

1Corinthians 18-07-08b

Let's resume our study now in the book of 1st Corinthians, chapter 10. We're looking at these things that became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. It's one thing to be presented with an opportunity, to present it with something that is enticing, but to be desiring something as they desired it is to indulge it and to start down the classic slippery slope.

Once you begin it is very difficult to extract yourself and the key to success in overcoming a pattern sin or a pattern failure is not to sit there staring at the pack of cigarettes on the table saying I'm not going to smoke, I'm not going to smoke, I'm not going to smoke. It is to not buy the carton of cigarettes, to not sit there with nothing to do and fidgeting and saying oh I sure love cigarettes and you know the whole Jerry Reed and other puff thing. It is to turn your attention and to invest your efforts and your time and your desires in fruitful things and don't stand at the threshold.

What's interesting to me is if you go all the way back to the early chapters of Genesis looking at the problem that Cain has when his sacrifice is not accepted remember that and God comes to him and says if you do well will you not be accepted but if not sin lies crouching at the door. Now we're out here in the country on 40 acres and I am certain that there are copperheads on this 40 acres. There are cottonmouth water moccasins on this 40 acres but I don't immediately worry about copperheads and I don't immediately worry about cotton mouths when I walk out the door here and go just beyond the fence through the gate and to the barn or to a car or out to whatever might be out there.

I don't really worry about that but if somebody said Sam there is a copperhead coiled at your door. There is a cottonmouth waiting at the door. How careful would I be compared to how careful I typically am right now.

I know that it's out there but if I'm told it's at the door I'm going to reconsider my whole plan of going out that door. We are in the household of faith. We are in the body of Christ and if you entertain desires of going out that door and into some other venue like a temple in Corinth where parties are held, a temple that is dedicated to another God, sin is crouching at that door.

It's not out somewhere on the property and you'd have to kind of go looking to find it. It is right there. If you do well you're accepted.

If not, sin is right there at the door and Paul says look at the example of the Israelites. Even though God supernaturally delivered them, even though God supernaturally provided leadership and direction and guidance and provision, how quickly in a day they became idolaters with the golden calf. How in a day with the Midianite women 23,000 fell.

23 yea 24. How quickly in a day half of the sons of Aaron lost not only their invisible inheritance

but their very lives. In a day it happens that quick.

Now is there anything wrong with lighting a censer, a torch? Is there anything wrong with carrying it around? Is there something wrong with approaching God's altar with it and it's a different fire that didn't originate at God's behest and at God's command when that altar was first constructed? Well you start doing things that you can justify and say they are innocuous but they lead to something else. So Paul here is encouraging the Corinthians and through them God is encouraging us take the long view. The way that seems right, the way that seems harmless, the way that seems justifiable, I can reason my way but if I look at the outcome, is it an outcome of faith or is it an outcome of evil desire that leads to direct conflict with God Himself? That's what he's giving examples of here.

I said we were going to look at this Midianite thing real quickly so keep your place. I'm going to use my fake \$3 bill here and go back to Numbers chapter 25. Numbers chapter 25.

The people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab in verse 1. They, the women of Moab, invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods and the people ate. See they didn't start out bowing down. They got invited to the sacrifice and they said well just going and watching the sacrifice there's no harm in that and sitting down to eating a meal there's no harm in that, right? But they end up joining in and bowing down which is something that there's great harm in because they have already made a commitment to the God of Israel.

All that the Lord has said we will do. They did that at Sinai just not that long ago, right? Now notice what it says in verse 3. So Israel was joined to, it doesn't say they were joined to non-Israelite women. They were joined to the ethnoi or the Gentiles or the non, these people the Midianites by the way they are descended from Abraham through Keturah.

They're one of one of the tribes that the 17 sons that Abraham has not with Sarah and of course you have the Ishmaelites through Hagar but the Midianites are descended from Abraham. They are cousins if you will with their mother being Keturah but it says Israel was joined to. This is the word that means to yoke, to attach and this is pledge, this is covenant, this is commitment, this is promise, this is you know being not unequally yoked together with the faithless.

Well this is not a momentary conversation or standing together at the hot dog stand. This is a bond, do not be bonded, do not be chained together. Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, the God.

