

Series – Be Wise (13 of 22)

Date/s – 1 September 2019

Topic – Starting Right, Finishing Strong (1 Corinthians 10:1-13)

Speaker/s – Elder Dr Andrew Goh

### Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[www.thesource4ym.com/games/](http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/)

[www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html) < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

### Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like “Overcome”, “How Could I Live”, “How Great You Are” or “Jesus I Come”.

### Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Reflect on God’s goodness and faithfulness through the generations;
2. Learn from history and choose to live lives that please God; and
3. Depend on God’s grace and mercy.

### Word [45 min]

Elder Dr Andrew Goh started his sermon by sharing an example of the people of Aneyoshi who lived along the coastline of Japan. They were warned through an ancient stone tablet not to build beyond a certain point – the people of Aneyoshi heeded the advice and were kept safe when a tsunami struck in 2011.

(Reference: Shawn Thomas)

Through this passage in 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Paul was warning the Israelites to learn from their history, or they would repeat the same mistakes. Paul’s warning also comes with a Promise.

#### Sample “Anchor” Verses

1. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12) – We cannot place our confidence in our own flesh that we will not fall. We need to draw close to Him, and in so doing, He will draw close to us.
2. Be sure your sin will find you out. (Numbers 32:23) – Elder Andrew shared about King David committing a sin and trying to hide it. However, God knows everything we have done – the good and the bad.
3. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that **causes someone else to stumble**. (Romans 14:21) – Elder Andrew also shared from 1 Corinthians 10:31-33 and Romans 14:21. Our freedom should not become a point of captivity for someone else.

#### Four Spiritual Advantages enjoyed by the Israelites

1. “were...under the cloud, and all passed through the sea” (v. 1)
2. “were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (v. 2)
3. “ate the same spiritual food” (v. 3)
4. “drank of a spiritual rock” (v. 4)

Verdict: “... God was not well-pleased ...” *These spiritual privileges did not guarantee subsequent blessings and continued spiritual victory for the Israelites.*

In verses 6-10, Paul gives four admonitions, given so that Corinthian Christians “should not lust after evil things, as they (the ancient Israelites) also lusted” (v. 6).

Paul counsels them:

- Not to “be idolaters, as some of them were” (v. 7)
- Not to “commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed” (v. 8)
- Not to “test the Lord, as some of them tested” (v. 9)
- Not to “grumble, as some of them also grumbled” (v. 10)

(Ref: Richard Niell Donovan, “Sermon Writer”)

Elder Andrew also shared four truths from verse 13.

Truth 1 - Life comes with testing. No person is exempted. We will face greater opposition when we desire to grow in godliness. (2 Timothy 3:12 and 17)

Truth 2 - Temptations are (actually) good for you. As silver is refined 7 times (Psalm 12:6), so you are being processed towards being “perfected” as your Father is perfect.

Truth 3 – “God is faithful...” He is always there, hearing every prayer. We cannot do it on our own. We rely on God’s dependability.

Truth 4 - “He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability...” God always limits the temptation to what we can handle.

This promise is true because of the adjunct: “He will provide a way of escape...” God always provides a way out of temptation “that you may be able to endure it.” Elder Andrew shared a quote from Corrie Ten Boom – “You may never know that Jesus is all you need, until Jesus is all you have.”

God gives us mercy and grace in time of need – “We are vulnerable to the temptation to sin, but praise God that, through Christ, we can *“draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need”* (Hebrews 4:15)”. (Ref: Isaac Walsh, Dulin’s Grove Church)

### **Summary**

The Christians in Corinth were warned to learn from the history of the ancient Israelites. Though they enjoyed spiritual advantages, they continued to do things that were displeasing in God’s eyes. Paul also gave the Christians in Corinth four admonitions from the examples of the ancient Israelites to learn from. Elder Andrew shared four truths and Paul’s promise to the Christians in Corinth in verse 13.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. **Read the passage (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). What is one lesson you learn from the ancient Israelites? What are some reasons people miss out gleaning from history or the experiences of others? OR Share a time when you did not heed a warning / learn from history. What did you learn from that experience?**  
[15 min]

