know, when you think about these stories of, the mythological stories of, say, like Homer and all these kinds of things, and you've got all these crazy stories and these Hercules with this superhuman strength, you know, a lot of times we want to say to ourselves as Western-minded people, oh, you know, that was all fake.

They just made all that stuff up. It's like, maybe they didn't. Maybe it was demonic. You know what I'm saying? And maybe there is a bit of truth in there. Maybe there was a Zeus and it was somebody who was possessed or it could have been all...

That's as far as I will go because there's a lot of things we could talk about. They're not... I can't support it scripturally, but my point is is that Paul tells us that what's behind that aisle is demonic.

[28 : 18] And so we've got to make sure then that as we look at idolatry and we think about idolatry in our own lives, that there really is a Satan.

There really are demons. And generally, most of us are taught that Satan and demons are fallen angels. Okay? That's what most of us are taught and I think that's probably a pretty good way of saying that.

The other ideas out there, there's a couple of them that have some merit, but the point is is that there is a spiritual force out there opposed to God in every way and Satan is...

We are told as the devil, like in 1 Peter chapter 5, that he prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Now Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, so what you have is you have a wounded devil now who one day is going to be released, and when he does, when he is released, he will amass a worldwide army against the church of the living God.

Right now he can't do that. All he can do now is just mess with individuals. And one day he will be dealt with. And yeah, there's all kinds of things that I think have demonic origin.

[29 : 35] The scriptures give us this idea that it's a demonic origin that we shouldn't be involved in. You know, we can jump into the entire section of stuff dealing with witchcraft and astrology and those kinds of things.

Like I don't think Christians ought to be reading their horoscope. You don't need to go read tarot cards. You don't need to be having seances or fortune tellers. They'll be playing with Ouija boards either. Right?

I mean, I think this is pretty easy, low-hanging fruit for us to really think about. But I think there's another way in which we often end up sort of on a demonic side.

And I want you to think about this. Jesus asks his disciples, who do people say that I am? Well, you're the Christ, the Son of the living God. And he tells Peter, flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you, but my Father who's in heaven. On this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail.

Right? And he goes on, has this little bit more that he talks about with the keys of the kingdom and this kind of thing. And the very next thing that happens is he says, they're going to come and take the Son of Man and they're going to kill him in three days who will rise from the dead.

[30 : 37] And what does Peter do? Oh, no, no, no, no, no. You are not going to do that. And Jesus rebukes Peter. What does, how does Jesus rebuke Peter? Get behind me, Satan.

I don't think that Peter was possessed, but I think that when we are diametrically opposed to the revealed will of God, that is demonic in adjective.

It's demonic in its field. When we are diametrically opposed, it's one thing for me to be tempted, wanting to do the right thing, but I fall into temptation. That's one thing.

But when I am just absolutely, completely, entirely, square on, opposed to the revealed will of God, then Jesus could say to me too, get behind me, Satan.

And so we want to avoid any kind of idolatry. We want to avoid anything that disregards God's revealed will because it is going to be demonic.

[31 : 45] The second thing that I think that comes out of this is just treasuring the oneness with Christ and his church. We need to treasure that oneness that we have with Christ and with the church because there is a big call in our culture to just sort of coalesce together religiously and to make a big cohesive drop of religious goo.

And I remember at 9-11 when you saw all these various religions getting up there and all offering their blessings. Back in Victoria, there's a mosque in Victoria.

It caught fire. Then it got repaired and as they were going to reopen the mosque, there were people from various Christian denominations there to pray blessings upon the reopening of the mosque.

And I'm just going, are you cuckoo? We should treasure the oneness we have in Christ and with the church universal, but we don't have a oneness with people who deny who Jesus Christ is.

We can't have a oneness with them because our oneness with each other comes from our oneness with Christ. And so even some church denominations that begin to deny things, I mean, there are people who claim to be Christians who deny the resurrection of Christ.

[33 : 13] So we want to treasure that oneness and find it in any place that we can, but we have to be careful with whom we're joining together.

All right. That's, that is, that's, any questions about that point? And then I'm going to get to our third one. And then, I'd like to comment in the mighty men, .

...

. . Yeah, I actually think there's a pretty good connection there, but I just feel like it's way too broad and deep for us to run into today.

But, yeah, no, I agree with you. I agree with you. All right, let's take a look at this last thing. It's that idolatry is avoidable. And let's kind of see what he has to say here.

[34 : 24] It begins in verse 23. All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good but the good of his neighbor.

Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. If any one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you're disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience.

But if someone says to you, this has been offered in sacrifice, then do not eat it for the sake of the one who informed you and for the sake of conscience.

I don't mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God. Just as I try to please everyone and everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

[35 : 34] So Paul kind of returns to this idea of Christian freedom here at the end. That's what chapter 8 kind of started with was the idea of Christian freedom.

And he starts with their theology that I can do anything I want to and it doesn't matter. And he's saying, well, you have freedom, but you've got to, that freedom has got to be guided by certain guardrails, right?

And those guardrails are basically these, right? Number one, you've got to seek the good of your neighbor. And that's that whole thing that as you're thinking about the Corinthians, they didn't care if those young converts got confused by their actions of going to the temple.

