

Overcoming Temptation

1 Cor 10:12-22

SS Lesson for 07/20/2014

Devotional Scripture: James 1:12-16

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson reveals how God provides Christians the power for **Overcoming Temptation**. The **study's aim** is to recognize temptation, its origin, its many forms and to understand how we can be victorious in meeting temptation because of Jesus. The **study's application** is to daily prepare ourselves mentally and spiritually to disarm and defeat temptation. (*From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary*).

Key Verse: 1 Cor 10:13

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.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

The presence of supernatural privileges in the lives of Old Testament Israelites did not produce automatic success. On the contrary, in spite of their special advantages, most of them (in fact, all but two members of one generation, Joshua and Caleb) experienced God's discipline, were disqualified, and died in the desert (Num. 14:29). In light of this, Paul's avowed need for personal self-discipline (1 Cor. 9:27) was genuine since even Moses was disqualified for the prize (Num. 20:12). Since this was so, the Corinthians' complacency in matters of self-discipline and their corresponding penchant for self-indulgence required immediate remedial action. Christian freedom was not meant to lead to self-indulgence but to selfless service (cf. Gal. 5:13), as the behavior of past Israelites illustrated. Paralleling the fivefold blessings enjoyed by Israel in their newfound freedom from Egypt, Paul proceeded to recount a fivefold failure experienced by Israel during this time.

He began with the Israelites' craving for the pleasures of Egypt, summarized in their plaintive cry, "Give us meat to eat!" (Num. 11:4-34, esp. v. 13) God gave them what they wanted but while the meat was still between their teeth, He struck them with a plague. The Israelites named the cemetery for those who were killed "Kibroth Hattaavah" ("graves of craving"; Num. 11:34). The application to the Corinthian situation was obvious (cf. 1 Cor. 8:13). Second, many in Israel failed by participating in idolatry (Ex. 32:1-6) and paid for it with their lives (Ex. 32:28, 35). Apparently some Corinthians were interested in more than meat in the pagan temples (1 Cor. 8:10; 10:14). For those who thought they as Christians could take part in idolatry with impunity, Paul intended, with illustrations like this, to knock out the false props which supported their behavior (v. 12) before God intervened and took their lives. A third failure among the privileged Israelites was in the area of sexual immorality. In the Israelites' case the immorality was associated with idolatry (Num. 25:1-2), which also characterized much pagan worship in the first century. But the Corinthians indulged in immorality in contexts other than idolatry, as the instances of rebuke in 1 Corinthians 5:1 and 6:18 illustrate. As God had brought death to the immoral among the Israelites (Num. 25:4-9), He could do in Corinth (e.g., 1 Cor. 5:5), a sobering thought for the libertines who said, "Everything is permissible" (6:12; 10:23). A possible solution to the apparent discrepancy in the death count found in Numbers 25:9 (24,000) and Paul's figure of 23,000 may reside in the phrase one day. Moses and most of Israel were mourning the death of those who had been executed by the judges (Num. 25:5) or killed by an ongoing plague. Meanwhile Phineas was dispatching an Israelite man and Moabite woman in their last act of immorality (Num. 25:6-8), which brought to completion God's discipline of the immoral Israelites and ended the death toll by plague at 24,000, a number probably intended as a summary figure. Another explanation of the 24,000 in Numbers (contra. Paul's 23,000) is that the former included the leaders (cf. Num. 25:4), whereas the latter did not. The Israelites' fourth failure was the presuming of some to question the plan and purpose of God on their trek to Canaan. As a result they were killed by snakes (Num. 21:4-6). Did the Corinthians think that they knew better than God the path that would bring them to heaven? (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-3:20). Israel's fifth failure, which God disciplined with death, occurred when they spoke rebelliously against God's appointed leaders, Moses and Aaron (Num. 16:41-49). Was Paul facing a similar situation as an outgrowth of the Corinthians' party spirit? (cf. 1 Cor. 1:11; 4:18-19) It is possible that each of these failures found expression in the Corinthian issue of eating food sacrificed to idols.

