

Scripture Reading: I Cor. 9:27-10:15

Background Observation:

10:5 After enumerating all these marvelous privileges that were theirs, the apostle must now remind the Corinthians that **with most of the Israelites God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.**

Although all Israel left Egypt and all professed to be one in heart and soul with their leader, Moses, yet the sad truth is that although their bodies were in the wilderness, yet their hearts were still back in Egypt.

They enjoyed a physical deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh, but they still lusted after the sinful pleasures of that country.

Of all the warriors over twenty years of age who left Egypt, only two, Caleb and Joshua, ever won the prize—they reached the Promised Land. The carcasses of the rest of them fell **in the wilderness** as evidence of God's displeasure.

Note the contrast between the word "**all**" in the first four verses and the word "**most**" in verse 5.

They were all privileged, but **most of them** perished. Godet marvels:

10:6 In the events that happened in the time of the Exodus, we see teaching that applies to us.

The children of Israel were actually **examples** for us, showing us what will happen to us if we also **lust after evil things as they did.**

As we read the OT, we should not read it merely as history, but as containing lessons of practical importance for our lives today.

In the verses to follow, the apostle is going to list some of the specific sins into which they fell. It is worth noticing that many of these sins are concerned with the gratification of bodily appetites.

10:11 The next three verses give the practical application of the events.

First, Paul explains that the meaning of these events is not limited to their historical value.

They have a significance for us today. **They were written** as a warning to us who are living after the close of the Jewish age and during the gospel age.

10:12 They constitute a warning to the self-confident: **Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.**

Perhaps this refers especially to the strong believer who thinks he can dabble with self-gratification and not be affected by it.

Such a person is in greatest danger of falling under the disciplinary hand of God.

10:13 But then Paul adds a marvelous word of encouragement for those who are tempted.

He teaches that the testings, trials, and temptations which face us are **common** to all.

However, **God is faithful, who will not allow us to be tested beyond what we are able.**

He does not promise to deliver us from temptation or testing, but He does promise to limit its intensity.

He further promises to provide **the way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.**

Reading this verse, you cannot help but be struck by the tremendous comfort it has given to tested saints of God through the centuries.

Young believers have clung to it as to a lifeline and older believers have reposed on it as upon a pillow.

Perhaps some of Paul's readers were being fiercely tempted at the time to go into idolatry.

Paul would comfort them with the thought that God would not allow any unbearable temptation to come their way.

At the same time they should be warned that they should not expose themselves to temptation.

--Believer's Bible Commentary: A Thorough, Yet Easy-to-Read Bible Commentary That Turns Complicated Theology Into Practical Understanding.

With these verses before us, I would like to preach on this subject:

“Why Believers Fall”

Let's get started now...

It is amazing to me how close to God these people had been and yet to see how they fell into gross sin:

Vv. 1 - 3

But they are not the only ones! The highway to heaven is strewn with casualties:

1. **Cain** – Sin made a *Murderer* out of him!
2. **Samson** – Sin made a *Mule* out of him!
3. **David** – Sin made a *Miserable* Man out of him!

4. **Lot** – Sin made him a *Mockery*
5. **Jonah** – Sin made a *Meal* out of him!
6. **Demas** – Sin Wrecked his *Ministry*!

Our country is full of people who used to be on the firing line for God:

- Call it Backsliding
- Call it Spiritual relapse
- Call it Falling away
- Call it whatever you want, it is all the same: it is **Falling!**

3 things and I'm through...

I. **The Why of it.**

Why does it happen? What is the reason?

We have two “natures” now that we are saved!

It is when the old/carnal “nature” is stronger that we FALL!

Romans 7:18 (KJV)

¹⁸For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

Romans 7:21 (KJV)

²¹I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

Romans 7:23 (KJV)

²³But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Galatians 5:17 (KJV)

¹⁷For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Before we were saved, there was no “warfare!”

The “old sinful, carnal nature” had no opposition:

[**Illus** 1] You have one dog and put food out to him, there is no trouble, but you add another dog and put food out, you are going to have problems with those two!

[**Illus** 2] A man lives alone and he gets to do the things he wants to do: throw clothes on the floor, fish, golf, hunt, watch ball games on TV, but when he gets married, he runs into opposition on all these good things!

The greatest problem we have is “ourselves” with these two “natures!”

[**Illus**] An old guy I heard about got drunk! He opened the fridge and got into the limburger cheese...

He got it all in his beard... When he sobered up, he said to his wife: “*My, My, it sure stinks around here!*”

He went outside to get some fresh air. Afterwards he came back into the house and said, “*Man! The whole world stinks!*”

She said, “*It’s not anyone else but you, old boy!!*”

So, The Why of it...

II. **The Woe of it!**

A. **It Brings Sadness:**

Psalm 137:1-4 (KJV)

¹By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

²We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

³For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us *required of us* mirth, *saying*, Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion.

⁴How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?

B. **It Brings Shame:**

Matthew 5:13 (KJV)

¹³Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

[**Illus**] In the old days, salt that had lost its strength was thrown out and people walked on it!

The world is making fun of fallen Christians today just like they did Samson!

C. **It Brings Sorrow and Suffering:**

- Ask the prodigal son—see what sin did to him!
- Ask Peter—he cursed and denied the Lord, but he wept bitterly as a result!
- Ask Naomi—She followed the flesh down to Moab and she said, “Call me not Naomi, but call me Mira” which means bitterness!
- Ask the Corinthian church—the entire church followed the flesh!

1 Corinthians 11:30 (KJV)

³⁰For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

So, The Why of it; The Woe of it...

III. **The Warning of it!** (v. 12)

1 Corinthians 10:12 (KJV)

¹²Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

If the Corinthians believed their **standing** in Christ and corresponding freedom could be exercised in sin with impunity, they were wrong, possibly dead wrong.

[**Illus**] Ask a good doctor and he/she will tell you to build a strong body you must eat right, exercise and rest!

- Eat the Word!
- Exercise in godliness!
- Rest in the Lord (turn your burdens over to Him)!

Paul gives a good exhortation about an attitude which makes temptation very destructive in a person's life.

A. **The presence of pride.** "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (10:12).

Pride gives temptation a great advantage in one's life.

Pride makes one overconfident about defeating temptation thus giving temptation a great advantage.

Pride does not protect itself from temptation.

It is not cautious about the danger of temptation. Thus, it is an easy victim of temptation.

Previous victory over temptation does not guarantee victory over future temptation if proper caution is not taken.

[**Illus**] "No degree of progress we may have already made, no amount of privileges which we may have enjoyed, can justify the want of caution" (Hodge).

B. **The peril of pride.** "Lest he fall" (10:12).

This means one yields to temptation.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

The "fall" to temptation is disastrous for a person.

Conclusion:

- Dear believer, have you "fallen" to temptation and sin in your life?
- Are you standing at the crossroads pondering it?
- You've been warned!

Psalm 97:10 (KJV)

¹⁰Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

Invitation Hymn: *"I Surrender All"*

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