

Bethany Bible Church; AM Bible Study; May 30, 2018  
The Holy Spirit—Our Helper; Lesson 30; His Helping

# THE SPIRIT'S HELP IN TIMES OF TEMPTATION

Theme: We experience the help of the Holy Spirit in times of temptation both by His indwelling presence and by His enabling power.

Here's a little something you may not know—temptation to sin is a reality in the Christian life. ("Stop the Presses", right?)

In spite of that all-too-familiar fact, many in the history of the church have nevertheless insisted that they can mature to such a point in their personal devotion and piety that they no longer experience any temptations to sin. (I heard once that there was someone who asked Billy Graham, "What would you say to someone who insists that he is not a sinner?" Dr. Graham said, "I'd ask if I could talk to his wife.") But while it's certainly true that as we grow and mature in our walk with Christ we surrender less to temptation than we used to, we will still face temptations to sin until the day we are glorified in the Lord's presence.

But we have a wonderful Advocate who helps us in those times of temptation. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:13—in a verse that many of us have learned to memorize early in our Christian lives;

*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).<sup>1</sup>*

And so, in this lesson, we continue our consideration of the specific "helps" that the Holy Spirit gives the individual believer by taking up the subject of how the Spirit helps us in those times of temptation. Two helpful passages are found in 1 Corinthians 6 and Romans 8.

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How do we experience the Holy Spirit's help? First we turn to 1 Corinthians 6 to see that ...

## **I. HE HELPS US BY THE FACT THAT HE INDWELLS US.**

A. Paul wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians to the believers in the ancient city of Corinth who were very prone to patterning themselves after the immoral practices of surrounding pagan culture. One area in which they frequently fell into temptation was in their sexuality. Paul wrote to them and urged them,

*Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18).*

And even though these believers were often tempted to give-in to the immoral pressures around them, Paul sought to exhort them by reminding them of Who it was that was indwelling them. He went on in that passage to tell them,

*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's (vv. 19-20).*

A reverent realization that they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit—and that they were nothing less than the dwelling place of God Himself—would help them to “flee sexual immorality”. It would help us also to remember the fact of the Spirit's indwelling—and not only with that specific area of temptation, but with all areas of temptation.

- B. In the original language of that passage in 1 Corinthians 6, Paul spoke of the individual believer's body—not of just the believer's spirit alone, but of specifically the body—as the “temple” of the Holy Spirit, who was from God and who was already in them. The word that Paul used for ‘temple’—*naos*—referred not to the temple area in general, but specifically to the inner portion of the temple that included the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. These were the most sacred places in God's temple in the Old Covenant. They were where God identified His presence to His people. In other words, the believer's body is declared in God's word to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit from God in the deepest possible sense. How unspeakably inappropriate that sin should be made an ongoing characteristic of the dwelling place of God! In a similar manner, Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:16,

*And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (2 Corinthians 3:16).*

It's important to understand that we do not lose our salvation when, as believers, we stumble and fall in to occasions of sin. Nor does the Holy Spirit cease to make us His dwelling place when that happens. His indwelling is an act of unmerited grace through Christ; and He did not even cease to indwell the disobedient Corinthian Christians. But a grateful and humble realization that we are the Holy Spirit's permanent ‘Holy Place’ on earth, and that we are now the present ‘Holy of Holies’ in which He identifies His presence and dwells during this New Covenant era—and along with that realization, also our love to Him for so graciously and intimately dwelling in us—should make us want to avoid grieving the Holy Spirit by dragging any unholiness into His holy habitation!

*For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 4:8).*

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So; that's one way that the Holy Spirit helps us in our times of temptation. He calls to our minds the fact that we are His holy dwelling place. That has to do with the renewing of our

minds and changes our thinking. But a second way He helps us is in actual practice. As Romans 8 shows us ...

## II. HE HELPS US BY THE WAYS HE EMPOWERS US.

- A. As we noted in our last study ('The Helper of The Believer's Walk'), the weakness of our flesh is such that we cannot in any way please God by the power of the flesh. As Paul wrote in Romans 8:8, "So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God." But as Paul goes on in that passage in Romans 8 to remind us,

*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness (Romans 8:7-10).*

This passage is not speaking mainly of physical death or of the resurrection of our physical bodies after death (although that is certainly in view). Rather, it speaks metaphorically of our current inability—the 'deadness' of our body—to please God in the power of the flesh. In this passage, Paul speaks in the present tenses of present states of being—"the body *is* dead because of sin . . . the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness". Paul means, then, for this to convey that the Holy Spirit is our present Helper in enabling us to live a life that pleases God—a life that it would be otherwise impossible for us to live because of the weakness of our flesh. Paul went on to explain;

*But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you (v. 11).*

Because of the Spirit's presence in us, He serves as a living, abiding, empowering resource—constantly in us—that gives us the the unlimited power of Jesus Himself to live the godly lives that our Father wants us to live.

- B. There is literally, therefore, no temptation that God will ever allow to enter into our experience that is greater than what the enabling and indwelling Holy Spirit is able to help us resist—if we will but turn to Him in times of temptation and trust Him. We should, of course, never deliberately expose ourselves to temptation in order to test Him; because that would be foolish and presumptuous. (That's what the whole surrounding context of the verse we began with—1 Corinthians 10:13—was all about!) But when it comes to the temptations that our loving Father wisely and watchfully allows to come into our experience to test us, He has placed in us an indwelling Helper that is greater than any power on earth—so that we will learn not to trust in ourselves but in Him. As Paul puts it in Ephesians 1; the Holy Spirit sent from the Father is

*the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all*

*things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:19-23).*

It's because of the Holy Spirit's indwelling and enabling ministry that Paul could say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13); and could say to us, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20). He is why the apostle John could say with respect to the 'spirit of antichrist' that is already at work in the world, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

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Dear brothers and sisters; we all experience temptation, and we will until the day we are glorified with the Lord Jesus. But those temptations to sin never have to defeat us. We have a divine Helper who abides in us and empowers us to walk as our Father calls us to walk and is able to effect real life transformation in us in Christ. The all-powerful Holy Spirit never leaves us, and is always ready to give aid when we ask.

May we grow increasingly to rely on the Holy Spirit for His unfailing help in times of temptation.

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<sup>1</sup>All Scripture readings are taken from *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.