

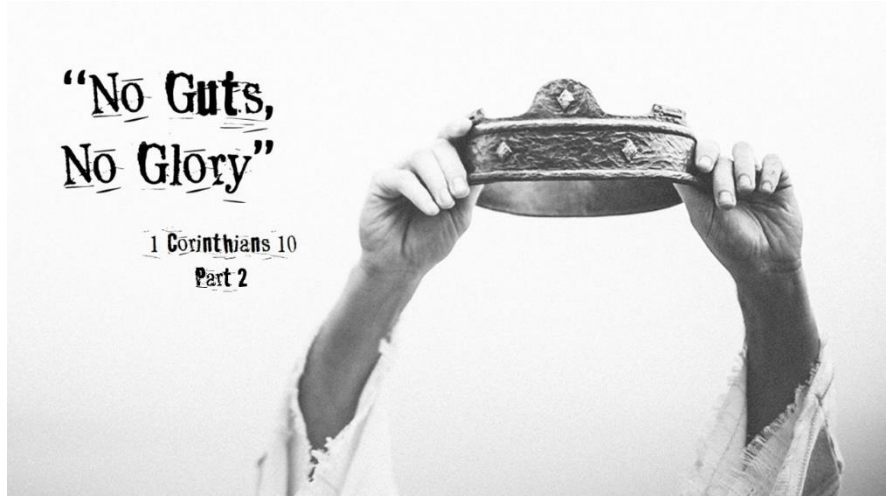
“No Guts, No Glory...”

- 1 Corinthians 10 -

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at JF Believers Church
in Menomonie, Wisc
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“No Guts,
No Glory”

1 Corinthians 10
Part 2



1 Corinthians 10 *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. 18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? 23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; 26 for "the earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness." 27 If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28 But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness." 29 "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? 30 But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks? 31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

(PART 2)

(10:13-14) After twelve verses of warning, Paul now brings a glorious word of encouragement and blessing.

Innumerable souls throughout our days have turned to this passage to find strength and boldness in times of testing.

First of all, we need to clearly understand that God does not *tempt*. That is crucial. He does, *however*, allow temptation to occur in our lives, and He does so in order to strengthen us and expose to each of us the weakness of our souls. Yet He also promises to not allow temptation to be greater than we can endure, greater than we are able to triumph over. I know that each of us have questioned the truth of this promise, as well as His promise to “provide a way of escape.” We tend to think that such is not true in our case, yet invariably it is because the “way” that He is providing is thoroughly rejected because...*well*, that would be really really hard and quite possibly embarrassing.

Furthermore, it seems that our testing and even our trials are proportionate to our strength...our level of maturity. Knowing that fact...perhaps even just *sensing* that reality, keeps many of us from growing up and moving on. Once again...this is the very fear that kept Israel from ever experiencing the Promised land! But I wonder where each of us would be today had we retreated to one of those child’s springy chairs mounted in the doorway and never learned to walk or run. Our spiritual development is much like our childhood development, in that as we grow up the difficulties in our life increase with age, but so do our blessings!

Thankfully, through it all...each step of our lives He protects us. We cannot over appreciate that fact. Because the truth is, if God took away His hand of protection from us, we would not even be able to hold on to our next breath. For Satan would take our very life if he was allowed. But if God did not allow such times of testing, we would also never grow up, never mature, never move beyond who we are today...and he desires...as a good father does, that we grow up to the fullness of who we are to be. Like it or not, we would never learn who we really are and what we are capable of unless we had fallen down some. We would never learn to lean on Him and allow Him to lead us.

Temptation to sin is a condition common to all men, and so are the very issues we are tempted by. We must also realize that temptation is not sin. Often folks are unduly distraught when they find that they...*in their flesh*, want something that is not of God...something that by any definition is sinful. We think that because we are now a child of God that such desires should not exist. And indeed, as I experience God the things of this world gradually lose their appeal. But you will always be tempted and at times desire things that are not good for you...right up until you finish this race. Scripture tells us that even Christ Himself was “tempted in every way as we have been tested.” But be encouraged Christian...we are promised here that God is faithful. Thankfully He is faithful “even when we are not.” 2 Timothy 2:13 tells us that “If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.”

2Th 3:3 “But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.”

