



Your Conscience & Common Temptations

All In Good Conscience, Part 4

If you have a Bible, the Word of God—and I hope you do—let me invite you to open with me to 1 Corinthians 10. It's good to be together around God's Word.

Along those lines, let me give you a brief heads-up on where things are going over the next couple of weeks. Today we're going to conclude our series on the conscience, then for the next two weeks, we're going to hear pastors from different locations as we walk through God's Word and think together about being the church as God has designed us to be—not distant from one another, but in closeness with each other and all that that involves. I'm really looking forward to the next couple weeks and, Lord willing, the coming months, as we move forward from this historic year in our world. Then, Lord willing, we'll come back all together after our time at different locations and pick up where we leave off today in 1 Corinthians 11, in a really important and oftentimes misunderstood passage on men and women in the church.

With that said, we have a lot of awesome ground to cover today with major implications for our lives in 1 Corinthians 10. In this series on the conscience, we've looked at four of six questions that we need to ask every day in different situations we face and decisions we make if we're going to live with a good clean conscience, which we've seen is critical to experiencing intimacy with God, true success in life and unity in the church. It's also critical for accomplishing mission in the world and living for what matters most in eternity.

We're going to look at the final two questions today that we need to ask if we're going to experience all these things. Let me start by reviewing the first four questions, just so we're all on the same page, as we think about what it means to live with a good clean conscience.

One, **what does the Bible say?** That's the first question we need to ask, knowing we need to align our conscience—our sense of right and wrong—with what God Who created us and knows what is best for us. We need to know what He says in His Word.

Then, when the Bible is not clear on exactly what to do in a certain situation, we need to ask a second question: **what does my conscience say?** Based on God's Word and God's Spirit in my life, what do I sense, as best as I can, is right or wrong or good or best in a specific situation. We know we may come to some different conclusions when we ask that question, even as followers of Jesus who believe the Bible.

A few weeks ago, we saw in 1 Corinthians 8 that we don't just need to think about ourselves. Instead, we need to ask a third question: **how can I best build up other Christians?** There may be something we can do in good conscience, but if it will cause our brother or sister in Christ to stumble, then we don't do it. Instead, we choose to build them up in love.

Then two weeks ago we saw in 1 Corinthians 9 that we need to ask a fourth question: **how can I best lead non-Christians to Jesus?** We saw how God calls us to reorient our consciences and rearrange our lives around how we can best lead people near us and far from us to Jesus.

Now, in order to show you the fifth and sixth questions we need to ask, I want us to read 1 Corinthians 10 and see how incredibly applicable this passage is to every one of our lives, no matter who you are, no matter how young or old you may be, no matter what you're going through in your life right now.

Now I want to warn you, as we read this chapter, you're going to think it's not applicable to your life, because we're pretty far removed from the context in which 1 Corinthians 10 was written—first-century Corinth. We're in 21st century America. I want to show you today how God's Word is timeless. In order to see its timelessness, we have to step back into the shoes of the first people who were reading it. Whenever we're studying God's Word, we've got to make sure to hear it from the perspective of those who were first hearing it, then we can understand the implications it has for our lives today.

Let's set the stage by jumping back into that day. Imagine with me for a moment that you were living in first-century Corinth, a city filled with temples to false gods and dedicated to the worship of all kinds of idols. These temples housed religious ceremonies that were dedicated to the worship of those idols. At the same time, those temples served as social gathering spaces for meetings, banquets and even eating, similar to restaurants today.

So if you were going to eat out—specifically if you were going to eat meat out—then you were likely going to eat at one of those temples because that's where meat was prepared as food. Or if you were going to the marketplace for meat to cook in your home, that meat in the marketplace was almost always prepared in one of those temples. Or, if you were to go to a neighbor's home to eat and they set meat before you, that meat was likely prepared in one of those temples.

Now, you're a Christian in first-century Corinth who knows there's only one true God and all these idols are false gods. Yet anytime you eat meat, it's somehow going to be intertwined in some way with the worship of idols. So what do you do? Do you eat meat in that temple restaurant or not? Do you buy meat from that marketplace? What do you do with the meat that's put in front of you in your unbelieving neighbor's home, knowing they see that food as a form of worship to an idol?

