

“Lord God, you have appointed me as a Bishop and Pastor in your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon your Word. Use me as your instrument – but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all.”

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”

1 CORINTHIANS 10

¹For 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. ²They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.

⁶Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷Do 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.” ⁸We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. ⁹We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

¹¹These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. ¹²So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.



Sermon Outline –

Would it surprise you to hear that many – maybe most – of the Israelites were not saved?
How sad to be so close to the Lord of love, and yet to be so far!
Wouldn't you expect that the devil will also tempt you?
Paul knew that.

A Sunday School Lesson About Temptation

1. Christian, expect it

What is temptation?

God does not do the tempting.

When things are going well, how will the devil tempt you?

2. Christian, respect it

Paul gave the Corinthians this incredible gut-check

So we must **respect** the temptations that come our way.

Sometimes we get the picture that if only we tried harder we could beat this temptation.

3. Christian, look to God to escape it

Christians the world over have noticed that God gives us more than we can handle every day.

Look to God.

Then He provides us an 'exit strategy.'

Don't forget prayer. And don't forget to whom you pray.

See also: *Matt. 26:41; Matt. 11:28; Rom. 13:14; 1 Pet. 2:22.*

Would it surprise you to hear that many – maybe most – of the Israelites were not saved? Paul talks about how they wandered for forty years in the desert, guided by the cloud of God’s glory by day and a pillar of fire by night. They were there to witness the Lord. They saw the ten plagues and how He ravaged the Egyptians, embarrassing their false gods. They ate His sweet bread from the sky. They drank water from a rock. They were thoroughly cleansed from slavery of Egypt and slavery of false religions as they followed Moses along the way. Still, they grumbled and **did not please** God.

We know that ***without faith it is impossible to please God***, and Paul tells us their dead bodies riddled the wilderness. How sad to be so close to the Lord of love, and yet to be so far!

Wouldn’t you expect that, if the devil worked so hard on God’s Old Testament people, tempting them to displease Him, the devil will also tempt you? Temptations to sin are his specialty. Why pray that God’s kingdom come? Another kingdom is trying to dislodge Christ’s kingdom from our hearts.

Paul knew that, and he wrote about it in a unique way. In our sermon text, he pointed out how common temptation is for God’s people. It was already true shortly after He rescued them from Egypt. God sincerely wanted the Israelites, the Corinthians, and you to be overcome and win temptations. Today, let’s hear ...

A Sunday School Lesson About Temptation

1. *Christian, expect it*
2. *Christian, respect it*
3. *Christian, look to God to escape it*

1. Christian, expect it

What is it to tempt? What is temptation? ***Temptation is any situation where a person is led astray***, into false belief, into despair, or into other great and shameful sins. Being tempted is not sinful; it is as common as breathing. Yet when the temptation is complete, the sinner *desires* and *does* sin.

God does not do the tempting. The tempter is the devil, and he wants to lure us into his trap by any means possible. He’s the ultimate pragmatist; the ends of getting sinners to hell instead of heaven justify the means of temptation, suffering, and sadness. So the devil’s tacklebox is always full. Temptations to sin are his specialty, and he his tacklebox holds every bait you can imagine.

When things are going well, how will the devil tempt you? In that dark hour, what bait will he use? When the grass looks greener in the light of unbelief, what sin will glitter and twinkle in your eye? When you are continuously dissatisfied with God’s blessings, what is the first lie that the devil will dangle because he knows you will bite? Will it be greed, hatred, sinful anger, cursing, or insults? Will it be affairs, other lying, domestic abuse, or rebellion? Will it be overconfidence, deception, or doubts?

You can expect this, Christian. *“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man.”* God wants you to be ready, to *“watch and pray so that you do not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak”* (Matt. 26:41). Our wants and desires rage on when we get exactly what we need, or even what we want. In your weakness ...

2. Christian, respect it

Because of their weakness, Paul gave the Corinthians this incredible gut-check: *“If you think you’re standing firm, be careful that you do not fall.”*

God (through Paul) wanted the Corinthians to see where they were standing.

How about you? Are you centering yourself on His promises? Do you respect that coming close to the line could get you pushed over? Do you dance the line? Do you tempt God by going only so far?

So we must **respect** the temptations that come our way. With **respect**, I'm not saying we must honor those temptations. But we must **recognize and not minimize** the skill the devil puts into his traps. We expect the devil to come with muscle, with a forked tongue, red tail, and flaming horns and cape. But instead he's crafty. He shows up as an angel of light and he comes with Bible quotations. He is a formidable foe. He's more powerful than we are on our own. He doesn't want to put you under for a day or two; he wants revenge on God, and so he wants your eternal soul.

Sometimes we get the picture that if only we tried harder we could beat this temptation. If only we could battle the devil better, life would end up just right. This is a form of minimizing what we face. These enemies of the devil, the world, and our inner sinner are greater than us just being better. Instead, the way to respect it is to look outside of ourselves, to a greater good, the greatest Good. We need God, and not just any god, but the One who laid His life on the line to deliver us.

3. Christian, look to God to escape it

"God will never give you more than you can handle." Have you ever heard that line before? It's one of those rampant lines that has gone viral for human problems. It's also not in the Bible. You might find it in the book of wall-art or things you see in knick-knacks and novelty shops downtown (between 'keep calm and drink wine' and 'wine-o-clock').

Meanwhile, Christians the world over have noticed that God gives us more than we can handle every day. How can we ever escape it?

Look to God. God's promises are intended to meet you in your troubles and hardships. He invites us to unload on Him and take His weightless innocence in the place of our trials and guilt. "*Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest*" (Matt. 11:28).

Then He provides us an 'exit strategy.' Some of the 'exits' God has provided are church every week; church friends; your family; prayer; sometimes your own two feet! Sometimes the 'exit' is to put the thought of sin out of your mind. "*Do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature* (Rom. 13:14)."

When a local magistrate died in the act of fornication, Luther's wife exclaimed, "How can people be so wicked and defile themselves with such sin!" the doctor said, "Ah, dear Katy, people don't pray." [#LutherQuotes](#)
[#LutherThoughts](#) table talk 5381

Don't forget prayer. And don't forget to whom you pray. This is the Rock the old Israelites forgot. He delivered water to the Israelites throughout the wilderness, Paul says. He has also fed you and sheltered you your whole life long. He has made you God's child in His baptismal promises. He has kept temptation from you at times, and at other times has walked through it with you. Not only does Jesus walk through temptation with you; He already successfully walked through temptation without you, long before this, on the way to the cross. "*He committed no sin and no deceit was found in His mouth*" (1 Pet. 2:22). He forgave you not just by dying, but by overcoming the same temptation you face and still battling on. That's a good thing! That's a relief! He has since fed you with His body and blood to offer, give, and seal the forgiveness of your sins – and to open the way to heaven and eternal life. Look to Him! Only He can help.

Sincerely, God. Amen.