

Examples to Learn From

My sister got into more trouble than me. It wasn't because I was more saintly than her — I wasn't. It was more likely I learn from her mistakes.

She is older and was usually the first to do something. When she got punished for her crimes I learned that I better not do what she did or I'd get it as well.

The point is — I learned from her mistakes.

In 9th grade, I vividly remember Gary Prescott climbing out of the third floor window on a dare. He was caught by the teacher and sent to the principle. Yep, I learned I better not do that.

It was that same year that my friends purchased small firecrackers about the size of a pea. They were called, crackling balls. When you tossed them to the ground they'd make a bang, like a toy cap gun. We thought it would be cool to toss them in the stairwells between classes. It made a cool echo and scared the girls. Well, it didn't take long for the administration to make an example out of one of my friends. We quickly learned that this was a very bad idea.



It is true, we can learn from both good and bad examples, but there's just something about the discipline that follows the bad examples that sticks with you.

In 1 Corinthians 10:6 we are given the point of today's lesson.

"Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."

In our passage, the Apostle Paul uses historic events to teach us biblical truths. He does not want us or the Corinthians to fall into the same trap the Israelis fell into.

In our passage, God makes it clear that He was not pleased with a number of people during Israel's wilderness wanderings. Note 1 Corinthians 10:5

“But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.”

It is implied that it is possible for God to be displeased with his children. He was with Israel

and with many at Corinth. Therefore, it would be wise for us to learn from their bad examples.

This lesson will examine five historic events where Israel stumbled in their unbelief. They are negative examples of what it looks like when someone says they worship God but fail to sincerely follow Him. Just because we say we worship God does not mean that God is pleased with us.

1. List the four items mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4.

- a. All our fathers were under the cloud; the pillar of fire by night and cloud by day – v. 1b
- b. They followed Moses and the cloud through the Red Sea -- v. 2
- c. They ate Manna _____ — food supernaturally provided by God – v. 3.
- d. Twice they drank water _____ that supernaturally came from the Rock _____ – v. 4.

2. After Israel experienced the supernatural workings of God you would think everything was OK with the nation. Read 1 Corinthians 10:5 and discuss what you think happened to bring God's displeasure.

ANSWER:

Just because we say we worship God it does not mean our actions will match our words.

1 Corinthians 10:1 begins with the warning, “I don't want you to be ignorant.” All our fathers were under the cloud; the pillar of fire by night and cloud by day – v. 1b. They passed through the Red Sea — v. 2. They ate Manna — a supernatural provision of food — v. 3. Twice they drank from the water that supernaturally came from the Rock — v. 4. But just because they experienced these supernatural events it did not mean God was pleased with them.

It would be like me saying God is pleased with me because I attend the Calvary Baptist Church. I never miss Sunday School and morning services. I was baptized in water and took part in communion. True, they are all good things, but they are not the sole measure of what pleases God.

With all the good deeds we do, it is still possible for God to say, “But with many of them God was not well pleased” — 1 Corinthians 10:5.

The first lesson is simple: Just because we say we worship God, does not mean that God is pleased with us. Mindless rituals do not please God. Just because we joined a “religious” group i.e. Baptists -- does not mean that God is pleased with us. Weren't the Israelites a nation established by God? Weren't the Corinthians members of a local church?

I'm not debunking church attendance. It is commanded that we not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for worship. But acts of church attendance, baptism, communion and even

tithing does not make someone spiritual. They may be indicators of an inward spiritual life, but the outward acts alone have no ability to make one more spiritual. Simply put, religious experiences are not what pleases God.

It must have been quite an experience to see and to follow the pillar of cloud. It had to be amazing to walk through the Red Sea. The nation of Israel must have been astonished to see water come from a rock. That experience happened twice. Then to experience the daily collection of manna for 40 years was a miracle, in an of itself. Yet none of those experiences made Israel more spiritual. In fact, in some cases it hardened their hearts.

Israel's reception of various blessing and/or provisions was not an indication of God's good pleasure. In fact, in spite of all these blessings God said of Israel,

“But with many of them I was not well-pleased and over threw them in the wilderness.” – 1 Cor. 10:5

In fact, God was only pleased with Joshua and Caleb who were willing to follow God by faith. But with the rest He was displeased. It is not that God hated them. He love them. He loved them as He loves us. It was because of His love and His grace that He provided for them. Yet with all the blessings poured out on His holy nation, He was not well pleased with them. Why? They failed to mix God's grace with faith.

