

1 Corinthians 10:13 Commentary

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1 Corinthians 10:13 **No temptation** has **overtaken** you but **such** as is **common** to **man**; and **God** is **faithful**, **who** will not **allow** you to be **tempted beyond what** you are **able**, but with the **temptation** will **provide** the **way** of **escape also**, so that you will be **able** to **endure** it. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [peirasmos humas ouk eilephen](#) (3SRAI) [ei me anthropinos; pistos de o theos on ouk easei](#) (3SFAI) [humas peirasthenai](#) (APN) [huper o dunasthe.](#) (2PPI) [alla poiesei](#) (3SFAI) [sun to peirasmo kai ten ekbasin tou dunasthai](#) (PPN) [hupenegkein.](#) (AAN)

Amplified: For no **temptation** (no **trial** regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently. (Amplified Bible - Lockman)

ASV: There hath no **temptation** taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.

Berkley: No **temptation** except what all people experience has laid hold of you, and God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted beyond your ability but will, at the time of temptation, provide a way out, so that you will be able to stand it.

BBE: You have been put to no **test** but such as is common to man: and God is true, who will not let any test come on you which you are not able to undergo; but he will make with the test a way out of it, so that you may be able to go through it.

ESV: 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. ([ESV](#))

KJV: There hath no **temptation** taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Moffatt: No **temptation** has waylaid you that is beyond man's power; trust God, he will never let you be tempted beyond what you can stand, but when temptation comes, he will provide the way out of it, so that you can bear up under it.

Montgomery: No **temptation** has overtaken you that is beyond man's power; but God is faithful, who will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but will, with every temptation, provide the way of escape also, so that you may be able to withstand.

NET: No **trial** has overtaken you that is not faced by others. And God is faithful, who will not let you be tried too much, but with the trial will also provide a way through it so that you may be able to endure. ([NET Bible](#))

NIV: No **temptation** has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. ([NIV - IBS](#))

NJB: None of the **trials** which have come upon you is more than a human being can stand. You can trust that God will not let you be put to the test beyond your strength, but with any trial will also provide a way out by enabling you to put up with it. ([NJB](#))

NKJV: 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.

NLT: But remember that the **temptations** that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

NRSV: No **testing** has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Phillips: No **temptation** has come your way that is too hard for flesh and blood to bear. But God can be trusted not to allow you to suffer any temptation beyond your powers of endurance. He will see to it that every temptation has a way out, so that it will never be impossible for you to bear it. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

TEV: Every **test** that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out

TLB: But remember this--the wrong desires that come into your life aren't anything new and different. Many others have faced exactly the same problems before you. And no temptation is irresistible. You can trust God to keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it, for he has promised this and will do what he says. He will show you how to escape temptation's power so that you can bear up patiently against it.

Wesley: There hath no **temptation** taken you, but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above your ability, but will with the temptation make also a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Weymouth: No **temptation** has you in its power but such as is common to human nature; and God is faithful and will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength. But, when the temptation comes, He will also provide the way of escape; so that you may be able to bear it.

Wuest: A **testing time** or a **temptation** has not laid hold of you with the result that these have you in their grip, except those to which mankind is continually subject. But God is faithful who will not permit you to be tested nor tempted above that with which you are able to cope, but will, along with the testing time or temptation, also make a way out in order that you may be able to bear up under it.

Young's Literal: No **temptation** hath taken you--except human; and God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but He will make, with the temptation, also the outlet, for your being able to bear it.

NO TEMPTATION HAS OVERTAKEN YOU BUT SUCH AS IS COMMON TO MAN: *peirasmos humas ouk eilephen (3SRAI) ei me anthropinos:*

- Je 12:5; Mt 24:21, 22, 24; Lk 11:4; 22:31,46; 2Co 11:23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28; Eph 6:12,13; He 11:35, 36, 37, 38; 12:4; James 5:10,11; 1Pe 1:6,7; 5:8,9; Re 2:10; 3:10
- **Common** - 1Cor 1:9; Dt 7:9; Ps 36:5; 89:33; Is 11:5; 25:1; 49:7; Lam 3:23; Ho 2:20; 1Th 5:24; 2Th 3:3; 2Ti 2:11-13; He 6:18; 10:23; 11:11; 1Pe 4:19; 1Jn 1:9; Re 19:11
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WHEN WE ARE TEMPTED GOD PROVIDES THE WAY OF ESCAPE

Having just given a **warning** (1Cor 10:12, really the entire preceding section 1Co 10:1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6, 7,8, 9, 10, 11) Paul passes to **encouragement**.

Third Millennium makes an interesting and convicting comment - 1 Corinthians 10:13 is a verse that is quoted often within the visible Church (see below) as a form of encouragement. However, Christians should note that Paul's words are actually a sharp two-edged sword that rebukes as well as assures. If God does not allow any temptation greater than the believer can withstand, then surely Christians never have a valid excuse for succumbing to sin! Although no believer avoids sin entirely (1Kings 8:46; 1John 1:8-10), there is no temptation to sin that cannot be resisted. ([Provide a way out - 1 Corinthians 10:12-13](#))

No temptation - The Greek word for "**no**" (*ouk*) signifies absolute negation.

THOUGHT - Ponder what this entails the next time you are tempted/tested! Are you alone? Do you ever feel like you are the only one who is being tempted with a specific sin?

Temptation is the first word in the Greek for emphasis. It refers not only to temptation but to trials and testings. Some versions in fact translate it as a **test** and others as a **temptation** (see versions above), which is understandable in view of the fact that in every test that God allows there always comes with it the potential that we might allow it to become a temptation to sin. God never tempts us to sin (Jas 1:13-note), but our fallen **flesh** processes the test God allows and says in essence "I think I will use this as an opportunity to sin." We are always responsible for how we chose to respond. Don't blame God, other people, circumstances, etc, if you sin when tested/tempted!

- Every **temptation** is an opportunity of our getting nearer to God. - John Quincy Adams
- **Temptations** discover what we are. - Thomas à Kempis
- **Temptations** are a file which rub off much of the rust of our self-confidence. - François Fenelon
- My **temptations** have been my masters in divinity. - Martin Luther

Just to make sure we understand -- whether the test becomes a proof of righteousness or an inducement to evil depends on our response. If we resist in God's power (The only way! cp **Spirit enabled** self control Gal 5:23- note, Gal 5:16-note, Gal 2:20-note, Ro 8:13-note, etc), it is a test that proves our faithfulness. If we do not resist, it becomes a solicitation to sin.

