LESSON ELEVEN

Built Different

"A Disciple Flees Pride"

SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 10:1–11:1

MEMORY VERSE

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

Built different: disciples pursue Christ and avoid prideful postures.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM

Prayer

GROUP TIME

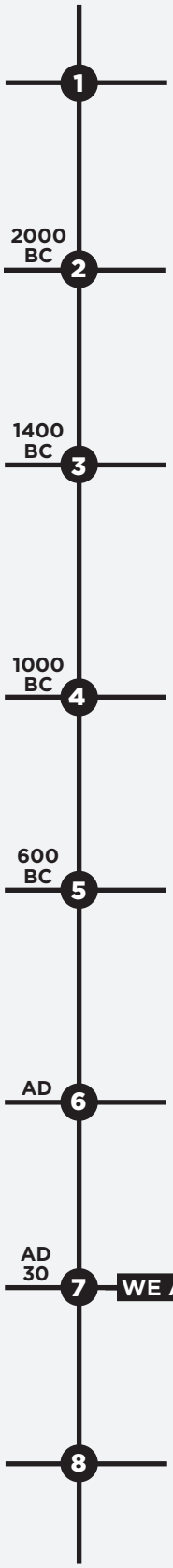
5 minutes	**Welcome**
5–10 minutes	**Attention Grabber**
10 minutes	**Story / Context**
25 minutes	**Discussion**
5–10 minutes	**Closing & Prayer**

PRAYER FOCUS

- **Strategic Launch Network** – The annual gathering for SLN, which focuses on planting churches in hard-to-reach cities, is next week. Pray for refreshing community for church planters. Pray for sharpened leadership skills, sustained vision, and renewed passion.

BEGIN this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of his Word, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your study.

GOD'S STORY TIMELINE



1. God Creates the World and Promises a Rescuer *(Genesis 1-11)*
God created everything good and placed humans in a garden to live in close relationship with Him. But Adam and Eve chose to trust themselves instead of God, and sin entered the world. Relationships, creation, even our connection to God was broken. Yet even in judgment, God promised that one day, a descendant of Eve would crush the serpent and bring healing.
+This points to Jesus as the promised Rescuer who defeats sin, Satan, and death.

2. God Calls a Family and Makes a Promise *(Genesis 12-50)*
God chose a man named Abram (later Abraham) and gave a covenant to him: that he would have a large family, receive a land, and be a blessing to all nations. Though Abraham and his descendants were deeply flawed, God continued His promise through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
+This points to Jesus as the true offspring of Abraham, through whom all nations are fully blessed.

3. God Rescues His People and Forms a Redeemed Nation *(Exodus-Deuteronomy)*
Generations later, Abraham's descendants were enslaved in Egypt. God raised up Moses to rescue them from oppression and slavery. God called His people into a relationship with Himself. He made a covenant with them, gave them the law, and instructed them in worship. He was forming a people who would live differently and show the world what it looked like to belong to Him.
+This points to Jesus as the greater Moses, who rescues us from slavery to sin and writes God's law on our hearts.

4. God Gives a Home and Promises a King *(Joshua-2 Chronicles)*
God brought His people into the promised land under Joshua's leadership. Over time, they asked for a king like the other nations. It was a disaster. But God graciously gave them David, with whom he made another covenant: one of David's descendants would rule forever. Solomon built the temple, but after his death, the kingdom split into two and began spiraling into idolatry and injustice again.
+This points to Jesus as the forever King from David's line, who reigns with justice and peace.

5. God Removes His People and Reminds Them of His Promise *(Ezra-Nehemiah)*
Because of their rebellion, God allowed His people to be conquered and taken into exile. First, it was the Northern Kingdom, Israel (to Assyria), then the Southern Kingdom, Judah (to Babylon). The temple was destroyed, and the glory of the kingdom faded. Yet God continued to speak through the prophets, reminding the people of His promise to restore them, give them new hearts, and send a Rescuer.
+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the new covenant, restores hearts, and fulfills every prophecy.