God's dealings with Israel were more than a matter of historical curiosity for Paul. They were examples (cf. v. 6) and warnings for the Corinthians that the God with whom they had to deal, who was bringing His interaction with people to a close in this fulfillment of the ages, was the same God who disciplined the Israelites with death and would do so again (cf. 11:30). If the Corinthians believed their standing in Christ and corresponding freedom could be exercised in sin with impunity, they were wrong, possibly dead wrong. After kicking out the props of false security, Paul pointed toward the One on whom the Corinthians could rely. The temptations that seized the Corinthians were like those people had always faced. They could be met and endured by depending on God, who is faithful. Part of the Corinthian problem, of course, was that some in the face of temptation were not looking for a way out by endurance, but a way in for indulgence.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

All one has to do is read the Old Testament to understand the power of temptation to defeat, discourage, and disqualify God's people. That was Paul's point in I Corinthians 10. He outlined how the Old Testament community of faith sinned against God and brought horrendous consequences down upon itself. The people committed sins that were broad and deep: idolatry, sexual vice, ungratefulness, and so forth. We should take heed. We have no reason to be overconfident in ourselves, since all the same temptations are around us today. We could also recall that some of the greatest saints of the Old Testament failed miserably to obey God at certain points. Abraham was cowardly and endangered his wife. Moses lost his temper and was a bad example to the flock. David sinned greatly and brought pain into his family and kingdom. Solomon married many wives and lost his way spiritually. On and on we could go. Although God is a forgiving God and we all must live under His grace, we should take heed, seek to obey and honor the Lord, and thus avoid all the unpleasant consequences of giving in to temptation. Our text points out a couple of important points. First, God does permit temptations and tests to come into our lives. They are "common to man." We are going to experience them. However, we do not have to be superhuman to resist them. We do not have to give in. They are "common" temptations that everyone experiences. Since they are often defeated by others, we should have confidence that we can defeat them too. Let us not excuse ourselves by saying they are too much for us. The text also promises that God will supply "a way to escape." The sense of this is not that there will be some kind of escape hatch and that we just have to look around, find it, and jump out of the fire somehow. Rather, we are expected to "bear" the temptation, or endure it, resisting and coming through unscathed. The phrase "way to escape" actually refers to God's direction in temptations, God has an endgame for us. It is simply to obey the Word of God. What do I do when under temptation? Hopefully I have hidden God's Word in my heart so "that I might not sin against [Him]" (Ps 119:11). The Word of God is the key. It will lead us successfully through temptation every time. God has been faithful to give us His Word, which provides the way of escape. His Word carries us through the common temptations we encounter, allowing us to avoid the pain of dishonoring the Lord and inflicting upon ourselves painful consequences. Let us be ready for temptations!

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Ignatius of Antioch, a leader in the early church, called the Lord's Supper the "medicine of immortality, the antidote against dying." He was writing about AD 110, a little over 50 years after Paul wrote I Corinthians. Ignatius believed and taught that participating in the Lord's Supper gave Christians almost magical protection against life's ultimate troubles. This idea later developed into what is called sacramentalism, a belief that eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord's Supper is essential to maintaining one's salvation. To be barred from participating (excommunication) was effectively to lose one's salvation. But defective views of the Lord's Supper did not begin with Ignatius of Antioch. At least some of the Corinthian Christians of Paul's day held one or more false understandings in this area. Part of Paul's response was to warn them by drawing on incidents from the history of Israel. This week's lesson will explore those examples.

Two areas of background information will better help us understand today's lesson. First, it is useful to review the wilderness experience of the nation of Israel since it forms the backdrop for Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 10. Perhaps some may idealize that experience as being somewhat like a weekend camping trip that was extended for 40 years. Everything was the same, week by week, as people lived in tents. Their clothes and shoes never wore out, so they never got new ones (Deuteronomy 29:5). They gathered manna and ate it daily (Numbers 11:6; Deuteronomy 8:3). But it wasn't that simple; things weren't always the same. During this period, the people of Israel had many points of

contact with other small nations and tribes (Numbers 14:45; 25:16-18; Deuteronomy 23:3). Encounters with peoples outside the covenant are the basis for some of the lessons Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 10. A second background item that can help us understand this lesson is to note Paul's use of an interpretation method known as typology. The essence of typology is that certain persons, places, things, or events in the Old Testament serve as patterns (or "types") that can help us understand various persons, places, things, or events in the New Testament. A good example is King David as a "type" of the Messiah or Christ. Certainly, David did not measure up to Jesus in essential nature, character, or importance, but David's kingship provides many patterns that help us understand Jesus as the true Messiah, sent by the Father. For example, when Psalm 2:7 says "You are my son," we understand this as having been written about David, but it is applied more fully to Jesus in Hebrews 1:5. Typology figures heavily into Paul's method of teaching in 1 Corinthians 10.