Playwright Oscar Wilde once jokingly remarked, **"I can resist everything except temptation."** We smile when we read those words because they speak an important truth about the human condition. Temptation pays a visit to each of us every day and most of us struggle to say no. (See [From Temptation to Triumph by Dr. Ray Pritchard - Recommended](#))

Robertson and Plummer An appeal to their past experience. Hitherto they have had no highly exceptional, superhuman temptations, but only such as commonly assail men, and therefore such as a man can endure. The typoi (types) just mentioned show that others have had similar temptations. This ought to encourage them with regard to the future, which he goes on to consider. ([A critical and exegetical commentary](#))

Matthew Henry - We live indeed in a tempting world, where we are compassed about with snares. Every place, condition, relation, employment, and enjoyment, abounds with them; yet what comfort may we fetch from such a passage! For, 1. "No temptation," says the apostle, "hath yet taken you, but such as is common to man, what is human; that is, such as you may expect from men of such principles as heathens, and such power; or else such as is common to mankind in the present state; or else such as the spirit and resolution of mere men may bear you through." Note, The trials of common Christians are but common trials: others have the like burdens and the like temptations; what they bear up under, and break through, we may also.

Temptation ([3986](#)) (**peirasmos** from **peirazo** = to make trial of, try, tempt, prove in either a good or bad sense) describes first the idea of putting to the test and then refers to the tests or pressures that come in order to discover a person's nature or the quality of some thing. **Peirasmos** connotes trouble or something that breaks the pattern of peace, comfort, joy, and happiness in someone's life. Trials rightly faced are harmless and in fact beneficial to the saint as Peter (and James 1 explain), but wrongly met become temptations to evil as explained below. Think of yourself as a tube of "spiritual toothpaste". Pressure brings out what's really on the inside! The word came to signify intentional trying w. the purpose of discovering what of good and evil, or power or weakness, was in a person or thing.

Peirasmos - 20v - Matt. 6:13; Matt. 26:41; Mk. 14:38; Lk. 4:13; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 11:4; Lk. 22:28; Lk. 22:40; Lk. 22:46; Acts 20:19; 1 Co. 10:13; Gal. 4:14; 1 Tim. 6:9; Heb. 3:8; Jas. 1:2; Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:12; 2 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 3:10

Matthew 6:13+ 'And do not lead us into **temptation** (**peirasmos**), but deliver (**rhuomai** in **orist imperative**) us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.']

Matthew 26:41+ **Keep watching** and **praying** (both are **present imperative** and to obey both commands continually we **need to continually depend on the Holy Spirit**) that you may not enter into **temptation** (**peirasmos**); the spirit is **willing** (cf Peter in Mt 26:33), but the flesh is **weak**."

James 1:2+ **Consider** (**orist imperative** see **our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey**) it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various **trials** (**peirasmos**),

James 1:12+ Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial (**peirasmos**);, for once he has been approved (**dokimos**), he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

1 Peter 1:6-7+ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary (THEY ARE NECESSARY!!!), you have been distressed by various **trials** (**peirasmos**),, so that (TRIALS HAVE PURPOSE) the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Jay Adams writes that **peirasmos** is "itself colorless and depends upon the context for its specific hue. In one sense every trial (or test) is also a temptation for it affords the opportunity to fail. Viewed from one perspective, a problem is a test which, if solved biblically, strengthens and helps one grow in grace (cf. James 1:2, 3, 4). Looked at from a different perspective, the same problem may be used by Satan as a temptation for sin. The book of Job shows the two-sidedness of every trial. (Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling)

In a sermon titled **"Faith Tested and Crowned,"** Alexander Maclaren distinguished between being tempted and being tried or tested. He said that the idea inherent in **temptation**

conveys the idea of appealing to the worst part of man, with the wish that he may yield and do the wrong. The latter (trial) means an appeal to the better part of man, with the desire that he should stand.

"Temptation says, 'Do this pleasant thing; do not be hindered by the fact that it is wrong.'

Trial or proving says, 'Do this right and noble thing; do not be hindered by the fact that it is painful.'"

In sum, **peirasmos** refers to all the trials, testing, temptations that go into furnishing a test of one's character.

Matthew records that "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness **to be tempted** (verbal root of peirasmos) by the devil. (Mt 4:1+) Mt 4:1-11 warrants careful study and meditation, for Jesus was fully Man and was "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." (Heb 4:15+) Jesus was able to endure the greatest temptation (Gethsemane may have been even more intense), and it did because He was (1) filled with the Spirit (Lk 4:1+) and (2) filled with the Word. The pattern is the same for every man!

The temptation was morally neutral -- there was nothing inherently evil in offering Jesus bread. The context however allows us to determine that the purpose of the testing is for evil not good. Satan, the Evil one himself, uses the "neutral" peirasmos for the purpose of inducing Jesus to sin,. When the context in a passage is to induce one to sin, most modern Bible versions translate the test as a "temptation". Remember however that God in His sovereignty is able to take even temptations to evil and cause them "to work together for good to those who love God" (Ro 8:28+, Ro 8:29+).

John MacArthur comments that

tests and temptations are two sides of the same thing. I want you to follow that: tests and temptations are two sides of the same thing. Life is full of tests. Every test, every trial potentiates a temptation.

A friend of mine told me one time, that he had taken a new job, with a very important company—he was very excited about it. He had only been on the job for a little while. Everyone had left the office one night and on his desk someone had left a HUGE sum of money. He immediately took the money, put it in his briefcase, and thought I am going to have to return this. He wrapped it up and the next morning brought it back, and when he came to work he immediately walked into the bosses' office and put the money down on the desk and said, "Somehow, someone left this money on my desk and I don't know who it was or who will be missing it, but I wanted to turn it in as fast as I could, so no one would be distressed by its absence." The boss looked him in the face and said, "I put the money there—it was a test—you passed."

Now life offers us those kinds of tests. If my friend had gone home, and opened the brief case and counted the money, and thought about, hmmm ... nobody will know and began to battle in his heart ... boy, I could use that money. I could buy this and I could buy that, and I could go here and I could go there. I could think of ten ways to explain if anyone wondered about the money ... then it would have become a temptation.

Once the external becomes the solicitation of the heart, it's turned into a temptation. Temptation is an inward solicitation resulting from an outward test. Life is full of those kinds of tests. Tests can be financial stress ... financial setback. You are in the midst of the test of financial setback, and you say I am just going to trust God for this; I am going to believe the Lord for this: we are going to cut things back, we are going to live frugally, we are going to budget, we are going to be faithful to our obligations, we are going to live on less, and we are going to believe the Lord to provide. You've passed the test. If you say, how can I steal from the till, how can I cheat on my income tax, how can I not pay what I owe to someone—you have moved it into a temptation because the external problem has become an inward solicitation to evil.

It could be personal disappointment. You had expectations of someone—they didn't perform. You either accept that with a trusting heart, love them in spite of it or you begin in your heart to feel animosity and bitterness, and now you are dealing with a temptation. It could be unkindness, it could be mistreatment, it could be injustice, it could be the test of illness, it could be the test of injury, it could be the test of unexpected disaster, it could be the test of death in the circle of your love, it could be the test of thwarted plans, it could be the test of failure to accomplish something that you had dreamed for a long time, it could be the test of facing a problem with no acceptable solution, it could be the test of a person or an experience that gives you an opportunity to do evil.