6. God Sends His Son and Fulfills His Promise *(Matthew-John)*
At just the right time, God sent Jesus into the world—born of a virgin, fully God and fully man. He perfectly obeyed the law, pointed us to the Father, and laid down His life as a sacrifice for our sins. On the third day, He rose again, proving that He is the Savior, the King, and the fulfillment of every covenant promise God has ever made.
+Jesus is the center of the story—all of Scripture leads to Him.

7. God Sends His Spirit and Builds His Church *(Acts-Jude)*
After rising from the dead, Jesus ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to empower His followers. The early Church spread the good news of Jesus across the Roman world—planting churches, welcoming both Jews and Gentiles, and learning to live as God's new covenant people. Though imperfect, the Church carries Jesus' mission forward today.
+This points to Jesus as the risen King who gives the Spirit to dwell in us and send us on mission.

8. God Restores All Things and Dwells with His People *(Revelation)*
The story isn't over. One day Jesus will return to judge evil and make all things new. There will be a new heaven and new earth, where God's people from every tribe and nation will live with Him forever. There will be no more pain, no more death, and no more sin—just joy, justice, and unbroken peace.
+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the story to its perfect and eternal culmination.

1 GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

LEADER TIP

To grab your participants' attention, start your lesson by telling a story related to the lesson's main idea. We have provided you with three options in this section, but feel free to develop your own.

OPTION 1: THE 1996 EVEREST DISASTER

On May 10, 1996, several climbing teams were attempting to reach the summit of Mount Everest. High on the mountain, climbers must pay attention to turnaround times because reaching the summit is only half the climb. They have to descend before exhaustion, darkness, weather, and low oxygen make the mountain even more dangerous. That day, delays built up, but some climbers continued upward even after the safest window had passed.

The summit was close, and turning back would have meant giving up something they had trained, traveled, and paid heavily for. Then a storm moved in while climbers were still high on the mountain. By the end, eight climbers had died. Pride does not always look loud. Sometimes it looks like ignoring limits and pressing past warnings.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Tell about a time you ignored warnings because you really wanted something.*
- *Have you ever unsafely ignored limits? Tell us about it.*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
The 1996 Everest disaster reminds us that pride can look like pressing forward when wisdom says turn around. In 1 Corinthians 10:1–11:1, Paul warned believers to not assume they were immune to temptation. A disciple is built different because they pursue Christ and avoid prideful postures.

OPTION 2: PETER'S CONFIDENCE BEFORE THE FALL

On the night before He was crucified, Jesus told His disciples, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me." Peter immediately pushed back: "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will" (Matthew 26:31–33). Peter was not trying to reject Jesus. He loved Jesus. But in that moment, he trusted his own strength more than he understood his own weakness.

Jesus warned him plainly that before the rooster crowed, Peter would deny Him three times. Peter insisted, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you" (Matthew 26:35). Within hours, Peter did exactly what he said he would never do.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Have you ever done something you said you would never do? Tell us about it.*
- *How would you explain spiritual overconfidence? Why is it so dangerous?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
Peter's confidence before his denial reminds us that sincere believers can still be vulnerable to pride. In 1 Corinthians 10:1–11:1, Paul warned the Corinthians to not assume they were immune to temptation. A disciple is built different because they pursue Christ and avoid prideful postures.

OPTION 3: PAST SUCCESS DOESN'T EQUAL A PRESENT KNOCKOUT

In 1992, Riddick Bowe defeated Evander Holyfield and became the undisputed heavyweight champion. A year later, they met again. Reports around the rematch questioned his weight, conditioning, and hunger after becoming champion. This time Bowe was defeated. Even Bowe later admitted he had underestimated Holyfield's determination.

That is the danger of presumption. Yesterday's victory doesn't fight today's opponent. In fact, past victory can make a person less watchful if they begin to assume they are safe. Pride sometimes sounds like, "I've been here before. I can handle this."

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Have you ever overconfidently assumed success only to lose? Tell us about it.*
- *Why can past success make someone less prepared?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
The Bowe-Holyfield fight reminds us that yesterday's victory does not remove today's danger. In 1 Corinthians 10:1–11:1, Paul warned believers to not presume they were safe because of past spiritual experiences or privileges. A disciple is built different because they pursue Christ and avoid prideful postures.