Baal, you remember this, it's the word for Lord in the ancient Near Eastern languages that are all derived from Proto-Semitic and so much so that Saul's got a son named Ishbaal which means man of the Lord and in the olden days it's kind of like there's some words that used to mean one thing and now they mean something else and you can't use them in politically correct society. Well Baal at one time had been another word for God capital G but it had been co-opted and corrupted by the Canaanites for the storm God, the God of storms and he put on a mask that

made him look like a bull and had a whopping good time with a goddess who dressed herself up like a heifer and they ended up having all kinds of you know a whole consortium of Canaanite gods. It's the Zeus story, it's like Leta and the Swan and some of these others and you end up with Hercules and he's a demigod and they anyway that they had this whole fantasy mythology but Baal meant Lord so there are various local Canaanite deities and the one in Moab is Baal Peor, the Lord Peor, the God Peor and this one gets introduced in much the same fashion in association with eating and drinking and sporting they end up being yoked to the God Peor and so the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.

Well let's take a look first of all at who the Midianites are because you remember that Moses himself spent a long time in Midian among the Midianites. His father-in-law Jethro, his wife Zipporah are from Midian right? You think well what a what a terrible turn. Well the southern Midianites and remember this is a very loose confederation of descendants of Midian from Abraham but the southern Midianites were almost their own people they are the Kenites and Jethro is the chief of the Kenites technically they're Midianites but they are a southern group sort of unto themselves that's where Zipporah comes from that's where Moses spends his time that's how he knows what's on the other side of the sea when God parts it and they cross he's been out there feeding flocks for four decades and so does he know how to find pasture and find water and all the rest of it of course he does.

Those are southern Midianites. These people in the very far north and remember Israel is 30 miles north of the northernmost border of Moab and in the Acacia Grove at Shittim and Matthew mentioned during the break my brother Matthew mentioned that there is fair evidence that in this same location or very near it is the remains of what they now think was Sodom and Gomorrah right on the northern border of Moab they haven't really been able to figure out exactly where those five cities were but there's a fair argument to be made that Sodom and Gomorrah were right there next to the Acacia Grove and that of course makes this doubly interesting but it isn't referenced in the Bible per se but this whole incident because if you go on to see what God does first of all there is a plague that strikes down 24,000 people that's down in verse 9 those who died in the plague were 24,000 on top of that in verse 4 of chapter 25 of Numbers the Lord said to Moses take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the Lord out in the sun that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel remember this plague starts spreading through and something in physical terms you know from from observation and and the way the human mind works something needs to stop it you think about the the plague when when David does a census of the people and he's not supposed to and the destroyer is out there and and David offers a sacrifice up there on the threshing floor of Araunah and the angel halts and God says it's enough you remember the the Passover night and the destroyer is going through and slaying the firstborn and God interposes himself everywhere where there's doorposts and a lintel with blood God gets between the destroyer and the inhabitants of that household and says no firstborn are going to die here and something stops the plague the brass serpent as many who look would live all you got to do is look and you will live otherwise the plague of serpents is wiping

