

# 1 Corinthians 10:1-33

“Walk in Love”

Today we enter back in to the topic that we’ve been considering for 2 weeks already, the topic of Christian liberty and what it is that regulates its limits. and I know that sometimes it can feel like the point is being belabored, overly emphasized, or run into the ground. But we have to understand that the Holy Spirit doesn’t isn’t in to beating dead horses. *If it seems like God’s Word spends an exorbitant amount of time on a particular topic you can rest assured that it’s a topic that God wants ingrained into us. and In reality when we’re speaking about gray areas of Christian liberty, that’s the secondary emphasis on the apostle’s heart. The primary point is really letting love regulate the limits of my liberty.*

In other words, if I’m willing to do damage to you in your walk with Christ over something that is irrelevant to Christianity (be it my right to go to a movie, or listen to a certain style of music, or *whatever* the case may be) than at that point I’m not walking in love. Now we’re not to go around being the “Holy Spirit police patrol” in people’s lives seeking out what they do that we don’t agree with. *We’re to let the Lord work out the non-essential areas of conviction in our lives. But if I know that you struggle with a certain liberty that I enjoy, and I impose my will in that situation regardless of where you’re at with it, now who am I concerned with? You? No, I’m just looking out for myself. To you, television is nothing but a cesspool of sin, (which you’re not far off) there’s nothing good about it, and you can’t even turn it on without suffering radical conviction.* Let’s say I have you over for dinner, (and I know the way you feel about it) and after dinner we’re kicking back on the couch, I grab the remote and start surfing for “Myth busters” or the Food network or something. and You start squirming in your seat, in your mind we just initiated a ceremony that has us bowing down at the altar of dish network. and I start trying to help you cope, “Oh c’mon man, there’s nothing sinful about guys doing experiments to see if certain myths could actually happen.” Or “What’s sinful about watching a meal get kicked up a few notches?” *and I’m enticing you to go against the grain of your conscience, of your convictions. The point to all of this is that at that point I’ve crossed a line, I’ve sinned against you, and in so doing I’ve sinned against Christ. I’ve imposed my will in watching T.V. instead of just walking in love and leaving it off realizing where you were at.*

and When you sift through everything that’s being said here in these 3 Ch’s that’s what you find on the bottom line. That we’re to be walking in love towards one another, and walking in love is one of the foundational layers of life in Christ, something that’s impossible to overstate or be reminded of too often. We read in the book of Romans, “*Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*” Rom 13:8 Paul told the Eph flat out, “*...be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*” Eph 5:1-2 We’re to walk in love. Remember Jesus said, “*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.*” John 15:13 *What does it mean to walk in love towards your brother’s and sister’s in Christ? It means being willing to lay down your rights, your liberties, translation - your life, if it’ll lead to the building up and edifying of where they’re at in the Lord.* We say it over and over again, Jesus has called us to a life of self-denial, a crucifying of the flesh life, doesn’t mean we go through life all somber, solemn, subdued, and always serious.

But our liberties aren't to lord us, we're let love *lead* us, walk in love, bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Now to follow the flow and to keep the context; remember that in Ch 8 we spoke of the fact that the Christian life isn't to be centered on knowledge, but on love. We know that an idol is nothing; therefore eating meat *offered* to an idol is harmless. **But walking in love is more important than doing damage to the one who doesn't know that, so if it bothers the conscience of someone to eat meat offered to an idol, than in love I'll forego that right.** We all have rights, but our rights isn't a main concern we're to have as believers, seeing people come to know Christ, and from there helping them to *grow* in Christ, is. (That was Ch 9) Laying aside my liberty if it'll make for an opportunity for one to come to *know* Christ, or facilitate an atmosphere that'll help them to *grow* in Christ.

and When it comes to our liberties as believers we always have to be so careful because if I insist on my liberties at all costs it lends itself to lust. I find myself unable to say "no" to myself, and in the name of certain liberties or rights I'm really just feeding the lusts of my flesh. **But if I'm willing to forego my rights for the sake of others, that lends itself to love, helps me to run the race well that's set before me. and Paul painted the picture of an athletic event in order to help us get a grip on the importance of being willing to discipline our bodies, and laying liberties aside when necessary in order to help us excel in the life that God has called us to.**

