

1 Corinthians 10:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Analysis

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall—After warning about Israel's failures, Paul addresses the root attitude: presumptuous self-confidence. The verb *dokei* (δοκεῖ, "thinketh/seems/supposes") implies subjective opinion rather than objective reality. Those who **think they stand** may actually be vulnerable to falling. Self-assessment is notoriously unreliable.

Take heed (blepetō, βλέπω, "watch/beware/look carefully") calls for vigilant self-examination. The subjunctive **lest he fall** (μή πέσῃ, "may not fall") indicates real possibility, not mere hypothetical. Those who feel most secure are often most at risk—spiritual complacency precedes spiritual catastrophe. The warning echoes Proverbs 16:18: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

This verse directly confronts Corinthian arrogance. They boasted in knowledge (8:1), freedom (10:23), and spiritual gifts (12-14), assuming these guaranteed spiritual security. Paul warns: Israel had divine privileges yet fell. Don't presume your status or knowledge exempts you from the need for constant vigilance. Those who think they're beyond temptation are closest to disaster.

Historical Context

Corinth's culture prized wisdom, rhetoric, and status. The church absorbed this triumphalism, viewing Christianity as spiritual achievement rather than grace-dependent perseverance. Paul repeatedly confronts their arrogance (4:8-13). This

verse warns that self-confident Christians are prime candidates for moral failure—biblical literacy and doctrinal orthodoxy don't automatically produce humble dependence on God's sustaining grace.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. In what areas of spiritual life do you feel most confident, and how might this confidence be dangerous?
2. How can you maintain vigilance without falling into fearful introspection or doubt of salvation?
3. What early warning signs indicate you're beginning to rely on your own strength rather than God's grace?

Interlinear Text

ὥστε	ὁ	δοκῶν	ἐστάναι	βλεπέτω	μὴ	πέσῃ
Wherefore	G3588	him that thinketh	he standeth	let	lest	he fall
G5620		G1380	G2476	G991	G3361	G4098

Additional Cross-References

Romans 11:20 (Parallel theme): Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

Proverbs 16:18 (Parallel theme): Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

2 Peter 3:17 (Parallel theme): Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

1 Corinthians 8:2 (Parallel theme): And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

Proverbs 28:14 (Parallel theme): Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

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