2 SET THE STAGE

LEADER TIP

This section provides the historical, cultural, and literary context needed to properly interpret and apply the text.

OUTLINE

I. Greetings and Thanksgiving (1:1–9)
II. Problems in the church (1:10–6:20)
  A. Divisions and factions (1:10–4:21)
  B. Gross immorality (5:1–13)
  C. Litigation before pagan courts (6:1–11)
  D. Fornication with prostitutes (6:12–20)
III. Replies to questions from the Corinthians (7:1–14:40)
  A. Questions about marriage (7:1–40)
  B. Limitations of Christian liberty (8:1–11:1)
  C. Veiling of women in public worship (11:2–16)
  D. Disorderly behavior at the Lord's Supper (11:17–34)
  E. Exercise of spiritual gifts (12:1–14:40)
IV. The Resurrection of the Body (15:1–58)
  A. Centrality of Christ's resurrection (15:1–20)
  B. Sequence of resurrection events (15:21–28)
  C. The resurrection and suffering (15:29–34)
  D. Nature of the resurrection body (15:35–49)
  E. The believer's victory over death (15:50–58)
V. Conclusion (16:1–24)
  A. Collection for the believers at Jerusalem (16:1–4)
  B. Paul's plans for visiting Corinth (16:5–9)
  C. Exhortations, instructions, and salutations (16:10–24)[1]

CONTEXT

In 1 Corinthians 10:1–11:1, Paul continued addressing the way believers use their freedom. In chapters 8 and 9, he taught the Corinthians to consider the faith of others and to surrender their rights for the sake of the gospel. Now he warned them to not confuse freedom with spiritual safety. Israel experienced God's deliverance, provision, and presence in powerful ways, yet many still fell into idolatry, grumbling, sexual immorality, and testing the Lord. Paul said these things were written as warnings so God's people would not become proud and careless. The Corinthians needed to learn from Israel's story. Their knowledge, freedom, and spiritual experiences did not make them immune to temptation. They needed to flee idolatry, depend on God, and use their freedom in ways that honored Him and built up others.

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

We presume we are stronger than we are. We think past successes guarantee present victory. We ignore warnings, excuse competing loyalties, flirt with idolatry, grumble against God, and treat temptation as though it is dangerous for others but manageable for us.

[1] F. Alan Tomlinson, "1 Corinthians," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1811.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

Jesus entered temptation without pride, compromise, or divided worship. Where Israel failed in the wilderness, Jesus remained faithful. Through His death and resurrection, He rescues sinners from the idolatry, arrogance, and rebellion that enslave us. Because we belong to Christ, we can flee temptation, return to God in prayer, and trust Him to provide the way of escape.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM: PRAYER

Prayer is one of the clearest ways disciples admit they are not strong enough to stand on their own. Pride says, "I can handle this." Prayer says, "Lord, keep me near to you." In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul warned the Corinthians to not presume they were safe simply because they had knowledge, freedom, or spiritual experiences. Israel's story shows how quickly God's people can drift into idolatry, grumbling, and compromise when their hearts stop depending on Him.

Prayer is not just a private habit or a way to ask God for help after we fall. Prayer is how disciples actively flee prideful postures before they harden. We pray to recognize competing loyalties, resist temptation, discern when to use freedom and when to give it up for others, and do everything for the glory of God. A disciple is built different because they pursue Christ and avoid prideful postures by returning again and again to dependence on God.

3 LOOK AT THE BOOK

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find exercises you can use to lead your group through Observation, Interpretation, and Application. As the leader, work through all the exercises below to ensure you understand the text well.

1 Corinthians 10:1–5 Paul was still talking about idolatry and personal freedoms. Here he reached back to Israel's wilderness story. He called Israel "our ancestors" (v. 1), even though the Corinthian church included many Gentile believers. In Christ, Israel's Scriptures are not merely someone else's history. They are part of the story God's people must learn from. Paul wanted the Corinthians to see that the danger they faced was not new. God's people have been tempted before to mistake spiritual privilege for spiritual safety.