Let's begin in Vs 24 of Ch 9

#### Vs24-27

You see if an athlete will discipline themselves for the life of their athletic career for a prize from the temporal things of this world that'll only perish in time, how much more ought we to discipline ourselves knowing that we're pressing towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus? For an eternal reward that will forever bring honor and glory to Him? (Correct illustration) **We don't want to be placed on the shelf, rendered inoperable, ineffective in our service to the Lord. You have to safeguard your heart lest you use your liberties as a means to feed your lusts thereby becoming disqualified. Understand that redemption doesn't grant you, or grant me some kind of automatic immunity from temptation whereby we can't fall prey to lust.** and That's the point that Paul is going to make directly, that just because God blesses your life, just because He pours out the benefits of His Spirit *upon* your life, don't think that now you're exempt from being disqualified. "Hey, I've been baptized, I partake of communion, I'm lead *by* the Lord, and seek to follow *after* the Lord." Paul is going to tell us in Vs 12, "Be careful, let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall."

#### Vs1-5

Now at 1<sup>st</sup> glance it may appear that Paul has turned the page, and started going down a different direction. But in reality he's making a very powerful point, he's saying that just because God has redeemed you, led you, and blessed you.

You're not exempt from being disqualified if you insist on liberty leading to lust rather than walking in love. and He uses the history of his own nation to illustrate the point. He says, "Don't be unaware of the fact that *all* of Israel were under the cloud, they *all* passed through the sea being baptized into Moses, they all had their needs met through supernatural means, God providing manna every morning and water from the Rock."

He's pointing out the radical spiritual blessings that were bestowed upon Israel. "They were all under the cloud." What cloud is he speaking about? He's speaking of that cloud that was the Shekinah glory of God that overshadowed them and led them throughout the duration of their wilderness wanderings. It was a constant ready reminder of the presence and protection of God. During the day it would shelter them from the blazing, blistering desert sun, by night it was a pillar of fire keeping them safe from would be raiders that might try and attack them under the cover of night.

Every one of them had the practical positive proof of the presence of God with them. They *all* passed through the Red Sea on dry ground, they all experienced God's power that way, seen it with their own eyes. They were all baptized into Moses as they passed through the Red Sea. Now what does that mean? It simply means that they identified with Moses as their deliverer. and What Paul is doing is drawing parallels that are relevant to our own Christian experience, they recognized and realized Moses as their deliverer, and when they went through the Red Sea they became identified with him in that way. Just as your water baptism identifies you with Christ as *your* deliverer. In demonstrates outwardly what's gone on in your heart inwardly. You pass through that water and you identify with His death, and as you come up, you identify with Christ in the newness of resurrection life in which He's called you to live. "They all ate of the same spiritual food, and spiritual drink." and It's referenced as spiritual not because it wasn't literal, but because it was sustenance supernaturally provided for them by God. and That was a foreshadowing of the supernatural sustenance that we'd receive in Christ. Remember Jesus said, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*" John 6:32-33 The people were all, "Lord, give us this bread always!" and Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*" John 6:35 A Little later on He said, "*If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.*" John 7:37

Now when he says that the Rock that followed them was Christ, he's not saying that Christ as a literal rock. But that it was Christ who was providing for them, meeting the needs they had, that Jesus wasn't brought into fruition in a little town called Bethlehem 2,000yrs ago. But that He's always existed as the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the triune God, and that He was their moving in their midst, meeting their needs. But you get the picture.