Now, this is when you might think, "Okay, that feels ancient to me. What does this have to do with us?" The answer is everything. Because 2,000 years later, we're just asking different questions, like, "What kind of music do you put on your playlist? Only Christian? Some secular? Where do you draw the line?"

“What kind of movies or TV should you watch—or should you watch it at all?” “What level of alcohol is appropriate to drink?” “What kind of party should or should you not go to?” “What should you expose or not expose your kids to—or yourself—in public school?”

I could keep going with a million examples of big and small decisions that we make every day that the Bible does not give a specific answer to. So what do we do? In 1 Corinthians 8-10, God is teaching us to make these decisions with a good clean conscience, in ways that lead to intimacy with Him and living for what matters most in the world.

In 1 Corinthians 8, we saw that, as a Christian in first-century Corinth, yes, you could eat meat in one of those temple-restaurants, as long as eating there didn't go against your conscience or cause your brother or sister in Christ to go against their conscience. But here was the problem. Some of these Christians in Corinth had taken that a step too far, having gone from just eating at the temple-restaurant, to being involved in religious ceremonies dedicated to idol worship—and they didn't seem to be bothered by that.

So Paul writes these words we're about to read to these Corinthian Christians. We're going to read all of 1 Corinthians 10, where Paul talks about how they were giving in to idol worship, then he addresses what they should do in the marketplace or in somebody's home. So follow along with me, starting in verse one, then I just want to show you how practically helpful and needed these verses are for every single one of us, no matter how young or old you may be or whatever you're walking through in your life. Hear the timeless Word of God:

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.

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.

¹⁴ Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. ¹⁸ Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? ¹⁹ What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or

that an idol is anything? ²⁰ No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. ²² Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

²³ “All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. ²⁴ Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. ²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁶ For “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” ²⁷ If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁸ But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— ²⁹ I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else’s conscience? ³⁰ If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³² Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³ just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

First Corinthians 11:1 says, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” All right, that was a lot. So let me summarize the practical takeaway from what we just read for first-century Christians in Corinth. The Bible is basically saying in 1 Corinthians 8, “Yes, you can eat meat sacrificed to idols in a temple, where it’s basically like eating in a restaurant—as long as it’s not part of a pagan religious ritual. But note: you cannot eat there if you’re causing a fellow Christian to sin. Further, absolutely do not eat at that temple as part of a pagan religious ritual. You’re worshiping demons when you do that, because it’s demons who are behind idols or false gods. So in no circumstance should you do that. Then, when you’re in the marketplace, don’t go asking a million questions about where the meat came from. Just buy the meat and eat it in your home. That’s totally fine. It’s also okay to eat it in somebody’s else home, including a non-Christian, unless someone at that meal points out that this meat was dedicated to an idol and they believe you are worshiping that idol by eating that meat. If that’s the case, don’t eat it.”

What I love about these specific instructions to Christians in first-century Corinth is how they are grounded in what God had said to His people centuries before—way back in the Old Testament. This is part of the timelessness of God’s Word that I want you to see here, because God’s instructions to His people in the first century go all the way back to His instructions to people centuries before that, and that’s what informs God’s instructions to you and me in the 21st century. His instructions are the same at every point.

This is what we read this last week in our Bible reading from Numbers 23:19: “*God is not a man...that he should change his mind.*” So God doesn’t change His mind. God’s Word to His people is unchanging. This means that what God spoke to His people 3,000 years ago and 2,000 years ago is what God is speaking to His people today, which means you can bank your life on this Word. It is unchanging. “*The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God will stand forever*” (Isaiah 40:8).

What else can you read tomorrow morning that gives you that kind of rock in your life? Nothing. Read this Word. Meditate on it. Memorize it. Let it soak in and bank your life on it because it will last forever. So see how what God is saying to His people here in first-century Corinth and to us today is based on what God has been doing among His people throughout history.

This is summarized in verses 11-13, right in the middle of this chapter. Look back there. The Bible says what happened to God's people years ago was an example that was written down for what purpose? For our instruction. Don't you love this? God made sure that what happened when the people of Israel were fleeing Egypt was written down for our help today, so that we might be warned to take heed lest we fall in the same ways they did. God made sure that what happened to them was written down because you and I are facing the exact same temptations they gave in to back then. This is so important.