These are the tests that make up life and when they go inside, then they begin to solicit evil and they become temptations. Look at James chapter one for a very lucid explanation of this internal processing. In James chapter 1, verse 13, James talks about the fact that God is not involved in tempting anyone. "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself doesn't tempt anyone." Now that is very important. God does not bring about an inward solicitation to do evil in anyone's life. But go back to verse 2. "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various tests, ("trials," same word), because the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." God sends tests but not temptations. God will bring the outward extremity to produce patience and endurance and spiritual maturity. 1 Peter 5 says, that after you have suffered for awhile, the Lord will make you perfect.

So God allows the tests of life to make us strong, but God never brings them to inward solicitation to do evil.

You say, "How does that happen?" Verse 14, God doesn't tempt ... verse 14 ... "but each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by" ... what? "His own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Don't you be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above." That's all God ever sends. God will bring the test for spiritual maturity and perfection. It is your own lust that begins to produce the solicitation to do evil.

Our victory then, I think, starts with understanding the means by which temptation comes. It comes through the trials, tests, and disappointments of life. So, we simply remind you that when things aren't going the way you want them in life and you are facing a test, that is the means by which temptation comes to you, so you learn to watch how you respond to tests. ([Sermon notes](#))

Frederick Godet -The term **peirasmos**, proof, temptation , comprehends all that puts moral fidelity to the proof, whether this proof have for its end to manifest and strengthen the fidelity—it is in this sense that God can tempt, Gen. 22:1;Deut. 13:3;—or whether it seeks to make man fall into sin—it is in this sense that God cannot tempt, James 1:13, and that the devil always tempts. It may also happen that the same fact falls at once into these two categories, as for example, the temptation of Job, which on the part of Satan had for its end to make him fall, and which God, on the contrary, permitted with the view of bringing out into clear manifestation the fidelity of His servant, and of raising him to a higher degree of holiness and of knowledge. There are even cases in which God permits Satan to tempt, not without consenting to his attaining his end of bringing into sin. So in the case of David, 1Chr 21:1; compare with 2Sa 24:1. This is when the pride of man has reached a point such that it is a greater obstacle to salvation than the commission of a sin; God then makes use of a fall to break this proud heart by the humbling experience of its weakness. Such undoubtedly is the meaning in which we are to say: "Lead us not into temptation." These remarks will find their application in the immediate sequel. ([Godet Commentary Online](#))

Oswald Chambers wrote that "Temptation is not sin; temptation must always be possible for our sonship to be of worth to God. It would be no credit for God to bring mechanical slaves to glory—"for it became Him ... in bringing many sons unto glory"—not slaves, not useless channels, but vigorous, alert, wide-awake men and women, with all their powers and faculties devoted absolutely to God. (The Philosophy of Sin)

J C Ryle once said "Trials are intended to make us think, to wean us from the world, to send us to the Bible, to drive us to our knees.:

Spurgeon explains the great value of his personal trials writing "I am afraid that all the grace that I have got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows, and pains, and griefs, is altogether incalculable. What do I not owe to the crucible and the furnace, the bellows that have blown up the coals, and the hand which has thrust me into the heat?... I bear my witness that the worst days I have ever had have turned out to be my best days... I can bear my personal testimony that the best piece of furniture that I ever had in the house was a cross. I do not mean a material cross; I mean the cross of affliction and trouble... In shunning a trial we are seeking to avoid a blessing."

John MacArthur has an excellent illustration and explanation of the purpose of **"trials"** (temptations). - "To test the genuineness of a diamond, jewelers often place it in clear water, which causes a real diamond to sparkle with special brilliance. An imitation stone, on the other hand, will have almost no sparkle at all. When the two are placed side by side, even an untrained eye can easily tell the difference. In a similar way, even the world can often notice the marked differences between genuine Christians and those who merely profess faith in Christ. As with jewels, there is a noticeable difference in radiance, especially when people are undergoing difficult times. Many people have great confidence in their faith until it is severely tested by hardships and disappointments. How a person handles trouble will reveal whether his faith is living or dead, genuine or imitation, saving or non-saving." ([MacArthur J. James. 1998. Moody](#))

Illustration of Temptation - A German picture called "Cloud-land" hangs at the end of a long gallery; and at first sight looks like a huge, repulsive daub of confused colour. As you walk towards it, it begins to take shape, and proves to be a mass of little cherub faces, like those in Raphael's "Madonna san Sisto." Close to the picture, you see only an innumerable company of little angels and cherubim. How often, frightened by temptation, we see nothing but a confused and repulsive mass of broken expectations and crushed hopes. But if, instead of fleeing away into unbelief and despair, we would only draw near to God, we should soon discover that the cloud was full of angels of mercy.'

SEIZED BY TEMPTATION

Has overtaken you - "has laid hold of you" (Berkley, Wuest), "has seized you" (NIV), "has waylaid you" (Moffatt), "has overtaken you and laid hold of you" (Amplified), "has you in its power" (Weymouth). As you can see, some of the translations render the Greek verb **lambano** (eilephen) in such a way that it paints a picture of an emotion or urge that suddenly attempts to seize a person's

mind, will and emotions, so that he or she might be led astray from the right way. The picture is as occurs in a war, when the enemy seizes or grasps us and attempts to hold us fast.

Overtaken (2983) (**lambano**) means taken hold of, grasped, seized and in so doing bringing under one's control. In some secular uses **lambano** meant to be taken by violence, seized or carried off (as prize or booty). It was also used of passions, feelings, etc meaning to be seized by them (cp Lk 5:26), and such a nuance could apply in the present context.

Paul uses the **perfect tense** which emphasizes that they had not only been solicited by temptation but seized and overcome and that this temptation was now "holding them fast" as Edwards phrases it ([1 Corinthians 10:13 Commentary](#)).

Robertson and Plummer add that the **perfect tense** "brings us down to the present moment; there never has been *peirasmos me anthropinos*. In addition to this there is the certainty that God will never prove faithless: est certus custos suoruyum (Calvin). ([A critical and exegetical commentary](#))

Common to man - Such as is human. But don't use this as an excuse for sinning when you are tested rationalizing it by saying "I'm only human!" That's not the application Paul intends! As one person has written God promises a safe landing but not a calm passage.

Barclay - Paul concludes this section by saying three things about temptation.

(i) He is quite sure that temptation will come. That is part of life. But the Greek word which we translate temptation means far more a test. It is something designed, not to make us fall, but to test us, so that we emerge from it stronger than ever.