So God will not shield us from all temptation, but He will provide a way of escape. Let’s be honest...isn’t the reality of the situation most often that we simply don’t like the escape we are given? The truth is, the way of escape that He has given us is often to run away! But we battle within us...thinking “isn’t there a way we can give in to the temptation *and* still please God?” No, **there isn’t**. The fact that He *did* give us the way out only clearly establishes our guilt when we fail to take it. He often simply tells us to flee. It isn’t glamorous and it isn’t going to stroke my ego, but it works ...*if* we actually do it.

1Ti 6:11 *“But you, ... are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.”*

2Ti 2:22 *“Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.*

1Co 6:18 *“Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual*

immorality is a sin against your own body.”

There are many ways to avoid falling to such temptations. It may be to turn it off, get rid of it, or lock it down. But it is almost guaranteed to be a very hard thing to do. He says it will be a **way** of escape. It doesn't say an *easy* way out. Because it won't be.

Paul goes on to call them “beloved” and tells them to **flee** from idolatry. His words there do not seem to be corrective or scolding as much as they are spoken out of his love for them. Paul was the quintessential pastor. He was corrective when it was called for, but always compassionate towards God's children.

(10:15) Paul was trying to appeal to the wisdom he knew resided within them. He did not seek to demean them or beat them down. He was simply asking them to look inside themselves and judge honestly whether all of this was God's honest truth.

(10:16-17) Paul gives a beautiful picture of the true spiritual meaning behind our traditional communion. Our taking of communion spiritually joins us together as one body...and further, one with Christ, the cross, and His greater task upon this earth and thereafter. His road becomes ours. We are now united in His joy, His blessing, and yes, even His pains, as well as all of those aspects of each and everyone that is part of your local body of believers...those you share communion with. In a nutshell, this encompasses the Christian life in community in its most basic form. Because of this profound picture of communion, we generally offer it only in the Covenant Community. Even in that, such is not perfect, for I know we will always have those in our midst that don't really mean it. But in my world, taking communion is serious business. It is a testimony that will “hold our feet to the fire.” Those that *did* take communion here in this fellowship and did *not* mean it, are now gone or on their way out. God will always see to that.

In verse 17 Paul uses the vernacular “we.” His message is not to some high elite pastoral group. Not some sort of chosen few, but to **everyone** who says they are “in the pool” ...all of us who join together in communion of the essence of Christ. *Together* we drink the cup of blessing. And *together* we drink the cup of His trials and His death. Together we share both the joys and the pains of each person who also partakes. This is true communion. ***This is Christianity.***

We are, though we are many, **one body**. Such a foreign idea in 2021 culture! I wonder if we even come close to understanding what this means...what this looks like? I ask because I have often witnessed some folks take a chain saw to that body and it ain't pretty. We are all partakers of that “one bread” which is Christ. We are *together* “**of Christ.**” We are to be **one**. Pulling together, battling together, living together. And we aren't to leave a man behind...that's why we here are more than a church, we are an “Intentional Christian Community.”

Paul speaks of Israel and the Jewish nation in verse 18. He is referring to the temple sacrifices that were made prior to the great and final sacrifice, where a portion was given to and consumed by the priests. With part of the sacrifice being consumed by the fire and the other part being consumed by men, the offering then symbolizes a unity of spirit and cause with God.

All of this is a really an act of worship. But what is worship, really? Throughout scripture we see a principle dramatically presented: worship is an action, not just some sort of subjective feeling or just singing and raising our hands. In this, we find the inherent and innate makeup of worship. Worship requires action on my part. When I am united with Him and with all those in my spiritual body, I *worship*.

(18-19) Paul was trying to turn the eyes and the hearts of the people toward God and away from all of the other things that had come to stand between them and God. He was asking a pertinent question: Are their sacrifices, *their actions* to the idolatry of their world worth anything at all? All the idolatry going on around them, did it mean anything? Did it come to anything of value? The way we win over temptation and sin isn't by trying to steel ourselves against such, but rather by uniting with and falling deeper in love with Christ and each other.

(10:20-22) The sacrifices ...*the acquiesce*, to the idols of the world, according to Paul, were simply a nod to demons and the dark side, whether the people were willing to acknowledge such or not. It's all the same today. People think they can partake in Jesus community while still worshipping at the feet of modern idols and think that by partaking in both they that they will receive from both the bounty of fulfillment. But such offerings and worship are empty and meaningless to God, and...knowingly or unknowingly, the latter are given to the demonic.

