

God's Wisdom For Living In A Morally Complex World – Part 3 (1 Corinthians 10:1-23 May 5, 2013)

God's Wisdom For Living In A Morally Complex World Part 3 1 Cor. 10:1-23



In the 1950's and 60's most Christians did not go to movies and did not own a TV set.

Movies and TV shows were classed as worldly entertainment not suitable for disciples of Christ.

Although most Christians did not own a set or go to the movies, Christian values still influenced programming. In the 50's even married couples were not shown as sharing the same bed. It took till 1967 for Captain Kirk to go where no man had gone before and utter a profanity – he said 'hell.'

But then came the 70's. The floodgates opened. Sex, homosexuality, graphic violence, gutter language – all became commonplace on the big and small screens.

Yet, it was also in this decade that churches began to teach that not owning a TV or going to the movies was legalism. So Christians joined the world in buying a television and lining up for the movies.

The problem arose that now Christians had to decide what they would watch – and the debate over what a Christian could or could not watch raged.

G, PG, M or R?

The debate continues today but it is difficult.

It is a rare movie without any sex, nudity, violence or foul language.

It is a rare movie without extramarital affairs or homosexuality treated as normal.

It is a rare movie that doesn't present greed and violence as virtues.

The occult and false religions are in. Christians are portrayed as buffoons or stereotypical caricatures.

So that leaves us with the question – what **can** you watch? And more crucially – what **should** you watch?

These are not easy questions.

The usual answer is an appeal to the conscience. If it is too outrageous or sick – the answer is you should not watch it. If it doesn't offend you – then you can probably put up with a few bad bits.

Some shows are clearly out.

I saw an article this week describing the hottest new reality show on Danish TV. It is called *Blachman*. Stunning young women come in – take everything off in front of a panel of men who rate them. While no one is surprised it is a hit – Christians realise that this is a bridge too far.

So in practice what Christians do is this. Each individual, couple, family sets a line regarding content and anything over that line is deemed inappropriate.

So here is your spectrum. At one end you have Bambi – at the other end you have porn movies, sado-masochistic movies, movies that glorify the occult.

Somewhere between Bambi and porn – each Christian seems to have a line. Where that line is drawn seems to differ from Christian to Christian.

Even Christian leaders differ. John Piper does not watch any television or movies. Mark Driscoll seems to watch most things.

So where is your line?

Is it any taking the name of the Lord in vain? Or as long as it not constant?

Is a bit of nudity OK? Or only full frontal ruled out?

Are occult heroes – vampires and the like – OK or not?

Is torture OK? Abuse? How much violence till it crosses your line?

Most of us aren't John Piper – so we have a line.

I want to suggest that no matter where you draw the line – you end up tolerating various levels of worldly entertainment.

If it doesn't give you nightmares, if it doesn't make you lust too much, if it doesn't draw you from Christ – you will put up with the bad stuff.

Our passage this morning contains principles which tell us that drawing a line and then accepting things as acceptable as long as they are on the other side of your line – even if they are just on the other side of our line – is **not** the best way to make decisions in morally questionable areas.

Instead it gives us another way to make the decisions.

Why is Paul dealing with this?

In 1 Corinthians 8-10 – Paul is answering a question regarding food offered to idols. Paul is brilliant – instead of just answering that question – he gives principles that we can use to answer other moral questions.

In answering the question, he gives two sections saying why pushing the limits of your rights is dangerous and two sections giving us principles on how to make moral decisions.

Here is how chapters 8-10 fit together.



Chapter 8 Pushing the limits of your rights is a danger to others

Chapter 9 Instead of pushing the limits of your rights you should choose to forgo your rights for the gospel

Chapter 10:1-23 Pushing the limits of your rights is a danger to you

Chapter 10:24-11:1 Instead of pushing the limits of your rights ask if it brings glory to God

Chapter 8 Pushing the limits of your rights is a danger to others

Chapter 8 begins with the question of what a Christian should do in the matter of food offered to idols.

Paul told them that knowledge without love was a danger to others – it might cause a brother to stumble.

