

A9 BIBLE STUDY: I CORINTHIANS #10

Scripture of Lesson: I Corinthians 10: 1~33

1. OT examples of disobedience and how to go through temptations: v. 1-13

Apostle Paul here cites the examples of disobedience in OT times when God's people, upon deliverance from Egypt and having seen and mighty power of God's salvation, yet committed fornication, worshipped an idol, complained to God and tempted God. The consequence of such sins was death along their journey to the Promised Land. These people were all baptized in the cloud and in the Red Sea as the rest of the people [v. 2], ate the same manna, which was a symbol of God's spiritual food [v. 3], and drank the same spiritual drink from the Rock, who is the Christ [v. 4].

And these cases of sins are for admonition to the NT Christians [v. 11]. Here, Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians to have **wholesome fear of God** and do the following:

- First, never test God's patience and mercy with your sins and disobedience [v.9].
- Second, do not complain to God lest you cause God's anger to destroy you [v. 10].
- Thirdly, if you think you are standing firm on the faith, take heed lest you fall [v. 12].

You may think this is too one-sided and God is demanding too much of us when our life is full of trials and temptations. When life becomes too tough to bear, don't we sometimes tend to complain and ask God to help? Here's a wonderful promise and encouragement regarding temptations and trials.

First, God does not allow extra difficult temptations to His people beyond what are common to mankind. In other words, He cares about us and ensures that no temptations that are too hard to bear come to us beyond what we are able.

Secondly, God provides a way of escape from temptations that come to us so that we can go through them without safely. [v. 13]

What a wonderful promise of care and thoughtfulness of God towards us! So, when your life comes to a difficult situation and you feel you cannot go through it on your own, here is a couple of guidelines:

1. Prayerfully consider why this trial has come to your way and do not blame God, others or yourself. This experience was given to you perhaps as a measure of discipline if you have sinned against God. Then, as King David did, repent in humility and pledge to God that you will not repeat the same sin. Accept the consequence and ask for God's mercy and help in mending the wounds and go forth from it with thankfulness that God limited the severity of the sin's consequence.
2. If this situation was not due to your sin, prayerfully consider what lesson might be in it. Ask God to see beyond the trial and seek His help to overcome it wisely but never complain to God about it. Search the Scripture to find out how others overcame similar experiences successfully. Seek your pastor's advice and support of the congregation. Make it a campaign not only of yourself but of your congregation and win the battle with help of God and His people. Remember God does not give you any trial/ temptation that you are not able to bear.

Discussion topic: Share your experience of going through a difficult experience and coming out as a victor through God's help.

2. Avoid idol worship: v. 13-22

Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians to "flee from idolatry" [v. 14]. Paul explains why the idol-worshipping Gentiles offer foods and other material things to their idols, which are devils. Pantheists and New Age people tend to believe God is expressed in these idols, which are worshipped by unguided non-Christians. Apostle Paul, however, clarifies to the Christians that idols are representations of 'devils,' which are servant spirits of Satan [v. 20]. So when people worship idols, they are in fact worshipping Satan and his cohorts.

And we Christians have no part with such idol worship [v. 21]. We worship the mighty Creator God and they worship the fallen chief angel, Satan, and his cohorts. God is jealous God. And let us not provoke His jealousy because we are His creation and He deserves our whole-hearted worship and praise [v. 22].

Discussion topic: How does this admonition apply to our contemporary living? What things we do might cause God to become jealous against our objects of adoration?

3. Soli Deo Gloria -- Do all things for God's glory: v. 23-33

The main instruction is expressed in v. 31:

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

And a practical guideline of caution is given in v. 23:

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being."

So, the takeaway from this last part of Chapter 10 can be summarized in two guidelines:

1. Be considerate of others so that your words and actions do not cause hurts in others but are rather in ways to edify their spiritual and physical welfare.

2. Do all things to glorify God. If what you say and do will not contribute to God's glory, avoid it or change it so that God is pleased with it and come to feel honored by it.

Discussion topic: Share your thoughts on how you can change your way of conversation and behavior to honor God.