



**151<sup>st</sup> Church of Christ**  
**Small Group Study Guide – 1 CORINTHIANS**  
by Richard Wolfe

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**AN IMPERFECT LOCAL CHURCH**  
*A Study in 1 Corinthians*  
**CLASS – Lesson 15**

**GENERAL OUTLINE**

**1 Corinthians 7:1-11:16, Questions asked about marriage, idols & head coverings**

**OUTLINE: Lesson 15**

**1 Corinthians 10:1-11:1, Temptation, fellowship & conscience**

10:1-13 Lessons in temptation

10:14-22 Fellowship with God or demons

10:23-11:1 For the conscience of your brothers

Chapter 9 ended with an encouragement to perseverance. It's good to start the race, but successfully completing the race is the key issue. With chapter 10, Paul uses the history of Israel to show the tragedy of falling short of the prize in spite of the significant privileges and advantages enjoyed by Israel. After all that God had done for them, an entire generation fell in the wilderness and failed to enter the Promised Land. Paul's summary of the experiences of Israel as they left Egypt isn't stated the way we might have expected, but the message remains clear.

**DISCUSSION**

**1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Lessons in temptation**

10:1-5 Israel's advantages

10:6-10 Israel's fall

10:11-13 A warning of dangers lurking

- 1. While the symbolism may not be direct, Paul's mention of baptism, spiritual food and spiritual drink evoke certain Christian events. What are they? (cf. Exodus 14; 16:1-17:7)**
  
- 2. Paul's statement about Christ being in the wilderness with Israel may catch us off guard, but how is the suggestion made by Paul similar to claims made by Christ? (John 4:14; 6:30-35, 48-59; 7:37-39. Consider also the "Rock" theme in the song of Deuteronomy 32.)**

3. What happened to the generation of Israelites who experienced the events mentioned by Paul & Jesus?
  
4. Classed under the general heading of evil things we should not lust after, what four actions does Paul warn against? What are the Old Testament stories that Paul references?
  
5. In verse 7 Paul quotes from Exodus 32:6. Do you see any significance to the fact that in the context of 1 Corinthians 10 he quotes the second half of Ex 32:6 instead of the beginning of the verse? Notice a similar detail in the story from Numbers 25:2.
  
6. Other than preserving history, what do we learn about God's purpose for Scripture from Paul's statement about the Old Testament stories he mentions?
  
7. Why does Paul use such drastic and dramatic stories to deal with the Corinthian question about eating in idols' temples?

### **1 Corinthians 10:14-22, Fellowship with God or demons**

Back in chapter 8, Paul addressed the matter of eating in an "idol's temple" purely from the viewpoint of how that practice by one Christian could affect the faith of a brother in Christ. He now goes beyond the influence issue and deals with the fundamental nature of such action. This change of primary focus explains the call for a more clear-cut separation from pagan temples.

Paul uses two words in this passage that have similar meanings, and different versions use a variety of translations. The word most commonly translated elsewhere as "fellowship" (*koinonia*) is used in vv. 16 (twice), 18 & 20. A word with a similar meaning (*metecho*) is used in vv. 17 & 21. Translations use "communion," "participation," "partake" and "have a part." It's useful to note this linguistic emphasis on the nature and meaning of fellowship among Christians.

8. This paragraph flows directly from what precedes as indicated by the first word of verse 14, "Therefore." What is the direct connection between Paul's call to "flee from idolatry," and the warning of verse 13? Was more involved than merely eating a meal in a questionable location?
  
9. The bread or loaf of the Lord's Supper is symbolic of the crucified body of Christ. What else does the "one bread" symbolize?
  
10. What did eating the food of sacrifices (whether the food of idols, v. 7, or that of God's temple, v. 18) signify in Old Testament Israel? What did partaking of the bread and the cup of the Lord's Supper signify? What, then, would sitting and eating at "the table of demons" signify?
  
11. At the end of chapter 8, Paul counseled against attending pagan feasts because it could lead a weaker brother astray. Here in chapter 10, he gives an even stronger prohibition against going to meals in pagan temples. What is the fundamental issue that drives this more absolute condemnation?
  
12. Can you think of a simple statement of Christ that might lie behind Paul's message in this paragraph about the impropriety of trying to be in fellowship with both Christ and demons? (Note: Paul doesn't often quote Jesus, but many teachings of Paul appear to be rooted in Jesus' statements.)

### **1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1, For the conscience of your brothers**

Paul has concluded his answer to questions about attending meals in pagan temples with a definite prohibition. He now moves on to a somewhat related, but nevertheless different, question, and teaches a more flexible attitude.

**13. As in question 12, can you think of a statement by Jesus that conveys the same thought as 1 Corinthians 10:24? (cf. Romans 15:1-3; Philippians 2:4)**

**14. Paul is balancing affirmations of our personal freedoms in Christ with concern for the good of our Christian brethren. Match these two ideas with the corresponding groups of verses.**

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|-----------------------|---------------------|
| a. Concern for others | a) vv. 23-24 _____  |
|                       | b) vv. 25-27 _____  |
| b. Personal freedom   | c) vv. 28-29a _____ |
|                       | d) vv. 29b-30 _____ |
|                       | e) vv. 31-33 _____  |

**15. To summarize and distinguish the three passages that deal with various aspects of the sacrificed foods, let us identify the setting for each section.**

- a. Where was the sacrificed food being eaten in 8:9-10?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Where was the sacrificed food being eaten in 10:20-21?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. Where was the sacrificed food being eaten in 10:25-28?

**16. In what area does the example of Jesus (11:1) provide the perfect concluding statement to this discussion of forgoing personal rights to better serve other people?**