



July 19 – Stand Firm

Weekly Reading – 1 Corinthians 5-9

This Week's Passage – 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Main Point

Because God is faithful, believers can stand firm against temptation by relying on His strength rather than their own.

Key Verse

1 Corinthians 10:13 – 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. (ESV)

Try to emphasize this verse throughout the lesson, building up to the Weekly Challenge to review the verse daily this week.

Life Group – The Flow

• 15 minutes – Conversation and relationship-building • 5 minutes – Looking back • 5 minutes – Introduction, Background, and Christ Connection • 30 minutes – Study and apply the Bible • 5 minutes – Application exercise • 10 minutes – Pray Through the Passage & Prayer Requests • 5 minutes – Conclusion	If Time is Limited... Focus on: • Main Point • Passage 2 – 1 Corinthians 10:6–13 • Reflection Question • Application Exercise – Warning Lights • Pray Through the Passage • Final Takeaway • This Week's Challenge
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Looking Back (5 min)



Use this time to celebrate obedience and encourage growth. Invite members to share how they sought to apply last week's challenge and what God taught them along the way. Focus on God's faithfulness and the progress He is making in our lives, not on perfect execution. Scan or click the QR code for last week's challenge.

Discuss one or more prompts:

- What area of life did you intentionally surrender to God's wisdom this week?
 - Did you notice yourself responding differently because of God's truth?
 - What was most challenging about replacing worldly wisdom with God's perspective?
 - How did God encourage or grow you through last week's challenge?
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Introduction (5 min)

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Ask:

- Have you ever seen someone with incredible potential fail because they became careless or complacent?

Examples:

- An athlete
- A student
- A business
- A marriage
- Even yourself

Follow-Up:

- What usually causes people to drift rather than fail overnight?

Say:

"Most failures don't happen all at once. They happen one compromise, one distraction, or one careless decision at a time. Paul reminded the Corinthians that Israel's history wasn't just ancient history, it was a warning. Their failures teach us how to remain faithful when temptation comes."

Transition to Background:

“Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that spiritual failure rarely happens overnight. To make that point, he didn’t begin with their own lives; he pointed them back to Israel’s history. Before we study the passage, let’s consider the setting and why Paul used these examples.”

Background

The Background and Christ Connection sections are designed to provide context and a gospel lens for the lesson. Feel free to summarize these sections rather than reading them word-for-word.

Corinth was a city saturated with pagan worship, sexual immorality, and cultural pressure. Many believers assumed they were spiritually mature simply because they had experienced baptism, participated in the Lord’s Supper, or possessed spiritual knowledge. Paul challenged that false confidence by pointing back to Israel’s history. Although Israel experienced God’s miraculous deliverance, provision, and presence, many still fell because they became complacent and gave in to temptation.

Transition to Christ Connection:

“Understanding Corinth’s culture helps explain the problem Paul was addressing, but the solution is found in Christ. Before we study the passage, let’s consider how this text points us to Him.”

Christ Connection

Israel repeatedly failed to remain faithful despite experiencing God’s blessings. Jesus, however, perfectly resisted every temptation and remained completely obedient to the Father. Through His death and resurrection, believers receive both forgiveness for past failures and the Holy Spirit’s power to stand firm when temptation comes. Our hope is found not in our own strength but in Christ’s faithfulness.

Transition to Passage 1:

“With that foundation in mind, let’s examine Paul’s first reminder to the Corinthians and what Israel’s history teaches us about following Christ today.”

Study and Apply (30 min)

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says and how we can apply it in our lives this week.

Passage 1 – 1 Corinthians 10:1-5

READ THE PASSAGE – Have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 10:1-5.

Warning Against Idolatry

[1] 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.
[5] Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. (ESV)

Commentary

Use the following commentary to prepare ahead of time. As you lead, feel free to summarize key insights rather than reading it word-for-word.

Verses 10:1-2.

The believers in Corinth who ate meat offered to idols had a measure of knowledge, but Paul feared they were ignorant of the lessons of Old Testament history and the imminent dangers that idolatry posed. The apostle drew two comparisons between the Corinthian Christians' experiences and the wilderness wanderings of Israel. First, the Israelites were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea. All the Israelites, young and old, male and female, faithful and unregenerate, were baptized into Moses in this way. The use of the word baptized points to an implicit analogy. The Israelites had been baptized into Moses just as the Corinthians had been baptized into Christ. Paul pointed out this similarity in order to identify Israel with the Corinthians, and thereby to apply Israel's lessons to Corinth.

He strengthened this association by referring to the Israelites as our forefathers, even though the Corinthians were Gentiles. In Paul's mind, sufficient continuity existed between the covenant people of God in the Old Testament (Israel) and in the New Testament (the church) that the Old Testament Israelites were the spiritual forefathers of all New Testament believers.

Verses 10:3-4.