Their knowledge was right – but it lacked love and it could cause a brother to stumble. Pushing the limits of your rights is a danger to others.

Let me apply this to our example of what to watch on TV or the movies.

There are Christians who tell me that a little flesh, a little language, a little violence is not that big a deal. It does not violate their conscience or cause them to stumble.

Now this morning's passage might help us deal with whether this is true or not. But that is what they think.

Perhaps you think you can watch Survivor or Baywatch without falling into lust.

Perhaps you think you can watch Ultimate Fighting without getting violent.

Perhaps you think you can watch a show filled with profanity and stay somewhat holy.

That may or may not be so, but your brother or sister in Christ might be different. They might watch the same show and have their conscience defiled.

Lust, anger, violence might fill them and they might be caused to stumble.

Pushing the limits of your rights is a danger to others.

Then in chapter 9 Paul gives his first set of principles for making moral decisions.

Chapter 9 Instead of pushing the limits of your rights you should choose to forgo your rights for the gospel

Instead of drawing a line – saying everything on this side of the line is my right – consider laying down some rights if it will enhance the spread of the gospel.

While there are shows you might have a right to watch – maybe you should choose not to.

Then:

Chapter 10:1-23 Pushing the limits of your rights is a danger to you

And next week we will finish with:

Chapter 10:24-11:1 Instead of pushing the limits of your rights ask if it brings glory to God

But this morning we are in:

Chapter 10:1-23 Pushing the limits of your rights is a danger to you

Technically you might be right that something you choose to do is not sin. But look at how Paul ends this section. Verse 23:

“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.

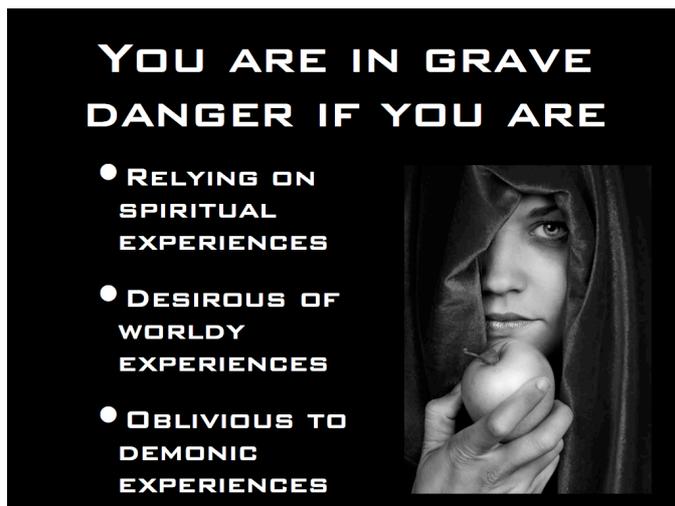
Why? Because when you push the limits of what is lawful – you are in danger.

Listen to a key verse in this section. Verse 12:

Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.

The Corinthians had their line. But when you start pushing morality close to the line – you end up in temptation. And the history of the church shows this often ends in tragedy.

Paul outlines this danger like this:



You are in grave danger if you are:

Relying on spiritual experiences
Desirous of worldly experiences
Oblivious to demonic experiences

Chapter 9 ended with sobering words. Only one receives the prize. Earn an imperishable wreath. Discipline yourself so you don't get disqualified.

If you push your rights to the limit – you might be disqualified.

Let me just say this. I believe fervently in the Scriptural doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

I do not believe those who fall away were ever saved. 1 John 2:19 says:

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

The fact they fell away shows they were never truly God's.

But the Bible speaks of many in Israel, in the church – who experience many spiritual blessings. They think they are saved. Many even do great works for God. But they are not His.

Matthew 7:21–23:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

These men and women did great deeds – prophesying, casting out demons, doing mighty works – but they were never Christ's – He never knew them.

The saints that persevere are those who work diligently to confirm their election and calling by disciplining themselves for godliness.

Paul knows this. Chapter 10 is a warning to all of us. Don't push the line morally – or we may find ourselves disqualified.

Let's look at this together. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 10 verse 1.

You are in grave danger if you are relying on spiritual experiences vv 1-5.

