



Community Group Discussion Guide

April 21, 2024

1 Corinthians 10:1-14 | God Is Faithful When We Are Tempted

MOTIVATE

Starter Question:

- ⇒ ***Share a personal goal you were able to complete. What helped you stick to this goal and complete it? Why is it so hard to stick to goals or complete resolutions?***

We have all been guilty of setting a goal and not achieving it. Maybe we created a New Year's resolution to get up an hour earlier every day, but gave up or forgot in the first month. Or maybe we decided to give up sweets for a period of time, but we faced temptation a lot sooner than we thought when a coworker brought donuts in for breakfast. Suddenly our previous commitment to that goal doesn't seem as important.

When faced with opposition or challenge to a goal, it can be tempting to take the easy way out. This can be true of our spiritual lives, too. Our natural inclination is to give in when we encounter temptation to sin. It's all too easy to convince ourselves that sin isn't a big deal or that someone's opinion of us matters more than our obedience. We often confuse our cultural values with biblical values. But God is very concerned with our holiness and obedience as His redeemed sons and daughters.

- ⇒ ***Why do we often treat sin like it is not a big deal?***
 ⇒ ***What are some excuses we make for giving in to temptation?***

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-14, Paul reminded the Corinthians that idolatry, immorality, and grumbling against God were serious offenses. Paul gave examples from the nation of Israel. He ended with the reminder that humility is important. None of us are free from temptation, therefore we must flee from idolatry. On our own, the command to resist temptation is impossible. But God promises that He will faithfully provide a way out of every temptation.

- ⇒ ***Why is it impossible for us to resist temptation on our own?***

DISCUSS

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, **2** and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **3** and all ate the same spiritual food, **4** and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

The Israelites enjoyed unique access to God as His chosen people. He led them out of Egypt and through the wilderness with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. This allowed God's presence to be with them while hiding His face (Exodus 12:31-22; 33:11). They were "baptized" into Moses, meaning they were united by his leadership, which made them part of a community that God

protected and provided for. God satisfied their physical needs in the desert by giving them manna from heaven and water from rocks (Deuteronomy 8:14-16).

⇒ ***Can you describe a time when God gave you physical protection or provision?***

Rocky sites were often used as places of refuge, which led to the frequent comparison of God to a rock as their source of protection. In verse 4, Paul identified Christ as the spiritual rock that nourished Israel in the wilderness.

⇒ ***In what ways do we have similar access to God? How do we experience Him leading us, uniting us to Himself, providing for us, or protecting us?***

As believers, we have the Holy Spirit leading and guiding us. God's presence literally dwells within us. We are baptized into Christ, united under Him, which gives us a new identity. God spiritually sustains us through His Word, our church, prayer, other believers, and worship.

⇒ ***What do these privileges teach us about God's faithfulness?***

1 Corinthians 10:5-6 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. **6** Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

All this privilege did not guarantee the Israelites' success. Despite God's provision of manna and water, they grumbled and wished they were back in Egypt. Despite His protection, they depended on their own strength to win battles. Despite His presence, they turned to false gods or made their own idols. They were overconfident, spiritually immature, and had no self-discipline. The temptation to sin and to break God's commandments overtook them and they experienced the consequences. Paul used the Israelites as an example to help us avoid the same sins that the Israelites fell into.

⇒ ***What sins or temptations did the Israelites repeatedly give in to?***

⇒ ***What are some stories of Israel's disobedience that stick out to you?***

⇒ ***What application can we make from the Israelites' experience?***

1 Corinthians 10:7-11 Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." **8** We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. **9** We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, **10** nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. **11** Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

Paul summarized the disobedience of the Israelites into four main categories:

1. Idolatry (Exodus 32).
2. Sexual immorality (Numbers 25:1-18).
3. Testing God (Numbers 21:5-6).
4. Complaining against God (Exodus 12:23; Numbers 16:41-50).

⇒ ***How can the Old Testament stories and experiences of the Israelites teach us today?***

The Jewish believers in the church of Corinth would have recognized these specific examples as stories of disobedience from their ancestors' pasts. They would have remembered that the evil activity of the Israelites provoked God to strike them down or to exclude them from the Promised Land.

Similarly, the Corinthians were lusting after evil things, trying to please God while partaking of food and fellowship at pagan events or clubs. Their motto was "everything is permissible" (1 Corinthians 10:23). The church had serious problems with false teachings, hypocrisy, sexual immorality, and living disobediently in a pagan society (see [1 Corinthians Overview](#) for more information).

Paul chose to share these specific examples from the Israelites in the wilderness to prove to the Corinthians that their disobedience made them just as guilty and therefore they were at risk of the same consequences. Although they would not lose their salvation, this behavior disqualified them from serving in the church and hindered the spread of the gospel through the city.

