

I CORINTHIANS IO

DEALING WITH TEMPTATION

STUDENT GUIDE

DAILY BIBLE READING

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DAY 2	I CORINTHIANS IO: 5-13
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Oscar Wilde once wrote, "The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with a longing for the things it has forbidden to itself." Wilde may be a legendary writer but he hardly makes sense concerning a believer's bout with temptation. Paul makes this clear in today's lesson.

Unfortunately, however, while some Christians do not take Wilde seriously, they simply imagine Christians are immune to temptation, a mistaken notion every bit as harmful to the Christian life.

OUTLINE

- 1. The Favor that Blesses the Christian Life (vv. 1-4)** - God did some wonderful things for His people. The term "all" is used 5 times. God is no respecter of persons and therefore He blesses "all" His people.

A.) *God blesses His people with guidance.* Note that "all our fathers were under the cloud" (cp. Ex. 13:21). The cloud was a symbol of God's presence. He was there to guide them through the new territory. The cloud was their physical guide in the day time. At nightfall, the cloud turned to a pillar of fire. Believers have the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide them (cp. Rom. 8:14). The Holy Spirit is God's guarantee we will move toward Him instead of away from Him.

Question: When you find yourself facing temptation, do you always recall Christ is with you? Explain. Why do we still fail even when Christ is with us?

B.) *God blesses His people with deliverance.* They passed "through the sea." Paul is quoting from the Exodus narrative (Ex 14:22). By means of a miracle, God carried the Hebrew people safely through the waters on dry ground. Christians also experience deliverance through miracles. Like Israel, the waters of death are held back. Jesus said, "he who believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:26). In fact, we have already passed from death to life (John 5:24). Jesus took our death upon Himself. We should have died at Calvary. The wrath of God should have been poured out upon us. Instead, we stand where the flood of wrath has already been! Christ bore our punishment.

C.) *God blesses His people with assurance.* Israel experienced a dry baptism which identified them with Moses. Going into the Red Sea, they were expressing their commitment to Moses as a leader. And, as they stepped ashore on the other side, they were a unified people under Moses' charge. Similarly, as they identified with Moses, we identify with Christ through a dry baptism (cp. 1 Cor. 12:13). We belong to Christ as Christians. In Christ, therefore, we have glorious assurance we can go through the Red Sea. Christ will accompany us as Moses accompanied them.

D.) *God blesses His people with sustenance.* Recall Paul's affirmation concerning "spiritual meat" and "drink" (vv.3-4). God miraculously provided for them. So too He provides for us!

2. The Failure that Blights the Christian Life (vv.5-13) - Of how many do Paul's words speak? All but two people! God was not pleased with over 2.5 million people. Paul lists the failures they committed (vv.6-9). The first failure was *lust*. Lust is any desire outside the will of Christ for us. The second failure was *idolatry*. Putting anything or anyone in the place of God may be referred to as idolatry. The third failure Paul lists is *fornication*. Interestingly, fornication often is connected with idolatry. For Corinth, fornication was a part of their worship. Fourth, their failure in *tempting Christ* is listed. Testing the Lord's patience is a habit no one should develop. Finally, Paul lists their failure of *murmuring*. The Hebrew people were plagued by a grumbling, complaining spirit. They too often gave audible expressions to unwarranted dissatisfactions.

There is a lesson we learn from the lists of failures Paul gives. The Old Testament is not just for Jewish people. Instead, the Old Testament is thoroughly Christian. The things happening to the people of God then are examples for the Church of God now. They are object lessons for our benefit.

3. The Foe That Batters the Christian Life (vv.14-33) - The apostle now takes us on a journey studying the Christian's eternal foe as we consider temptation. In a real sense, he dubs this as dining with devils. Overall, there are two principles at play here.

A.) *Spiritual Implications (vv 14,22)* - God is a jealous God and therefore we must love Him with all our being. Idolatry is to be avoided at all costs. To illustrate this, Paul contrasts the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

B.) *Social Implications (v.23)* - Things we do affect our relationship with others. If we succumb to temptation, our failure has repercussions for others, not just for ourselves.

Two precautions are necessary. First, one's actions must not *hinder* others (v. 32). We should not cause others to stumble. Second, my actions must attempt to *help* others (v. 24). We do not look to people to see what we can get from them. Rather we see what we may give to them, how we may contribute to their spiritual success.

Wrap Up: *How do Christians keep from falling? Paul gives a summary in verse 13. Temptations are everyday events for Christians. We must remember that. Also, God is faithful during temptation. He never excuses Himself when things get rough. Finally, He gives a way to escape temptation. No believer can ever plead he or she had to sin because there was no way from preventing it. God always gives us direction on following his will.*