It seems that one of the reasons that the Corinthians were confident of their ability to push close to the moral line was the great spiritual experiences they were a part of.

In Chapter 1:5–7 Paul told them:

That in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— so that you are not lacking in any gift.

When you turn to chapter 12 we find that they had some of the most miraculous gifts operating in their church. Prophecy, healing, tongues, miracles.

When you are in the midst of incredible spiritual experiences – the obvious thought is that God is blessing. You infer that you can't be sailing close to the wind morally because of the spiritual blessings falling around you.

But spiritual experiences are not necessarily a sign of God's pleasure with how we are living. In God's grace and love He blesses even when we are disobedient.

Paul points them to the experiences of Israel.

1 Corinthians 10:1–4:

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 the Rock was Christ.

The Jews who came out of Egypt in the Exodus had great spiritual experiences.

The Shekinah cloud – the cloud of God's presence – went before them. When it moved they moved. They were under the cloud.

All of Israel passed through the Red Sea.

That is a miracle of unbelievable proportions. Israel was trapped – about to be annihilated by Pharaoh's army. Moses raised his staff and the waters of the sea parted. Israel passed through.

Imagine being there. Seeing the power of God to save. Watching walls of water rise up on either side as you pass through.

Then watching as Pharaoh's army is swept to their deaths. God is with you. God is on your side.

Christian baptism signifies a choice to leave your old life and follow to the Lord. By passing through the Red Sea it was a form of baptism for the Israelites – a choice to leave the old life of Egypt and follow the Lord. But it was a miraculous baptism.

They experienced other miracles. The manna, the quail, the water from the rock. God provided for them.

God was with them. In fact – although they did not realize it – the one providing for them and protecting them was Christ.

But – verse 5:

Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

With most of them God was not pleased. What an understatement!

Two million Israelites left Egypt. Of those aged over twenty – only two entered the Promised Land.

The bones of the rest were scattered across the wilderness.

Great spiritual experiences were not a sign of pleasing God and living well.

Let me put this in context. Israel – the chosen people of God – the ones the Lord rescued from Egypt by His mighty hand. They had spiritual experiences beyond anything 99.9% of those who belong to God will ever experience.

They had spiritual experiences far beyond those of this church – even far beyond what the Corinthian church experienced.

Yet, being the recipients of great spiritual experiences did not save them. They perished.

Spiritual experiences do not protect us from sin and falling away.

Over the years we have seen high profile Christians fall morally. In most cases the church seemed to be experiencing blessings. Growth, finances, a great environment.

I have spoken to Christians who fell into desperate sin – and it caught them unawares. Things were going so well, finances, family, work – God had to be blessing them – but they were not taking care of their soul.

Brothers and sisters – God saves individuals not churches, not families. Your soul must be right with Christ.

Our church has its failings – but in general it is pretty good. Teaching is OK. We deal with overt sin. People are being saved. The church is growing. Our giving to missions is growing. You might think that God is blessing us.

Being in a good church is not enough. In fact it can be a danger. You can become complacent. It is no substitute for the need to discipline yourself for godliness. You need to make sure your inner man is growing closer to the Lord.

The Corinthians became complacent because of the spiritual experiences that seemed to indicate the blessing of God.

Nothing is a substitute for keeping short accounts with God, reading the Word, praying, dealing with sin.

The church in Corinth was deceived – there was immorality, divisions and worldliness – no spiritual experience can paper over those cracks.

What does this mean for us? Just because you have had great spiritual experiences in your life does not mean you can push the limits of your rights.

Paul has a second warning for us.

You are in grave danger if you are desirous of worldly experiences vv. 6-14

Verse 6:

Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

What an incredible verse. I know you struggle to read Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy – but the lessons in them are crucial for us.

Two million Jews came out of Egypt and only two over twenty – Joshua and Caleb – made it to the Promised Land. Wow!

Why because they desired evil. Desire – it is the word – *epithumia*. It is a very strong word.

It is the word for lust, desperate longing, a craving.

You can crave good things and bad things.

Here they craved evil things such as idolatry and sexual immorality.