Definition of Temptation

From The New Unger's Bible Dictionary

Generally understood as the enticement of a person to commit sin by offering some seeming advantage. The sources of temptation are Satan, the world, and the flesh. We are exposed to them in every state, in every place, and in every time. The nearest approach to a definition of the process of temptation from within is given us by James, "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust" (James 1:14).

From Nelson's Bible Dictionary

An enticement or invitation to sin, with the implied promise of greater good to be derived from following the way of disobedience. In this sense, God does not tempt man, nor can He Himself as the holy God be tempted (James 1:13). God cannot be induced to deny Himself (2 Tim 2:13). The supreme tempter is Satan (Matt 4:3; 1 Cor 7:5; 1 Thess 3:5), who is able to play upon the weakness of corrupted human nature (James 1:14) and so to lead people to destruction.

From McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia

There are four things, says one, in temptation (1) deception, (2) infection, (3) seduction, (4) perdition. The sources of temptation are Satan, the world, and the flesh. It may be wisely permitted to show us our weakness, to try our faith, to promote our humility, and to teach us to place our dependence on a superior Power; yet we must not run into them, but watch and pray; avoid sinful company; consider the love, sufferings, and constancy of Christ, and the awful consequences of falling a victim to temptation.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

The Reality of Temptation (1 Cor 10:12-18)

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

13 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.

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

Handling temptation (12-13)

Handle temptation by not having pride which Satan uses to tempt (Prov 16:18)

18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Handle temptation by not trusting in own strength (Matt 26:33-35)

33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." 34 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." 35 But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

Handle temptation by not being arrogant (Rom 11:18-20)

18 do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid.

Handle temptation by not going beyond God's Word (1 Cor 4:6-7)

6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. 7 For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

Handle temptation by not trusting in own knowledge (1 Cor 8:1-3)

1 We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But the man who loves God is known by God.

Handle temptation by praying (Luke 22:46)

46 "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

Handle temptation by not growing weary and losing heart of resisting sin (Heb 12:2-4)

2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

Handle temptation by being self-controlled and alert (1 Peter 5:8-9)

8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Handling idolatry (14-15)

Handle idolatry by keeping away from it (1 John 5:21)

21 Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

Handle idolatry by realizing that idolaters will be placed in hell (Rev 21:8)

8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Handle idolatry by realizing it is nothing especially not a god (1 Cor 8:4-6)

4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Handle idolatry by putting to death what belongs to the earthly nature (Col 3:5)

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Handle idolatry by being separated from it (2 Cor 6:16-17)

16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." 17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

Handle idolatry by trusting in God instead (Ps 31:6)

6 I hate those who cling to worthless idols; I trust in the Lord.

Handling involvement in the body of Christ (16-18)

Involvement in the body to simulate love and good deeds (Heb 10:23-25)

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Involvement in the body realizing that we are in the presence of God (Matt 18:20)

20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Involvement in the body for fellowship (Acts 2:42-47)

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Involvement in the body for prayer (Acts 1:14)

14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Involvement in the body for sharing within the assembly (Acts 4:32)

32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

Involvement in the body because of being baptized into one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13)

13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Involvement in the body because it is a good custom (Luke 4:16-17)

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

Involvement in the body to reason about the Scriptures (Acts 17:1-4)

17 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

The Danger of Temptation (1 Cor 10:19-22)

19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?

20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

Danger of participating with demons (19-20)

Participating with demons angers God (Deut 32:16-17)

16 They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. 17 They sacrificed to demons, which are not God — gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear.

Participating with demons defiles people (Ps 106:37-39)

37 They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. 38 They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood. 39 They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves.