- ⇒ ***Why would idolatry, immorality, testing God, and complaining against Him disqualify the Corinthians?***
- ⇒ ***Why would it be so critical for them to resist temptation in these specific areas?***
- ⇒ ***If we ultimately know we are forgiven, why does it matter if we continue sinning? If we have grace to fall back on, why would sin disqualify us from being fully used by God for His good purposes?***

We know we cannot lose our salvation and that sin does not change God's heart toward us, but we too can experience consequences and disqualifications when we choose to give into our sin. We can fall into the trap of thinking our sin isn't as bad as the sin of the Israelites. After all, they had the presence of God leading them and were bound by the law. However, our sin is far more serious because we have the example of the Israelites, Jesus' life, and the early church. Warren Weirsbe put it this way, "To sin against the law is one thing, but to sin against grace is quite something else."

1 Corinthians 10:12-14 Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. **13** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. **14** Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

- ⇒ ***How would you define temptation?***

In our definition, it should be noted that temptation is not the same as suffering. Temptation can be summarized as the enticement to do evil (James 1:14). Satan's intent is to destroy us through temptation that leads to sin, which leads us to death and hell. Temptation is not sin, but yielding to temptation is.

God may allow temptation for the purpose of our sanctification, to grow our faith and patience. James also tells us that "blessing awaits the one who endures temptation" (James 1:12). The more we grow spiritually, the more cautious we need to be. We are never experienced enough to not encounter temptation. We need to be desperately dependent on God no matter how long we have known Him.

- ⇒ ***Why are we inclined to think that spiritual growth or sanctification protects us from temptation?***
- ⇒ ***How will humility before the Lord increase our ability to resist temptation?***

We arrive at the crux of this passage when Paul reminded the church that God is faithful to help during times of temptation. He is faithful to provide a way of escape if we will only trust Him and take advantage of it. This is evidence of His grace and continued faithfulness in spite of our sin.

- ⇒ ***Recall some examples from the Bible of people resisting temptation. How do we see God's faithfulness in these stories?***
- ⇒ ***Can you share an example from your own life?***

With the words "no temptation has overtaken that is not common to man," Paul encouraged the Corinthians to remember that they were not alone in the temptation they faced. Believers need not feel singled out or abandoned when we have wrong desires. We can be reassured of God's faithfulness by remembering that others have faced the same temptations and overcome them.

- ⇒ ***What are some tangible ways God provides a way of escape for us?***
- ⇒ ***If willing, share a time when you experienced temptation and God intervened to help you resist.***

Paul closed this section with a simple yet powerful statement, "flee from idolatry." Idol worship was the main expression of worship in Corinth. Statues of wood or stone were given credit for things only God can do, like good weather, healthy crops, and bearing children.

Idolatry is still a serious problem today but it takes a different form. Trusting in anything for what God alone provides is idolatry. When we look to a promotion for power, a Netflix binge session for pleasure, or a bigger home for prestige, we are making these into idols. Only God can give us true identity, comfort, and purpose. Paul tells us to flee from these idols, as idols cause us to sin. Anchoring our lives to the truth of God's Word will help us resist temptation and flee from idols.

- ⇒ ***What "idols" do we face today? How do these idols tempt us to sin?***
- ⇒ ***Why must we "flee" from such things?***

TRANSFORM

1. Make personal application: Satan is eager to destroy our lives by tempting us to sin. God allows temptation but promises to give us an escape and a way out. We have the precedent of the Israelites and the early church as reminders of the consequences of sin and idolatry, as well as examples of how to resist temptation. Scripture also reminds us of God's faithfulness and love in spite of our imperfection.

- ⇒ ***What lessons have you learned from your previous failures or successes over sin?***
- ⇒ ***How have you seen God's faithfulness in spite of your rebellion?***
- ⇒ ***Do you have any idols or sins you need to confess to your Community Group?***
- ⇒ ***How can our Community Group hold each other accountable in our struggle against temptation?***

2. Pray: Ask God to reveal your idols and sources of temptation. Confess your sins to Him and ask for forgiveness. Confess that you are desperately dependent on God and ask Him to give you strength and courage to resist temptation in the future. Ask God to deepen your love for His Word and to strengthen your relationship with your faith community as you flee from idolatry and evil.

STUDY

Resources used, compiled from, and quoted:

- *CSB Study Bible (2017), pages 1825-1826.*
- *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (2015), pages 311, 788, 1372 and 1545.*
- *NIV Life Application Study Bible (1997), pages 2076-2077.*
- *Wiersbe New Testament Bible Commentary (2007), pages 476-477.*