You are in grave danger if you desire worldly experiences.

The problem is the Israelites thought they could flirt with idols, immorality and the world and not get burned.

But we are too sinful to stand the temptation. They flirted with the world and ended up craving the world and then they capitulated to the world.

Don't miss this. God brings Israel out with a mighty hand. The cloud of His presence. The miracle at the Red Sea. All knew He is mighty to save. In the desert He provides them with manna, quail, water.

The Lord brings them to the foot of Mount Sinai. Moses climbs the mountain to receive the blessing of the commandments. It is less than three months since they left Egypt.

You might think the people are gathered below in prayer and thanksgiving.

Not quite. Verse 7:

Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."

Paul is referring to what happened in Exodus 32.

It seems their faith was in Moses not God. When Moses went up the mountain to receive the Law and was delayed they decided they needed something to lead them and they settled on a golden calf.

Aaron, the high priest, Moses' brother a man who should have known much better. In verse 4 he makes this amazing statement, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!"

They had been in idolatrous Egypt – probably flirted with idols there – and God still brought them out in the Exodus – so making an idol – flirting with the world didn't seem too bad.

But once you start – it never stops there.

Aaron proclaimed that, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord."

Then we read what happened. "And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play?"

What might not be so apparent is that rising up to play is not referring to dancing and revelry. It is a euphemism for sexual immorality – orgies.

They had been in Egypt for 400 years. They had seen what happens with idols – you have feasts that soon lead to drunkenness, immorality and every manner of sin.

God had to act. Exodus 32:26–28:

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. And he said to them, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.' " And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell.

Unfortunately Israel did not learn. They repeated their error. Verse 8 of 1 Corinthians 10:

We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

Paul is referring to what happened in Numbers 25:1–9:

While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. ... those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.

Amazingly much of the interest in this verse has to do with the fact that Paul says 23,000 died and Numbers says 24,000 died.

There are various suggestions about how to reconcile this. Paul says 23,000 died in one day. The other 1,000 may have died the after that first day.

Others suggest the actual number is part way between 23,000 and 24,000 and Paul rounded down and Numbers rounded up.

But all of this misses the main point. Israel – who had been saved by God and seen the power of God – saw some good looking women – and if the price to sleep with them was a little cultic worship – so be it. They were seduced by the Moabite gods and women. They got involved in idolatry and immorality and the wrath of God descended.

Verses 9 and 10:

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.

The first incident refers to the time Israel grumbled about the food and water God had provided and the Lord sent fiery serpents among them (Numbers 21).

The second incident refers to the grumbling of Israel and the result was the fire of the Lord – the Destroyer – consumed some in the camp (Numbers 11, 14, 16).

God had provided food and drink for his people but they wanted the food and drink of the world – the stuff they used to have in Egypt.

When you read the Old Testament there is a strong link between grumbling and idolatry and immorality.

When you become dissatisfied with the provision of the Lord you look for satisfaction in the world – idols and sex. Something will fill the void.

The Old Testament says this is putting the Lord to the test.

Israel put Christ to the test and the Lord punished them.

Verses 11-13:

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. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.

The children of Israel wanted God and the world.

They wanted the protection, provision and guidance of the Lord and they wanted the fun of the world – idolatry and immorality.

I don't think Israel set out to fall into idolatry or sexual sin. But they didn't flee. They dabbled with it and the temptation overcame them.

Listen to Proverbs 6 regarding temptation:

Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned?

Scripture is filled with examples of godly men and women who drew too close to the fire – too close to the line – thinking they would be fine – and they were burned – some were spiritually destroyed.

Eve wanted to be like God – she took the apple.

David looked at Bathsheba and the lust overcame him.

Demas – once a companion of Paul – loved this present world – and it destroyed him.

Balaam – a prophet of God – loved money – and it was the end for him.

Israel loved their idolatry and immorality and it led to their destruction.

Example after example. They are written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

You ignore these examples at your peril.

David was a man after God's own heart. Balaam was a prophet. Judas was a disciple.

If you think you can stand where they failed – you are a fool – take heed lest you fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.