Second, the Israelites ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink. This food and drink were not ordinary, but spiritual. Paul did not mean that these items were nonphysical but that they came from the Spirit and had spiritual power for God's people. Specifically, Paul spoke of the manna that God provided to Israel for forty years (Exod. 16:12-35), and the water he provided them at least twice (Exod. 17:6; Num. 20:11). A spiritual rock, one miraculously provided by the Spirit and empowering the people, accompanied them in the sense that water-giving rocks appeared on at least these two occasions. John explained that the manna foreshadowed Christ (John 6:31-58). Here, Paul symbolically connected Christ and the water-giving rock. The rock was Christ.

Israel's spiritual food and drink were similar to the Corinthians' partaking of Christ's body and blood symbolized in the Lord's supper (10:14-22). The Israelites in the wilderness had lived through the Old Testament foreshadows of Christian baptism and the Lord's Supper. By describing these Old Testament events as "baptism" and "spiritual food and drink," Paul emphasized the similarity between the situation of the Corinthians and of the Israelites under Moses.

Verse 10:5.

Next, Paul addressed his chief concern. Five times in four verses (10:1-4) he mentioned that "all" of the Israelites shared these common experiences. All the Israelites were joined together in their experiences of God's grace, just as all the Corinthians were joined together in their experiences of Christian baptism and the Lord's supper. Despite the experience of grace enjoyed by all Israel, God was not pleased with most of them. As a result, most of them died in the desert and were not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Paul mentioned this to draw attention to a similar possibility within the Corinthian church. Everyone in the Corinthian church had begun a spiritual journey in Christ, and everyone had participated in baptism and the Lord's Supper—but these experiences did not guarantee that each of them would complete the journey and receive eternal life.

We must not think that Paul believed it was possible to lose salvation. Paul taught that those who have saving faith in Christ will never lose their salvation (Rom. 5:8-10; Eph. 1:5, 13-14). Yet, he also knew that not all people who profess faith in Christ and partake of baptism and the Lord's Supper have saving faith.

Guide Discussion

You do not need to cover every question. Use the questions that best help your group engage with the passage. I do encourage you to use the Reflective question to provide more engagement from your Life Group.

- 1. Good for Students. What blessings and spiritual privileges did the Israelites experience in these verses?**

2. **Discuss.** Why do you think Paul reminded the Corinthians of Israel's history before addressing temptation?
3. **Deeper Dive.** What dangers arise when we begin to rely on past spiritual experiences instead of maintaining a present, growing relationship with Christ?
4. ★ **Reflective** - write answers on an index card (these can be found in the resource cart). Where are you most tempted to rely on past spiritual experiences instead of pursuing a growing relationship with Christ today?

Teaching Insight

The Teaching Insight is intended to help you identify and emphasize the main truth of the passage. Consider using it as a brief summary after discussion or a way to clarify the lesson's central message if your group gets off track.

Say:

"Paul wasn't minimizing Israel's spiritual blessings. He was warning that spiritual privilege alone does not guarantee spiritual faithfulness. Healthy discipleship requires continual dependence upon God."

Transition to Passage 2:

"Israel's story wasn't recorded merely as history. It was written as a warning. Paul now explains what those warnings mean for believers today."

Passage 2 - 1 Corinthians 10:6-13

READ THE PASSAGE - Have volunteers read 1 Corinthians 10:6-13.

[6] Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil 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 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.

[12] 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. (ESV)

Commentary

Verse 10:6.

Five times Paul warned the Corinthians against acting as they did (“as some of them,” 10:7; “as some of them did,” 10:8-10). Five times he showed how Israel’s experiences provided negative examples of Christian behavior. Each example drew attention to Paul’s main concern in this passage: how to deal with meat offered to idols. First, the Corinthians were to avoid setting their hearts on evil things. This terminology occurs only twice in the Old Testament (Num. 11:34; Prov. 1:22), so Paul may have been alluding to Numbers 11:4-6 where the Israelites valued Egypt’s food above loyalty to God. Israel committed so many sins that all but two of the adults who originally left Egypt died in the wilderness (Num. 14:22-30; 32:11-13). Even Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land (Num. 20:12)..

Verse 10:7.

Second, Paul warned believers not to be idolaters. Here he had in mind the specific event of Exodus 32:6, and he quoted it to illustrate his point. When Moses went to Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, Israel began to indulge in pagan revelry before the golden calf, which evidently included pagan cultic meals like those the Corinthians ate in pagan temples (8:10). Because of this idolatry God nearly destroyed the entire nation of Israel. As it was, he had three thousand men put to death (Exod. 32:28).

Verse 10:8.