everybody out but the this is a picture these physical things are a picture of how devastating the effects of sin are and what radical measures God has to take to weed it out so that it doesn't metastasize spread and destroy people from within so these people have taken their Moabite sin God didn't tell Israel attack the Moabites when the Moabites wouldn't let them come through their land God didn't say well those evil Moabites go in and I will be with you and with a mighty hand you will slay them down to the last man woman and child God said go around the Moabites leave them alone but the Moabites are not content to be left alone they have come up and are trying to subvert Israel into worship of their God and once they are yoked to pay or now there is a promise there is a contractual obligation this is why in Europe they were constantly marrying each other's cousins and the house of Habsburg and the Germans and Britain and everybody is trying to marry each other's daughters and so on because once we are yoked you won't attack me once we have a commitment we have to be allies these people everybody that dies on this day made a commitment to Baal Peor you say well it seems like an awful lot of people there are in the next chapter 601,000 men what fraction is 23 24,000 of those men I don't know to do the math but it's it's not a great amount 60,000 would be 10% right if there's 600,000 60,000 be 10% so it's a third of that so it's like 3% so 95% of the Israelites don't do this but 3% of the men go and cavort with these Midianite women and so God slays with a plague these 3% this 24,000 has joined themselves they have said I divorce in a sense my commitment to the God of Israel I pledge myself to Baal Peor the Lord Peor the Moabite God because we're at this these parties are way better than any parties we have in Israel and these women are far more enticing than anybody I'm married to or engaged to or looking at for marriage within the the nation and so God starts a plague Moses looks around and says I don't know where this thing is going to stop but we need to show God that we're serious about our commitment to him and so Moses says in fact the Lord says the anger of the Lord was aroused so the Lord said take the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the Lord out in the Sun this is the way the fierce anger of the Lord will turn away from Israel you've got to show that most of you want these ringleaders who have decided Baal Peor is a better God you've got to show that they don't represent you you expunge them you expel them you kill them and hang their dead bodies as a witness that we're not having this in Israel so Moses said to the judges of Israel notice duly constituted authority this is a national capital crime trial and punishment here the judges of Israel every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal Peor now how do they know who was and wasn't joined to Baal Peor evidently it was visible it was easy to see did they take a mark did they put a slash did they get a tattoo did they wear some sort of initiation badge evidently it was visible and irreversibly so those who had joined themselves to Baal Peor typically these really craven debauched cults had some sort of self affliction that was associated with initiation and if you were initiated into it you had wounds scars burns you can't believe how nasty the cult of Baal Peor is I'll read you a little description here coming up but these men were inescapably branded in some way as having committed themselves so all the judges had to do was look for the mark you know kind of like in the latter days the mark of the beast if you've got that mark forget it you can't unmark yourself so these people had these men had taken the mark of Baal Peor because the judges have no

difficulty they don't have to have a long protracted trial with witnesses well did you see him at there with the Midianite women all they have to do is say show me your arm there's the mark you're dead we're hanging your body in the Sun so indeed as as one of the most heinous things one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren this is one of the sons of Israel a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel weeping at the door of the tabernacle meeting this guy he's a leader in the tribe of Simeon we find out here in a verse or two this guy is a big noise in the tribe of Simeon he's one of the clan chiefs very prominent leader and he takes a Midianite gal who is also the daughter of a of one of the most prominent Midianites in this group that has come up to subvert Israel this guy doesn't just go to the sacrifice eat the meal and commit himself to Baal Peor he brings this woman back takes her to the tabernacle goes into the tabernacle into the holy place lays her down on the ground and starts having his way with her in between the golden candlestick and the showbread so to speak it's the tent of meeting this guy takes this his name is Zimri the son of Salu this is down to verse 14 a leader of his father's house among the Simeonites the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cosby the daughter of Zor he was head of the people of a father's house in Midian he Zimri takes Cosby marches right through the people flaunting it before everybody and says this is perfectly acceptable we're in love and he goes to the tent of meeting goes into the tent of meeting and starts having ritual copulation activity in there now how do I know this a in the sight of all of the congregation of the children of Israel who are weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting they're at they're looking at the door the tabernacle mean how can they all see this because that's the door he goes through with this Midianite gal Cosby he marches right through the midst and goes in and he's basically saying I dare the God of Israel to do anything against this I don't know what his thinking was but Phineas the son of Eliezer the son of Aaron the priest what tribe is Phinehas in what kind of a guy is he what do we call guys that are direct descendants of Aaron priests he's not just a Levite he's a priest who are the guys that are allowed to go into the tabernacle of meeting the priests so how can Phinehas go in there he's a priest not just any old Israelite can go in there Moses talks to God at the door of the tabernacle he's not a priest separation of church and state if you will Aaron can go in Aaron's son Eliezer can go in and Aaron's grandson Phinehas can go in Phinehas sees this desecration act of Zimri and Cosby so he grabs a javelin and he goes marching into the holy place and he thrusts through Zimri's back and out Zimri's front and into Cosby's front and out her back and pins them to the ground and kills them both with one thrust you're not doing this in God's house but there's more going on here than simple immorality these people aren't out in a tent somewhere you know having a good time this is a symbolic act this is joining Israel to Moab as a nation this is wedding the principal people into leadership houses of these nations and saying this God of Israel is subordinate to the God of Moab because we're going to go in and do a Moabite ritual in his tent well who's who's the underdog here who's subordinate if you do that it's not one of Aaron's sons going to the tent of Baal Peor and taking over his place of worship this is there's a lot more going on here than just oh I can't believe you all were trying to have a party this is subverting from within and destroying essentially the nation of Israel whose definitional principle is commitment to