We are fallible beings corrupted by sin.

I have seen it so many times – the anatomy of a fall.

I am still on the acceptable side of the line.

I have flirted with going over the line before and been fine.

But this time they draw close to the flame but this time they are not alright.

They watch a show with a few racy bits. They are fine. The show gets racier but they keep watching. They end up at a web page that is not great – but they are in control. Then out of nowhere they keep clicking. Before they know it they are over the line and lust is killing them.

Couples in love – it is just a bit of kissing – but before you know it – it goes too far.

The married man just talking to the pretty girl at work – it is fine – till she smile back – and then you are in trouble.

There is not one person here who has not drawn too close to a line – taken fire to his chest – and found they are burned.

Yet, somehow we think the next time we will be OK.

Take heed lest you fall.

What are we to do?

Verses 13-14:

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. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

Notice this word 'temptation.' Sometimes you will see this word translated 'trial' and other times you will see it as 'temptation.' Both nuances are in this word.

Look at what Paul said. "No temptation has overtaken that is not common to man." The temptations the Corinthians were undergoing were not some supernatural trial from Satan that they had no resources to overcome. They came from their own lusts and were no different from the trials and temptations everyone experiences. The temptation to idolatry and immorality and grumbling was not something unique to the Corinthians.

Paul continues, "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability." What an encouraging promise. God is not the source of our trials and temptations but, He is in control of them. He knows that they will mature us, but He also knows what will break us. He will never allow a child of His to be broken by a trial. God knows what we can endure. He knows the limits of our makeup.

There have probably been many times where you have questioned that. Times when you have cried out, "Oh God, this is beyond what I can endure." But this is meant to drive us to our knees and closer to the Lord.

And with the temptation He will provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

When you are in the midst of a trial. A chronic illness. Bullying. A disastrous marriage – what you want is for the trial to disappear – like waking up from a dream.

But notice that is not what God does – to mature us – to give God the glory – the way of escape is that God enables you to endure it.

If we ever think we deserve to avoid our trials to have an easy way out, look at Christ. He was sorely tempted in the Garden of Gethsemane. Great drops of blood fell from His forehead so severe was His trial. The temptation was to avoid the pain and suffering of the cross. Yet He prayed, "Not My will, but Thine be done." His trial led to the cross, not around it.

What is this way of escape? It is to utilise the spiritual resources provided for you to stand firm. You must be practicing the spiritual disciplines – putting on the armour of God that you might stand firm.

Don't be confused by this word endure and think that when a temptation comes we are to grit our teeth and try and endure it. No that is trials. Temptations we do differently.

Look again at verse 14 – Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

1 Timothy 6:11:

But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

2 Timothy 2:22:

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

When Potiphar's wife set her heart on Joseph – told him you can have me – Potiphar will never know.

Joseph did not stand there – saying – God give me the strength to resist. Guys we aren't made of that kind of stuff – not even Joseph. He fled for his spiritual life. Not one man here is in the same league as Joseph spiritually – yet he fled.

What is the point? Brothers and sisters – you know where you are vulnerable.

Sex, greed, drugs, alcohol, anger, gossip – whatever it is for you – whatever line you have in terms of what you can watch on TV, how you deal with members of the opposite sex, how you deal with the idols of the heart, what juicy news you share – whatever your line is – Paul would say – don't even get anywhere near it.

Maybe you will be fine 90% of the time – maybe 99% - but one day you will be tired spiritually vulnerable – and you will not stand you will fall.

I suspect that every person here has crossed the line they have set many, many times – and often when you cross it a bit – your heart says – might as well cross it a lot. We know we should not draw anywhere near our line.

And remember this – our hearts are sinful and desperately deceitful. We usually draw the line in the wrong place anyway.

So, don't go near the line. Stay well away from the things of the world – don't even give your sin a spark to work with – or you may fall.

Paul has one final warning for us.

You are in grave danger if you are oblivious to demonic experiences vv. 15-23

Verses 15-23:

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 is 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? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans 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?

In the western world we often neglect the reality of the spiritual world.

Ephesians 6:12 is very clear:

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Satan is the prince of this world. Satan is filled with wrath especially against the church.