In the third example, Paul warned against sexual immorality, referring to the time when twenty-three thousand of them died after engaging in idolatry at Baal-Peor and involving themselves in fertility rituals (Num. 25:1-9; 31:16). Many died because of involvement in pagan fertility rites. Fertility religions believed that participating in religious prostitution and orgies brought health, fertility, and prosperity. The idolatry practiced in Corinth in Paul’s day involved similar fertility practices. Paul’s warning was plain: eating meat sacrificed to idols may lead to sexual immorality—to which some of the Corinthians were prone (1 Cor. 6:15-16)—and such immorality stirs the wrath of God.

Verse 10:9.

Fourth, Paul warned the Corinthians not to test the Lord, and he mentioned snakes which killed many in Israel. This alludes to Numbers 21:4-9 where the people blasphemed God by rejecting his manna. Paul drew upon this parallel because some in Corinth were not satisfied with what God had given them in Christ. As the Israelites before them who desired food other than manna, the Corinthians desired meat so much that they disregarded all other considerations. God’s retribution against the Israelites warned the Corinthians against these practices.

Verse 10:10.

Complaining against God and his leaders took place many times in the wilderness (Exod. 15:24; Deut. 1:27). But Paul had in mind a time when the destroying angel killed those who grumbled. Although the Scriptures do not mention a particular time when such an angel appeared in the wilderness, similar concepts appear in many places in the Old Testament (Exod. 12:23; 1 Chr. 21:15). The rabbis of Paul's day taught that God had a particular angel who destroyed and killed. Apparently, Paul agreed with this teaching. Those who opposed Paul on the matter of meat offered to idols risked committing against him the kind of rebellion against Moses which brought death to the Old Testament Israelites.

Verse 10:11.

Paul again exhorted the Corinthians that the sins and judgments in the wilderness happened to them as examples and were written down in the Old Testament as warnings for Christian believers. This does not mean that the only reason the Israelites experienced these things was to provide an example for later Christians, but it does mean that in God's providence this was part of the reason. Similarly, these events were not recorded just for the sake of the New Testament church; the Old Testament covenant people of God also benefited from these lessons. Followers of Christ are always in danger of taking their Christian experiences of grace as a license for sin (cf. Rom. 6:1), but the Old Testament example prohibits such license.

Verse 10:12.

Followers of Christ who are overly confident and think they are standing firm should be careful not to fall as the Israelites did in the desert. Again, Paul did not mean that one's salvation can be lost. Rather, he meant that some who wrongly think they are saved might prove themselves not to be (see Heb. 3:12-13).

Verse 10:13.

The warning to be careful not to fall raised another issue that Paul addressed. What if Christians are so tempted that they cannot resist turning from Christ? Perhaps he had in mind the attraction some Corinthians had toward the idolatrous fertility rituals practiced in Corinth. What if they were not able to resist? First, all temptations that Christians experience, including that of idolatry, are common to man. Others had resisted the temptation toward idolatry, and the Corinthians could do so as well.

Second, God is faithful, and he will not desert his people (see Deut. 7:9; 1 Thess. 5:24; Heb. 10:23; Rev. 1:5). God can be trusted not to allow temptations beyond what Christians can bear. God will always provide a way out of temptation so believers can stand up and not fall into apostasy. He himself tempts no one (Jas. 1:13), but he is in control of Satan, who tempts believers to sin (Matt. 4:1; 6:13). Because of his great love for his children, God does not allow temptations to be so great that they overcome us. Instead, Christians sin because they do not search for a way out.

💡 Consider This -

Optional illustration to reinforce the passage.

On December 15, 1967, the Silver Bridge connecting Ohio and West Virginia suddenly collapsed during rush hour, killing 46 people. Investigators discovered that the disaster wasn't caused by a massive crack or a dramatic event. Instead, a tiny fracture—less than a tenth of an inch deep—in a single steel eye bar had slowly grown over time. That nearly invisible flaw eventually caused the entire bridge to fail.

Spiritual failure often follows a similar pattern. Few believers wake up one day and decide to abandon their faith or give in to serious temptation. More often, compromise begins with small choices that seem insignificant at the time. That's why Paul warns believers to "take heed lest you fall" and reminds us that God faithfully provides a way of escape before temptation takes hold.

Guide Discussion

1. **Good for Students.** According to Paul, why were Israel's failures recorded for future generations?
2. **Discuss.** Paul warned believers who thought they were standing securely to "take heed lest they fall." Why do you think spiritual overconfidence can be more dangerous than spiritual weakness?
3. **Deeper Dive.** Verse 13 says God always provides "a way of escape." What do you think that escape often looks like in everyday life?

Possible answers:

- accountability
 - Scripture
 - prayer
 - walking away
 - confessing early
 - removing ourselves from temptation
4. ★ **Reflective** - write answers on an index card (these can be found in the resource cart). If you truly believe God always provides a way of escape, how might that change the way you respond to temptation?