And of course, Paul doesn't want the believers in Corinth to have any fellowship with demons. He states for their clarity and for ours, that we cannot have both. You simply cannot. You cannot worship both the Lord and the world. We cannot call ourselves Christians and still worship at the table of the world that is the realm of Satan. There are only two sides. There is no middle ground.

We like to think God has endless patience and will keep us in His protective hands indefinitely. However when we try to divide our allegiance, we provoke God to jealousy. Then everything around us starts falling apart. No one lasts out there in the wilderness. They simply roam around and around in circles and finally just die.

(10:23) Paul had been talking for some time about a person's freedom in Christ...our liberty under the umbrella of Christianity. He is not talking out of both sides of his mouth and herein trying to take away everyone's freedom and grace. He is, however, putting a face on it. Because either direction you take my friend, there is always a cost. He is trying to give some perspective for a believer trying to worship the true and living God while walking in this world. This pertains to believers who are literally walking daily around altars offering worship to the demonic realm, as well as the lethargic church goer that is just trying to stay "safe" in the wilderness...even if that means a lifetime eating manna and wandering around in circles going nowhere.

He states clearly that we are indeed free. We have to note that "all things" does not include the things expressly declared as sin in scripture. Paul has been addressing the things not directly prohibited in the Bible...issues that we may be free to engage in even if they are "weights" that slow us down. Paul is saying that just because I am free to indulge in these things does not mean that they are good, or that they are benign in their effect, that they build me up, or that they glorify God.

(10:24) Paul's point in all of this is that the decision on whether we choose to partake in one thing or another must not emanate from our own will or desires, but rather what is 1) good for us...making us stronger and faster. 2) what is good for those around us and their spiritual development and well being. Remember...***one body!*** And 3) what ultimately brings glory to God. All of these three considerations can be difficult to manage. But remember...no guts, no glory...*as in glory for God.*

(10:25-28) Paul returns for a moment to the issue of meat offered to idols. He hasn't really ever left the subject but just simply expanded on the practicum of such an issue. Indeed, it was highly possible that some of the meat sold in the market was "second hand" offerings to idols. He was saying that they could hyper-analyze every instance of this occurrence, or they could eat and be thankful to the true God for what they were receiving. So, ***eat and be thankful.*** However, if someone comes along and is troubled by your indulgence, then stand down and do not eat.

(10:29-33) Such an action does not mean we have to change our beliefs, abandon our freedoms and our individual relationship with Christ. Paul is not directing us to change our personal and private relationship before God. We often struggle with the idea of having in any way to live our lives for others, yet love for others is a large part of our love of God, and a large part in our worship of Him. We cannot separate the two. Paul does however seem to discourage obsessing over this issue. Certainly one could drive themselves crazy attempting to please everyone around him on every matter. Just consider the welfare of those around us and get on with it...always and forever following the supreme rule...seek in all things to glorify God by doing it or not doing it. Because the bottom line is not *me*, nor is it even the other person. The bottom line is the glory of God. If that is

where the buck stops when we consider the exercise of a liberty, then we are on solid ground.

Rom 14:19-22 NLT *“So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up. Don’t tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember, there is nothing wrong with these things in themselves. But it is wrong to eat anything if it makes another person stumble. Don’t eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another Christian to stumble. You may have the faith to believe that there is nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God. Blessed are those who do not condemn themselves by doing something they know is all right.”*

In closing, I want to point something out that is crucial in my opinion. All of the stuff in this chapter can be...a likely *will be* **hard**. Paul is not apologizing for that nor is he attempting in some manner to make it easier for you. Being a disciple of Christ is hard. But the last time I checked, so is life in the world. The mental health struggles, the depression and suicide rates, the divorce rates, the parenting failures and bankruptcies...all of it, make that abundantly clear...even though you can’t convince any of the folks standing in line to be next down that shoot! Being a disciple of Jesus means I have *died*. This all isn’t about me anymore. It’s all about Jesus and bringing glory to Him, the Father, and the kingdom at large. You **MUST** depend on the Holy Spirit to fill you, walk with you, and strengthen you. And He will! He *promised*. But there is just not some magically mystical elixir you can drink and avoid it all. Remember: No guts. No glory...