We have this tendency to think we're advanced in so many different ways compared to people 3,000 years ago on the outskirts of Egypt or 2,000 years ago in Corinth. But listen to verse 13: "*No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.*" In other words, the questions or decisions may be different today, but the temptations are the same. They're common to all people throughout all history. We need to learn about how they fell so we can take heed, lest we do the same thing. We need to be instructed by them.

So what are these temptations that are common to all people throughout history? What are the temptations they were facing 3,000 and 2,000 years ago that you and I will face this week? I want to show you in this passage six common temptations that are going to lead to the final two questions we need to ask if we're going to live with a good clean conscience. We're going to hit these temptations pretty quickly. Each one of them could be a sermon, or even a series, in and of themselves. But I want you to see them all together, realizing that God is saying in His Word right now that these are temptations that are common. No matter how young or old you are, or what you're going through, you will face these temptations this week.

Temptation #1 – We are all tempted to celebrate salvation from God without giving devotion to God.

First, we are tempted to celebrate salvation given to us from God without giving devotion of our lives to Him. This is the very beginning of 1 Corinthians 10. It's what we've been reading about in our Bible Reading as a church family in Exodus, Leviticus and now Numbers.

Verse one says we are to remember that God's people were all under the cloud, led by God in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. They also passed through the sea. They were delivered out of Egypt and delivered from the Egyptian army that was about to overtake them. God split the Red Sea in half for them to safely cross. They also ate spiritual food that God provided from heaven and drank spiritual drink when God provided water from the rocks in the desert. Verse four goes on to talk about how that rock

was Christ. Basically, they were seeing a picture of God's provision that would ultimately be fulfilled in the fountain that flows from Jesus. The whole picture is that they had seen and experienced such grace from God. Bread from heaven. Water from rocks. A pillar of cloud leading them every day. God was providing for them all along the way.

Yet, after all that grace, including escape from slavery in Egypt, they did not trust God or obey God. Instead, after all of that, they rebelled against God and were overthrown. They were scattered to die in the wilderness instead of devoting themselves to God.

God is saying to these Corinthian Christians, "Do you realize that you're tempted to do the same thing today? You come to the Lord's Table to feast on God's grace to you in Jesus, then turn around and worship idols. You even use the Lord's Supper as a cover-up for your idolatry?" They were thinking, "If I go to church and take the Lord's Supper, then I'm good. It doesn't matter what I do during the week." But God says, "It does matter. Don't do it. Don't disconnect salvation from devotion to Me."

Think about how we're tempted to do the exact same thing today. Do you see how this is the brand of Christianity that so many people have bought in 21st century America? Go to church or watch online. Go through religious motions. Pray a prayer, receive God's forgiveness, then go on living however you want. God says, "That's not Christianity. That's idolatry." That's worship of the world under the guise of worshipping God. Don't be fooled. That kind of life leads to ruin in this world. You'll waste your life that way.

Don't disconnect your God-given salvation from your devotion to God. These go together. You have been saved—why? To know, love, worship, walk with and obey God, because life is found in utter and complete and total devotion to God. Don't disconnect these two. We will all be tempted to celebrate salvation from God and disconnect it from devotion to God when we wake up in the morning tomorrow. That's one temptation that's common to all of us.

Temptation #2 – We are all tempted to turn what is good into a god.

We see this in 1 Corinthians 10:6-7: "*Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were.*" Now, the challenge is that when we hear the word "idolatry," we think statues and idols—what people back then or in other parts of the world today bow down to. We don't do that. We don't have idols in our homes that we pray to or bow down to.

Now follow this with me. Here in 1 Corinthians 10, the Bible is talking about how food is a good gift from God that can be used for the glory of God or it can be used for the worship of false gods. Good gifts can be used for the worship of false gods. This is so significant. Please listen closely here. When we think about sin, we think about bad things, right? Things like lying, stealing, cheating, whatever it might be. That's what we consider sin—and yes, those things are sin.

