

Parson to Person
1 Corinthians 10 – Part 1
(Temptation and Victory)

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:1–13).

Within the continuity of chapters 8–11, Paul illustrated by personal testimony the sacrifices one may make for the benefit of others (9:1–23). Then as the chapter concluded Paul points the truth at the Corinthians (and all of us) by showing that if we intend to minister to others we must be intentional and remove any possible stumbling blocks that may prevent ministry reception (9:24–27).

In Chapter 10 Paul began with another set of illustrations regarding temptation and compromise. He has said, and will say again, that “*all things are lawful*” (6:12 and 10:23), but within the passages cited he also said that there are many things that do not edify, are unhelpful, may bring a believer in bondage, and therefore calls the Corinthians (and all of us) to a life of discernment and discipline.

The illustrations Paul used were:

- 1) Don't have fellowship with idols and/or participate in idolatry (vs. 7).
- 2) Don't engage in sexual immorality (vs. 8).
- 3) Don't make false and selfishly motivated accusations against the Lord (vs. 9).
- 4) Don't falsely accuse appointed leadership (vs. 10).

Paul said that these four illustrations were intended as examples set forth so “*that we should not lust after evil things*” (vs. 6), and concluded with the fact that we may be tempted to error—but that God has enabled every believe to endure temptation and overcome by His gracious power.

He wrote, *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it”* (1 Corinthians 10:13), and precluded the thought by saying (in effect), “Don’t think you are beyond temptation!”; “Don’t think that temptation may not come your way!”; “Don’t think more of your willpower, personal strength, human integrity, than you ought to think!”

We are all human and weak. We will only overcome by the power of God working in us, from within us, through the active agency of the Holy Spirit. Our flesh is weak and we are prone to wander. However, God is able to strengthen us in and through temptation. He will always provide us the way of escape, that we may be able to bear up under it, stand strong against its desire to bend or break us, and provide us increasing victories—now in the present hour—and climactic victory in the life to come.

It is of note that the theme within these three chapters is the paganism of the then present day in Corinth. However, as noted, there are applications for all of us!

As we continue our study we will further examine what Paul drove home with the Corinthians: No fellowship with paganism and idolatry, our fellowship in the Lord, our need to represent the Lord with integrity, and our call to others-centered love for the purposes of the truth of the Gospel.

I love you all,
Pastor Paul