

Student Guide: 1 Corinthians 10 – Near the Things of God or Known by God?

Objective: To understand Paul's warnings in 1 Corinthians 10 about Christian liberty, spiritual experience, and the need for daily trust and obedience in God.

I. Near the Things of God, or Known by the God of Those Things?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:1–5

- The Israelites experienced God in extraordinary ways:
 - **Cloud** – Spirit of God
 - **Sea** – Baptismal imagery
 - **Spiritual food and drink** – Christ, the Word
- Paul reminds us:

"Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

Observation:

- Experience does not equal faithfulness.
- Spiritual exposure cannot replace daily trust and obedience.
- Miracles can awaken faith, but only relationship sustains it.

Reflection Questions:

1. Can you think of times when a spiritual experience inspired you but didn't change your daily habits?
 2. Are you relying on past experiences with God rather than trusting Him today?
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II. Lessons from Israel's Failures: 1 Corinthians 10:6–13

Paul identifies four categories of sin that led to Israel's downfall, each rooted in **unbelief and impatience**:

1. **Idolatry (εἰδωλολάτρης)**
 - *Exodus 32:1* – The golden calf was about anxiety, not theology.
 - Idolatry often begins with waiting. We desire something tangible while God seems distant.
2. **Sexual Immorality (πορνείω)**
 - Promises closeness without covenant.
 - Offers immediate satisfaction when God asks for trust and patience.

3. Testing Christ

- *Numbers 21:5* – Complaining about manna: “We detest this miserable food.”
- God’s provision was good, but their hearts grew impatient.

4. Grumbling

- *Numbers 14:1–4* – Complaints against God and Moses reveal regret for leaving Egypt.
- Grumbling often begins as harmless venting but grows into unbelief.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does impatience affect your trust in God today?
 2. Are there areas where you’ve substituted God’s provision for something immediate and easier to control?
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III. From Experience to Relationship

- Spiritual experiences are meant to **introduce** us to God, not **sustain** us.
- When the excitement fades, relationship is what carries us.

Practical Application:

- Be a people who:
 - **Pray**, not out of obligation, but out of longing
 - **Fast**, not to prove yourself, but to pursue God
 - **Love the Word**, not for knowledge, but because it gives life

Reflection Question:

- Which of these disciplines (prayer, fasting, Word) are you relying on for habit, and which are helping you grow in relationship with God?
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IV. Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 10:12 – *“Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.”*

V. Application Exercise

Take some time this week to reflect on:

1. One area where you may be living on **experience instead of relationship**.

2. One spiritual discipline you will intentionally use to strengthen your daily walk with God.
3. One “Egypt” in your life—a familiar, comforting place or habit you may be clinging to instead of trusting God fully.