(ii) Any temptation that comes to us is not unique. Others have endured it and others have come through it. A friend tells how he was once driving Lightfoot, the great Bishop of Durham, in a horse carriage along a very narrow mountain road in Norway. It got so narrow that there were only inches between the wheels of the carriage and the cliffs on one side and the precipice on the other. He suggested in the end that Lightfoot would be safer to get out and walk. Lightfoot surveyed the situation and said, "Other carriages must have taken this road. Drive on." In the Greek Anthology there is an epigram which gives the epitaph of a shipwrecked sailor, supposedly from his own lips. "A shipwrecked mariner on this coast bids you set sail," he says. His bark may have been lost but many more have weathered the storm. When we are going through it, we are going through what others have, in the grace of God, endured and conquered.

(iii) With the temptation there is always a way of escape. The word is vivid (ekbasis, Greek #1545). It means a way out of a defile, a mountain pass. The idea is of an army apparently surrounded and then suddenly seeing an escape route to safety. No man need fall to any temptation, for with the temptation there is the way out, and the way out is not the way of surrender nor of retreat, but the way of conquest in the power of the grace of God. ([1 Corinthians 10 Commentary](#))

Albert Barnes - What temptation the apostle refers to here is not quite certain. It is probable, however, that he refers to such as would, in their circumstances, have a tendency to induce them to forsake their allegiance to their Lord, and to lead them into idolatry and sin. These might be either open persecutions, or afflictions on account of their religion; or they might be the various allurements which were spread around them from the prevalence of idolatry. They might be the open attacks of their enemies, or the sneers and the derision of the gay and the great. The design of the apostle evidently is to show them that, if they were faithful, they had nothing to fear from any such forms of temptation, but that God was able to bring them through them all. The sentiment in the verse is a very important one, since the general principle here stated is as applicable to Christians now as it was to the Corinthians.

The word **temptation** suggest something bad we need to remember that (1) temptation is really a test and (2) temptation is not in itself is sin. In fact temptation is a guarantee as long as we exist in these mortal bodies. As **Oswald Chambers** says...

Temptation comes to me, suggesting a possible shortcut to the realization of my highest goal— it does not direct me toward what I understand to be evil, but toward what I understand to be good. Temptation is something that confuses me for a while, and I don't know whether something is right or wrong. When I yield to it, I have made lust (**Ed**: And self or flesh) a god... Temptation is not something we can escape; in fact, it is essential to the well-rounded life of a person. Beware of thinking that you are tempted as no one else--what you go through is the common inheritance of the human race, not something that no one has ever before endured. God does not save us from temptations--He sustains us in the midst of them...

For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered (Jesus' suffering was a test - yes, He was fully God, but he was tested in His Humanity), He is able to come to the aid (pictures one who upon hearing a cry for help comes running) of those who are (present tense, passive voice = continuously being) tempted. (Hebrews 2:18-note)

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but **One Who has been tempted** in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace (**Ed**: When should we draw near? Of course, always, but in context, when we are being tempted!), that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15, 16-note).

But such as is common to man... The design of the apostle is to comfort and encourage the Corinthians, and to keep their minds from despondency. He had portrayed their danger; he had shown them how others had fallen (cp 1Co 10:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12); and they might be led to suppose that in such circumstances they could not be secure. He therefore tells them that they might still be safe, for their temptations were such as human nature had often been subject to, and God was able to keep them from falling.

Think of it this way - Trials/temptations are part of human nature and we all experience them. To be sure, each of us has his or her besetting sin or susceptibility to temptation but none of us are immune to these "intruders". They are part of our fallen human condition.

Jesus as the God-Man also experienced the temptations common to man...

For since He Himself **was tempted** in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. (He 2:18-note)

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who **has been tempted** in all things as we are, yet without sin. (He 4:15-note)

In Galatians **Paul** alludes to this "common" aspect of temptation writing...

Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too **be tempted** (Ga 6:1)

Vine - God permits the circumstances to take place from which a temptation arises, but He does not bar the way of retreat. The believer must take it. This is his responsibility. God is not the author of sin. ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

J Vernon McGee writes that...

A great many people feel that nobody has ever been tempted as they are tempted. My friend, no matter what temptation you experience, there have been others who have had the same kind of temptation. The encouraging thing is that God will make a way of escape for you. God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can endure. Dr. Hutton used to say it like this:

God always makes a way of escape and sometimes the way of escape is the king's highway and a good pair of heels.

In other words, let the Devil see your heels -- run as hard as you can to get away from the temptation. One of the reasons we yield to temptation is that we are like the little boy in the pantry. His mother heard a noise because he had taken down the cookie jar. She said, "Willie, where are you?" He answered that he was in the pantry. "What are you doing there?" He said, "I'm fighting temptation." My friend, that is not the place to fight temptation! That is the place to start running.

Guzik - We often want to excuse our particular tempting circumstances as "very unique" and a "special exception." But God reminds us that our temptation is not unique, many other men and women of God have faced the same or similar temptation, and have found the strength in God to overcome the temptation. Others before you have found strength in the Lord to overcome your same temptation and worse. So, you can be victorious in the strength of Jesus, not in your own strength (cp Jn 3:30, Ro 13:14-note, Gal 5:16, 17-note). We fight temptation with Jesus' power, like the girl who explained what she did when Satan came with temptation at the door of her heart: "I send Jesus to answer the door. When Satan sees Jesus, he says, 'OOPS, sorry, I must have the wrong house.'"

Alan Carr addresses who is affected and where the temptation comes from...

A. All humans are subject to temptation. (Ill. Best to the least) (Ill. Jesus, Peter, David, etc!)

B. We are daily assaulted with a wide range of temptations. (List some!) (Illustration -We all have one area where we are particularly susceptible.

C. It is not a sin to be tempted. (Ill. Jesus - Heb. 4:15) Sin enters the picture when temptation is surrendered to.

D. Our greatest danger is to think we have arrived at a place where we are above sinning, 1Cor 10:12; Pr 16:18. When our pride tells us that we cannot fall, then we are headed for a huge one! Pride in this area just tempts the devil!

E. Why doesn't God just kill the devil and remove the attraction for sin? If that were to happen, then you and I would lose the ability to be overcomers in Jesus. Without opposition, there is no victory! God has not called us to a life of ease, but to one of victory. A victory that we cannot enjoy until we have faced evil and overcome it.

THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION (Where)

A. "Common" - Do not think your temptations are so great, they are just like the ones we all face. They are just common, run of the mill, garden-variety temptations. We all get the same ones from the same sources. (Ill. 1John 2:16; Eve - Ge 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5ff) There are three primary sources of temptation:

The world, the flesh and the devil. Let's look at these three sources and how they attack us.

B. The World - In the Bible, the word for world means "system or order." The Bible speaks of this system called the world and says that it is evil. (Ill. 1John 2:15; James 4:4) It is possible for believers to become so worldly that they fail to stand out for the Lord. We are to be different and distinct. We are not to allow the world to force us into its mold, Rom. 12:1, 2; Mt. 5:13, 14, 15, 16 (Illustration of a Thermostat and thermometer) Ill. The world's idea of beauty - 1Pe 3:3. God's Idea is inward beauty of the soul untouched and unspoiled by the taint of the world.

