

## 13: ESCAPING THE HIDDEN TRAP OF TEMPTATION

### "THE ESCAPE"

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

#### This Week's Core Competency

**Self-Control** – I have the power, through Christ, to control myself. Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

According to 1 Corinthians 10:5, God was not pleased with most of the Israelites that he saved from Egypt, supplied a leader, and sustained in the wilderness. In spite of what God had done for them, they set their hearts on evil things (v. 6). In verses 1-4 Paul points to five privileges they "all" enjoyed: 1) "Under the cloud" refers to God's guidance and protection (Nu 9:15-23; 14:14; Dt 1:33); 2) "Passed through the sea" refers to God's deliverance from Egypt (Ex 14:15-22); 3) "All baptized into Moses" refers to them "voluntarily and unconditionally placing themselves under the leadership of Moses" (David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, TBST, 167); 4) "Ate the same spiritual food" refers to the manna God gave them daily (Ex 16:1-35); 5) "All drank the same spiritual drink" refers to water from the rock God gave them to quench their thirst (Ex 17:1-7; Nu 20:1-13). Despite all these blessings, the

***No man who seeks spiritual freedom can afford to yield passively to all the appeals of a society of salesmen, advertisers and consumers.***

– Thomas Merton

Israelites failed their wilderness exam. When tests "seized" (cf. 1Co 10:13) them, rather than trust God who is faithful, they surrendered to temptation.

"Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did" (v. 6), Paul says. In other words, unless we are careful, the history of Israel will be repeated in our own experience. Then he gives specific examples of Israel's failures. First, when Moses did not come down from the mountain after "forty days and forty nights" (Ex 24:18), rather than wait as he had instructed them, the Israelites grew tired of waiting. Having decided that their deliverer and leader had abandoned them, they took matters into their own hands and demanded Aaron make gods to go before them (32:1). When Moses *did* return, he found the camp engaged in idolatrous revelry (vv. 6, 19). In the words of one commentator, the people "did not exercise 'self-control' in the matter of idolatry and thereby failed to gain the prize" (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 443).

Second, while the people were staging for the conquest east of the Jordan in Shittim, Balaam managed to instigate a scheme to seduce Israel's men. Moabite women invited them to the sacrifices of their gods (Nu 25:1-2), which happened to involve engaging in sexual activity. Fertility rites (cf., Dt 23:17-18; 1Ki 14:22-24) were part and parcel of the regular worship of Baal (Nu 25:2). Rather than decline the invitation, the men accepted. "So serious was this breach of covenant, especially when Israel was on the threshold of the land of promise, that the LORD commanded Moses to take serious action" (v. 4) (Eugene H. Merrill, "Numbers," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 245-46);

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24,000 Israelites died in the aftermath (v. 9).

Third, as the Israelites journeyed around Edom, the people "spoke against God and against Moses" (Nu 21:4-5) accusing them both of bringing them into the desert to die. "There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" (v. 5). Rather than persevere, they tested the LORD by accusing him, and he responded by sending venomous snakes among them (v. 6).

Finally, when Korah and 250 others rose up against Moses, accusing him of bringing them up "out of a land flowing with milk and honey" to kill them in the desert (Nu 16:1-2, 12-13), the LORD commanded they all gather in from of the Tent of Meeting. There he caused the earth to open up and swallow the offenders with their households and all their possessions (vv. 31-33). Rather than accept the LORD's judgment and learn from it, "the next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. 'You have killed the LORD's people,' they said" (v. 41). And even though Aaron interceded for the people, 14,700 of them died.

The trials Israel faced in the wilderness with their accompanying temptations to idolatry, to sexual immorality, to test the LORD, and to grumble about their circumstances were all tests "common to man." Consequently Paul can rightly say, "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall" (1Co 10:11-12).

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

vv. 1-12

1 For 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. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. 6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 7 Do 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." 8 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. 9 We should not test the Lord, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel. 11 These

things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

### 1 Corinthians 10:13

13 No 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.

#### Cf., another translation

13 No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it. (NRSV)

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Underline "temptation" in v. 13.
- \* Circle "seized" in v. 13.
- \* Double underline "tempted" in v. 13.
- \* Highlight "God is faithful" in v. 13.
- \* Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 13.
- \* Circle "a way out" in v. 13.
- \* Box "so that" indicating *result* in v. 13.

