

## **CASE STUDIES**

### **Scripture Reading:** Read 1 Corinthians 10

One of the preferred teaching tools for training adults is the case study method. I remember professors in seminary utilizing this tool with some of our classes. They would utilize true stories and present each objectively without bringing a given issue to a conclusion. We were then expected to discuss the issue with a facilitator or in a small group to reach a resolution consistent with the Scripture, pastoral wisdom, the reality of the fallen condition, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, there was no one right option, so we had the chance to dialogue and discuss alternative solutions from different perspectives. By doing these case studies, it helped us to think in advance about how we would address some of the situations we might face in ministry.

In a way, Paul's presentation in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 is nothing more than a series of case studies. The only exception is that Paul actually draws some conclusions for the Corinthian believers rather than leaving a resolution completely up to them. Take a look at how he does it: *For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 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 pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!"*

You can see how Paul traces the history of Israel's failures as they made their way from Egypt to the Promised Land and suffered judgment for it. Notice how Paul twice tells the Corinthians that the events of Israel's history were examples to the church. He wanted them to learn from Israel's mistakes rather than repeat those mistakes in their lives and learn the hard way. He would want the same for us today!

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** As you reflect on Paul's case studies, what from Israel's history stands out as an area that the Father wants to address in your life? Is it in the area of idolatry – placing something else in the place that is God's alone? Is it immorality – involvement with sexual sins whether in your mind, through your eyes or in your actions? Is it in the area of testing the Lord rather than trusting Him? Is it grumbling and complaining when the Lord doesn't do what you want? Repent of whatever the Lord shows you and pray for Him to reinforce His lessons through Paul's case studies.

**Take-a-way:** *Learning from your own mistakes is good. Learning from someone else's is even better!*