Teaching Insight

Say:

"Temptation itself is not sin. Paul's encouragement is that believers are never left to face temptation alone. God's faithfulness is greater than our weakness, and He always provides the grace needed to obey Him."

Transition into Application Exercise:

“Paul’s warning is not meant to leave us fearful but vigilant. God has faithfully given us everything we need to stand firm, but we must honestly examine our own lives and respond before small compromises become larger failures. Let’s take a few moments to evaluate where we may need God’s help.”

Application Exercise (5-7 min)

Warning Lights

Time: 5-7 minutes

Supplies: Index Card – you can find them in the resource cart

Instructions

Evaluate yourself:

Which warning lights have you noticed recently?

- Spiritual complacency
- Pride
- Isolation
- Neglecting prayer
- Neglecting Scripture
- Lingering temptation
- Overconfidence
- Rationalizing sin

Then discuss:

- Which warning light is easiest to ignore?
- How does God often get our attention before we fall?
- What practical step could you take this week to stand firm?

Transition into Pray Through the Passage:

“Recognizing areas where we need to grow is only the beginning. God doesn’t call us to stand firm through willpower alone; He invites us to depend on His strength through prayer. Let’s spend a few moments praying through the truths we’ve studied today.”

Pray Through the Passage (10 min)

Led by the Prayer Champion:

Read the verse/passage, then read the prayer prompt out loud. Allow a few moments between prompts for reflection and prayer. Encourage members to personalize each prayer by filling in the blank with their own response.

Prompt 1 - Adoration (have people pray this prompt out loud)

1 Corinthians 10:13a - No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful.... (ESV)

- Lord, I praise You because You are faithful in _____.

Prompt 2 - Confession (can be silent)

1 Corinthians 10:12 - Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. (ESV)

- Lord, reveal an area where I have become spiritually complacent or overconfident: _____.

Prompt 3 - Gratitude (have people pray this prompt out loud)

1 Corinthians 10:13b - ... but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (ESV)

- Lord, thank You for always providing a way of escape when I face _____.

Prompt 4 - Response/Obedience (have people pray this prompt out loud)

1 Corinthians 10:13 - 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. (ESV)

- Lord, help me stand firm against _____ this week by relying on Your strength instead of my own.

End the prayer prompt time and transition to the next section:

Prayer Requests, Praises, and Follow-Up

1. Take a few minutes to ask the group for updates from the previous week's prayer requests. Encourage the group to celebrate answered prayers.

2. Next, identify specific needs that can be prayed for throughout this coming week. Encourage members to be vulnerable and open in their needs so members can better and more fully support each other in prayer and in tangible ways.
3. Record requests and praises, share them with the group during the week, and follow up on them at the next gathering.

Transition into Conclusion:

“God’s faithfulness gives us confidence to face temptation with hope. As we leave today, let’s remember that standing firm isn’t about relying on our own strength; it’s about trusting the God who is always faithful.”

Conclusion (5 min)



Scan or click the QR code and share the link in your Life Group’s group chat (e.g. GroupMe, text or email thread, etc.) so they can see This Week’s Challenge. Encourage your group to keep these questions in mind, review/memorize the Key Verse during the week, and engage in the Year of Prayer reading plan this week.

Final Takeaway

After discussion concludes, read the takeaway statement:

Believers stand firm not by relying on their own strength, but by trusting the God who is always faithful to provide what they need to endure temptation.

This Week’s Challenge

Respond – *What will I do this week?*

Identify one area where you regularly face temptation or spiritual compromise. This week, take one intentional step to rely on God’s strength rather than your own.

Examples:

- Ask a trusted believer to pray for you or hold you accountable.
- Remove a source of temptation from your daily routine.
- Begin each day by praying specifically about that area.

- Memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13 and recall it when you're tempted.
- Replace an unhealthy habit with a Christ-honoring one.

Reflect – *What is God showing me?*

- Where am I most tempted to rely on my own strength instead of God's?
- What "way of escape" has God already provided that I may be overlooking?
- When have I experienced God's faithfulness in helping me resist temptation?
- How can I become more intentional about depending on God before temptation comes rather than after I've fallen?

Review – *How will I keep God's Word before me?*

Review this week's **Key Verse** each day and ask God to use it to shape your heart and thinking throughout the week.

1 Corinthians 10:13 – 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. (ESV)

Read – *How will I prepare for next week?*

This week's reading is **1 Corinthians 10-14**. You can access the Year of Prayer reading plan [here](#).

Prayer

Either pray something like the guide below, or invite someone in the group to close in prayer.

Father, thank You that You are always faithful, even when we are weak. Thank You for never leaving us to face temptation alone and for always providing the strength and grace we need to stand firm. Help us rely on You rather than our own abilities, remain vigilant against temptation, and walk in daily obedience to Christ. May our confidence rest not in ourselves, but in Your unfailing faithfulness. In Jesus' name, amen.