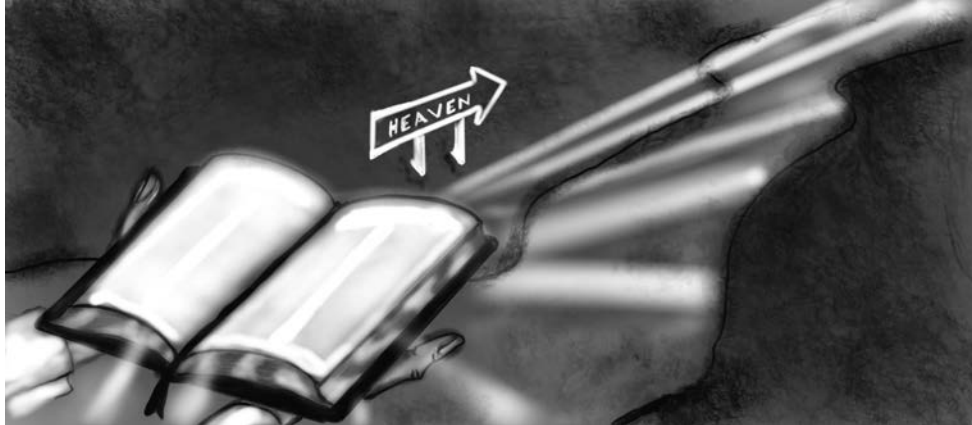


Do Everything to Honor God



SABBATH—JULY 25

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 1 Corinthians 8:1–13; 1 Corinthians 9:1–6; 1 Corinthians 10:7–11; Mark 10:17–22.

MEMORY VERSE: “So if you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything to honor God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NLV).



Because we are God's temple, He lives in us and makes us strong and holy.

IN 1 CORINTHIANS 8–10, we finish reading about the topic we started in chapters 5–6: sex sins. At the same time, chapters 8–10 introduce Paul's answers to some questions. The church members at Corinth asked Paul these questions in a letter (1 Corinthians 7:1). The rest of 1 Corinthians is about Paul's answers to these questions.

1 Corinthians 7 shows us that the topic of sex sins (chapters 5–7) is connected to worshiping false gods (chapters 8–10). The Bible often talks about these two sins together (read Acts 15:20, 29; Acts 21:25; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5; Revelation 21:8; Revelation 22:15). Paul tells us that, as Christians, we must not do these sins (1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Corinthians 10:14).

Last week, we learned that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). Because we are God's temple, He lives in us and makes us strong and holy. He gives us the strength to run away from sex sins. This week, we will learn how we can stop worshiping false gods, too. How do we do that? We can stop worshiping false gods when we “do everything to honor God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NLV).

KNOWING AND LOVING GOD (1 Corinthians 8:1–13)

Read 1 Corinthians 8:1–13. Why does Paul compare knowing God with loving Him? What is Paul talking about in these verses?

Paul talks about food offered to the statues of false gods. Paul uses this topic to talk about a bigger problem in the church: not having enough love in our hearts (1 Corinthians 8). The church separated into two groups because of the problem with eating food offered to statues. Some church members believed they could eat food offered to statues of false gods. That was because they knew these gods weren't real (1 Corinthians 8:4). Paul says these Christians are strong (1 Corinthians 4:10). But Paul says that the Christians who complain about this behavior are weak (1 Corinthians 8:9–12). Why does Paul say these Christians are weak? Because they didn't give up some of their false beliefs when they became Christians. What happened when these weak Christians saw the strong Christians eating food offered to false statues? The weak Christians thought that maybe they can worship Jesus and false gods, too. So, Paul didn't want the strong Christians to cause the weak Christians to sin.

The Bible doesn't have nice things to say about people eating food offered to statues (Acts 15:20, 29; Acts 21:25; compare with Revelation 2:14, 20). But Paul doesn't use the same strong language in these verses to talk about this topic in his letter to the Corinthians. Paul wants the church to be at peace. He knows that this topic can cause separation in the church. Paul is not saying that knowledge itself is evil. But Paul is against church members being filled with pride and separating from the church because they think they know more than other members. What happens when we share Bible truth without love in our hearts? We can cause separation in the church. If we have Bible truth, but we don't have love in our hearts, we really know nothing (1 Corinthians 8:2). We must love God and know Him. Then He can make us wise (1 Corinthians 8:3).

