

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**

**March 22, 2016**

- ✓ Numbers 26:1-65 – The numbering of the tribes and the Levitical line.
- ✓ 1 Corinthians 8:1-9:27 – Food offered to idols (8); Paul’s self-discipline (9).
- ✓ Psalm 22:1-13 – Plea for deliverance from suffering and hostility.

**REFLECTIONS:**

**Numbers 26:1-65.** This chapter records the second census some thirty-eight years later after the first one recorded in chapter one. Overall, there has been a decline of nearly two thousand in the total number of fighting men. The census reveals that of all the *men* counted previously, only Joshua and Caleb remain alive to enter the land of Canaan. So many dead men due to failure to be diligent regarding the spiritual life! What a waste! What a shame! Regarding Simeon’s numbers (26:12-14), they have declined far more than those of any other tribe—from nearly 60,000 to a little over 22,000, which probably indicates that the Simeonte leader killed during the Midianite seduction shortly before this census was taken (25:14) was but one of thousands of Simeonites involved in the

Numbers 26	First	Second	
	Numbering	Numbering	
	Ch. 1	Ch. 26	
Reuben.....	46,500	43,730	2,700 <i>decr.</i>
Simeon.....	59,300	22,200	37,100 <i>decr.</i>
Gad.....	45,650	40,500	5,150 <i>decr.</i>
Judah.....	74,600	76,500	1,900 <i>incr.</i>
Issachar.....	54,400	64,300	9,900 <i>incr.</i>
Zebulun.....	57,400	60,500	3,100 <i>incr.</i>
Manasseh.....	32,200	52,700	20,500 <i>incr.</i>
Ephraim.....	40,500	32,500	8,000 <i>decr.</i>
Benjamin.....	35,400	45,600	10,200 <i>incr.</i>
Dan.....	62,700	64,400	1,700 <i>incr.</i>
Asher.....	41,500	53,400	11,900 <i>incr.</i>
Naphtali.....	53,400	45,400	8,000 <i>decr.</i>
Total.....	603,550	601,730	1,820 <i>decr.</i>

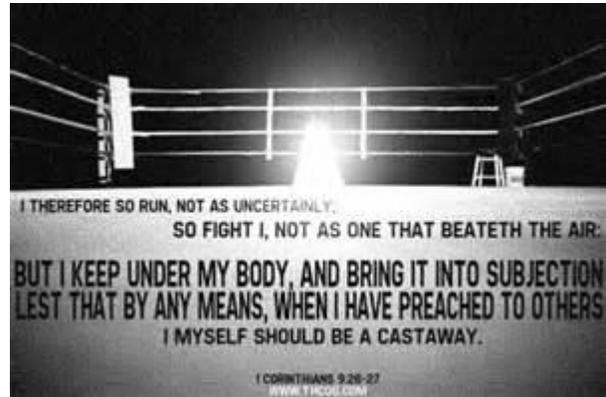
Midianite seduction noted in the previous chapter. Why do the majority of God’s people become spiritual failures? It seems like every place you open the Word of God, Old Testament or New Testament, the majority of believers are more interested in giving their hearts and lives to the world rather than the Lord. Why is that? Who do so many believers wear themselves out in the world and have little to nothing left over for the Lord and His people? Given that the Lord is the greatest object in the universe that one could pursue, it seems like the majority of believers should be fervent about the Lord and the things of the Lord. Why would believers rather watch TV or spend time talking about and persuing trivial things of this world than spend time alone with the Lord in His Word and in prayer for no other purpose than just to be closer to Him? It seems like those who have hearts for the Lord are rare in the Bible as in modern society. But why? The doctrine of concurrence explains how the grace of God can harden some and soften others just as the same sun that hardens clay softens wax. By resisting God’s grace, their hearts have come hardened and *in such a state* they not only do not really care about God as such they really can’t. *Quo Vadis?*

**1 Corinthians 8:1-9:27.** The passage I would like for us to consider is last verse in this section: *1 Corinthians 9:27 But I strike a blow to my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.* While a boxer is trained to beat his opponent, Paul's metaphor is that his body is his opponent. It is his body that must be dominated and mastered. This is not a message that

resonates with many modern Christians who so compartmentalize their lives that the spiritual things are separate from the physical. Paul, moreover, says that failure to bring his body under control will result in disqualification for the prize. The prize refers to rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. So, in essence he is saying that if he does not control his body, he will be disqualified from receiving rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The idea in the metaphor is of one being rejected by the

Ultimate Judge. The very thought of this brought fear in the life of Paul. Apparently, rewards have a lot more to do with our daily lives, like control over our bodies, than simply confessing sins and taking in more Bible doctrine—at least according to Paul and the Word of God. To be sure, it would be a mistake to think Paul is teaching spirituality by asceticism as if harsh treatment of the body was the key to rewards at the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ, just as it would be wrong to think that our bodies do not really matter because of some notion that the soul as a separate entity is the only thing that is really important. The Greek and Roman athletes were famous for their self-discipline especially in the areas of sex and food, those two areas that most preoccupy Paul's arguments in this letter. In the context of Paul's references to the discipline of his body, we should recall that the body is especially associated with its appetites for food or sex (Rom. 1:24; 4:19; 6:12; 1 Cor 6:13, 18; 7:4). Moreover, note the next chapter where Paul reminds the Corinthians of the dismal failure of the Israelites who gave in to their "evil cravings" and were destroyed due to their apostasy, which manifested itself principally through idolatry and sexual immorality. Virtue is all about not only controlling our body cravings, but changing our very appetites so that they conform with our second order wills concerning the good.

Supernatural virtue is when natural virtue is raised to a supernatural level where one lives all life in the reality of God, as God lifts up of the human will and intellect by grace. It is in and with supernatural virtue that the believer lives in 2<sup>nd</sup> person presence of God and fulfills 1 Corinthians 10:31, *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*



**Psalm 22:1-13.** Note how the psalmist laments his tremendous suffering. No known incident in the life of David fits the details of this psalm.

Jesus Christ Himself laid His hands on this psalm of desolation, despair, and deliverance when on the Cross He took its first words as expressing His feelings: *My God My God Why hast Thou forsaken Me?* This psalm describes Jesus' crucifixion. While David used many poetic expressions to portray his own immense suffering, these poetic words became literally true of the suffering of Jesus Christ at His enemies' hands.

Note that this psalm does not include one word of confession of sin, and no imprecatory prayer against his enemy. It describes the account of a righteous man who was put to death by wicked men. The love of God for you and me is quite literally a Cross kind of love. And so, *we love because He first loved us*, 1 John 4:19.



All because of Christ,

Pastor Don