

# Seriously Committed

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Introduction: Many people take a casual attitude toward God's word. After all, "everyone sins and I'm doing the best I can." We tell ourselves God is merciful, and He will overlook my transgressions in the end. As a result, we don't try really hard to correct our sins. I'm afraid to many Christians don't take the Lord seriously.

I. Paul expressed a resolute determination to be obedient to the Lord (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Paul is saying we had best take our race seriously. We better discipline ourselves and bring ourselves into subjection. Paul goes on to explain why we need to take the Lord seriously.

II. Paul points out that the Israelites were like us.

A. They were baptized (1 Cor. 10:1-2). Similarly, we are saved in baptism (Mark 16:16).

B. They partook of the same spiritual food and drink (1 Cor. 10:3-4). We enjoy the same spiritual bread and drink which is Christ (John 6:31-35, 48-56).

III. Understanding that Christians and Israelites have something spiritually in common, what can we learn from them?

A. Most of the Israelites were not saved in the end though they were baptized and communed with Christ (1 Cor. 10:5-6). They died in the wilderness where their bodies were scattered.

B. They lusted after evil things leaving us an example not to be like them. After all, we are not unlike them (Eph. 2:3).

IV. What evil did Israel lust after?

A. Idolatry (1 Cor. 10:7).

1. Remember the golden calf (Ex. 32:1-6)? Paul quoted verse 6.

2. God was going to wipe them out (Ex. 32:9-10).

3. Aaron described the Israelites as being set on evil (Ex. 32:22).

4. Moses observed they were unrestrained (Ex. 32:25).

5. As a result 3000 wicked Israelites died (Ex. 32:28).

6. Moses appeals to God for forgiveness to which God proclaims that only the sinful will lose their life (Ex. 32:32-35). They weren't just punished, nor did they just die, but God removed their names from the Book of Life!

B. Fornication (1 Cor. 10:8).

1. The Israelites became so bold in their wickedness that they openly committed fornication (Num. 25:1-9). It got so bad that one Israelite took one of the Moabite women to his tent in front of everyone including Moses. When Phinehas saw the deed, he took his javelin, went in their tent, and ran them both through while they were in the very act.

2. That deed found favor in God's eyes which stopped the plague only after 24,000 people had died (Num. 25:10-13).

C. Tempting God (1 Cor. 10:9).

1. The Israelites in their discouragement, spoke against God (Num. 21:4-6). The death toll was not recorded.

2. How many people do you know blame God when they become discouraged?

D. Complained (1 Cor. 10:10).

1. After the Israelites saw the giants in the land of Canaan, they complained and wanted new leaders (Num. 14:1-4).

2. Joshua and Caleb tried to reason with them but they would not hear (Num. 14:6-10).

3. So God renders His judgment (Num. 14:26-32). He also executes the 10 other spies who brought the bad reports about Canaan (Num. 14:36-38).

4. Then Korah leads a revolt with 250 of the tribe leaders against Moses and Aaron. Just as its looking worse, God steps in (Num. 16:20-21, 31-35).

5. If that weren't enough, the remaining Israelites complained that the punishment wasn't appropriate (Num. 16:41).

6. God said enough is enough (Num. 16:44-45).

7. So Moses quickly tells Aaron how to make atonement (Num. 16:46-48). Where Aaron stood separated the living from the dead. Over 14,700 people died besides those who died with Korah (Num. 16:49).

V. What happened to the Israelites was for our warning (1 Cor. 10:11-12).

A. God destroyed nearly 42,000 people besides those who died with Korah; those who died from the serpents; and the entire congregation in Joshua and Caleb's generation.

1. Is there a lesson for us? Like us, the Israelites were baptized and communed with Christ, yet they all died because of disobedience. The number of believers that made it to their inheritance was mighty small (Matt. 7:13-14; Matt. 22:14). Only two people made it by my count.

2. "Let him who THINKS he stands take heed lest he fall." What makes us think it is all right to sin? If God is willing to wipe out thousands of people just because they complained, do you think we should complain?

3. If we use the same ratio as those who were saved from Egyptian bondage that entered the promise land multiplied by the present U.S. population (322,762,018 x .000002), only 65 people living today will make it to heaven.

Conclusion: Some of you are thinking, “Well, I can’t do it. If the Israelites were destroyed for those sins I don’t stand a chance.” I believe this is why Paul concludes this topic with one last thought (1 Cor. 10:13).

With the Lord’s help, we can stand against sin. Let’s heed the warning the Israelites left us and take our Lord seriously. Let us resolve to sin no longer. Let us make every effort to be obedient to the Lord even in our attendance.

If you haven’t taken the Lord seriously, you can repent of your sins this very moment. Please come...