### **Leader’s Notes:**

*Cell leaders who have new believers / visitors in their cells may wish to give a brief summary of the Exodus journey the Israelites had (focused on the verses Paul wrote) and also how they ended up wandering around the wilderness for 40 years due to their lack of faith. The following video links (a total of 13 minutes) give a good account of the Book of Exodus and can be sent to members in advance to watch:*

Exodus 1-18: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jH\\_aojNJM3E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jH_aojNJM3E)

Exodus 19-40: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNpTha80yyE>

*This is a recap and relate question. This question aims to get members to share about the reasons why people may not heed warnings e.g. they do not find it relevant to them, they feel that they will not make such mistakes. Leaders can also ask members to consider the reasons why the ancient Israelites continued to sin against God and worship idols though they saw His miracles in the desert e.g. their heart attitudes towards God, and also ask members to relate it to their own experiences. Despite the spiritual advantages the Israelites had coming out of Egypt, they did not guarantee that they would reach the Promised Land. Disobedience caused people to forfeit the promise and die in the wilderness. The four admonitions by Paul point out the sins committed by the Israelites as a warning for the Corinthian church. Are they still relevant today?*

*Leaders can choose to use the 2<sup>nd</sup> question to ask members about an experience where they heeded or did not heed / learn from history or the mistakes of others, and what they learnt in the process. Verse 13 close off the passage with a promise that history need not repeat itself. Focusing on God's promise and relying on His strength are the only way to live a victorious life!*

2. **Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. Elder Andrew shared on four truths from this single verse, pointing out that this verse ends with a promise about God's faithfulness. Share your thoughts about this verse with your cell, especially on how God's truth can help you overcome temptations. [15 min]**

**Leader's Notes:** *This is a reflect question. Leaders can choose to let members list the various kinds of temptations we will face and / or share how God provided the way of escape for them in their own situation. Paul shared the specific ones of sexual immorality (verse 8) and grumbling (verse 10), but verse 13 applies more widely. Leaders can also get members to share what were their first thoughts, or questions they had when reading this verse – what does it say about God, and man? Has this verse encouraged them in difficult situations? How are we to respond when we face trials and temptations in the future? Leaders can guide members through each truth shared by Elder Andrew to round off the sharing, concluding that God will provide conquering grace in the form of a way out. The way of escape from temptations is ultimately dependence on Him, other than being spiritually disciplined.*

- a. *Life comes with testing – facing trials and temptations is not something unusual and is to be expected. Believers do not have to doubt their standing with God when faced with temptations.*
- b. *Temptations are (actually) good for us – temptations are not of God, but God can bring about growth and character development when we are obedient to Him and are refined through these trials and temptations.*
- c. *God is faithful – We can depend on God. This is something we can learn from history as encapsulated in His Word. God's faithfulness is ultimately reflected in what Jesus Christ did on the Cross.*
- d. *Not tempted beyond what we can bear – the trials are controlled pressures and God will not allow us to be tempted above our strength. We must rely on God!*

*Some articles on this verse:*

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-to-endure-common-to-man-temptations>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-sovereignty-of-god-and-the-sin-of-the-believer>

<https://www.raystedman.org/daily-devotions/1-corinthians/no-temptation>

3. **God gives us His mercy and grace in times of need. Share an area that you would like to receive prayer for.** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A response question. Cell leaders can choose to get the members to break into smaller groups to specify an area that they need God's mercy and grace in before they commit with each other in prayer. Cell leaders may also wish to get members to share in the smaller groups a verse that has encouraged them in their walk in such times of need. The group can meditate on these verses during the week. Encourage members to share their insights and any added spiritual promptings throughout the week.

### Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

Every RiverLifer will depend on God's grace and mercy, learn from history and choose to live lives that pleases God.

### Announcements

1. **Water Baptism Class Sat, 28 Sep | 9am-3pm | Faith Chapel**

Register for this class at the Information Counter by Sun, 22 Sep. For enquiries, please contact Karen Koh at 6511 4139 or email her at [karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg). Our next baptism service will be on Sun, 17 Nov

**Church Vision:**

"A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations."

**Mission:**

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.