Has it ever occurred to you that sin is not just doing bad things. Sin also includes taking that which is good and turning it into a god. This is vintage Romans 1. We're all tempted to worship created things rather than the Creator. When you realize this, you start to realize that so many good things can become a god or an idol in your life. You can take good things like love, sex, material possessions, work, career, sports, fitness, family, achievements in work or school, getting accepted into a school—all of these things are good. But idolatry takes place when our lives become consumed with them, when we become centered around them, thinking, "This is where fulfillment, joy, security, identity or safety are found." Idolatry takes place when we are consumed with looking a certain way, being with a certain person, having a certain status, achieving a certain goal of pursuing these things more pursuing God, to the point where we begin to desire those things more than we desire God. In other words, to the point where we begin worshipping these things more than we worship God.

What good things in your life are you tempted to turn into gods? What good things in your life are you tempted to love and desire more than God? Ask that question, and examine the evidence in your life: where you spend your time and energy, where your emotions are most caught up, where your mind is most focused. Is God the center or are good things in the center of your life? We're all tempted this way and we need to realize it. We need to realize this when what we think about becomes idols. Our mind immediately begins to think about bad things, when the reality is that's almost never the case. The reason things become idols in our lives is usually because they're good things. The more good they are—in other words, the greater they are—the more likely we are to begin to look to them, love them, desire them, work for them or worship them instead of God.

We desperately need to realize that good gifts make lousy gods. Created things and people were never intended to provide the meaning and identity, the ultimate satisfaction or unending joy that our Creator alone can provide. Mark it down: idols always disappoint. Anything or anyone that you ultimately hope in or look to in this world will at some point let you down, because that thing or that person is not designed to carry that weight. Only God can carry that weight. Idols always disappoint.

Idols also ultimately destroy. If you look to good things instead of the God Who gives them for hope and joy and meaning, you will find yourself empty in the end. This is so important for us to be aware of. We are all tempted to turn what is good into a god, in ways that lead to all kinds of other sins.

Temptation #3 – We are all tempted to choose sexual immorality over sexual purity.

This temptation is common to all of us is found in 1 Corinthians 10:7-8: "...as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.'" That's quoting from Exodus 32:6 when idolatry led God's people into sexual immorality. The word 'play' right there is specifically talking about sexual

immorality. That's why the very next verse in 1 Corinthians 10 says, *"We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day."*

You can read more about this in Exodus 32, but here's the clear temptation that's common to all of us. We are all tempted to choose sexual immorality over sexual purity. We talked about this in depth in 1 Corinthians 6 and 7, how sexual immorality is any and all sexual activity outside of marriage between one man and one woman. It is common to each one of us to be tempted to choose sexual immorality over God's design for sexual purity.

We had a whole series on this topic so there's a whole list of resources on our website at <https://mcleanbible.org/sexuality/> where you can find help amidst all kinds of temptations to sexual immorality.

Here in this text, God is reminding us that sexual immorality and idolatry go together. We saw this in our Bible Reading this morning. It's like God is shouting to us today. In Numbers 25 we see how sexual immorality is born in a heart that goes aside from the worship of God. So guard your heart, mind and desires at all times, knowing we are all tempted to sexual immorality instead of sexual purity.

Temptation #4 – We are all tempted to test God instead of trusting God.

Then next, in 1 Corinthians 10:9, the Bible says, *"We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents."* There's a fourth temptation, to use that exact language: We are all tempted to test God instead of trusting God. This past week in our reading plan, we read in Numbers 21 that God's people became impatient with Him and began questioning His provision for them. That's what we do when things are not going the way we think they should or hope they would, when we don't understand why this or that is happening.

I'm really thankful for how so many of you have continually asked Heather and me about our adoption process that was put on pause last year. Three days before we were about to get on a plane to go pick up our newly adopted son (three years old at the time), we got a call saying his country was shutting down in light of an unknown virus there. Now, 16 months later, we're still waiting to pick up him up and bring him into our family. It's been really good to read Numbers and remember, "Don't lose trust in God. Don't doubt God's power. Don't doubt God's love. Don't doubt His wisdom, provision and timing." In so many ways and at so many points in each of our lives, we are tempted to test God instead of trusting God.

Temptation #5 – We are all tempted to grumble against God instead of being grateful to God.