C. The Flesh - Born into everyone of us, from the most innocent child to the most godly adult, is a bent in our nature. There is a leaning toward sin. We inherited this from our first father, Adam. It is called the "old Nature." (Ill. There is a civil war in the heart of every saved person here today - Gal 5:17!) When we fail, we try to blame our sin on the devil. Yes, he tempts us and points us toward sin, but we are responsible for the final decision, Ill. V.13. (Ill. Even if Satan were gone, we would still sin - Illustration Millennium - Rev. 2:27.

D. The Devil - His main objective, as far as you are concerned, is to cause you to fall so that God is dishonored and your become useless to the Kingdom work of God. He knows every weakness you have and he exploits them trying to get you to sin. He tells you how great sin will be, that you will get by with it, that you even deserve it, but he hates you and he is plotting your defeat. He loves to point at fallen saints and laugh before God as he stands accusing us of evil. Don't give him the satisfaction!

C H Spurgeon once preached about how that all of us Christians experienced the same depth and type of despicable temptations to sin in this life, saying,

"Ah! but you will find that apostles have been along that way, confessors have been that way, martyrs have been that way, and the best of God's saints have been tempted just as you now are. "Oh, but!" says one, "I am tempted, as you said a little while ago, with blasphemous and horrible thoughts." So was Master John Bunyan; read his Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, and see what he had to pass through. Many others have had a similar experience, and among them are some of us who are alive to tell you that we know all about this special form of temptation, yet the Lord delivered us out of it. "Oh, but!" says another tried soul, "I have been even tempted to self-destruction." That also has not been an unusual temptation even to God's dearest saints; and, though he has preserved them, and kept them alive, yet they have often felt like Job when he said, "My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life." "Ah!" cries another, "I am tempted to the very worst sins, the foulest sins, I should not dare even to mention to you the abominations Satan tempts me to commit." You need, not tell me; and I trust that you will be kept from them by the almighty power of God's Holy Spirit; but I can assure you that even the saints in heaven, if they could speak to you at this moment, would tell you that some of them were hard beset — even some of the bravest of them who walked nearest to God were hard beset by temptations which they would not have told to their fellow-men, so troubled were they by them. Perhaps yet another friend says, "I have been actually tempted to self-righteousness, which is as great a temptation as can befall a man whose whole confidence is in Christ." Well, so was Master John Knox, that grand preacher of justification by faith. When he lay dying, he was tempted to glory in his own bravery for Christ, but he fought against that evil thought, and overcame it, and so may you." ([Comfort for the Tempted](#))

J. C. Philpot in his devotional Pearls has this entry entitled "Were we left wholly in its hands!"

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man." 1 Cor. 10:13

There is not a single sin ever perpetrated by man which does not lie deeply hidden in the recesses of our fallen nature! But these sins do not stir into activity until temptation draws them forth.

Temptation is to the corruptions of the heart, what fire is to stubble. Sin lies quiet in our carnal mind until temptation comes to set it on fire.

Temptation is to our corrupt nature, what the spark is to gunpowder. Have you not found this sad truth: how easily by temptation are the corruptions of our wretched heart set on fire, and burst into every kind of daring and dreadful iniquity?

In temptation, we learn what sin is ...

its dreadful nature,
its aggravated character,
its fearful workings,
its mad, its desperate upheavings against God,
and what we are or would be,
were we left wholly in its hands!

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." Matthew 26:41

"Hold me up, and I shall be safe!" Psalm 119:117

AND GOD IS FAITHFUL: pistos de o theos on ouk easei (3SFAI)

- Nu 23:19, Dt 7:9, 32:4, Ps 100:5, Is 25:1, 49:7, La 3:22, 23, 1Co 1:9, Php 1:6, 1Th 5:24, 2Th 3:3, Titus 1:2, Heb 2:17, 6:18, 10:23, 11:11, Re 19:11
- 1 Corinthians 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A STABILIZING ENCOURAGING TRUTH

Observe, that when the temptation/test comes, God does not or has not "vacated the premises". He is there with you (Heb 13:5-note), in you (Col 1:27-note, Gal 2:20-note), and for you (Ro 8:31-note). Nothing can separate you from Him (Ro 8:38, 39-notes). Of that truth, that certainty you can be fully assured and confident. You can trust Him, secure in Who He is and what He promises.

When we are most satisfied in Him
Is when we are safest from sin

As **S Lewis Johnson** observes "The text says **God is faithful**, doesn't it? So if we fall, who's to blame? Well it's not God. He's faithful. The text says that God is in control. No temptation is overtaken you except such as is common to man, but God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able. He is in control. So if I fail, it cannot be excused. Not only that, we read, he will also make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it, and so since he provides a way of escape there are no excuses for our falls. We have a God who is faithful, we have no excuse. We have a God who controls circumstances, we have no excuse. We have a God who, as he says here in the last part of the text, makes ways of escape. We are of course inexcusable. This is marvelous provision for the weak and I happen to be of this category, the weak. There is a beautiful protective providence, no temptation is ever overtaken you except such as is common to man. What a comfort that is. God has overseen my life and he does yours to be sure I do not have a temptation beyond my capacity with his help to overcome. Not only a protective kind of providence but a preventive kind of providence; God is faithful he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. He doesn't shield us, but he sustains us in the trials of life. In all these things we are, in all the things Paul says, doesn't he, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us; not out of them, in them. And so many of us have to go through some very disappointing circumstances. I wouldn't want anyone to go through some of them. The loss of loved ones, how deeply one feels that through him who loved us. Job, what an illustration of this. Joseph what an illustration. And finally this kind of providing providence we could call it in verse 13c, but with the temptation also make the way of escape -- something like a way out that you may be able to bear it. Not an escape from temptation, but a present power to endure it in its midst. What a glorious provision is made for those who are sorely tried in the Christian life to know there is a way of escape that God provides. Some of you in this audience have had some very serious, serious trials. I know some of them, some I don't know. But this is the comfort of the saints in the midst of their trials. May God help us to live in such a way that we are not disqualified. ([1 Corinthians 10:1-13 Lessons From the Past](#))

THE FAITHFUL TOTALLY TRUSTWORTHY GOD

God is faithful - Timothy Edwards notes that "God's faithfulness is shown in not permitting temptation to be too intense in degree or too long in duration." ([1 Corinthians 10:13 Commentary](#)).

1 Corinthians 1:9+ God is **faithful**, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

THOUGHT - If we can trust that He called us into fellowship with His Son, surely we can trust He will (and is able) to keep us in fellowship with His Son!

