

“Therefore, My Beloved, Flee From Idolatry”

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“Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” (1 Cor. 10:14)

Read 1 Cor. 10:1-14

In our Western culture, idolatry is viewed as something done by those who are polytheistic (i.e. many gods) or pantheistic (i.e. everything is god). Monotheism (i.e. only one god) is “typically” not idol oriented. However, our text gives us an interesting insight into what constitutes idolatry.

Verses one through five speak of those with whom God was not pleased. Verse six assures us that our Old Testament counterparts serve as examples to the New Testament Church (v. 11). Verse seven exhorts us not to be idolaters. Yet, the fascinating element within verses eight and following is what represents biblical idolatry.

- 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.
- 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents.
- 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

It becomes apparent that biblical idolatry is more than the bowing down before fabricated figures. Biblical idolatry is when we look beyond or outside of God for our satisfaction or contentment. When I am not satisfied with who He is and with what He has provided and is doing, then I am an idolater.

Because of idolatry's expansive nature and appeal to the old self, the task of staying spiritually and morally pure seems beyond the individual. The application of verse twelve strikes a sobering note, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.” We are to live life humbly. God, in His grace, provides the means whereby we can live a life of perseverance. Verse thirteen is one of the most comforting verses within biblical revelation.

13: No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Because of the promise of verse thirteen, we have the exhortation in verse fourteen, “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” We can flee any and all idolatry because God is faithful. It is the faithfulness of God on which the believer perseveres in faith. Nothing else can enable finite man to endure to the end.

Verse thirteen gives several insightful statements.

First, there is a solidarity in all temptation faced by humanity. Nothing we encounter is unique. We are all in the same “proverbial” boat.

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Second, every temptation we face is being controlled by God. He is not tempting us beyond what we are able to endure. Temptations do not have a life of their own. They are not independent elements outside of what God is doing. The temptation is what God is doing. Because of this, we must not see the temptation as anything but the gracious and kind expressions of a loving God. We cannot afford to lose sight of Romans 8:28.

Third, in every temptation there is a way of escape. We might not see it or sense it, but God has promised that with the temptation He will provide the way of escape. The nature of a temptation is to attract us away from Christ and His sufficiency. The temptation is to find something other than Christ to be the satisfier of our soul. Not to be able to find, celebrate, and declare Him to be enough is the temptation.

As individuals within the larger fellowship of WBC, let us individually and collectively, “Flee from Idolatry.” “Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith (Heb. 12:1, 2).” And let us continue to shout the supremacy of God in all things by finding, celebrating, and declaring that Jesus Christ is enough in this life and in the life that is to come through the systematic study of the Scripture and to share Him with every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Let us never forget that this message of being a Christ-Exalting, Word-Centered, Grace-Based message is a Global-Impacting message.