Related to that, verse ten says we must not *"...grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer,"* likely a reference to Korah's rebellion that we read about in Numbers 16, when God's people grumbled against Him and the leaders God had given them. So temptation number five that's

common to us is that we are all tempted to grumble against God instead of being grateful to God. How tempting is it to complain to God about what we don't have, instead of being grateful to God for what we do have?

I was on a phone call last week with someone and I asked how they were doing. They said, "Better than I deserve." I thought, "How true is that." Then I was on a date earlier last week with Heather. We were talking about all the dumb things I did when we first met in high school,. Which I will not list. I will tell you one of them that I'm so ashamed to say. I broke up with Heather on the day her grandmother died. Is that not horrible? What was I thinking? So in case there was any doubt, I don't deserve to be married. Every time you say, "How are you doing, David?" I'm going to say, "Better than I deserve" and you're going to think, "You're right. Better than you deserve."

Then one of my sons and I were sharing the gospel with a couple of Uber drivers early last week. I thought, "Who am I? I don't deserve to have eternal life and joy in Jesus." Then another time, I was meeting with people from church, and another time with some friends who were in town, and I was just sitting there thinking, "I deserve to be in hell right now. Here am I, enjoying friends in Christ and talking together about how to get the greatest news in the world to more people in the world. I don't deserve this." Yet with all this grace that God has given me, I am—and we all are—tempted to grumble at so many different points, instead of being grateful at all times (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

After this reminder to be grateful, 1 Corinthians 10 starts talking about the Lord's Supper. Verse 16 says, "*The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?*" This word 'participation' in the original language of the New Testament is *koinonia*. It's the most common word in the New Testament for community. That's what the Lord's Supper is about. There's a reason it's called "communion," because it represents community with God through the body and blood of Jesus. When Christians eat this bread and drink from this cup, in a very real way we're feasting on the grace of God and enjoying communion with Him that's made possible by what Jesus did on the cross.

If you're not a follower of Jesus right now, I invite you to listen really closely here. The Bible teaches that we are all created by God, yet we've all sinned against God. All of us have turned aside from God and His ways to ourselves and our own ways. Our sin separates us from communion with God. If we die in this state of separation from communion with God, we will spend eternity separated from communion with Him, eternally experiencing the judgment due our sin.

But the good news of the Bible is that God loves us and has come to us. He has made a way for that communion to be restored. He has come to us in the person of Jesus, Who lived a life of no sin. Then even though He had no sin to die for, He chose to die—He gave His body and shed His blood on a cross—so that anyone who trusts in Him will be forgiven of all their sins and restored to communion with Him

forever and ever. Now, I invite you to put your trust in Jesus and experience communion with God for all of eternity. It's the most important decision you'll ever make in your life. You can make it today.

Temptation #6 – We are all tempted to exchange communion with God for compromise with the world.

When you do—and for all who have—when you experience this communion with God, and you celebrate that in taking the Lord's Supper, remember this sixth temptation that is common to all of us. We are all tempted to exchange this communion with God for compromise with the world. In other words, when believers celebrate the Lord's Supper as we gather with the church, we are then tempted to leave here, go out and do what they were doing in Corinth—worshipping idols and false gods in the world. They were doing it by participating in religious feasts. You and I are tempted to do it in all the ways we've talked about.

Think about it this way. We are celebrating communion with God. It makes no sense for us to then leave this place and go running out into the world, running after money like everybody else does. It makes no sense because we have communion with God, Who owns everything. What does this world have that we need? We shouldn't celebrate communion with God in worship, then run out into the world, running after positions, possessions, sex, success, looking for meaning, joy, satisfaction, identity and security in those things. We have all of those things in God, more than everything in this world offers put together.

Don't exchange communion with God for compromise with the world. Don't do it even though you'll be tempted to do it all this coming week. I'll be tempted to do it all week long. Don't do it. Walk every day in communion with God. Live out of the overflow of communion with God. Don't compromise with this world.

This then leads to how the whole chapter ends with a summary of all we've seen about a life marked by a good clean conscience—focused not just on ourselves, but on others. Verse 24 says, *"Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor."* Verses 32-33 say, *"Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God..."*—that's pretty much everybody— *"...just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved."* So live for the good of other believers, and live for the good of unbelievers.

