

# 1 Corinthians

10:1–11:1

## Introduce

What was one thing growing up that you can remember wanting more than anything else? Why did you want it? We all want things at one point or another. The passage tonight will help us think about our desires and how they relate to the glory of God.

## Investigate

### *Background*

Within this larger section, which began with a discussion of food sacrificed to idols, Paul is now going to turn to confront head-on the idolatry of the Corinthian church and draw to a close this section of the letter.

### *Explore the Passage*

**10:1-13** [Note: This is a very difficult passage. Don't get caught into a lengthy discussion over these interpretive difficulties. Focus on the main issue of standing firm in the face of temptation.]

- What are some things that are difficult to understand in vv. 1-5? Let's deal with them as a group. [some difficulties and interpretive possibilities below]
  - **Our fathers:** Remember Paul is speaking to a mainly Gentile audience. In what way were the Israelites “fathers” to Gentile believers? *[there is a continuity in the people of God between testaments]*
  - **Baptized into Moses:** What essentially is Christian baptism? How then could they have been baptized into Moses? *[Baptism is about identification; they were identified with Moses.]*
  - **Spiritual food and drink:** *[Their food and drink was spiritual in that it was given supernaturally and sustained them supernaturally.]*
  - **Drank from spiritual Rock which is Christ:** Why would Paul connect the rock with Christ? *[He wanted to show that it was Christ that provided for them in the wilderness. He does this to connect what happened with the nation of Israel with what is to happen with the church today.]*
- Why does Paul bring up the example of the people of Israel?
- What was Paul's purpose in bringing up the harsh examples in vv. 6-11? Were the Corinthians doing similar things as that of Israel? How so? *[Paul wants to draw a direct parallel between what the people of Israel did and what the Corinthians are doing. They are likely to suffer a similar punishment for their sin.]*
- What does Paul mean in verse 12? What were the Corinthian believers standing on? *[their spirituality, their knowledge, their participation in the things of the church, their allegiance to certain teachers]*
- What are things we stand on? How can these things prevent us from seeing our own potential to fall?
- How does verse 13 make you feel? Do you always believe this? Why or why not?

**10:14-22** *[Do this paragraph quickly to save time.]*

- What is Paul's big idea in this paragraph? *[flee from idolatry]*
- How does he support his point?
- What are ways that we can provoke the Lord to jealousy in our lives?

**10:23-11:1**

Now Paul comes back to what he began this section with, namely the issue of what to do with food offered to idols.

- Where have we heard the language of v. 23 before?
- What is Paul's big idea in this section? *[Seek the good of others above your own good]*
- Summarize what Paul says about how the Corinthian believers are to deal with food issues.
- What is the principle that should drive everything the Corinthians' do? *[doing all to the glory of God]*
- How does Paul's last statement relate to what he began talking about in this larger section when he began defending his apostleship? *[He imitates Christ and therefore is worthy of their imitation. This is further support to his authority as an apostle and as one they should listen to and follow themselves.]*

*Discover the Big Idea*

What would you say is the big idea of this larger section, chapters 8-10? What is the main thing Paul wants the Corinthian believers to get out of his section?

Summary: In all these issues the bottom line is the glory of God. There are times we will need to give up our "rights", legitimate or otherwise, because the glory of God demands it. The glory of God is so much greater than our convenience and comfort.

## **Respond**

- What is the relationship between the issue of idolatry and the glory of God? In what ways do we practice idolatry to the detriment of God's glory?
- What causes us to seek our own glory? *[the desire for satisfaction]*
- What is the basis for believing that you will be fully satisfied by Jesus Christ?