Participating with demons blinds the mind (2 Cor 4:4)

4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Participating with demons keeps people from repenting (Rev 9:20)

20 The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood — idols that cannot see or hear or walk.

Participating with demons is rebellion against God (Josh 24:19)

19 Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins.

Participating with demons provokes God's wrath (Ps 106:28-29)

28 They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods; 29 they provoked the Lord to anger by their wicked deeds, and a plague broke out among them.

Participating with demons has nothing in common with worshiping God (2 Cor 6:15)

15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

Participating with demons has been prophesied (1 Tim 4:1)

4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

Danger of trying to serve two masters (21-22)

Trying to serve two masters cannot be done (Matt 6:24)

24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Trying to serve two masters provokes God to want to spit a person out of His mouth (Rev 3:15-17)

15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!
16 So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

Trying to serve two masters must be resolved by choosing whom one will serve (1 Kings 18:21)

21 Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.

Trying to serve two masters really means a person is against Jesus (Matt 12:30)

30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Trying to serve two masters causes one to be double-minded (James 1:6-8)

6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts From Bob Deffinbaugh

Paul does not patronize his readers either. They thought themselves to be wise and strong. They thought less of Paul. But in spite of this, Paul speaks to them as though they were wise. He informs them that they will have to reach for what he is about to say, and he encourages them to critically consider what he is about to say to them. What he will say can bear scrutiny and reflection. What others may be saying won't. In verses 16-22, Paul sets the table, or rather two tables, side-by-side. The Lord's table is the table around which the Corinthians gather every week to commemorate the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord by partaking of the symbols of the bread and the wine. Some of the Corinthians have felt at liberty to sit at another "table," the table which is served as a part of a heathen ritual, at which idols are worshipped, and to which sacrifices are made. The things which are eaten at this table have been sacrificed to the idol, or they are at least a part of the heathen ritual. In dealing with this matter, Paul establishes several principles upon which he bases his conclusion.

(1) To partake of the cup at the Lord's table is to symbolically partake of what the cup represents. To partake of the cup is to symbolically commemorate the fact that we have become partakers in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins which it accomplished, through faith in His atoning death on the cross of Calvary. This is what Jesus taught before His death (John 6:47-58). The drinking of the cup symbolizes the believer's participation in the work of Jesus Christ by faith in His shed blood for the forgiveness of sins. The cup symbolizes the New Covenant, which was inaugurated by His death, burial, and resurrection.

(2) *To partake of the bread at communion is to symbolically proclaim that we have identified with our Lord's body.* We have identified with Christ, not only in His incarnation, and in His bodily death, burial, and resurrection, but we have identified ourselves with His “**body**,” the church. The one loaf symbolizes one body, of which all Christians have partaken and are thus a part. When we partake of the bread, we remind ourselves of our union with His body, but also in His incarnation, and in His spiritual presence now, through the church.

(3) *Communion commemorates our union with the person and work of Jesus Christ.* It commemorates our union with Christ by faith at the time of our salvation and for all eternity. It commemorates our union with Him in His bodily death, burial, and resurrection. It signifies our union with the church, His body. Communion symbolizes our union with Christ, then (at the cross of Calvary) and now (in His body, the church).

(4) *There is more than one “communion.” The Old Testament saints had communion, too.* Eating of what has been sacrificed on the altar not only unites the one eating with the sacrifice, it unites him with those who share in the meal with him. The Old Testament saints had their own form of communion at which they ate a portion of what had been sacrificed. The sacrificial meal joined the participant to the sacrifice and to those who shared with him in eating of it.

(5) *The pagan ritual of eating a meal, of which a portion is that which was sacrificed in heathen worship, was a “communion service” as well.* The heathen worshipper is celebrating a communion service when he eats of what was sacrificed to an idol. In eating the things sacrificed to the idol, he is identifying himself with the pagan sacrifice and all that it means. Those who eat the meal together identify not only with the pagan sacrifice, but also identify themselves with all those sitting at the table with them.