I love this first verse of 1 Corinthians 11 that summarizes it all: *"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."* Live like Jesus. I love how attainable this is. The Bible is saying here that you and I, all of us, can experience the life of Jesus in us on a daily basis. It is possible for you this week, all week long, to experience the life of Jesus in you, for each of us to show each other what this looks like. From the very first week in this series on conscience, we saw how Jesus is the only way to a clean conscience and the only way to living with a good conscience.

So we ask these questions on a daily basis in our lives:

- One, what does the Bible say?
- Two, what does my conscience say?
- Three, how can I best build up other Christians?
- Four, how can I best lead non-Christians to Jesus?

And now, 1 Corinthians 10 has given us two final questions we need to ask, particularly in light of the common temptations we face.

Question #5 – How can I best guard against sin?

In every decision we make, in every question we face, how can we best guard against sin? In 1 Corinthians 10, God is saying to us right now, today, as His church, “Realize that as you make decisions, you will be tempted all this week in so many ways—specifically these ways—just like My people have been tempted throughout history.”

You are not stronger or wiser than any of them—none of you are. You and I can fall in the exact same ways. So in our decision making, let us be on guard. That’s what God is saying to us. The Christians in Corinth had gone from eating in a temple like a restaurant to participating in a religious ritual to an idol because they were not on guard. God said to them then what He’s saying to you right where you’re sitting now, “Be on guard in your music or movie choices, in your professional life, social life, family life. In all the moments you spend and the decisions you make—as a child, a teenager, a young adult, a single adult, a married adult, a senior adult—whoever you are, whatever you’re doing, ask, “What is the best way to guard against sin?”

It says in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that as we fight and guard against sin—these are my three favorite words in the whole chapter—God is faithful. *“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.”* Is that not good news? There is no temptation you will face this week that you cannot overcome, because there is no temptation you will face this week alone. God is faithful. The God of the universe is with you. He will strengthen you. He will help you, as you keep your eyes on Him, as you trust in Him, as you live for Him.

This leads right to the last question we need to ask when making decisions or facing situations and temptations. It comes straight from 1 Corinthians 10:31: *“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”* It could not be any clearer.

Question #6 – How can I most glorify God?

What can each of us think and say and desire that will bring the most glory to God in every situation? If we ask that question on a moment-by-moment basis, by the power of Jesus in us, we are on

our way to a good clean conscience and all the fruit that flows from that: intimacy with God, true success in life, unity as a church, mission in the world, living together for what matters most this week and what matters most for the next ten trillion years. Let's live with that kind of conscience.

Will you bow your heads with me? I want to lead us to pray for God's help amidst all these common temptations. Before I do that though, I would be remiss if I didn't ask every single person within the sound of my voice, "Fundamentally, do you have communion with God through faith in Jesus? Have you put your faith in Jesus to forgive you of your sin, to restore you to relationship with God?"

If your answer to that question is not a resounding yes in your heart, then I invite you right now, right where you're sitting, to pray this God: "I know that I have sinned against You, God, and that I am separated from You by my sin. But today I believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead so that I can be forgiven. God, please forgive me. Please restore me to communion with You. I trust You to lead my life as Lord of my life." The Bible says if you call on God to save you in this way, He will by faith.

When you do, and for all who have, this is our prayer.

God, help us, based on Your faithfulness to us, to walk faithfully with You. God, we want to experience all that communion with You involves. We want to dedicate ourselves completely to You. We don't want to turn anything, any of Your good gifts, into gods. They're all a reflection of You and Your greatness as the Giver of all good gifts. Help us worship You alone, trust in You alone, look to You above all, desire You above all. Help us to choose sexual purity over sexual immorality.

Every day this week, the next week and the next, help us trust You and not grumble against You or test You. Help us be grateful for all the grace You've poured out in our lives. Help us take heed, learn from those who have gone before us and stand this week based on Your strength and Your life in us, Lord Jesus. May it be true of us that everything we do—whether we're eating breakfast or drinking during a break during work or playing in this way or that way—whatever we do, help us to do it all to Your glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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All Scriptures are quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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