

Living Connections Bible Study



Self Portrait II

Prayer

Read Text: Romans 7:7-25

Ice Breaker:

Does Paul's experience sound all too familiar to your own?
The harder we fight temptation the stronger the temptation becomes! Why?

The story is told about a man who took advantage of the superstitions of the people back during the Dark Ages. He walked from village to village, carrying a black pot and his walking staff. When he arrived in a new village he would find a busy place of commerce and build a fire under his big pot. He would tell the curious onlookers that he was going to make gold, and that they could assist him by bringing water and dirt to go into the pot. Soon the mud in the pot would begin to boil. He would stir the pot with his staff, into the end of which he had inserted a big gold nugget, sealed with a wax plug. The wax would melt and eventually he would stir the nugget to the top as the mud thickened.

Of course the people wanted to know his secret for making gold. When they paid him a certain sum of money he would tell them – *The secret is not to think of monkeys when you stir the mud in the pot.* And of course no one could prove him wrong, because the harder they tried not to think of monkeys the more the thought of monkeys consumed their thoughts.

1. What great promise does God make to us in 1 Corinthians 10:13?

The goal of this lesson is to discover the way to victory over temptation. But first we need to find out God's assessment of our flesh and its vulnerability to sin. Did you realize that in your own strength you have no more power over temptation now that you are saved than you did before you became a Christian?

2. What was Paul's assessment of his fleshly human nature in Romans 7:18?

3. Is it possible to please God by our own human determination and effort? Romans 8:5-8

4. What rebuke did Paul give to the new believers of Galatia who tried to find favor with God through a legalistic approach of following the rules and regulations of the Law? Galatians 3:3

Before we were Christians it was impossible to please God because we only had a fallen sinful nature, which we inherited from Adam. Even the good that we might purpose to do involved selfish motives. But now that you are a Christian you have two natures at work within you, your flesh - also called your old Adamic nature, and a new nature, also called the new man. You were spiritually dead, but now you are spiritually alive through the Holy Spirit who lives within you.

5. What conflict developed within you when you became a Christian? Galatians 5:17

6. What does the Holy Spirit do for you now that you are a Christian?
Isaiah 30:21, 1 Kings 19:11-12, John 16:8, 13

7. What do you think it means to quench and grieve the Holy Spirit?
1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30

8. Contrast the works of the flesh (our old nature) with the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:19-23

9. What is the key to victory over the desires (temptations) of the flesh? Galatians 5:16

10. What happens when we try to take temptation on in our own strength by resolving, *I'm not going to do it! I'm not going to do it!* Romans 7:19-24

11. How does Paul answer the question of Romans 7:24 in verse 25, *O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death* (from my old sinful self)?

The key to victory over temptation is not fighting it in my own strength but changing the focus from the temptation to seeing myself as crucified with Christ and raised with Him to live in newness of life in the power of the Holy Spirit. This involves an act of faith.

12. How does Paul teach us to handle temptation in the following verses?

Romans 6:11

Galatians 2:20

Romans 6:13

13. Instead of a legalistic striving to obey the laws of God, what is my motivation to be?
1 John 5:3; John 14:15

When claiming the promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13 many Christians fail to see the connection to verse 14. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13-14

14. Instead of gritting our teeth and striving to resist temptation in the flesh, what are we to do when faced with temptation according to verse 14?

15. What is idolatry?

20. See how the following verses teach us the same truth when it comes to handling temptation.

John 10:4-5, 27

1 Corinthians 6:18

Genesis 39:11-12

1 Timothy 6:10-11

2 Timothy 2:22

Think About It this week:

When it comes right down to it, we must admit that the reason we sin is because of our love of sin. The flesh does not like to be denied, much less die. The flesh is an expert at self-preservation. It will lie, cheat and steal to have its way. It loves gratification and recognition. The only way to have victory over the flesh is to see how ugly your sin really is in the eyes of God, and to recognize how destructive it is to your own life. Your sinful habits are what nailed Jesus to the cross. The wages of sin is death.

- Let your love for Jesus motivate you to be willing to die to sin.
- Reckon yourself to be dead to sin and alive unto God through identification with Jesus.
- Change the focus from fighting against sin, to living for Jesus. Yield yourself completely to do His will.

***I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,
that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,
which is your reasonable service.
And do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.***

Romans 12:1-2