Faithful ([4103](#)) (**pistos** from **peitho** = to persuade - induce one by words to believe, have confidence) is something or someone who is worthy of faith or keeps promises and is applied to God, humans, His Word, etc. Paul's point is that God always acts consistently with His character, and thus has made provision adequately to meet the need of those who rely upon His strength and seek to be conformed to His will (cp He 4:14, 15, 16-see notes)

Pistos is used 67 times in the NT translated believe(2), believer(4), believers(5), believing(1), faithful(43), Faithful(1), faithful one(1), faithfully(1), sure(1), trustworthy(7), who believe(1). Mt 24:45; 25:21, 23; Luke 12:42; 16:10, 11, 12; 19:17; John 20:27; Acts 10:45; 13:34; 16:1, 15; 1Cor 1:9; 1 Cor 4:2, 17; 1 Cor 7:25; 10:13; 2Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 6:15; Gal 3:9; Eph 1:1; 6:21; Col 1:2, 7; 4:7, 9; 1Th 5:24; 2Th 3:3; 1Ti 1:12, 15; 3:1, 11; 4:3, 9-10, 12; 5:16; 6:2; 2Ti 2:2, 11, 13; Titus 1:6, 9; 3:8; Heb 2:17; 3:2, 5; 10:23; 11:11; 1Pe 1:21; 4:19; 5:12; 1Jn 1:9; 3Jn 1:5; Rev 1:5; 2:10, 13; 3:14; 17:14; 19:11; 21:5; 22:6

Related Resource:

- [Faithfulness](#) - Attribute of God
- [How can I learn to trust in the faithfulness of God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are practical ways to depend on God alone?](#)

J. C. Ryle exhorts us to "settle it firmly in our minds that there is a meaning, a needs-be and a message from God in every sorrow that falls upon us... There are no lessons so useful as those learned in the school of affliction... (and be encouraged for) The tools that the great Architect intends to use much are often kept long in the fire, to temper them and fit them for work."

Spurgeon after preaching on **1 Corinthians 10:13** prayed "O Lord, fulfill thy gracious purpose unto thy servants! Hold thou us up, lest we fall. We are very weak; keep us, for thy dear Son's sake! Amen."

John MacDuff - "For myself," says one whose saintliness has stirred the pulses of the century, "now, at the end of a long life, I say from a full heart that God has never failed me; never disappointed me; has ever turned evil into good for me...and what He has been to me who have deserved His love so little, such He will be, I believe and know, to every one who does not repel Him, and turn from His pleadings." (John MacDuff. The Pillar in the Night)

Illustration of God's faithfulness - There was once a young boy whose dad left him on a downtown corner one morning and told him to wait there until he returned in about half an hour. But the father's car broke down and he could not get to a phone. Five hours went by before the father managed to get back, and he was worried that his son would be in a state of panic. But when the father got there, the boy was standing in front of the dime store, looking in the window and rocking back and forth on his heels. When the father saw him, he ran up to him and threw his arms around him and hugged and kissed him. The father apologized and said, "Weren't you worried? Did you think I was never coming back?" The boy looked up and replied, "No, Dad. I knew you were coming. You said you would."

Jamieson - To be led into temptation is distinct from running into it, which would be "tempting God" (1Co 10:9; Mt 4:7).

C H Spurgeon writes...

God is true to His promises. "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able" (1 Cor. 10:13). "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb 13:5). "God is faithful," and He will fulfill that promise. This is one of Christ's promises, and Christ is God. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28). "God is faithful," and God will fulfill these promises.

You have often heard this promise, "As your days, so shall your strength be" (Deut. 33:25). Do you believe it? Or will you make God a liar? If you believe it, then banish all dark depression with this blessed little sentence, "God is faithful."

God sends our trials at the right time. If He puts an extra burden on us in one way, He takes something off in another. John Bradford, the famous martyr, suffered with rheumatism and depression, in which I can greatly sympathize. Yet when they imprisoned him in a foul damp dungeon, and he knew that he would never come out except to die, Bradford wrote,

It is a singular thing that ever since I have been in this prison and have had other trials to bear, I have had no touch of my rheumatism or depression. (**Ed note:** This writer can attest to this truth, for more than 10 years ago I began to have a loud humming/buzzing noise in my right ear and I thought I would go crazy. And yet to this day, even though I can still "hear" it, God daily gives me the grace to be able to "ignore" it.)

How blessed, and you will find that this is true, "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted (tested) beyond what you are able, but with the temptation (test) will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). ([Spurgeon, C., & Clarke, R. H. Beside Still Waters: Words of Comfort for the Soul Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.](#))

Albert Barnes - God is faithful. This was the only source of security; and this was enough. If they looked only to themselves, they would fall (cp 1Co 10:12, Pr 16:18, Peter's example Mt 26:33). If they depended on the faithfulness of God, they would be secure. The sense is, not that God would keep them without any effort of their own; not that he would secure them if, they plunged into temptation; but that if they used the proper means, if they resisted temptation, and sought his aid, and depended on his promises, then he would be faithful. This is everywhere implied in the Scriptures; and to depend on the faithfulness of God, otherwise than in the proper use of means and in avoiding the places of temptation, is to tempt him, and provoke him to wrath. See Barnes "Matthew 4:1" and following.

Matthew Henry - God is faithful. Though Satan be a deceiver, God is true. Men may be false, and the world may be false; but God is faithful, and our strength and security are in him. He keepeth his covenant, and will never disappoint the filial hope and trust of his children.

GOD—HIS KEEPING

1. He will "keep" you as the apple of His eye (Ps 17:8).
2. He will "keep" you in all your ways (Ps 91:11).
3. He will "keep" that which you have committed to Him against that day (2Ti 1:12).
4. He will "keep" you as a shepherd cares for his flock of sheep (Jer 31:10).
5. He will "keep" you in perfect peace (Is 26:3).
6. He will "keep" you from the hour of temptation and support you in the time of trial (1Co 10:13).
7. He will "keep" you from falling (Jude 24). (The Speaker's Quote Book)

WHO WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO BE TEMPTED BEYOND WHAT YOU ARE ABLE: on ouk easei (3SFAI) humas peirasthenai (APN) huper o dunasthe, (2PPI):

- Ex 3:17; Ps 125:3; Da 3:17; Lk 22:32; Jn 10:28-30; Ro 8:28-39; 2Co 1:10; 12:8-10; 2Ti 4:18; 1Pe 1:5; 2Pe 2:9
- 1 Corinthians 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Who will not allow...-As a natural (supernatural) effect or outflow from His eternal, immutable, infinite faithfulness to His children. (For which we thank Thee! Amen) **Amplified:** not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure,

Not (3756) (ou) signifies absolute negation -- as a child of the Living God, you can be sure that He will absolutely not allow a temptation or test into our life that He knows we cannot handle. He is not trying to destroy us but refine us.

