

Lesson 59

TEXT Proverbs 16:32; Luke 21:34-36 (Spirit); Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (Time); 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 (Desires); James 1:26; 3:2 (Tongue)

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that true temperance is having self-control over our spirit, our life, our appetites, and our tongue, that we might keep in balance all aspects of our daily living.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. — 1 Corinthians 10:31

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. — 1 Corinthians 9:25

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **Tempers Flared**
**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Temperance**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The prime meaning of *temperance* is “self-control,” not being limited, as some think, to abstinence from liquor. Self-control will often include self-denial. Many times there are choices a Christian makes for the sake of others; things, associations, and relationships he will give up rather than be the possible cause of a brother’s stumbling. There are legitimate things or activities that the Christian who is wholeheartedly out and out for God will lay aside because they are “weights” that would hinder his own spiritual progress. To be temperate requires the Christian to recognize his need and to purpose, with God’s grace, to follow through and achieve that goal. In Luke 21:34, the word *overcharged* means literally, “to be

made heavy,” as is generally the case with those who eat or drink too much. Jesus was warning His hearers to take heed that they not be rendered ineffective by an improper use of lawful things. They were not to let the mundane things of this life crowd in to the point that they would neglect to attend to their spiritual trust.

In James 1:26, the phrase, “bridleth not his tongue,” refers to one who does not speak according to the Word of God. Whatever pretenses he makes to religion, he only shows by his lack of spiritual knowledge that his religion is false, empty of solid truth, no profit to others, nor good for himself. Such a person should bridle his tongue.

YOUR OPENER

Temperance

TEXT: Proverbs 16:32; Luke 21:34-36 (Spirit); Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (Time); 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 (Desires); James 1:26; 3:2 (Tongue)

KEY VERSE: And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. — 1 Corinthians 9:25

RESPONSES

1. Allow time for your students to discuss their answers. The point should be made that if they effectively rule or control their spirit, they will be exercising self-control. This will include being temperate in how they react to people and circumstances that come their way. Ask your students to give some hypothetical examples of situations that might come up which would test their temperance in this aspect.

2. Obtain definitions from your students. They should bring out these meanings:
Overcharged — to load too heavily, burden
Surfeiting — overindulgence, excess
Drunkenness — being intoxicated
In view of these definitions, discuss the meaning of the verse. Bring out that this is not giving license to do in moderation things that are sinful.

3. Allow time for students to cite specific examples, and discuss how each can be harmful to the body. If insufficient responses are given, some examples might be: recreational activities, choice of reading material and amount of time spent at it, bodily exercise to extreme, job involvement, school activities. Overdoing in any of these areas could wear you down physically.

Adam Clarke defines *temperance* as, “the proper and limited use of all earthly enjoyments, keeping every sense under proper restraint.” In reading 2 Peter 1:5-7, we find that this is another aspect of Christian character that God expects us to add to our spiritual life.

1. Proverbs 16:32 indicates that one needs to rule his spirit. Explain how you think this verse relates to temperance.

2. Looking at Luke 21:34, and using a dictionary, briefly define the following:

- Overcharged
- Surfeiting
- Drunkenness

3. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19,20. Because of lack of temperance or lack of moderation, there are many things that could be done to defile the temple of God. For example, one may eat too much, or too little. Give other examples showing how the temple of God can be abused by extremes.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Temperance for Christians involves moderation, not in sinful habits or wrongdoing, but in things that are lawful. Suggest how temperance could be exercised in the following areas:

Use of time

Control of appetites

Use of money

5. Temperance, or self-control, is discipline. Explain what you think Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 9:27.

6. How do you “bridle” your tongue (James 3:2)? Controlling the tongue is more than eliminating the obvious sins of the tongue, such as lying or swearing. In what ways should a Christian be watchful or exercise control over his tongue? See Proverbs 10:19.

7. Moderation in all aspects of our daily living will be possible if we can answer these questions in the affirmative. Pose a hypothetical question or situation that might confront one in your peer group, and make an application using the following questions.

Will it glorify God? 1 Corinthians 10:31,32

Can it be done for the Lord? Colossians 3:23,24

Can it be done in Jesus’ name? Colossians 3:17

How will it appear to others? 1 Thessalonians 5:22

Would it hinder another Christian? Romans 14:21

Does it involve the wrong company? 2 Corinthians 6:14,15

Does it compromise my testimony? 1 Corinthians 6:12

Is this God’s will for me? James 4:15,17

Am I willing to face it in the Judgment? 2 Corinthians 5:10

4. Discuss the three points with your class. Have your students evaluate each one as to the possible consequences of a lack of temperance.

5. Your students should conclude that when Paul speaks of bringing his body into subjection, he is speaking of exercising temperance or self-control. What is the end result of not exercising this control? Help the group see how being in-temperate could lead to loss of salvation.

6. Allow several minutes for your students’ responses. In your discussion, touch on the importance of refraining from talking too much (Proverbs 10:19), talebearing (Proverbs 11:13), gossiping (Proverbs 16:28), foolish jesting (Ephesians 5:4). As a wrap-up to this question, direct your students to see that speech is a reflection of the inward man. See Luke 6:45.

7. These questions do not require specific answers, but should be used to sum up all the aspects of temperance covered in our lesson. Ask one or two of your students to share their examples. Refer back to Luke 21:34, “Take heed to yourselves, lest . . . that day come upon you un-awares.” Conclude your study of this subject by bringing out the reasons why we must be temperate: the necessity of being prepared for the Lord’s coming, and our Christian witness to the world. Make sure the students understand the relationship between the lack of temperance in any area and the lack of spiritual growth.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What should you do when you discover you've overreacted in a situation?

What can we do to help ourselves not to overreact?

What are some aspects of our daily living over which we should exercise self-control?

Are the standards of self-discipline the same for everyone? What are some of the guidelines we can use to direct our behavior? See question 7 in SEARCH.

The two boys in our ANSWER story had difficulty in controlling their tempers and their tongues. How might they have reacted in the same situation while showing self-control?

Do you think of overeating as not important when considering temperance? Why or why not?

If something is okay to do—some pastime or hobby—why shouldn't you do it as much as you would like?

What relationship is there between temperance and priorities?

What relationship is there between temperance and spiritual growth?

THINGS TO DO

Bring a bag of potato chips, cookies, etc. Define temperance by explaining it is like having control of how many chips, cookies, etc., you eat.

Have a skit showing a person going through a frustrating experience and losing his temper; for example, while looking for his keys when in a hurry to run out the door, he could turn the house upside down in disgust.

Bring a balance or scales to class. Show how even good things can overbalance the scales in one direction or another.

Read James 3:5,6 aloud to your class. Then strike a small match and light a large piece of paper to help you illustrate the damage vain talk and evil speaking can do. (Take care you don't catch anything else on fire!)

Answers for ANSWER

How Will You React?

Temperance is self-control. Each of the pictures below presents a situation where your self-control will be on trial. In the empty edge on the left of each box, write a reaction which shows a lack of control. On the right edge, write in a reaction which shows self-control.

Bad grade at



School

Ignored by a



Friend

Early curfew by



Parents

Planned picnic but



Stormy Weather

Caught jaywalking by



Police

Pestered by your



Brother