He says, "They were all delivered from Egypt, just as you've been delivered from the world, they were baptized into Moses, just as you've been baptized into Christ, it was the Lord who brought sustenance to them spiritually/supernaturally, just as the bread and water that they partook of was of spiritual origin, so to we receive our spiritual sustenance in Christ, the bread of life, the One to whom we come to have our deepest thirst quenched. (Vs 5, read)

Now that has to be one of the largest understatements of the entire bible, "*most*" of them? Out of the millions that were delivered from Egypt, of those over 20, exactly how many received the prize, how many entered to the Promised Land? 2, Joshua and Caleb, even Moses was disqualified. Once they failed to enter the Promised Land the 1<sup>st</sup> time, the longest death march/funeral procession in the history of the world began, and for 40 yrs they did circles in the desert until that entire generation died off. (Now look at Vs 6)

## Vs6-10

So his point here is that even though Israel had all kinds of things going for them spiritually, they still failed dismally in so many areas and paid the penalty accordingly. and We do well to learn from their mistakes. Vs 6, “These things became our examples, *to the intent...*” the intent being that we should learn, and not lust after evil things that will make for our ruin. That will serve to disqualify us from the race that’s set before us. He says here, “Do not become idolaters as was some of them.” Remember here the issue at hand is eating meat offered to idols, and dining in the, “Apollo’s patio and grill.” Now you may not wrestle with idolatry in the sense of a little trinket that you ascribe power *to* and bow *before*. **But really anything that you place as a higher priority than God in your life is an idol. Today idols are made in the form of leather interior, convertible tops, and generally tricked out rides. Or they come in the form of whatever hobby I enjoy.**

Perhaps the career I pursue, power, or position. We read in 1 Sam 15:23 that, “... *stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*” How so? Because I defiantly demand my own way, and my own will over and above God’s way, God’s Word, and God’s will, thereby I exalt my will, and word above God’s, in essence becoming the object of my own worship. Now we’re speaking here with in the context of “our rights,” and the warning is to be careful lest in stubbornly demanding our rights we become guilty of idolatry.

and Here where it speaks of sitting down to eat and drink and rising up to play, it’s a euphemism for fornication. In their idolatry they justified sexual immorality, which is the next warning in Vs 8, now we know there was an issue with sexual immorality with in the church there in Corinth, we spoke about that back in Ch 5 and again in Ch 6.

Vs 9, “Nor let us tempt Christ,” how did they tempt the Lord? Well the issue he speaks of is found in Num 21 whereby the people were complaining against God and against Moses. Not being satisfied with what God was providing but wanting more. “Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? There’s no food, no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread!” **and God was fed up with their griping, their self-centered, self-focused frame of heart and mind and He sent serpents in and among the camp and whoever would be bitten by these serpents would be stricken with an unbearable burning sensation and would die. Of course here in Vs 10 Paul mentions complaining, what’s the root found in every one of these sin issues that Paul has brought up?** All of these things reflect a self-centered, self focused heart. When I commit idolatry I’m looking to please me, sexual immorality revolves around me, tempting Christ, complaining, these are things that happen when *I’m* not satisfied. and Paul here says, “Be careful, just because you were redeemed, just because you feed on spiritual food, and spiritual drink, just because you’ve been baptized, don’t think you’re exempt from falling prey to your own lust under the banner of liberty. Israel had all that going for them, and they fell, notice.

## Vs11

**So all these things happened to them, but they were recorded *for us*, why? So that we might go, “Man, those guys blew it, I can’t believe they had all that going for them and still followed the dictates of their own heart.” No, but so that we might learn from their mistakes and not repeat them, believe me it wasn’t for their benefit, it was damage already done.**

You go out there and blow life and then the paper does an article on it, how does that help you, it's already done. But the idea here is that we're to benefit from their failure. It was written as a warning for you, and for me, there's personal implications and applications. and So what happens? *We become even more accountable than they were because we have a record to read through and learn from.* So they had all that going for them and so many (all but 2) were disqualified from the Promised Land. Now you have all that going for you, plus you have their experience to learn from, who has the greater responsibility and accountability?