To be tempted beyond - "to be pressured above". As **Vine** puts it, God "is fully aware of all the circumstances attaching to every temptation and not one comes to us except under His permissive will. His restraining power is such, that we can meet and overcome the temptation by the exercise of our wills in response to, and by the power of, the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts. (Ibid)

Beyond ([5228](#)) (**huper**) is used in this context as a marker of a degree beyond that of a compared scale, thus signifying over and above or more than. This speaks of the extent of the temptation we experience. God made each of us and knows each of us intimately and thus He can be trusted to not allow us to go into a temptation which is more than we can handle. A corollary thought is that the test/temptation that God allows in the life of a more mature saint might be "stronger" or "greater", but it will always be within the spiritual capability of the one tested to be able to bear up under it.

Beyond what you are able - In short, no trial/temptation is inherently stronger than our spiritual resources. People sin because they willingly sin. Notice that God does not promise to deliver us from the trial/temptation, but He does promise to limit its intensity so that it does not overwhelm our ability to handle it. And as discussed more below, He also promises to provide the way of escape that we might be enabled to bear up under the trial/temptation.

An OT Illustration - God rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (violate the "law of nature" and conscience) for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented (imperfect tense = over and over - describes a vessel tossed by the waves Mt14:24, disease Mt 8:6, pains of childbirth Re12:2) day after day with their lawless deeds), then **the Lord knows** (Study passages that speak of what the Lord knows - 2Ti 2:19, Ps 1:6, Lk 16:15, Ps 103, 14, Nah 1:7, Mt 6:8) **how to rescue** (**rhuomai** = bring out of severe, acute danger emphasizing greatness of peril from which deliverance is given by a mighty act of power) **the godly from temptation**, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, (2Pe 2:7, 8-notes, 2Pe 2:9-note)

[Standing on the Promises](#)

by R Kelso Carter

Standing on the promises of Christ my King,
Through eternal ages let His praises ring,
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,
Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

*Standing, standing,
Standing on the promises of God my Savior;
Standing, standing,
I'm standing on the promises of God.*

Standing on the promises that cannot fail,
When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,
By the living Word of God I shall prevail,
Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

Standing on the promises I now can see
Perfect, present cleansing in the blood for me;
Standing in the liberty where Christ makes free,
Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

Standing on the promises of Christ the Lord,
Bound to Him eternally by love's strong cord,
Overcoming daily with the Spirit's sword,
Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

Standing on the promises I cannot fall,
Listening every moment to the Spirit's call
Resting in my Savior as my all in all,
Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

Able ([1410](#)) (**dunamai**) conveys the basic meaning of that which has the inherent ability to do something or

accomplish some end. Thus **dunamai** means to be able to, to be capable of, to be strong enough to do or to have power to do something. The derivative word **dunamis** (from **dunamai**) refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way, the power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. The word group (dunamai, dunamis, dunatos, etc) gives us our English word **dynamic**, (synonyms = energetic, functioning, live, operative, working) which describes that which is marked by usually continuous and productive activity or change. That which is dynamic is characterized by energy or forces that produce motion, as opposed to that which is static.

BDAG says that **dunamai** means "to possess capability (whether because of personal or external factors) for experiencing or doing something.

Larry Richards says that **dunamis** and **dunamai** "look to the inherent physical, spiritual, or natural strength or power of individuals. The verb raises the issue of one's being "strong enough" and thus able.

TDNT -Words of this stem all have the basic sense of ability or capability.**Dunamai** means a. "to be able" in a general sense, b. "to be able" with reference to the attitude that makes one able, hence sometimes "to will," and c. (of things) "to be equivalent to," "to count as," "to signify."

Thayer's summary of **dunamai**...

1 to be able, have power whether by virtue of one's own ability and resources, or of a state of mind, or through favorable circumstances, or by permission of law or custom.

2 to be able to do something.

3 to be capable, strong and powerful.

Vine summarizes **dunamai** writing that it means "to be able, to have power," whether by virtue of one's own ability and resources, e.g., Ro 15:14 (note); or through a state of mind, or through favorable circumstances, e.g., 1Thes 2:6 (note); or by permission of law or custom, e.g., Acts 24:8, 11; or simply "to be able, powerful," Matt. 3:9; 2Ti 3:15 (note), etc. See can, may, possible, power.

Oswald Chambers encourages us writing that "Patience has the meaning of testing—a thing drawn out and tested, drawn out to the last strand in a strain without breaking, and ending in sheer joy. The strain on a violin string when stretched to the uttermost gives it its strength; and the stronger the strain, the finer is the sound of our life for God, and He never strains more than we are able to bear." (The Love of God—The Ministry of the Unnoticed)

William MacDonald - Reading this verse, one cannot help but be struck by the tremendous comfort it has afforded to tested saints of God through the centuries. Young believers have clung to it as to a life-line and older believers have reposed on it as upon a pillow. Perhaps some of Paul's readers were being fiercely tempted at the time to go into idolatry. Paul would comfort them with the thought that God would not allow any unbearable temptation to come their way. At the same time they should be warned that they should not expose themselves to temptation. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Matthew Henry - God is wise as well as faithful, and will proportion our burden to our strength. He will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able. He knows what we can bear, and what we can bear up against; and he will, in His wise providence, either proportion our temptations to our strength or make us able to grapple with them. He will take care that we be not overcome, if we rely upon Him, and resolve to approve ourselves faithful to Him. We need not perplex ourselves with the difficulties in our way when God will take care that they shall not be too great for us to encounter.

Guzik - God has promised to supervise all temptation which comes at us through the world, the flesh or the devil. He promises to limit it according to our capability to endure it ? according to our capability as we rely on Him, not relying on ourselves. Satan would destroy us in a minute if God would let him, even as he wanted to destroy Job (Job 1:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) and Peter (Luke 22:31), but God will not let him. So, like a mom who keeps her child from the candy aisle in a store, knowing the child couldn't handle that temptation, God keeps us from things we can't handle. But what we can and can't handle changes over the years!

Barnes This is a general promise, just as applicable to all Christians as it was to the Corinthians. It implies,

(1.) that all the circumstances, causes, and agents that lead to temptation, are under the control of God. Every man that tempts another; every fallen spirit that is engaged in this; every book, picture, place of amusement; every charm of music and of song; every piece of indecent statuary; and every plan of business, of gain, or ambition, are all under the control of God. He can check them; He can control them; He can paralyze their influence; He can destroy them. C. Matthew 6:13 (note).

(2.) When men are tempted, it is because God suffers or permits it (cp Job 1:8, 9, 10, 11, 12; Lk 22:31). He does not himself tempt men, (James 1:13, 14-note) He does not infuse evil thoughts into the mind; He does not create an object of temptation to place in

our way, but He suffers it to be placed there by others. When we are tempted, therefore, we are to remember that it is because He suffers or permits it; not because He does it. His agency is that of sufferance, not of creation. We are to remember, too, that there is some good reason why it is thus permitted; and that it may be turned in some way to his glory, and to our advancement in virtue (James 1:2, 3, 4 - notes).

