



New Year Communion 2011/2012

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See I Cor.10:1-13; Paul concludes chapter nine by telling us how he disciplines his body so as not to be disqualified in his service for Christ and the gospel. He realized that anyone, including himself, could fail and end up on the sidelines. Then here in chapter ten he lists some Old Testament examples of failure, letting us know that God recorded these for our sake. Please note that the overall reason they failed was because they set their hearts on things that were evil. Prov.4:23 says this, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:21) Col.3:1 instructs the Christian to “...set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”

Please notice that all these people mentioned had the same spiritual privileges, the same opportunity for victory, yet most of them ended up failures. And notice with me where their bodies were scattered – “over the desert.” That’s very interesting to me. See Deut.8:2-3. God led them through the desert to test them. See James 1:13-14. There is a difference between testing and tempting. See Luke 8:13. In the time of testing, some fall instead to temptation.

Four areas of failure are listed here. Let’s briefly take a look at each one.

1. Idolatry

* Setting anything or anyone above God; See Gen.32:1-8; This was an idol of gold. See Col.3:5; So many have fallen to a god of gold, a god of greed (Achan, Joshua 6; Gehazi, II Kings 5; Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5; The Pharisees fell to this god (Matthew 23:16-17; Luke 16:13-15). This is interesting, because the Pharisees tithed meticulously, studied the Scriptures diligently, and kept to a very rigid religious routine. Though they tithed, they were not generous. Even when they did give to the poor, they did it publically for everyone to see. See Heb.13:5; I Tim.6:18 commands us to be generous and willing to share. And Paul encourages us in II Cor.8:7 to “excel” in this grace of giving. Luke 8: 14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

* Prov.3:9, then be generous with the leftover.

* As the people of Israel worshipped the golden calf, they “sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.” In other words, they had godless appetites and a live for this world mentality. See Phil.3:18-19. What is the answer to overcoming this temptation? Deny self, discipline my body (I Cor.9:27; Prov.25:28; II Tim.3:1), and develop a heavenly appetite (Spending Time With God, battle For My Mind). My wife at the table this morning, giddily said, “I finish today and get to start all over tomorrow.”

* Numbers 11: 4 The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! 5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost--also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. 6 But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" (also vv.18-20, 31-34).

2. Sexual immorality

* Numbers 22-25

* Rev.2: 14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.

3. Grumbling

* Prov.6:16-19; Jude 6

* Numbers 14:2, 37; 16:41-49; 17:5, 10

* This was a generation of grumblers (Deut.1:21-27). And then you see them grumbling repeatedly during the wilderness wandering (Ex.15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num.11:1; 14:2; 16:41). I think that's why, when the next generation stands on the brink of entering the Promised Land, Joshua sends only two spies in, and he did it secretly (Joshua 2:1). And when they actually enter the Land and God gives them victory over the walled city of Jericho, He commands that no one is to talk at all (Joshua 6:10). The people march around the city for seven days, seven times on the seventh day. Can't you imagine someone in the crowd wanting to complain? "Why do we have to walk around the city again today?" "Why seven times today?" "I'm tired!" "We really look stupid out here!"

* Phil.2: 14 Do everything without complaining or arguing...

4. Testing the Lord

* Repeated rebellion (Numbers 21:4-9)

* Prov.29:1 A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.

* Only those who looked to the bronze snake on the pole would be healed of the deadly bite.

* John 3: 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,¹⁵ that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

CONCLUSION

* Four areas of potential failure, and certainly there are others the Holy Spirit may speak to us about. May the Lord be glorified in our lives in 2012, may we end it in victory, not defeat.

* Exodus 12:1-20, noting that this began a new year for them. They were to repeat the Passover each year, and each year get rid of any leaven from their lives. See I Cor.5:6b-7. Jesus left us with the freedom of "as often as you do this..."