The repetition of "all" in verses 1–4 is important. All were under the cloud. All passed through the sea. All were baptized into Moses. All ate the same spiritual food. All drank the same spiritual drink. Israel had shared experiences of God's deliverance, guidance, and provision. The cloud points to God's presence leading His people. The sea points to their rescue from Egypt. To be "baptized into Moses" means Israel was identified with Moses as their covenant leader and deliverer. Paul was drawing a comparison between Israel's exodus experience and the Corinthians' own life as the people of God.

The "spiritual food" and "spiritual drink" refer to manna and water in the wilderness (vv. 3–4). These gifts were not "spiritual" because they were symbolic only; they were physical provisions given by God and filled with spiritual meaning. When Paul said "that rock was Christ" (v. 4), he was reading Israel's wilderness provision through the fulfillment found in Jesus. Christ is the true source of life for God's people, and the Lord who sustained the Corinthians was the same Lord who sustained Israel.

Verse 5 turns the shared privilege into a warning: "Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness." Israel's problem was not a lack of exposure to God's power. They had seen His rescue, followed His cloud, eaten His provision, and drunk from His supply. Yet many still fell in the wilderness. Paul's point was not that spiritual privileges are meaningless but that spiritual privilege must not become presumption. The Corinthians could not assume that knowledge, freedom, baptism, the Lord's Supper, or past experiences made them immune to temptation.

1 Corinthians 10:6–13 Verse 6 explains how Israel's story should function for the church: "These things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did." "Examples" carries the idea of patterns or warnings. Scripture does not simply preserve ancient events. It shows later generations what temptation looks like when God's people stop depending on Him.

Paul named four wilderness failures. In verse 7, he warned against idolatry and quoted the scene of the golden calf from Exodus 32: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." That example would have landed directly on Corinth because the church was wrestling with meals connected to pagan worship. In verse 8, Paul warned against sexual immorality, likely recalling Israel's sin at Baal Peor in Numbers 25. In verse 9, he warned against testing Christ, echoing Israel's wilderness rebellion and the judgment of serpents in Numbers

21. In verse 10, he warned against grumbling, a repeated pattern in Israel's wilderness life.

These sins are not random. Together, they show what prideful presumption does to the heart. It treats God's warnings as negotiable. It assumes closeness to holy things makes sin less dangerous. It lets appetite, complaint, and divided worship take root while still claiming to belong to God. The Corinthians may have thought they were too knowledgeable to be pulled into idolatry. Paul showed them that God's people have fallen in these ways before.

Verse 11 repeats the point: "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us." The Corinthians lived in the era of fulfillment, "on whom the culmination of the ages has come." Christ has come, the gospel has been revealed, and the church now lives in the overlap between this present age and the coming kingdom. That does not make warnings less necessary. It makes them more urgent. Verse 12 gives the clearest warning: "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" The danger is not only obvious rebellion. It is the confidence of someone who thinks the warning applies only to others. Spiritual pride often begins with the assumption that we are too mature, too experienced, or too informed to fall in familiar ways.

Verse 13 gives hope without removing the warning. Temptation is real, but it is not unique to one person. God is faithful, and He provides a way to endure. This is not permission to linger near idolatry and test our strength. In the flow of the passage, the "way out" often looks like fleeing, praying, listening to warning, and refusing to treat temptation casually. God's faithfulness does not make believers passive. It calls them to dependent obedience.

1 Corinthians 10:14–22 Verse 14 gives the command that grows out of the warning: "Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry." Paul did not tell the Corinthians to manage idolatry, prove their freedom around idolatry, or get as close as possible without crossing a line. He told them to flee. This is especially important because the Corinthians' knowledge was true but incomplete. Idols are not real gods, but idolatry is still spiritually dangerous.

Paul appealed to the Lord's Supper in verses 16–17. The "cup of thanksgiving" is a participation in the blood of Christ, and the bread is a participation in the body of Christ. The word "participation" means fellowship, sharing, or communion. The Lord's Supper is not an empty ritual. It is a visible sharing in Christ and a tangible expression of unity with His people. "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body" (v. 17).

Verse 18 adds another example from Israel's worship. Those who ate the sacrifices participated in the altar. Paul's point is that worship meals are not spiritually meaningless. Meals can express allegiance, fellowship, and participation. That is why the Corinthians could not treat every temple meal as though it were only a matter of food.