The things of this world draw much of its power from Satan and his demons.

Paul says be very careful – spiritual meals are not neutral. To participate in them links you spiritually with the powers behind them.

This can be good – Israel in the Old Testament – the sacrificial offerings – Christians around the Lord's Table. It unites us with each other and with the Lord.

But, the cultic meals – the ones Israel partook of or the ones the Corinthians might eat at a pagan temple – these are not neutral. Energising them are demons.

Christians must not eat at the Lord's Table and the table of demons.

2 Corinthians 6:14–16:

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?

Paul's point is this. When you draw too near to the things of the world – you can draw too near to the forces that power the world.

It is not just idols and false religions. I have little doubt that energising the sex trade, and drug trade, and advertising and Hollywood and Wall Street – are demons.

Satan wants you captured by lust and greed and addiction and gluttony – anything that will take the place of God.

And those forces want your heart. It starts subtly – drawing a little too close to the line and the world – then you are drawn in – and then they have you.

You cannot have a foot in Christ and a foot in demons. It will destroy your soul.

But the table of the Lord reminds us that in participating with Christ – sharing in His death – washes our sins clean.

All the times we went close to the line and failed. Jesus' blood takes care of that for those who are in Christ.

It is a spiritual battle. You resist by putting on the armour of God – not by drawing near to the temptations of the world.

Finally, Paul sums all of this up in verse 23:

1 Corinthians 10:23:

“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.

Technically – you might argue that as long as you are on the good side of the line – what you want to do is lawful. But – it might not be helpful – to your soul – to the souls of others. It might not build you or others up in Christ.

Brothers and sisters:

Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned?

No. Do not put the Lord to the test. Don't put yourself to the test. Keep away from the line.

I have seen too many men and women inadvertently become spiritual statistics. They love the world and the things of the world. They draw too close – and they are destroyed.

My prayer for you is this. That you would draw near to Christ and not the world. That you would serve one Master. That you would be joined to one spiritual power – Christ. That you would find joy in Him.

Getting It Wrong Even When You Are Right – Part 3 (1 Corinthians 10:1-23 May 5, 2013)

Main Point:

When we push the limits of our rights and draw too close to the moral line – we place our spiritual lives in grave danger.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-23

- What principles do you use to decide whether you can watch TV or movies and which ones you should not watch?
- What are the dangers of drawing a line – acceptable – not acceptable – and thinking everything on the good side of the line is fine.
- In chapter 9 and 10 – Paul warns of those who are disqualified, fall are destroyed. Discuss whether the Scriptures see these as losing their salvation or never having been saved?
- How can you tell if you are deceived about being in Christ?
- Read vv. 1-5
- What were the spiritual experiences Israel had – and the Corinthians had?
- Why would God give such experiences to sinful people?
- Why is it a danger to rely on spiritual experiences?
- Why spiritual experiences can we rely on?
- Read vv. 6-14
- Discuss how the OT is filled with examples for us to learn from.
- What does it mean to desire evil?
- How could Israel have the Exodus experiences and still continually fall into idolatry and sin?
- What was their main problem? What should they have done?
- Why do we keep falling into sin and then think we will be able to resist it next time?
- What are the areas you struggle with and need to avoid getting close to the moral line?
- Why are trials and temptations so powerful?

- Proverbs 6 says: Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Discuss what this means.

- What is the way of escape God provides?

- What should we do in the case of:

Trials

Temptations

- How can we prepare to endure trials?
- How can we make sure we will fell temptation?
- How do we discipline ourselves to not go near the moral line?
- Read vv. 15-23
- Why do we neglect the reality of the spiritual world?
- What can we learn from Eph 6:12?
- How does eating a cultic meal link you to demons?
- What are the things of the world you believe are empowered by demons?
- In what ways can drawing too near to these things expose you to demonic forces?
- Discuss v. 23. In what way can what is lawful not be helpful or edifying?
- If this chapter has convinced you not to draw near to the moral line – how do you decide how far from the line you need to go? Are there times you should avoid that area all together? How do you make these decisions?