the God of Sinai right and the Sinai covenant is over now where we've got a new thing going here it's a new covenant with Baal Peor symbolized that's why you have so much space devoted here to Zimri and Cosby and Phineas you got to admire Phineas Phineas the son of Eleazar saw he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand and he went after the man of Israel into the tent what's the tent in context here the tent of mating and thrust both of them through the man of Israel and the woman through her body the plague was stopped among the children of Israel at that point even beginning to hang the leaders up didn't really stop it it says as soon as he did that the plague stopped those who died in the plague were 24,000 the Lord spoke to Moses saying Phineas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest has turned back my wrath from the children of Israel because he was zealous with my zeal among them so that I did not consume the children of Israel in my zeal therefore behold I give to him my covenant of peace and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood because he was zealous for his God and made atonement for the children of Israel as Israel goes in the Old Testament so the individual believer in the new how important is it for us to identify and purge out evil desire in our lives Paul is trying to make this point to the Corinthians and he is alluding back to this story to do it it starts innocuously enough beautiful gals throwing a party let's go see what they're up to the food smells good let's sit down and eat all there they're going to do these little rituals and those look like fun because they're dancing and there are engaging in ritual prostitution and well this is even better it starts harmlessly enough let's go outside the camp and see what these girls are up to and it ends up with being yoked to Baal Peor and 24,000 of them dying because this is the crack in the armor that is exploited like Achilles heel and the intention is to destroy the nation of Israel now is God just so jealous that he can't stand for anybody to worship another God God has a purpose for this nation it's a stated purpose you can leave this nation anytime you want you don't have to stick around with Moses in the wilderness you don't have to wait the 40 years until the Jordan is crossed participation in the nation of Israel is entirely voluntary dedicating yourself to the to the commands and the ordinances and the and the purposes of God is entirely voluntary but if you do that now you've got to honor that commitment and if you break that commitment and and you're not going to leave if you why didn't they go to Moab if they really want Baal Peor just pack up your stuff and say you know I really like that Moabite religion I'm leaving and going to Moab no they are bringing it into not just the camp and not just the midst of the people but into God's tent itself and God says if I don't do something the nation of Israel is gone there will be nobody to cross the Jordan there will be nobody to take the land there will be nobody to fulfill all the Old Testament types and shadows that that prefigure the coming of the Redeemer himself you'll destroy it all because you're so short-sighted that your evil desire is all you can think of so God like a cancerous tumor cuts it out with the plague and the people of Israel represented by Phineas say we're with you oh Lord we don't want this infection in our nation either and God says I have stayed my wrath because Phineas has embodied the desire of the faithful people of Israel to not defect and leave their first commitment their pledge this is the equivalent of not committing adultery no matter how attractive some alternate may be you made a promise you made a commitment you made a pledge and it is evil to say well but this