Verses 19–20 hold together two truths that might seem to conflict. Paul said in 8:4 that an idol is nothing. He did not take that back. An idol is not a true god. Yet pagan worship is not spiritually neutral. He said the sacrifices of pagans were offered to demons, not to God. False

gods may not be real gods, but false worship still involves real spiritual deception and danger.

The issue, then, is divided worship. Verse 21 says, "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too." The Corinthians could not claim fellowship with Christ while participating in worship practices that expressed fellowship with idols. Paul was not being overly cautious. He was protecting the exclusive loyalty that belongs to Christ. The reference to provoking the Lord's jealousy in verse 22 draws on Old Testament covenant language. God's jealousy is not insecurity. It is His holy claim on the worship and allegiance of His people.

1 Corinthians 10:23–30 In verse 23, Paul returned to a Corinthian way of talking about freedom: "I have the right to do anything." He did no deny the statement. Instead, he tested it. "Not everything is beneficial." "Not everything is constructive." Christian freedom is real, but freedom is not the highest measure of Christian decision-making. The better question is whether a choice builds up.

Verse 24 states the guiding principle: "No one should seek their own good, but the good of others." This continues the argument from chapters 8 and 9. The Corinthians were tempted to think of freedom as a private right. Paul taught them to think of freedom as something exercised before God, around other people, and for the sake of love.

In verses 25 and 26, Paul said believers may eat meat sold in the market without raising questions of conscience, "for the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." This quotation from Psalm 24 matters. Paul was not superstitious about food. Meat does not become spiritually contaminated simply because it passed through a pagan environment. Creation belongs to the Lord, and believers can receive food with gratitude.

Verses 27–30 give a similar principle for eating in the home of an unbeliever. If a believer is invited and chooses to go, they may eat what is set before them without turning the meal into an investigation. Paul was not calling the church to withdraw from unbelieving neighbors. He expected believers to have ordinary social contact with people who do not yet know Christ.

The exception comes in verse 28: "But if someone says to you, 'This has been offered in sacrifice,' then do not eat it." The issue is not that the meat has changed. The issue is what eating communicates once the religious connection has been named. For the sake of the other person's conscience, the believer should abstain. Love pays attention to context. The same action may be permissible in one setting and unwise in another because meaning is shaped by the people present and the message being sent.

This section gives leaders a helpful framework. Paul did not answer every freedom question with one flat rule. He taught discernment. Sometimes a believer may receive a gift with gratitude because the earth is the Lord's. Sometimes that same believer may lay down a freedom because another person's conscience or spiritual good is at stake. Prayer belongs here, because disciples need wisdom to know when freedom serves love and when love calls for restraint.

1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1 Verse 31 gathers the whole discussion under the largest purpose of life: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you

do, do it all for the glory of God." Paul took ordinary actions like eating and drinking and placed them before God. The glory of God is not reserved for church gatherings or religious activities. It governs meals, friendships, public witness, private choices, and disputed freedoms.

In verse 32, Paul told the Corinthians not to cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks, or the church of God. These three groups show the range of Christian concern. Believers should care about their witness to Jews and to Gentiles and about the effect of their choices on fellow Christians. Freedom must be used with an awareness of the people who may be shaped by it.

Verse 33 brings Paul's own example back into view. He sought the good of many "so that they may be saved." This connects directly to chapter 9, where Paul became all things to all people so that by all possible means he might save some. Paul was not trying to please people in a shallow way. He was seeking their good for the sake of the gospel.

The section closes in 11:1: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." Paul could call the Corinthians to imitate him because his pattern was rooted in Jesus. Christ did not use His authority, freedom, or glory for selfish gain. He humbled Himself for the salvation of others. Paul wanted the Corinthians to see that the way of Christ should shape the way they handled temptation, worship, freedom, and community.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1–11:1

10 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." b 8 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. 9 We should not test Christ, d as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

23 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. 24 No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, 26 for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." c
27 If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. 29 I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience? 30 If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—33 even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

11 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.[2]

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people to discuss the Observation and Interpretation questions.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: ISRAEL'S PRIVILEGES AND FAILURES

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–13. Make a list of the spiritual privileges Israel had. What warnings did Paul give from their story?