Both Paul and Moses teach that we must have love in our hearts. Or everything we know about God is useless.

Paul says if we don't have love in our hearts, what we know may become a bad thing (1 Corinthians 8). Why must we share our beliefs with love?



What happens when we share Bible truth without love in our hearts? We can cause separation in the church.

LOVE THAT ISN'T SELFISH (1 Corinthians 9:1–6)

Read 1 Corinthians 9:1–6. What example of love do these verses show us?

In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul offers us examples of love that isn't selfish. Paul and Barnabas want to help other Christians grow strong in their faith. So, they don't accept any money, support, or other things that other Bible workers got from working for the church. Some of these things that Paul and Barnabas didn't do or accept included:

“Receiv[ing] food and drink from the people that we [Paul and Barnabas] help” (1 Corinthians 9:4, EASY). Paul was an apostle. An apostle was a leader, teacher, and preacher in the church. As an apostle, Paul may ask the people he helps to support him. Many spiritual leaders in Paul's day used to do that. But Paul didn't. He supported himself with making tents (Acts 18:3).

“Bring[ing] a believing wife with us when we travel” (1 Corinthians 9:5, ERV). A married apostle was allowed to bring his wife with him on his preaching trips. The church agreed to pay for it. Examples of married couples include Priscilla and Aquila (Romans 16:3), Adronicus and Junia (Romans 16:7). But Paul wasn't married (1 Corinthians 7:8). Yes, Paul could get married. Then he could get support from the church for himself and his wife when they traveled. But Paul chose not to do that.

Not “working for a living” (1 Corinthians 9:6, NLV). Paul and Barnabas were allowed to earn pay for their work for God (1 Corinthians 9:4–6). But they didn't accept any money from the church. Paul made tents for a living (Acts 18:3). We don't know what work Barnabas did for a living. We do know that Barnabas sold land that he owned and gave the money to some Bible workers (Acts 4:36, 37). Barnabas was willing to work to support himself.

Is it fair for Paul and Barnabas to earn a living from the church? Paul shows that the answer is “Yes” (1 Corinthians 9:7–12). The Lord Himself commanded, “Those [people] who tell the Good News should get their living from this work” (1 Corinthians 9:14, ERV). But Paul doesn't get any money from the church. Why not? Paul says that his choice not to accept money makes his preaching of the Good News more powerful. So, Paul is an example of love that is not selfish (1 Corinthians 9:1–18).



Paul and Barnabas didn't accept any money from the church. Paul made tents for a living (Acts 18:3).

LEARNING FROM THE PAST (1 Corinthians 10:7–11)

In 1 Corinthians 9:27, Paul talks about why self-control is important. Paul wants Christians to follow his example. At the same time, Paul says that Jesus is the best example of self-control for us to follow (1 Corinthians 11:1).

What sins did Israel do in the desert? God blessed Israel with many gifts during this time. Why did these gifts make Israel’s sins even worse? Read 1 Corinthians 10:7–11 for the answer.

In 1 Corinthians 10:1–5, Paul talks about the history of God’s people in the desert. Paul’s words about the cloud and the sea help us remember how God led and protected Israel in the desert. Paul also talks about the food and drink that God gave His people. The food and drink are a symbol of God’s loving care. Paul talks about the experience of Israel in the cloud and sea. This experience is the same as a baptism. In the same way, when Paul talks about the food and drink, he helps us remember the Lord’s Supper.

In other words, 1 Corinthians 10 teaches us that Christians are living the same experiences that Israel lived in the desert. Paul tells us Israel’s history because he doesn’t want us to make their mistakes. God blessed Israel in many ways. But Israel wanted evil things (1 Corinthians 10:6). They wanted to worship false gods (1 Corinthians 10:7). They did sex sins (1 Corinthians 10:8). No wonder, then, that “God was not pleased with most of them” (1 Corinthians 10:5, ICB).