(6) *When the pagans worship idols by sacrificing to them, they are worshipping demons.* Here is an amazing fact, which the Corinthians had overlooked. There are no other gods. Idols are nothing, because they represent gods which don't exist. But false worship is not thereby rendered harmless and insignificant. This is where the Corinthians went wrong. Paul says that the worship of idols is the worship of demons. Is this some new truth, a mystery not revealed until Paul's writing? Far from it! (Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 106:37). The Corinthians who reasoned that they were at liberty to eat idol-meats did so based upon principles they derived from the Old Testament Book of Deuteronomy (see 1 Corinthians 8:4-5). What they failed to take into account was the rest of the book, where it is clear that idol worship is not trivial, but the worship of demons.

(7) *When Christians participate in the pagan sacrificial meal by eating the idol-meats, they unite themselves with the pagan sacrifice and with the heathen with whom they are eating.* Just as biblical communion unites the meal-sharer with the sacrifice, and with those sharing in the meal, so the one who participates in a pagan festive meal becomes a sharer in the heathen sacrificial altar, and a co-participant with those eating the meal. One does far more than have dinner when one attends a pagan sacrificial meal.

(8) *Christians cannot become partakers of two tables, for one is the table of the Lord and the other is the table of demons.* Just as no man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24), neither can a Christian participate at two religious tables or partake of two sacrificial meals. The Lord's Supper, and all that it symbolizes, is diametrically opposed to the “table of demons.” It is amazing that some Corinthians could so casually explain away their presence at the table of demons, while at the same time regularly observing the Lord's table. The inconsistency is intolerable.

(9) *When the Corinthians eat idol-meats while participating in pagan idol worship, they provoke the Lord to jealousy.* Paul has instructed the Corinthians to “**flee idolatry**” in verse 14. Now we know exactly what he means. To sit at the table of demons and to participate in this pagan worship by eating idol-meats is to practice idolatry. This is exactly the way the ancient Israelites fell into idolatry, by joining themselves with the pagans at their “**table**.” No wonder God gave the Israelites such strict food laws; this kept the Jews from eating with the Gentiles, and thus from participating in their idolatry. Idolatry is a most serious offense to God, even if it was not a serious transgression to the Israelites or to the Corinthians. The Israelites were “**laid low in the wilderness**” (10:5) because God poured out His wrath by various plagues. The Israelites were to have learned from the example of those who died. The Corinthians (and us) were to be warned by the outpouring of God's wrath on idolaters. To practice idolatry is to provoke the Lord to jealousy, and this is a most serious situation. Those who were so cavalier in eating idol-meats at pagan celebrations should certainly be shaken by Paul's words.

Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/table-talk-1-cor-1014-33>

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

On the blog "Waiter Rant," this observation was made: "Seduction ... isn't making someone do what they don't want to do. Seduction is enticing someone into doing what they secretly want to do already." This statement occurs in the context of a waiter enticing a foursome of women to have dessert after an expensive dinner. He presumed that the four truly wanted calorie-laden desserts but were denying themselves this pleasure. The waiter, using patience and the power of suggestion, eventually convinced all four to order dessert, adding \$33 to their bill. When paying their tab, one of the women moaned, "I can't believe I ate that... You are the devil." We are surrounded by temptations. These come from advertisements, from the Internet, from friends, from those closest to us. None of these wears the face of a devil or demon. But just as Paul warned the Corinthians, we are to be careful lest we fall into old patterns of sin. Temptation to sin may also come through us. Remember that some of our fellow believers have been delivered from horrendous, destructive patterns of sin. They may fall back into them easily through a bad witness on our part. We must never be the cause of the fall of a brother or sister (Romans 14:20; 1 Corinthians 8:13). Let us work daily to keep our lives "from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27) and to keep everyone in our fellowship in the same condition (Jude 23).

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. Pride and smugness often lead to failure (I Cor. 10:12)
2. The Christian cannot escape temptation, but he can overcome it with God's help (vs. 13)
3. Idolatry is a present-day evil, and we still need to flee from it (vss. 14-15)
4. If one regularly fellowships with another, then he identifies with him and his cause on some level (vss. 16-18)
5. To fellowship with the world's idols is to be in partnership with the devil (vss. 19-20)
6. He who knowingly participates in evil invites the Lord's discipline (vss. 21-22)