person makes me feel good right now so I want to go do this sorry you didn't have to pledge to the person you're married to but you did and now you need to stick to that pledge they didn't have to serve the God of Israel but they did they made a commitment and you don't break that pledge without consequences and God has warned them they've already gotten look where we are in numbers you know they've already gotten all of the of the warnings in the book of Exodus they've got the word of the Lord right so it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood because he was zealous for his God and then he goes on to tell you about Zimri and Cosby and the Lord spoke to Moses saying in verse 17 harass the Midianites and attack them why because they're a bunch of promiscuous women and need to be taught a lesson for they harassed you with their schemes by which they seduced you in the matter of pay or all pay or they seduced you into defecting from your commitment your pledge your covenant and in the matter of Cosby the daughter of a leader of Midian their sister who was killed in the day of the plague because of pay or not because of promiscuity not because of sexual immorality it is pay or the issue is defection the issue is going back now after the plague you have in 26 the census and ultimately in chapter 31 flip forward in numbers to chapter 31 you have some more intermediate stuff there then the Lord spoke to Moses saying take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel afterward you shall be gathered to your people this is to tell the girls when we took him to the playground we walk them down there and they could slide and they could swing and they could climb the monkey bars all that and then when it's time to go home we'd say okay do your last thing instead of just saying time to go home and sparking a you know a temptation to be upset we would ease into it and say okay do your last thing and then we'll go home so they knew they could do one more thing so there's not an immediate temptation to throw a fit or you know be cross we'd say do your last thing so God says to Moses you got one more thing to do then you're coming home so take vengeance on the Midianites on behalf of the children of Israel he doesn't say take vengeance on the Midianites on my behalf he says on behalf of the children of Israel the last thing you need to do is affirm what Phinehas did a few chapters back the last thing under your leadership is to get the Israelites to show their commitment against Baal Peor and in favor of the God of Israel so take vengeance on their behalf afterward you'll be gathered so Moses spoke to the spoke to the people saying arm some of yourselves for war let them go against the Midianites to take vengeance for the Lord on Midian now these guys are for the Lord this is not so much the Lord if the Lord wanted to take vengeance on the Midianites he could just stop their hearts they would all fall over right he could send a plague among them he could send fiery serpents in their midst why do the Israelites do it they are going to take vengeance at the Lord's behest because this is a representative action like Phinehas Phinehas kills one guy from Israel and one gal from Midian and God is satisfied here some of you will go a thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war now a thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war so there were recorded from the divisions of Israel 1,000 from each tribe 12,000 armed for war exactly half of the number that died in the in the plague right Moses sent them to the war a thousand from each tribe sent them to the war with Phinehas the son of Eliezer the priest with the holy articles and the signal trumpets in his hand do you see the

connection here this is like the book of Numbers why is Phinehas the leader what tribe is Phinehas from Levi what's his job priest do you put priest in charge of the army why is Phinehas in charge of this army it is a restatement remember Deuteronomy is the second giving of the law you get the first tablets they're broken at the golden calf new set of tablets and a new commitment right here you have Phinehas and the initial recognition that that they've got to stick with the the God of their fathers and the God of Sinai here it is a recommitment so they warred against the Midianites verse 7 just as the Lord commanded Moses and they killed all the males now these this is not every Midianite in the whole country these are the Midianites who are in the camp that came up with these women with these expressed design of subverting and suborning and corrupting Israel you can't find all of the Midianites all the way down to the south where the Kenites live when he says all the Midianites these are all the Midianites who are still camped out there with these 10,000 odd women there's probably they they they killed the kings of Midian and those who were killed Evi, Recham, Zur, Hur and Reba the five kings of Midian Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword remember Balaam counseled them on how to subvert Israel and it's a spiritual subversion it's a spiritual conspiracy get them to commit to Peor and they're done so the children of Israel took the women of Midian captive with their little ones and took a spoil all their cattle their flocks and all their goods they burned with fire the cities where they dwelt and their forts and they took the spoil and all the booty of men and beasts this is in the northern part of Moab here this is in the area they've got to go 30 miles just to get to Moab and this subsection this small force from the larger army of Israel goes remember there's 601 military-age men in Israel 601,000 and they sent 12,000 so this is like one and a half percent of the army if I figure right and so they these five northern most towns that conspire and and get together at Balaam's suggestion to attack they go down and wipe them out children of Israel took the women captive burned with fire the cities took all the spoil in the booty of man and beast then verse 12 they brought the booty in the spoil to Moses Eliezer the priest to the congregation of Israel to the camp in the plains of Moab by Jordan across from Jericho and again the plains of Moab are north of Moab these are the plains whereby you get to Moab so Moses went to meet them outside the camp but Moses was angry with the officers of the army captains over thousands captains over hundreds who had come from the battle Moses said have you kept all the women alive these caused the children of Israel through the council of Balaam to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor they're not in a town called Peor they're not in a place called Peor the incident of Peor is the commitment the yoking together of those 24,000 men with that God this was a political move and these are the women who can still lay claim to those men there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord now therefore kill every male among the little ones and kill every woman who has known a man intimately keep alive for yourselves all the young girls who have not known a man intimately now again in the ancient Near Eastern cultures you don't have to do some strange bizarre test to find out if somebody is has known a man or not there are accouterments married women and single women dressed radically differently it's kind of like in India there there are women who have a small dot when they get married it's tattooed over with a big dot there were marks in these cultures that clearly designated women and it wasn't something