3. What can we learn from the five examples given below? What does God want from us?

a. Compare 1 Corinthians 10:6 with Numbers 11:4. What was Israel's problem?

They were not satisfied with God's provisions. -

They preferred the Egyptian food to God's provisions – 1 Corinthians 10:6. “These things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.”

Numbers 11:4 And the mixt multitude that *was* among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? ⁵ We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: ⁶ But now our soul *is* dried away: *there is* nothing at all, beside this manna, *before* our eyes. . . .¹⁰ Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased.

God provided their needs but they were not satisfied with what God gave them. It is the same thing when we are not thankful for our jobs, our homes, our lot in life, or our daily provisions.

It is like us saying, “O Lord, why did you give me this? I was better off before.”

b. Compare 1 Corinthians 10:7 with Ex. 32:1-14. What was Israel's problem?

They believed God had abandoned them

1 Corinthians 10:7 — “Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”

Remember in Ex. 32:1-14 – Moses delayed coming down off the mount. “And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out off the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.”

Are we not like this? Quick to think God does not care? Quick to think He has turned His back on us? Quick to think that God will not answer our needs? When we think wrong thoughts like this, we are in danger of turning our trust to something else.

c. Compare 1 Corinthians 10:8 with Numbers 25:1-3, 9. What was Israel's problem?

They committed physical and spiritual fornication . God was not enough. They changed who God was into something else . - v. 8

1 Corinthians 10:8

"Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand."

Numbers 25:1-3, 9

Remember in Num. 25:1 "Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. ² And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. ³ And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. . . ⁹ And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

Their children started dating and marrying unbelievers. (*God has no one for me, so I will marry outside of God's will*). Their practice at home took on the practices of the pagans. Their music was affected, their parties became worldly, their language no longer reflected God's grace.

Literally they were saying they were God's children, yet you couldn't tell them from Satan's children.

d. Compare 1 Corinthians 10:9 with Numbers 21:4b-5. What was Israel's problem?

They challenged God's character and goodness .

1 Corinthians 10:9

"Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents."

Remember in Numbers 21:4b-5 –

". . .the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. ⁵ And the people spake against God, and against Moses, 'Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for *there is* no bread, neither *is there any* water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.'"

Our passage says they tempted Christ or challenged His goodness and character. Why did God leave me alone? Doesn't He care? I will die like this. Why did He lead me into this awful wilderness. In effect, God's way is not good enough

e. Compare 1 Corinthians 10:10 with Numbers 16:41-50. What was Israel's problem?

God's leadership wasn't good enough.

1 Corinthians 10:10

"Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer."

Remember in Numbers 16:41-50 the Korahites wanted to overthrow Moses' leadership.

Num. 16:41 "But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD. ⁴² And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. ⁴³ And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. ⁴⁴ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ⁴⁵ Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. ⁴⁶ And Moses said unto Aaron, "Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun." ⁴⁷ And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. ⁴⁸ And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. ⁴⁹ Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. ⁵⁰ And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

4. What insights can we gain from this passage? Also see 1 Corinthians 10:11, 12, 13.

INSIGHTS:

These examples are given for our benefit _____: — 1 Corinthians 10:11

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Don't Be Prideful _____ - 1 Cor. 10:12

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Israel became complacent and relied on their own strength." The Corinthians became arrogant and felt they could stand on their own

Remember: Regardless the trial God is able _____.

- a. When we become dissatisfied with what we have. Remember, regardless the trial God is able to help.
- b. When it feels like God has abandoned us or does not care. Remember, God is able to help.
- c. When we are tempted by the allurements of the world — sex, music, pleasure, power, prestige Remember, with the trial God is able to help.
- d. When we are tempted to think that God is not good enough, that he led us into an awful situation to die. Remember in the trial God is able to help.
- e. When we become bitter over situations or leadership, whether in the church, in local or national government, in business or in the home. Remember, with the trial God is able to help.
- f. God is able to help.

God promised He will provide a way to escape - 1Cor. 10:13

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."