Now they shouldn't have gone to the temple because that's also dangerous and it's a part of this demonic thing. But also it's not loving to them either. So they've got a double whammy on them, but he's just, he's telling them, listen, this thing of Christian freedom, yes, we're free to do certain things, but you've got to do things for the good of your neighbor.

Things that build them up, things that encourage them, things that help them. We are not free to just think about ourselves. We have to be proactive in thinking about others.

[36 : 52] Then he gives this interesting section here, and I don't know what to make of it other than to just walk through it. But this whole section about how to kind of get along in a pluralistic world, you know, what do you do?

Because you've got a lot of little things, okay? So obviously you can't go to the temple. I think chapter 8, verse 10, and chapter 10, verse 20 about being demons.

I think that the big idea is that you cannot participate in worship with other people. So if they're doing an act of worship, you can't be a part of that act of worship.

That's why I don't think that I could stand next to a Muslim and we both pray for something because I just, it's an act of worship, right? But then he starts talking about, okay, so you're in the meat market and you're about to buy some meat.

And looking at all this meat, you're going like, hmm, this is good meat. Let's buy some meat. And a Christian comes up next to you and says, you know, that was a sacrifice to Zeus yesterday. And you kind of go like, oh, okay, well, I'm not going to buy that meat.

[37 : 56] I'm going to walk away. Okay. Well, then what if somebody who's lost, what if a lost person invites you to dinner? He says, don't ask any questions about where the food came from.

Just don't ask them. Don't ask them. But if somebody, a younger Christian comes to you and says, you know, that was a sacrifice to Zeus yesterday, then guess what you're supposed to do?

Don't go eat. I don't know exactly what to do with all that, except that Paul's given some real practical handles to how to deal with a situation that they run into. I'm not sure that we have necessarily similar situations.

But I think that the idea here is that we don't participate in the worship, but the food is just the food. He says the earth is the Lord's of the fullness thereof.

So, like, if they're selling it here in the marketplace, it's not connected to worship. It's not going to support them. I'm free to buy that if I want to. As long as I'm not violating somebody else's conscience about it.

[38 : 55] My weaker brother. Right? And so that's how he's trying to navigate and thread the needle of this. Because it's a sticky situation. Because you have byproducts from that worship that get put into the culture at large.

What are you going to do? Well, I think that his focus is, number one, the good of others. Number two, don't be involved in worship.

Number three, you've got to do all for the sake of the glory of God and the gospel. You've got to do all things for the glory of God. Now, how many of you have ever heard verse 31?

Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God. This is the context in which it comes out of. I think that's super fascinating. Because it's as though he's looking at these super spiritual Christians and telling them what you eat and what you drink is important.

Not in the sense of what it is, but how you do it. What's your goal? You know, you could see these super spiritual Christians going into the temple with Zeus and you've got to ask yourself the question.

[40 : 07] Are you there? Are you in Zeus' temple so that you can give glory to God while you eat a leg of lamb that was sacrificed to Zeus? Aren't there some things in life that you've thought to yourself, you know, I'd like to do that.

It's like, well, could you do that and also fully embrace giving God all the glory and all the praise? Not God amorphous, but the triune God. Now, there's some things in life we find ourselves going

like, yeah, I can't really glorify God with that.

And so we've got to watch and be careful because we're supposed to do all things for his glory and for the sake of the gospel. Right? For the sake of the gospel.

I've got to be able to share with people the gospel and I don't need things getting in the way of that. But what happens is that we want to live our lives, do our thing, and nobody tell us what to do.

And if that happens to be where I can also share the gospel, fine. So we always start with ourselves rather than the gospel and Paul starts with the gospel rather than himself. Christian freedom is not about getting to do whatever I want to do.

[41 : 18] Christian freedom is not being bound by anything so that I have the freedom to share the gospel with others. That's how we avoid idolatry. Because if I'm fixed upon the good of others, the glory of God, and the spread of the gospel, then how am I going to have time to be craving something to satisfy my own self?

So as we then seek the good of others, we should do so in all of our decision making. How you make decisions in your personal life, you should be thinking about your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Now this is very contrary to the American spirit. But we should be thinking about how our decisions affect our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Thinking about your vacation time, thinking about your house, thinking about your job, thinking about all of these things.

You need to be thinking about how does this affect my brothers and sisters in Christ. And it doesn't have to just be your brothers and sisters in Christ here, but it could be the church universal. How is this going to affect?

[42 : 36] I think the same thing goes with spreading the gospel. Every decision I make needs to be, how does this help me or hinder me in spreading the gospel? Will this help in spreading the gospel or will this hinder in spreading the gospel?

And all the decisions that we make need to be run through these filters to kind of say, am I doing things the way Paul told us to do? You know, chapter 11, verse 1, Paul says this, imitate me as I imitate Christ.

Imitate me as I imitate Christ. And I think that's where the final of all of this should land is right there. Because as we think about how Paul was living, doing everything for the good of others, doing everything for the glory of God, doing everything for the gospel, that's how we should live.

And that helps us. It's a proactive way to live that helps us to keep from falling into idolatry. It's not foolproof. It's not foolproof. We're still sinners and we're quite talented in picking up new idols.

But the more that we live in that proactive way, the less we have time to be involved with our idols. So I encourage us to imitate Paul as he imitates Christ.

[43 : 53] And that's it.