you could quickly change they're easy to spot they don't have to undress them they don't have to do anything fancy it's easy to spot those who are single and those who are married those who have had children those who haven't they they are marked by dress and by body accouterments by jewelry and so on it's very evident you can look at them and tell right away used to be if a girl was married she had a ring on the third finger of her left hand if she's engaged she's got an engagement ring on that finger and if she's single she conspicuously does not wear a ring on that finger to let you know I'm single I'm eligible ask me out if you're good-looking and rich you know that it was easy to tell you can quickly you knew when you walk up to somebody and you'd say well hello miss Hall or you'd say hello mrs. Hall you just do a quick glance at their hand and and you could that that's when we had those those forms of address miss and mrs. well now nobody follows the conventions much and and you can't really tell and you don't know you know they may some woman may have a wife somewhere and and you don't know what's what so everybody's just well hello there person of interest and and you scared to say anything but it was easy to tell in these days so now it talks about killing them now people have made great hash out of this you know isn't this the God who commanded the genocide of the Midianites commanded the Israelites to slaughter all the Midianite males including infants and I'm reading from one of them all adult Midianite women the same God who commanded the young girls to be tested for virginity and given to their captors as sex slaves you know take for yourselves it says look at the context God says these that you're killing are for me these that you're keeping are for you in the sense that they're not for me some of them are Karam they are dedicated to the Lord devoted to the Lord this is God's price this is God's cost there there is an animal part that you put on the altar and send to God in smoke and there's a part that you keep and perhaps eat as a part of a fellowship meal that parts for God that parts for you it for you means nothing more than it isn't for God it is something you are going to keep as a memorial and as a reminder and as opposed to something that is going to God think in terms of sacrifice there's a portion that the priests eat there's a portion that goes to God it doesn't mean anything beyond it's not going to God it is the portion of the priest it is the portion of the offer it is God's portion it's apportionment not implying that you're going to have your way with these young girls and you know people say the Bible is rife with examples of God's acting in a manner inconsistent with goodness they go to numbers 31 God sanctions the very crimes he should abhor murder rape enslavement child abuse and then they go on to go through these details well naturally if this is actually what God had done if that's all there was to it any anybody with a shred of morality would say hey wait a minute that you know what's up the culture in the ancient near east for young girls and keep in mind that marriageable age in those days was right around the time you were as a girl physically able to have children and you know that's very early teen years so girls were everybody grew up a lot faster in those days because you didn't have the luxury of sitting around watching TV and chewing gum and you know getting on social media all day long there you know you were in a environment where everybody who could work did work and when you were old enough to have children you typically got married and started having children you've heard the tradition that Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus might have been as young as 13 or 14 years old we are shocked by

