

LESSON 6C – Listening to Friends and Members of the LGBTQ+ Community



(based on pp. 203-258)

Introduction: Responding with Compassion and Bible Balance

Respond to the following:

- “It disgusts me that the church harps on select sins. Conveniently making some sins worse than others.”
- “Should moral conservatives have executive, legislative, and judicial power, we can legislate traditional marriage and sexuality in schools, the media, and workplace.”

How does God help us overcome our temptations?

This section is applicable to all temptations, whether greed, substance abuse, sexual sins, or even putting science or reason above God’s Word. To avoid giving in to temptation, we need to stay clear, if possible, of situations where we’re likely to be tempted (which Peter didn’t do the night Jesus was betrayed). But with our broken natures in this broken world temptations follow us and assail us constantly wherever we go.

1. How does God help us overcome temptation?

Matthew 4:4, 7, 10 [Jesus answered Satan, “It is written...”]

Matthew 26:41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

Ephesians 6:10-18 Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

2. Among our prayers is the Lord's Prayer. Consider also Luther's explanation:

The Sixth Petition: Lead us not into temptation. (What does this mean?) God surely tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or lead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins; and though we are tempted by them, we pray that we may overcome and win the victory.

Reflection

While Jesus commands us to watch and pray, we are making a mistake if we think that by doing this, that, and the other thing, we can overcome ALL our temptations. As God's children we do have a little strength. But since we also have a sinful nature, our victories will always be partial.

Only the Son can set us free from guilt. Only the Spirit can renew our strength each day. Only the Father can give us the ultimate victory when he takes us home.

In the meantime, instead of focusing on the temptation, let's focus on positive things (see Philippians 4:8). And let's not go it alone. Let's find fellow Christians we can talk to and pray with and who can encourage us.

Our Identity in Christ

2 Peter 1:3-7 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence. ⁴Through these he has given us his precious and great promises so that through them you may share in the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that sinful lust causes in the world. ⁵And, for this very reason, after applying every effort, add moral excellence to your faith. To moral excellence, add knowledge. ⁶To knowledge, add self-control. To self-control, add patient endurance. To patient endurance, add godliness. ⁷To godliness, add brotherly affection. And to brotherly affection, add love.

3. What seven qualities does Peter urge us to add to our faith? What do these help us to do?
4. The Greek word for "moral excellence" means "habitually doing what is God's will." How can we work toward making God's will our habit?
5. **2 Peter 1:5b** "To moral excellence, add knowledge." What are ways we can add the knowledge of God's will to habitually doing what his law says?
6. **Peter 1:6a** "To knowledge, add self-control." Compare Galatians 5:19-21 with the world's view of these same actions.

Galatians 5:19-21 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

7. How do we strengthen the new person in us so that we live self-controlled lives? Think of ways we can work to gain self-control (consider Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians).

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

1 Corinthians 6:12 "Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

1 Corinthians 9:27 I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

8. **2 Peter 1:6b** "To self-control, add patient endurance." Describe the many facets of the hope that produces patient endurance in us so that we don't give up on living a self-controlled life.

1 Peter 1:3-8 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

9. **2 Peter 1:6c** "To patient endurance, add godliness." Godliness is the opposite of libertarianism, whose followers in Bible times lived by the motto "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Godliness is living a quiet life as we revere God's holy will and respect authority (both from God and people). Suggest ways we can add godliness to patient endurance so that we become even more determined to live according to God's will.

10. **2 Peter 1:7a** "To godliness, add brotherly affection." Give examples of ways we can show brotherly affection today. (cf. Matthew 25:34-40).

11. **2 Peter 1:7b** "To brotherly affection, add love." Use 1 John 4:7-11 to help define (agape) love. Why is love sometimes harder than brotherly affection? How are we able to keep growing in love?

1 John 4:7-11 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

12. What does God promise if we nurture these seven qualities?

2 Peter 1:8-11 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Final Thought

What would you say to the LGBTQ person who's crying out that there are only two choices: embrace the same-sex attractions he or she feels or live a life of celibacy?

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

NEXT TIME: Meet again in January? Topic?

Prayer