Suggested Response: Paul said the spiritual ancestors of the Corinthian church had shared spiritual privileges: they were under the cloud of God's presence, were delivered from their oppressors by passing through the sea, were baptized into Moses, ate the same spiritual food of manna, and drank the same spiritual drink of water from a rock. But God was not pleased with most of them, and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Paul said these things happened as examples and warnings; though they experienced God's power and presence, they were unfaithful to remain dependent on Him. Paul named their downfall: idolatry, sexual immorality, testing Christ, and grumbling. He also warned, "If you

[2] *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Corinthians 10:1–11:1.

think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" and said God is faithful and will provide a way out when they were tempted.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: FLEEING IDOLATRY

Read 1 Corinthians 10:14–22. What command did Paul give in verse 14? What did he compare Communion with?

Suggested Response: They were commanded to flee from idolatry. Paul contrasted communion with worshipping demons. He said the cup of thanksgiving is a participation in the blood of Christ, and the bread is a participation in the body of Christ. He said, because there is one loaf, believers, who are many, are one body. Paul said sacrifices offered by pagans are offered to demons in acts of worship. He said believers cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too, and they cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: FREEDOM AND GOD'S GLORY

Read 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1. What did Paul say about freedom? When should the Corinthians give glory to God?

Suggested Response: Paul said, "I have the right to do anything," but not everything is beneficial or constructive. Freedom may be experienced, but it may not be beneficial in all circumstances. To explain this, Paul said no one should seek their own good but the good of others. He told them they may eat meat sold in the market without questions of conscience, and they may eat what is set before them in an unbeliever's home. But if someone said the food was offered in sacrifice, they should not eat it for the sake of the other person's conscience.

Paul said, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." He said to give glory to God in all things and all circumstances. So, there is something about the way we do something that can bring glory or not bring glory to God. Paul served as an example of bringing glory to God by the way he did things, saying, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: PRIVILEGE AND PRESUMPTION

In 1 Corinthians 10:1–13, what warning can we take from Israel's wilderness story?

Suggested Response: Paul warned believers not to confuse spiritual privilege with spiritual safety. Israel experienced God's deliverance, guidance, provision, and covenant identity, yet many still fell into sin and judgment. The Corinthians needed to understand that knowledge, freedom, baptism, the Lord's Supper, or past spiritual experiences did not make them immune to temptation. The same is true for us. Pride says, "I am standing firm, so I do not need to be careful." Faith says, "God is faithful, so I need to depend on Him, listen to His warnings, and take the way of escape He provides."

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: THE DANGER OF DIVIDED ALLEGIANCE

In 1 Corinthians 10:14–22, why did Paul tell believers to flee idolatry?

Suggested Response: Paul taught that idolatry is not harmless. There is no power in the object or the physical things used in sacrifices, but the ritual demonstrates an allegiance to something other than God. The Corinthians might have known idols were not true gods, but meals connected to idol worship still carried spiritual meaning. Paul pointed to Communion to show that worship involves fellowship and allegiance. Believers belong to Christ, so they cannot treat competing loyalties lightly. Paul's command to flee shows that disciples should not trust themselves around things that pull their worship away from God.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: FREEDOM UNDER GOD'S GLORY

In 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1, how did Paul help believers decide when to use freedom and when to give it up?

Suggested Response: Paul did not answer every situation with the same rule. Sometimes believers may receive food with gratitude because "the earth is the Lord's." Other times, they should give up that freedom because of another person's conscience or spiritual good. Paul taught that freedom should be guided by better questions than "Am I allowed?" Disciples ask, "Does this honor God?" "Will this build up others?" and "Could this cause someone to stumble?" Freedom is faithful when it is used for God's glory and the good of others.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

QUESTION 1: Paul warned about a prideful posture regarding temptation. What are some sins most believers think they would never commit?