that because of our cultural mores and because of the delayed maturity that is a part of our culture but in the ancient near east and even down to the modern days and a lot of the Bedouin tribes marriage happens at a very early age and so if it's a girl that has not known a man and is not of marriageable age and is not married we're talking about probably under the age of 12 under the age of 11 you know small girls and God is not saying take for yourselves these little girls in some sort of child molestation scenario children as soon as they were old enough to walk around and coordinated enough to hold things would begin to do light household chores they could sweep they could carry food they could tend goats they would provide services and functions in a household and with the flocks and young children of single digit age were useful in that regard and when he says take for yourselves you're going to adopt this little girl she's going to come into your household and it's kind of like that servant girl for Naaman the Syrian and she says there's a man in Israel who can help you with that leprosy problem remember that she's not Naaman's sex slave she's a maid she is an assistant to his wife in the household and that's all it is and there's nothing in the Bible account to say that there's anything more than that going on and it is if you read the literature talking about culture in the ancient Near East the only people who abused children were Baal Peor worshippers they were heinously and famously known for abusing children and Molech worshippers who would take children too small for anything else and burn them in the big brass tummy of Molech the Canaanites were the ones who practiced a lot of these almost too bad dimension practices Israel was distinct and singular in that they eschewed all of those practices and if you don't think God is unhappy with abandoning his covenant and you look at these numbers of people who are slain by plague because they leave God's ordinances and covenants what do those ordinances say that God is against rape God is against fornication God is against adultery God is against abuse of foreigners or of widows or of orphans or of slaves God is against all of those things and so people who eschew his covenant and want to go with Baal Peor who thinks all of those things are great and will make your crops grow better God slew those people you don't abandon the covenant of good for a covenant of evil so there's all of this sex slave stuff is not supported by history much less by the Bible secondly these women are not slain because they worship Baal Peor the Midianites are not slain because they worship a foreign God and God says anybody in the area can't worship anybody but me why are they wiped out they didn't stay where God left them God told Moses don't attack those people leave them alone Israel took a long circuitous journey to avoid these people they came out they initiated an attempted coup in Israel of the theocratic government and God says I'm not done with you all God's judgment began in his own house right and it began with the the people in Israel the 24,000 men they are slain well what about their complicit seducers in Midian and the people who brought them up there and supported them and sent them and encouraged them and said yeah we're we're all going to do this Balaam's got a great idea the people who hatched the plot the people who supported the plot the people who financed the plot the people who perpetrated the plot a portion of the Israelite army as I said it's like one and a half percent of the army it's a recon force is going to go down there and excise that active part of Moab and it is for the Lord and what do you do with their families you could wipe

them all out to the last baby or you can say there are certain ones and by this time in Israel by the way because of dropping in the wilderness one of the greatest needs is women of childbearing age to repopulate what they have lost how are you going to get replacements for the 24,000 men that got themselves killed in the matter of Baal Peor well the Midianite women who tried to seduce Israel are instead going to be put into service when they do become of age and when they are allowed to enjoy the blessings of the nation of Israel who is going to go into the land flowing with milk and honey instead of being destroyed these women are going to be incorporated in at when the time is right when they are of marriageable age when they're brought up and trained in the culture and in the worship of God in Israel they will like Rahab become a part of the nation and be part of solving the problem they caused or their aunts and mothers and such caused and the Midianites far from destroying Israel are going to help repopulate Israel those 24,000 that were slain you can look at it that way so just remember this is not a wanton act of wrath and you know sort of emotional foot stamping anger on God's part this is a carefully thought out symbolic action why is it that God promises the Israelites you will take spoil of those who are oppressing you it's a constant promise promise throughout the the prophets remember that that the kings of the earth will bring their treasure into Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom why because Israel has been oppressed by these very kings for centuries they've been downtrodden by the Gentiles well now the Gentiles are going to bring treasure to Jerusalem this is that same kind of thing the Midianites who tried to destroy Israel are actually going to be part of them is going to be a means of rebuilding Israel and replacing what was lost by their nefarious plot but there's no abuse there is no rape there is actually sparing their lives and finding a way to use something that comes from that which is evil God is working something together for good here these little girls are going to get to come into the nation of Israel and have the blessings that Rahab enjoyed that Bathsheba enjoyed that Ruth enjoyed Ruth is a Moabitess right some centuries hence and coming to Israel you leave Moab and you've got a new start and out of judgment out of destruction out of a nefarious evil attempt to destroy Israel is going to actually come something that builds Israel out of the famine in Israel which is a judgment out of the widowhood of Ruth and the widowhood of Naomi and the loss of those men those sons is going to come the line of David himself which is ultimately the line of Christ himself and it's through Ruth the Moabitess well here these Moabite girls are going to be taken at a young age where they're still teachable and can absorb and come to understand what the God of Israel represents who he is and what the covenant means and then become a part of that nation so people who have some sort of knee-jerk reaction and say isn't that awful God told men to kill babies haven't informed themselves of the why and it is the same necessity that we have today to identify that which is an evil desire and is a sinful beginning of something that is only going to lead to death and as Barney Fife said nip it in the bud one thing leads to another and you've got to see that even though this thing might look good if the ends thereof are the ways of death you've got to anticipate that by the same token something that looks evil if you look at the outcome the ekbasis this testing and this trial the outcome may be the peaceful fruit of righteousness it may be the well-being of my fellow believers I will deny myself something that I do not cause a brother to