We can easily blame the Israelites for their bad behavior. But Paul says that Christians can easily do the same sins, even with everything we know about Jesus. That’s why Paul warns us: “So watch yourself! The person who thinks he can stand against sin had better watch that he does not fall into sin” (1 Corinthians 10:12, NLV). The words “who thinks” tell us that some people in the church didn’t know they were in danger of doing the same sins that Israel did. Are we in the same danger today?

Satan will try to get us to sin. But the Bible promises that God “will not allow the testing to be too hard for you” (1 Corinthians 10:13, WE). God will make a way to keep us from sinning. So, why do we continue to sin?



Paul’s words about the cloud and the sea help us remember how God led and protected Israel in the desert.

DO NOT WORSHIP FALSE GODS (1 Corinthians 10:5–22)

Read 1 Corinthians 10:5–22. Why must we not worship false gods?

In 1 Corinthians 10:14–22, Paul again talks about food offered to statues of false gods. Today, we may think the idea of offering food to statues is strange. But people offered food to statues all the time in Bible times. People killed animals and offered the meat to the gods in temples. The people gave part of the animal to the priests. The priests were the religious leaders at the temples. The priests sold the meat. Some of the meat was sold in the public markets. This meat was not kept separate from other meat that was also sold in the market. So, a Christian could buy meat that was offered to statues and not know it. Paul gave the church some advice about the meat: Christians may buy the meat that was offered to statues in temples.

So, Christians could eat this meat at home (1 Corinthians 8:1–13). Paul said that Christians were allowed to eat the meat at home because the false gods are not alive. They were nothing (1 Corinthians 8:4). But Christians must not go to the temple celebrations of false gods. Why? Because that is the same as worshiping demons (1 Corinthians 10:20, 21). As Paul says, “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and then go drink a cup that honors demons. You cannot share a meal at the Lord’s table and then go share a meal that honors demons” (1 Corinthians 10:21, ERV). As Jesus said, “ ‘You cannot serve two masters at the same time’ ” (Matthew 6:24, ERV).

Paul teaches us that God wants us to serve Him with our whole hearts. When we worship false gods, we make God jealous (1 Corinthians 10:22). Paul gives us a rule against worshiping false gods when he shares a quote that Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 6:4, 5: “ ‘Listen, people of Israel! The LORD is our God. The LORD is the only God. You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength’ ” (ERV). To this idea, Jesus added, “ ‘You should love other people as much as you love yourself’ ” (Mark 12:31, EASY).

A false god can be more than a stone or wood statue. We can make false gods from almost anything. What false gods, if any, do you need to give up in your life?



People killed animals and offered the meat to the gods in temples.

HOW TO GIVE UP FALSE GODS (Mark 10:17–22)

In 1 Corinthians 8:1–3, Paul says that love for God keeps us safe from worshiping false gods. Paul talks about this topic some more in 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1. In 1 Corinthians 8:3, Paul talks about our love for God. Later, Paul talks about our love for other people. “Do not think about the things that will help you. Instead [but], each of you should think about what will help other people” (1 Corinthians 10:24, EASY).

Read Mark 10:17–22 and Mark 12:28–31. What is the same about these two verses? How do these verses help us understand 1 Corinthians 10?

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul does the same thing Jesus did in Mark 12:28–31. Paul connects the two most important commandments of God’s law: love for God and love for other people. In the story about the rich young man (Mark 10:17–22), Jesus connects these two types of love. Jesus wants us to think about Deuteronomy 6:4 (read Mark 10:8) and the last six commandments (read Mark 10:18). The rich young man had a problem. He loved the things he owned more than he loved God and other people (Mark 10:20). The rich young man loved his money more than he loved the poor (Mark 10:21, 22). So, this young man worshiped a false god: money.

In 1 Corinthians 10:27, 28, Paul teaches us that we must love God more than anything else. We must love people as we love ourselves. At the same time, love doesn’t mean that we “‘are free to do anything!’ . . . Not everything helps you to be strong as a believer [Christian]” (1 Corinthians 10:23, EASY). Some things don’t help other people grow strong. That’s why Paul adds, “Do everything to honor God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NLV). Honor and praise belong only to God. Anything that ‘steals’ honor from God is the same as a false god (Isaiah 42:8). So, we must not give honor, praise, or attention to any false gods. When we do, we ‘rob’ God of the things that belong to Him.

