

Discovering God's Wisdom

STUDIES IN FIRST CORINTHIANS

Lesson 11 **1 Corinthians 10:1-13**

Searching the Scriptures ***for hidden treasure***

"I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure." Psalm 119:162

Paul ends chapter 9 with the words, "*But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*" In chapter 10, he begins by using the nation of Israel as an illustration of some who *were* disqualified. This chapter speaks to us of self-discipline.

First Day: Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-5

1. Who does Paul use as an example to the Corinthians of those who were not *self-disciplined* (what does he call them)? v. 1
 - a. From the context of this passage, share who these people actually were. (You may see Exodus 12:51 for help.)
 - b. Were these the Corinthians' actual (physical) fathers? How were they related to the Corinthians?

2. Paul uses the word *all* 5 times in this passage, pointing out the spiritual advantages that *all* their fathers had. Look at these verses and share your understanding of the special privileges these Israelites had:
 - *all were under the cloud*—Exodus 13:21-22; 14:19

 - *all passed through the sea*—Exodus 14:21-29

 - *all were baptized into Moses*—This concept is a little difficult. The word here for baptized, *baptizo*, in its more general implications means *to be identified*. With that thought in mind, see if you can define what Paul might have meant here. Use Galatians 3:27 for help.

 - *all ate the same spiritual food*—Exodus 16:12-15, 35

- *all drank the same spiritual drink*—Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:1-11
3. In contrast to the spiritual privileges given *all* of Israel as they were led out of Egypt by the mercy and grace of God, verse 5 offers a sad conclusion. What was the outcome for *most* of them?

Making It Personal...

4. If you are a believer in Christ, you are part of the *privileged group* that has received *every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 1:3). You are one of the *privileged group* that has been given *all things that pertain to life and godliness*, through the knowledge of Jesus (2 Peter 1:3). Consider yourself as one who lives a *privileged life*, being led, fed, and continually blessed by the Holy Spirit of God. How does this make you feel? Are you thankful for these great privileges? Do you even realize you have them? Share your thoughts.
 - a. What warning do verses 1-5 give *you* (share from your heart)?

Digging Deeper

“All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” It seems that Jewish legend held that a real (material) rock actually followed the Israelites on their wilderness journey. Paul shows us that it was Christ who was with them all the time!

- ❖ How do these verses reveal Christ as our provision of spiritual food and spiritual drink? John 6:31-35, 48-58; John 7:37
- ❖ Do your best to summarize today’s passage in a couple of sentences.

Pearl of Great Price

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” 1 Corinthians 10:12
This is your memory verse—begin memorizing it today!

Second Day: Read 1 Corinthians 10:6-10

This portion of Scripture tells us *why* the Israelites fell in the wilderness. Harvard philosophy professor George Santayana made the profound point that, *“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”*

1. Share from the following verses the account of Israel's sin and God's wrath in each case mentioned by Paul. (Share in your own words your understanding of what happened.) *Now these things became our examples to the intent that we should not...*

- *lust after evil things as they also lusted*—Numbers 11:4-6, 31-34
- *become idolaters as some of them*—Exodus 32:1-6, 28
- *commit sexual immorality as some of them did*—Numbers 25:1-9

Paul speaks here of one day, probably the first day of judgment, when 23,000 fell. Numbers records *all* who died by the plague, 24,000.

- *tempt Christ as some of them did*—Numbers 21:4-6
- *murmur as some of them also murmured*—Numbers 16:1-3, 16-35

Making It Personal...

Consider the sins of Israel that kept *most* of them from entering the Promised Land: lusting after something they did not have, idol worship, sexual immorality, tempting the Lord with complaints, murmuring against God and His leaders. Is there an area here in which you struggle? Ask God today to help you in that area. Commit this area and yourself to Him. Trust Him that what He has given you is what you need (including Himself and the leaders He has placed over you), or He would have given you something else! Take this seriously! 1 Corinthians 11:31 says, "*For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.*" Judge yourself so you will not need to be judged by God!

Digging Deeper

- ❖ Because of the sins mentioned in our passage today, *most* of the Israelites didn't enter the Promised Land, even Moses was denied the privilege. In fact, all but 2 died in the wilderness. When we are truly saved, we know we can't lose our salvation (see Romans 5:8-10; Ephesians 1:5, 13-14), but consider the point of *not being allowed entrance into the land of promise*. What might this mean to you for your spiritual journey here on earth?
- ❖ Do your best to summarize today's passage in a couple of sentences.

Third Day: Read 1 Corinthians 10:11-13

1. Why does verse 11 tell us these things happened and were recorded for us?

One of the meanings of this word “example” is *type*. Israel’s experiences were *typical* experiences. H.A. Ironside in his commentary on 1 Corinthians says, “*These incidents took place literally just as we are told they did, but their significance was something beyond their place in history.*” God knew, if His people were wise, they would take the events of the past and learn from them. God wastes nothing!

2. Considering what we have studied in this portion of Scripture, which began in chapter 8 with Paul answering a question about meat sacrificed to idols, who do you think he might be addressing in verse 12? See 1 Corinthians 8:1-3, 9.
 - a. The Israelites were *spiritually blessed* by God in their wilderness journey, and yet *most* of them fell to temptation. What is Paul’s point to the *spiritually enriched* and *highly blessed* Corinthians in verse 12?
 - b. How can you apply this admonition to *yourself* today?
3. Although the temptation to sin is always there, and falling to temptation is always possible, verse 13 encourages us that we need not fall! Break down verse 13 by answering the following questions:
 - Is the thing that tempts you today unique?
 - Who is in control of the degree of your particular temptation? Can He be trusted?
 - What will always be provided so that you will be able to endure?
 - How does this verse assure you *personally* that no temptation to sin or trial of your faith need ever cause you to sin?