### Vs12-13

What a great and precious promise from the Word of God. and Of course there are a # of key words in this Vs. 1<sup>st</sup> of all we might note that there's no such thing as unique temptation that you alone fall victim to. How many people think that you may have temptation, "But I'll guarantee you, you don't endure temptation like my temptations?" *What's the 1<sup>st</sup> key word here? "Common," there's no temptation I face, or that you face that is somehow unique to the human race. It's Satan that wants you to believe that no one else has it like you have it and that no one else would be able to stand under those kinds of pressures, so you can't be to blame if you don't either.*

Hey, throughout the ages *many* have been the men, or the women that have been confronted with temptation just like, or even worse than yours that have endured and secured victory over it. How? 2<sup>nd</sup> key, "God is faithful." and He won't *allow* you to be tempted beyond what you are able. What does that mean? It means that God promises to be the personal supervisor to every temptation that comes your way via the flesh, the world, or the devil. *and He knows what you can bear; now we understand that in our own strength we can't bear anything, left to myself I probably won't pass up a Reese's cup. So we're talking here about relying on Christ in us, but God knows your breaking point. and When temptation comes He'll make the way of escape. and When we speak of a way of escape we're not necessarily speaking of the path of least resistance type route. We often want an escape chute; we just want to be jettisoned out.* But more than not it surfaces like a Mt pass, the picture is that of being surrounded by the enemy, and then suddenly spying an escape route through the Mts, it's not necessarily going to be easy, but it'll keep you alive. and Notice that it's not an escape from temptation altogether, that place is called Heaven. But we're brought to a place whereby rather than being crushed *by* it, we're able to bear up *under* it.

*Now some people seek to escape temptation by simply giving in to it, but then you find yourself confronted with it over and over again and it keeps getting worse and worse. Why? Well because Satan has found an effective weapon that works against you. If a pitcher knows that a certain pitch will strike a particular batter out every time (he's a sucker for curve balls) then that's all he's going to get when he gets to the plate.* and Until that batter *proves* he can hit the curve ball, or play effectively at the plate against it, he's never going to get a different pitch. So perhaps if you're always confronted with the *same* temptation, it could be that you aren't going to get a different pitch because the enemy has found one that works. He won't change his game plan until he has to, don't give in to temptation in order to escape the pressure of it. God is faithful, look for the way of escape, use wisdom with respect to making yourself accountable, and God will do the work in your life.

**Vs14-18**

The idea being that you and I become one when we partake of the common meal. There's a loaf of bread, I pull from it, you pull from it, we both eat it and are sustained by the same loaf thereby becoming one in that way. and When they offered the peace offering to God in the OT, the priest would burn a portion of it on the altar (the idea being God was partaking of the offering) and then the worshiper and his family would partake of another portion from the same animal. and The concept was that I am becoming 1 with God, not in the sense of becoming God, but in that we're fellowshiping together with God, sharing together in an intimate way, there is a bond that's being created. So to with the elements of communion, we're all acknowledging Jesus as our common bond, His body broken for us, His blood shed for us, we're in fellowship with Him, 1 (as it were) with Him. Him in us, and we in Him (you might reference Jhn 14:20, 15:4, and 17:21). So as you would go to the temple and partake of the sacrifice (the meat from the altar) you're entering into communion with God.

**Vs19-22**

So we know that idols are nothing, but there's definitely demonic activity behind them. and He's saying that when you go to the Apollo's patio and grill you're in essence dining at the table of demons. You're provoking God to jealousy, because just as when you break bread at the Lord's table it means something, you can't break bread at an idols table and it not mean something.

“What agreement has the temple of God with idols?” (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 6:16) and So the point here is that we have to be careful where we go and what we give way to in going there, you may be a strong Christian, but are you stronger than the Lord? Do you provoke Him to jealousy?

**Vs23**

There is liberty in Christ, but some things can ultimately lead to devastation as opposed to edification, they can tear us down rather than build us up. What's a good rule of thumb to help us avoid those situations?

**Vs24**

Don't focus on what *you* can do, how much can *I* get away with and still be a Christian. Don't live your life for yourself, but for others. Just because I have the right to do something doesn't mean I always need to do it. I should live in consideration for others around me, rather than always just thinking *of* me.