Suggested Response: Christian confidence is not unfounded. Believers may feel safe because they have been a Christian for a long time, know the Bible, serve in church, have experienced God's faithfulness, or have avoided certain sins in the past. Paul reminded us that confidence is dangerous when it stops depending on God. We need to take temptation seriously, listen to God's warnings, and pray for humility. Common areas are financial fraud, marital infidelity, alcoholism, lying, cheating, or yelling at their kids.

As your group responds, use follow-up questions to guide below surface-level responses. Encourage transparent responses.

QUESTION 2: Israel's story is an example of the drift that often happens before a fall. In what areas of your life could distraction lead to a bigger fall?

Suggested Response: I may need to pay closer attention to what I am starting to excuse, what I complain about most, where I am turning for comfort, or what I am letting shape my desires. Paul's warning helps me notice drift before it becomes disaster. Prayer is one way I bring

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find questions to choose from that will help your group consider how God calls them to respond to the text. Help your group set measurable action steps.

Leaders – share your story with your group. It takes 3-5 minutes. You are modeling this for your group, so follow the guidelines. (Click here for the guidelines).

Challenge – group people into 2's or 3's and have them prepare to share their story with each other next week. Set aside 15-20 minutes of your group time for this.

my heart honestly before God and ask Him to keep me from becoming proud, careless, or divided in my worship.

As your group responds, ask follow-up questions to challenge broad and general responses. Invite your group to get specific.

QUESTION 3: What gets too much of your attention? What can you reprioritize or flee to keep God first in your life?

Suggested Response: I may be trying to manage approval, comfort, success, money, resentment, lust, control, entertainment, or a relationship that pulls my heart away from God. Paul did not say to treat idolatry casually. He said to flee! That means I may need to create distance, confess honestly, ask for help, or stop treating the danger passively.

As your group responds, ask follow-up questions to challenge broad and general responses. Invite your group to get specific.

QUESTION 4: Paul said God is faithful and provides a way out when we are tempted. What might the "way out" look like for you this week?

Suggested Response: The way out may look like praying before I act, leaving a tempting situation, changing what I watch or listen to, calling a trusted friend, confessing sin, setting a boundary, or choosing gratitude instead of grumbling. God's faithfulness does not mean I can be careless. It means I can depend on Him and take the escape He provides.

QUESTION 5: How can prayer help you recognize a prideful posture before it leads to a fall?

Suggested Response: Prayer slows me down and puts me back in a posture of dependence. When I pray, I am admitting I need God's help, wisdom, and strength. Prayer can expose where I am making excuses, ignoring warnings, or assuming I can handle temptation on my own. It helps me return my worship to God before my heart drifts further away. A good prayer is Psalm 139:23–24.

QUESTION 6: In 1 Corinthians 10:23–24, Paul said not everything is beneficial or constructive, even if it is permissible. What is something permissible that may not be best for you? What questions would help you consider others?

Suggested Response: Freedoms like what I watch, what I post on social media, what I drink, how I spend money, how I speak, or how I use my time. Instead of only asking questions like "Am I allowed to do this?", I can ask, "Will this build up others?", "Could this cause someone to stumble?", and "Will this help me honor God?"

QUESTION 7: Pray together Psalm 139:23–24. Ask God to reveal postures of pride.

Suggested Response: Prayer demonstrates our dependence on God rather than our own strength or past spiritual victories. "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

4 CHALLENGE

LEADER TIP

End your study time with one final challenge and prayer. Your final challenge should pull together everything you covered in this lesson and call your participants to action.

A disciple is built different because they pursue Christ and avoid prideful postures. Paul's warning in 1 Corinthians 10 is not aimed only at people who look rebellious. It is also aimed at people who feel confident, experienced, knowledgeable, and safe. Israel's story reminds us that spiritual privilege does not make us immune to temptation. The call is not to live afraid but to live awake.

This week pay attention to where pride may be making you less prayerful.

- Where are you assuming, "I can handle this," instead of asking God for help?
- What competing loyalty do you need to stop managing and start fleeing?
- Where do you need to ask whether your freedom is honoring God and building up others?

God is faithful. He does not leave His people alone in temptation. He provides a way out, calls us back to Himself, and teaches us to do everything for His glory. Prayer keeps us in the posture pride wants us to abandon: humble, watchful, dependent, and near to Christ.

Let's pray.