Making It Personal...

4. Read Hebrews 10:36-39 and apply these words to the thing you are being tempted or tested in today.

Digging Deeper

- ❖ Tie this week’s memory verse (1 Corinthians 10:12) to the heart of what Paul is saying in this chapter.

Fourth Day:

Deeper Discoveries

This portion of the lesson will take a closer look at some of the words in the chapter. You will need to have your tools—or resources at hand: more than one Bible translation, a dictionary or Bible dictionary, concordance, atlas, and encyclopedia. (If you don't have all of these, simply use what you do have to enrich your learning.)

Using the tools you have at hand, do some digging into the following terms. Start with your dictionary (or Bible dictionary), and then look up the references to add to your understanding. If you have additional resources, you may want to keep digging (making notes in the margins). After you've completed the investigative process, write a definition in your own words. Your investigation in today's lesson will lay the groundwork for tomorrow's study, so be as thorough as you can in your research.

Idolaters (10:7) *“And do not become idolaters as were some of them.”*

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5; Revelation 21:8; 22:15

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Temptation (10:13) *“But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? Matthew 6:13; 26:41; James 1:12; 2 Peter 2:9

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Fifth Day:

Heartsearch

Are you walking worthy of your high calling? Are you applying the wisdom of God to your daily life? Get ready for some self-discovery! This portion of the lesson will give you the opportunity to examine your heart, express your mind, and experience your lesson, by applying what you are learning to everyday circumstances.

Choose This Day Whom You Will Serve!

Today's fast-paced, materialistic, instantly gratifying world makes it all too easy for us to embrace and worship false gods such as money, pleasure, fame, prestige, and so on. What they are and how much they control us will vary from person to person, but one thing is universal: *giving God His rightful place in our lives is the only thing that will keep these things from turning into gods!*

Paul is exhorting the believers when he says in verse 7: *“Do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, ‘the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’ ”* We know from our lesson that Paul was referring to the incident that occurred when the Israelites made a golden calf and worshipped it in the wilderness (Exodus 32). It would seem incomprehensible to us that, following God's miraculous deliverance of His people from their slavery in Egypt, they could *become idolaters*, worshiping an image made from human hands. Although they claimed to be worshiping God, He was offended and dishonored by what they were doing and could not overlook their sin. Neither will He overlook ours!

1. Take a moment to meditate on the heart of 2 Peter 2:19 NLT which says: *“You are a slave to whatever controls you.”* (Used in this context, the word *slave* means dependence upon, or in bondage to something.)
 - a. What thoughts first come to mind?
 - b. Is there something that exerts control over your thoughts or desires, by demanding your attention and affection?
 - c. Has this thing drawn you away from the Lord or in any way interfered with your relationship to Him? Please comment.

Simply stated, an idol is anything that takes the place of God in our hearts. No one sets out to become an idol worshiper, but the amount of time we devote to the pursuit of these things allows them to grow into gods that ultimately have control over our thoughts, desires, and energies. The Apostle John shares good advice with every believer: *“Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts”* (1 John 5:21 NLT).

2. What *practical steps* are you taking to ensure that you “keep away” from idols?
 - a. What advice would you share with someone who is having difficulty in this area? (Be prepared to share this suggestion in your group.)

Keeping away from idols is a daily choice that we must make. Even “dabbling” in the world—*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*—can lead us back into the sin of idol worship. It is much wiser to leave it behind, rather than think we can withstand the temptation that may lead us to fall. God expects us to *use* the wisdom He’s given us to make godly choices that will strengthen our Christian walk. Then we can, in turn, offer a hand to someone else who needs it!

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you.”

Ezekiel 36:25-26 NLT

If you have become aware that there is an idol in your life, have you turned to the Lord, asking Him to cleanse you and forgive you? Have you relinquished the false gods in your life that have become idols? Have you asked God to give you an *undivided* heart, with new and right desires? How long has it been since you asked Him for a fresh filling of His Holy Spirit? He is waiting to hear from you today.

Heartsearch: Briefly look back over your *entire lesson* before filling in the following.

❖ *Examine your heart*

What has God put His finger on through your study and brought to light in a new way? (What did you learn about yourself?)

❖ *Express your mind*

What change has this week’s study brought about in your thought process? What difference will this make in how you view your current circumstances?

❖ *Experience your lesson*

What nugget of wisdom from your lesson do you plan to apply to your life?

Sixth Day:

Laying Up Treasure

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:19-21*

The highest calling of the believer, and the most important way to lay up treasure in heaven, is through intercessory prayer. You will want to give thoughtful consideration to what you record on this page, as it will be the basis for your prayer during group time. The format for this day of your lesson is based upon the ACTS method of prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. In addition to these four, there is space provided for you to keep track of answered prayers, people and things you want to pray for in the coming week, and also a place to write out this week’s Scripture verse from memory.

Using the lesson as your focal point, write out your prayer for each of the following:

I praise God for (an aspect of His marvelous character) _____

I confess to God that I _____

I thank God for _____

I am asking God _____

Praise for answered prayer: _____

People/things I want to pray for this coming week: _____

Pearl of Great Price: _____

Notes