**Vs25-30**

Notice the issue is never the meat itself; it's the Lord's on the hoof, or on the BBQ. It's not infected with demonic cooties if it came from a temple. The issue is the atmosphere in which I partake and consideration for the conscience of my brother or sister. He says stay away from the pagan temple itself, because the connotations *there* go beyond a simple steak. But if you want to buy meat, buy meat, just don't ask where it came from and it won't bother your conscience, the bottom line is that it belongs to the Lord. Remember when we brought up the issue of dancing? Can Christians dance? Some can and some can't, but what Paul is saying here is that we should stay away from the atmosphere, or the environment that stands *for* and speaks *of* more than a simple dance. In other words the *act* of dancing in and of itself may be fine, but the *atmosphere* in which I dance is an altogether different thing.

Dancing in a dance studio, or during an exhibition or performance at the mall or in some hall, or at my house, etc... is one thing. You enter into a bar and suddenly it carries a whole different connotation. What Paul is saying is that where I do what I do can make a difference. (and Dancing is just an example, the principle carries across the board when it comes to gray areas)

If you're invited to a BBQ and the guys a non-believer just eat what he puts before you and don't ask about it. Now if perhaps someone else leans over to you and says, "Hey, I saw them slaughter this cow down at Zeus', I don't feel right about this." Then he says, "For the sake of the weak conscience with you, don't make a big deal out of it, simply pass on the steak." But apart from that, if your conscience doesn't condemn you over a steak, go ahead and thank God for it, and enjoy it. The liberty is there, just exercise with in the confines of love. and Really if you guys want a memory Vs or a way to place any and everything we do with in its proper context, get real familiar with Vs 31.

### Vs31

This Vs is the key, the purpose of our lives isn't to see how much we can get away with or what we can do and still be Christians. Our lives are to glorify God, Jesus said, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*" Matt 5:16 *Whatever* you do, do *all* to the glory of God. If we'll but bear this principle in mind, it'll save us much grief and contention.

### Vs32-33

He's not saying that he's a "man pleaser" or else you can't be a God pleaser. He's saying that aim of his life is not liberty, but love. Not his own gain, but he wants his life to benefit others, why? That they might be saved, God help us that we have regard for the lost. We don't want our lives to *hinder* the lost from seeing Jesus, but to *help* them to see Him; because God's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. and Lest we be disqualified through the lusts of the flesh, God help us that we crucify the flesh and walk in love.

## Prayer Points:

God help us that we be not slaves, to the lusts of our flesh, using “liberty” as a cloak to indulge our lusts. But rather teach us to walk in love, that we’d understand what it means to allow love to temper our liberty. and That we be about the business of not seeking our own, but each of us the other’s well being. (God that sounds so spiritual, but it’s hard for us, the spirit is willing, our flesh is weak, strengthen us in the inner man). and Help us that we do *whatever* we do, all to *Your* glory, that our light so shine that people having seen what goes on in our lives, they’d glorify You.

Not only was it Paul’s desire, or our desire to see people saved, it’s God’s desire to save people. We’ve all fallen prey to sin, and we fall short of the perfect standard of God, and the wages of sin is death, physically, and eternally in separation from God. But the gift of God is eternal life, however it’s only found in one place, or perhaps I should say one person, in Christ Jesus. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by Me.” He didn’t say He was *a* way, or that He *taught* the way, or that He *pointed* the way. He said, “I’m it, I am the way.” He didn’t say He was *a* truth, that He *pointed* to truth, He said, “I am truth, I’m it.” He didn’t say that He pointed to a pathway of life, or taught *about* life, He said, “I *am* the Life.” **Everlasting life is found only in the person of Jesus Christ and He became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He bore our sin upon the cross, shed His blood that we might receive forgiveness of every sin we ever have or will commit and that forgiveness can be accredited to you, by your simple trust in Jesus, believing in Him for the work He did on your behalf.** Let me encourage you to open your heart, ask Jesus to take up residence in your heart and in your life, forgiving you of your sin, and as far as the east is from the west He’ll remove your sin from you. Salvation can be yours.