In 1 Corinthians 10:33, Paul says that he didn’t live to make himself happy. He did what was best for other people because he wanted “them to be saved” (1 Corinthians 10:33). That is how Paul copied Jesus in his life.

How can you learn to love other people as you love yourself?



The rich young man loved the things he owned more than he loved God and other people (Mark 10:20).

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Idolatry at Sinai,” pages 315–330, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

“Just think about all the good things we could do if we lived to bless other people! God blesses each of us with gifts. We must use these gifts to help other people. . . . Then everyone who really loves God will stop worshiping self.”—Ellen G. White, in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, November 18, 1884, adapted.

“Paul wanted Christians to think about how their words and behavior made other people think and feel. Paul didn’t want them to do anything that caused anyone to think they supported the worship of false gods. Some new Christians were weak in the faith. Paul didn’t want the strong Christians to do anything to cause them to fall into sin. That’s why Paul said, ‘When you eat anything, or you drink anything, do it all in a way that praises God’ [1 Corinthians 10:31, EASY]. . . .

“Paul’s warning to the church at Corinth also is for Christians in every time and age. His words are also for our time today. What were the false gods that Paul was talking about? Yes, Paul was talking about not worshiping statues made from wood or stone. But we can make self our false god. Do you love an easy life? That can be your false god. What about eating and drinking anything you want? Then those things can be your false gods, too.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 316, 317, adapted.

“Are you doing something good that is holding God’s work back? Then stop doing it. Do not do things that get in the way of God’s work. Don’t do anything that will cause other people to reject Bible truth. . . . You may be allowed to do many things. But if they will hurt God’s work on this earth, we should not do them.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 9, page 215, adapted.



“Do you love an easy life?
That can be your false
god.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Paul tells us that sometimes the behavior of a strong Christian can hurt the growth of a weak Christian. Think about the times when that may happen. Why is loving God more than anything the answer to this problem?
- 2 What are some of the false gods we worship today?
- 3 Why is worshiping false gods so bad?

THE DAVIS INDIANS—PART 1

Ovid Elbert Davis was born in Michigan, on April 3, 1868. In 1902, he decided to follow Ellen White's advice. She wrote about how people should serve God in foreign lands. So, Davis studied how to be a Bible worker. Then he accepted a job to work with Indians first in Alaska and then in British Columbia.

On January 19, 1906, the General Conference voted to send Davis to British Guyana. The Seventh-day Adventist Church just started working there. Davis married Carrie Rosley, in April, and the couple went to Guyana the next month.

Davis gave Bible booklets and other books to people during his first two years in British Guyana. Then, in 1910, he started a new church 160 miles upriver. In that same year, some groups in Guyana invited Davis to visit them. These family groups lived deep in the jungle. No white man went there before. The family groups wanted Davis to teach them the Good News about Jesus.

These family groups heard about Seventh-day Adventists from other family groups nearby. Davis heard stories about an old village chief. A shining person visited the chief and taught him and his people about Adam and Eve, how sin started, the promise of a Savior, and the Second Coming. The shining person also showed the people how to worship on the seventh-day Sabbath and live a healthful life. The shining person told the chief that a man with a black book would come and teach them more.

The journey to the jungle village took Davis two months. In one report he said that he traveled 29 days on a boat. Then he traveled another 10 days through the forest.

Davis taught the family groups from his "black book," the Bible. Davis taught them all about Jesus. Davis started three centers there. He wrote that 187 people decided to follow Jesus. Davis built three church buildings. He started to teach the new Christians Bible truth. He also taught them to sing a song about Jesus in English.

Davis came back for a second visit in 1911. In his travel diary, he complained about a fever and heart problems before he left on his trip. His last words were written on Monday, July 17. He wrote, "I spent the day teaching the people and giving them a new name." The people wanted a new name that showed their decision to follow Jesus and obey Bible truth.

This story came from Michael Cambell's story in the online Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists. We invite you to visit encyclopedia.adventist.org to enjoy more stories about Seventh-day Adventist Bible workers and pioneers. Read the rest of the story next week.

INSIDE Story

by MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL



The shining person told the chief that a man with a black book would come and teach them more.