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## day 2

## EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. The NIV speaks in terms of *temptations* and being *tempted* while other English versions speak in terms of *tests* and being *tested* (cf., NRSV, GNT). Why do the English versions differ?
2. Explain the difference between being *tempted* and being *tested*.
3. Give three examples of *tests* "common to man."
4. Identify *temptations* that might accompany those tests.
5. Paraphrase the statement: "God is faithful."
6. God's faithfulness is a *two-sided* coin. How so?
7. "Provide a way out" and "stand up under it" sounds like a contradiction. Explain how to resolve it?
8. Paul warns us to "be careful that you don't fall" (v. 12). Talk about how verse 13 relates to his warning.
9. **Discussion:** Having read the passage carefully, talk about which translation you prefer, NIV or NRSV, and why.

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## day 3

# EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

1 Corinthians 10:13 is one of the better known verses in Paul's letter, "having served generations of Christians as a word of hope in times of difficulty" (Fee, 461). One author calls it "the great antidote to falling into sin through temptation" (W. Harold Mare, "1 Corinthians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10: 250). In verses 1-10 Paul describes how the Israelites were tested and tempted in the desert, explaining that what occurred to them and how they responded serve as examples that were written down as warnings for us (v. 11). Consequently, overly confident Christians who think themselves impervious to temptation should, in Paul's words, "be careful that you don't fall" (v. 12). Then "following hard on the heels of the warning to 'beware lest they fall' in v. 12, Paul reassures his Corinthian friends that they *need not fall*, at least not in the vicissitudes of Christian life common to all. God has already committed himself to them when it comes to ordinary human trials" (Fee, 460 italics added).

Paul asserts two things in verse 13. First, he asserts, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man." Because the Greek noun *peirasmos* and related verb *peiradzo* can be translated *temptation* and *tempt* or *testing* and *test* respectively, our English translations differ. Paul has in mind the everyday challenges in life that test our faith and obedience. Every test is accompanied by the temptation to respond to it in unacceptable ways. As one commentator explains: "Tests in life are not bad; in fact, they can be divinely sent (James 1:2-4). The main issue is my response to a test. Do I respond in a way that looks to God to guide me through it? Do I trust him, or do I put him to the test? How do I respond to personal struggles in my life? Do I get angry? Do I seek to reassert my control (even when I know I cannot control events!)? Or do I rest in faith, look for

God's hand, and ask him what I should learn from what I am going through?" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 131). For example, here are some trials that can "seize us" with the temptations that might accompany them. A serious illness might tempt us to question God's care. Undeserved criticism might tempt us to respond in anger. Suffering harm might tempt us to seek revenge. The promotion of a devious coworker might tempt us to question God's righteousness. Such tests and temptations are not unusual; they are "common to man" kinds of things faced by everyone.

Second, Paul asserts, "God is faithful." And then he explains that God's faithfulness is manifested in two ways. On the one hand, he will make sure that no test we face will be too hard for us. The apostle assures us, "He will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm" (GNT). On the other hand, he will make sure that in every test we face he will see us through. Paul says, "At the time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out." He does not assert that God will make sure that every trail we face comes with a way out of it, a way to escape unscathed. Instead, he assures us God will make sure we "can stand up under it."

What Paul says about our faithful God in 1 Corinthians 10:13 correlates nicely with what is said about him in other passages. In Romans 8:31-32 Paul asks, "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" And the author of the book of Hebrews adds, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" (13:5).

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## *The Message of the Passage*

*When you're tempted to sin in response to tests in life, turn to your faithful God who will provide a way for you to withstand them.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about how God revealed himself to you . . .

–Write about how God wants you to change you . . .

–Write about how God wants to use you to change your world . . .

