

Small Group Leader's Guide

A Perspective on Our Strengths

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Introduction: 1 Corinthians 10:1 begins with the word “For,” which connects back to what Paul has just talked about at the end of 1 Corinthians 9. In 9:24-27 Paul writes that he runs the race of the Christian life and ministry in such a way that he might not be disqualified (9:27). To avoid such an end he exercises self control (v. 25) and he buffets his body and makes it his slave (v. 26). Paul wants the Corinthians and us to live the same kind of disciplined lives that we too might not become disqualified. He urges us to “run in such a way that [we] may win” (v. 24). We might be inclined to think it is only our weaknesses that we need to be concerned about in this race, but Paul suggests in these verses that we need to be concerned about our apparent strengths. They can trip us up if we are not careful. May we learn well from Paul’s instructions here that we may run the race of the Christian life well to the very end.

Opening Question: In what areas of your life do you tend to feel confident and strong?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

1. What kinds of spiritual advantages did the children of Israel have (vv. 1-4)?
2. How did God feel about the children of Israel (v. 5)? Why?

Steve said:

Paul is making a very simple, yet profound observation: God’s blessing and provision do not guarantee that our lives please Him. Past spiritual experiences do not validate your present walk with God. Who could boast any greater spiritual experiences than the children of Israel?!? And yet such experiences didn’t translate into walking with and pleasing God.

3. In what ways might we use our past spiritual experiences to try and validate our present walk with God?
4. Do you agree that God’s blessing and provision do not guarantee that our lives please Him? Why?
5. Verse 6 says that the things that happened to the Israelites were examples for us? How are these examples to affect our lives?

6. What specific examples of sin by the Israelites does Paul mention (vv. 7-10)?
7. Why do you think he highlights these sins?
8. What warning does Paul give the Corinthians and us in verse 12? How does this warning relate to our strengths?

Steve said:

My encouragement to you is to discern the particular temptations in your life associated with your areas of strength. We all know the temptations associated with our weakness, but do we understand the temptations associated with our strengths – the areas in which we “think we stand”?

9. What temptations are associated with your strengths?
10. What does Paul teach about temptation (v. 13)?
11. What does Paul teach about God (v. 13)?

Steve said:

When you and I are facing temptation, the most relevant question is not, “Am I strong enough to resist this temptation?” but “God, how have You been faithful to provide me with a way of escape?”

12. How might this question help us in our temptations?
13. How does God help us escape temptations?