stumble or a sister to stumble right and so Paul is appealing to the Corinthians think ahead be a good chess player don't do one-ply thinking you know apply is is apply one move or two moves yeah so one move is apply yeah so all you do is think about your move and oh wow my queen is gonna be out here where she can attack everybody you don't see the little pawn sitting there ready to take her you've got to think ahead take the long view Abraham dwelt in cities did not dwell in cities he dwelt in a tent waiting for a city whose founder and builder is God it was something down the road I'm not going to commit to an earthly city I'm gonna wait for God's eternal city all these died in faith not having received the promises they looked at them at a distance this is what Paul is illustrating he's using the Old Testament type and Paul doesn't have any bashfulness about referring to the incident of Baal Peor and talking about the idolatry that ended up in 23 24,000 falling in a day Paul's not embarrassed by that if you think well this is an ugly God and we want to kind of sweep them under the rug not at all nothing to be embarrassed about nothing to be ashamed of nothing indefensible in fact if you take time to look at it it's a little bit like the accusation is a little bit like I can't believe you let a stranger take a sharp steel blade and cut your child in the abdomen what were you thinking total stranger comes in sharp knife slices your child open how could you do that until you explain the stranger is a doctor the child has appendicitis and this was actually a life-saving measure it's all in how you pitch it that's why you can't trust the news media much anymore well what's the what's the final application here let's listen to Paul's exhortation the appeal of the Holy Spirit to us is think about your biblical examples which includes the Corinthians and you say well my simple associations here are doing no harm I'm associated with people these people but I don't partake of their more heinous practices the Corinthians said I can go to the temple of Artemis I can go to the temple of Demeter I can go to the temple of Asclepius and partake of a party because I'm not an idolater I'm just but but I I'm free to associate Paul says you start eating and drinking you end up with a commitment one leads to another and the only way to avoid the commitment you can't dangle on the precipice where well I've got the cigarette in my mouth I just haven't lit it yet don't have a cigarette don't have a pack don't have a carton don't go daily right by the place where they sell them work your way back and cut the thing off at the beginning do not go to the temple not only are you endangering yourself but what kind of example are you setting remember Zimri and Cosby why is his example particularly heinous because he's a leader and people are looking to him and saying well Zimri did it he's he's a prominent guy in the house of Simeon so if it's okay for him it must be okay for me and in the presence in the sight of all Israel to go and do this well these Corinthian believers going to the temple and sitting down and acting like it's all okay diminishes the stark contrast and difference there is supposed to be between idolatry and man-made human wild stories and the genuine living God who sent the Lord Jesus Christ to die for us and you cause confusion you blur the lines you you make it impossible to discriminate well isn't your God just like all of the others no he's not he's not at all like them and if you investigate a little bit you see that so it's important for us to examine ourselves and make sure that we are in the faith and we look at the outcome of faith the ek bosses we're not trying to escape our challenges we're not trying to escape temptation we're trying to see it for what it is and see its outcome there's an outcome of

indulging desires that we tell ourselves are harmless and there's an outcome to faith and patience and obedience look at the outcome raise your gaze take a longer view where are you going to be at the end of this trail you're going to be nowhere closer to a good destination than when you started or off a cliff or are you going to be on that narrow road through the straight gate that leads to life abundant life meaningful life purposeful life well food for thought let's close here in a word of prayer father thank you for this passage and for the wonderful way that your messenger the Apostle Paul draws on the types the examples of the Old Testament to bring our attention squarely on our own ways of thinking and the choices that we make in the associations that we choose the things that we allow ourselves that we allow into our eyes that we allow into our ears that we fail to identify as potential threat to our spiritual commitment to you we pray that the Holy Spirit will give us insight and understanding help us to see clearly what with our human eyes is impossible to see the higher and greater way that leads to life we thank you for these things we thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ and we pray these things in his name