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# notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 11 *these things* See vv. 1-10, esp. vv. 6-10 (see Ex 32:6; Nu 25:1-9; Nu 21:4-6; Nu 16:45-49).
- v. 11 *them* I.e., the Israelites in the wilderness.
- v. 13 *temptation* Cf., "testing" (NRSV). "Gk. *peirasmos*, which, depending on context, can have the nuance either of temptation (= 'seduction to sin') or trial/test (which can lead to the former if one does not bear up under it)" (Fee, 460). What's more, both senses can be found in the same verse (cf., Jas 1:13, HCSB).
- v. 13 *has seized* Cf., "has overtaken" (ESV, NKJV, NET, HCSB, NIV 2011). The testings that believers face are implicit in everyday life. We don't go after them; they come our way. These distinctively human tests are not unlike those faced by the Israelites in the wilderness (vv. 6-10).
- v. 13 *common to man* Cf., "The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience" (NLT); "No trial has overtaken you that is not faced by others" (NET). "The temptations that come to the Christian are those all human beings face" (Mare, 250). "The trials we face are only normal problems (cf. also 2:4, 13; 4:3; Rom. 4:19; James 3:7; 1 Pet. 2:13)" (Dan Mitchell, *The Book of 1 Corinthians*, TCBC, 145).
- v. 13 *faithful* When it comes to the trials common to this human life, "God is faithful;" he can be counted on for help. Paul's confidence is rooted in motifs depicting God in the OT. "The God of Israel was a faithful God, always reliable, always true to himself, who could therefore be counted on to fulfill all his promises (Deut. 7:9; Ps. 144:13)" (Fee, 44). God helps those facing testing in two ways. "First, God has pledged himself 'not to let you be tested beyond what you can bear.' This, of course, speaks not only to the fact of God's prior activity in behalf of his people, Paul's emphasis, but also to the fact that they will be called upon to endure. They must be prepared for 'a long obedience in the same direction.' In his faithfulness God is pledge not to allow what is beyond that endurance. Second, and as the other side of the same coin, 'when you are tempted, he will also provide the way out (or make an end) so that you can stand up under it'" (Fee, 461).
- v. 13 *way out* Cf., "At the time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out" (GNT). "This sounds like a contradiction in terms: finding 'the way out' so that you 'continue to bear it.' But the problem lies only in the less-than-precise wording. There is a 'way out of,' or 'end to,' whatever testing one may undergo; but that is to be seen from the divine perspective. One may yet have to endure before the 'end' is realized. In any case, one may trust the faithful God to provide the 'end' to a test that he has not necessarily originated, but that he has allowed" (461). "God will 'provide the way of escape' (v. 13). In early Greek, this was a nautical term that had the sense of a landing place. The idea is not that God will enable us to escape temptation, but that He will enable us to land safely on the other side victorious. Often the only escape is 'to endure' (cf. James 1:12 but also 1 Cor. 6:7)" (Mitchell, 145).

### Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

I volunteer on an executive board for an organization at my son's high school. The director of this club can be very difficult to work with. After a meeting last week, several of us were standing in the parking lot discussing a heated issue that had come up. Most board members were extremely frustrated by a decision the director had made and were making their grievances LOUD and CLEAR. I, too, was frustrated but was trying not to talk badly about him or his decisions. Ephesians 4:29 popped into my head. "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up..." However, the longer I stood there, the greater the temptation was and I ended up joining in the conversation. Thankfully, my phone rang and I had to leave the group. As I got in my car to leave, I asked God, "Why didn't you provide a way out of that sooner?! I was not going to say anything!" He gently replied in my spirit, "I did. I spoke my Word to you." Ephesians 4:29. God had provided a way out for me - I simply chose not to take it. I am so thankful for a loving God who will use His powerful Word to lead us into righteousness. I may have failed this one but God will provide a way out the next time, and in His strength - I will take it!

#### What Does The Bible Say

Read: 1 Corinthians 10:13

1. Is everyone tempted?
2. Fill in the blank. "And God is \_\_\_\_\_; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear."
3. What will God do for us when we are tempted?

#### What Do You Think

List some ways God may provide a way of out temptation for you.

#### What R U Going To Do

Use a pencil to make a list of the things you are most tempted by. Do you watch too much TV? Is it hard to tell the truth? Do you complain, procrastinate, worry? Use a permanent marker and write 1 Corinthians 10:13 on top of your list. Ask your parents for help. Post your list and remember to pray when you encounter temptation.

### MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Self Control - Taking charge of myself with Jesus' help

Memory Verse

1Co 10:13 *No 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 you can stand up under it.*

### KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC \_\_\_\_\_ and Verse \_\_\_\_\_. Family completed **Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **Think** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.  
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

*6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).