(3.) There is a certain extent to which we are able to resist temptation. There is a limit to our power. There is a point beyond which we are not able to resist it (cp 1Co 10:12, 2Cor 12:9-note, 2Cor 12:10-note). We have not the strength of angels.

(4.) That limit will, in all cases, be beyond the point to which we are tempted. If not, there would be no sin in falling, any more than there is sin in the oak when it is prostrated before the tempest.

(5.) If men fall into sin, under the power of temptation, they only are to blame (James 1:14-note). They have strength to resist all the temptations that assail them (cp James 4:6,7), and God has given the assurance that no temptation shall occur which they shall not be able, by His aid, to resist. In all instances, therefore, where men fall into sin--in all the yielding to passion, to allurements, and to vice--man is to blame, and must be responsible to God. And this is especially true of Christians, who, whatever may be said of others, cannot plead that there was not power sufficient to meet the temptation, or to turn aside its power.

Conflicting Feelings

by John Newton

Strange and mysterious is my life.
What opposites I feel within!
A stable peace, a constant strife;
The rule of grace, the power of sin:
Too often I am captive led,
Yet daily triumph in my Head,
Yet daily triumph in my Head.

I prize the privilege of prayer,
But oh! what backwardness to pray!
Though on the Lord I cast my care,
I feel its burden every day;
I seek His will in all I do,
Yet find my own is working too,
Yet find my own is working too.

I call the promises my own,
And prize them more than mines of gold;
Yet though their sweetness I have known,
They leave me unimpressed and cold
One hour upon the truth I feed,
The next I know not what I read,
The next I know not what I read.

I love the holy day of rest,
When Jesus meets His gathered saints;
Sweet day, of all the week the best!
For its return my spirit pants:
Yet often, through my unbelief,
It proves a day of guilt and grief,
It proves a day of guilt and grief.

While on my Savior I rely,
I know my foes shall lose their aim,
And therefore dare their power defy,
Assured of conquest through His Name,
But soon my confidence is slain,
And all my fears return again,
And all my fears return again.

Thus different powers within me strive,
And grace and sin by turns prevail;
I grieve, rejoice, decline, revive,
And victory hangs in doubtful scale:
But Jesus has His promise passed,
That grace shall overcome at last,
That grace shall overcome at last.

BUT WITH THE TEMPTATION WILL PROVIDE THE WAY OF ESCAPE ALSO: alla poiesei (3SFAI) sun to peirasmo kai ten ekbasin:

- Ge 19:20,21; Ps 124:7; Je 29:11; Lk 16:26; Acts 27:44; Jas 5:11
- 1 Corinthians 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE WAY OF ESCAPE

Beloved, if you are walking in the light, walking in the Spirit, walking as Jesus walked (1 Jn 2:6+), and you are confronted with temptation, even one that is seems overwhelmingly strong, you can come through as more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus if you humble yourself and walk through the door that God provides -- the way of escape. He will always have this door available. In other words the temptation and the way out are a "package deal." They come "side by side" so to speak. Our problem is either we are not walking in the Spirit and fail to see the way out or we see it and simply refuse to walk through it (SADLY I CONFESS I HAVE TOO OFTEN BEEN GUILTY OF THIS LATTER FOOLISH MOVE! AND I ALWAYS PAID THE PRICE FOR MY STUPIDITY!).

But (235) (**alla**) is an adversative that signifies contrast.

Will provide (4160) (**poieo**) can mean to make, to create (Mt 19:4), to accomplish (speaking of bringing about a state or condition). God is able to undertake or do something (anything He wants to do - see Omnipotent; Sovereign) that brings about an event, state, or condition, which in context would refer to the specific way of escape.

Alford - God makes the temptation arranging it in His Providence, and in His mercy will ever set open a door for escape.

With (4862) (**sun/syn**) speaks of intimacy in contrast to **meta** which speaks of nearness without the idea of intimacy. An excellent illustration of this difference is the two thieves on the Cross. The believing thief was crucified (physically but more importantly spiritually) **with** (sun) Christ (see word study on crucified with = sustauroo) while the other thief was crucified (physically next to) with Christ. The first thief experienced intimate union **with** Christ, while the second experienced only close physical proximity to Christ, the result of which was eternal separation from Christ.

John MacArthur says "when God allows us to be tested, He always provides a way out. There is always a path to victory." (MacArthur, J., F., Jr. The Vanishing Conscience. Dallas: Word Pub)

Robertson and Plummer - **'But will provide, with the temptation, the way of escape also'** 'A way to escape' (AV.) ignores the article before ekbasis, 'the necessary way of escape,' the one suitable for such a difficulty. The **sun/syn** (with) and the articles imply that **temptations and possibilities of escape always go in pairs there is no peirasmos without its proper ekbasis, for these pairs are arranged by God, Who permits no unfairness. He knows the powers with which He has endowed us, and how much pressure they can withstand. He will not leave us to become the victims of circumstances which He has Himself ordered for us**, and impossibilia non jubet... As to God's part in temptation, see Mt. 6:13-note; 1Chr 21:1; Job 1:12, 2:6; Ex 16:4; Dt. 8:2; and, on the other side, Jas 1:13-note. ([A critical and exegetical commentary](#))

Temptation (3986) (**peirasmos** from **peirazo** = to make trial of, try, tempt, prove in either a good or bad sense) describes the idea of putting to the test and then the tests or pressures that come in order to discover a person's nature or the quality of some thing. Pressure brings out what's really on the inside!

Alex Deasley reminds us that...

testing and temptation are facts within God's world and constitute some of the tools through which he is bringing to fulfillment His redemptive purpose. Both trials (as revealing and stimulating character and progress)

and temptations (understood as allurements to evil) may minister to the divine purpose, provided the outcome is positive (Jas 1:12-note). But there is this important distinction: since temptation embodies incitement to evil, it cannot be God's doing (Jas 1:13-note). Hence the tendency of the biblical writers is to say that while God sustains his people during testing (Ro 5:3-note; Re 3:10-note), he delivers them from temptation (1Co10:13; 2Pe 2:9-note). What is true in the private experiences of individuals is also true in the history of salvation in which the testing of Abraham (Ge 22:1), Israel (Ps 66:8, 9, 10, 11, 12), or Christ (He 2:17,18-note) contributed to the furtherance of God's saving purpose.

Temptation neither constitutes nor necessarily leads to sin. Temptation could not destroy Christ's sinlessness (Heb 4:15), and his temptations were entirely like those of all other humans (He 2:17-note). Still more, succumbing to temptation is never inevitable. The triumph of Christ over the powers of darkness (Mt 12:28,29; Col 1:13-note, cp Acts 26:18, 1Pe 2:9-note) means that a way of escape is always open for those united to him (1Co 10:13). When temptation is yielded to, forgiveness is available through Christ (He 2:18-note; He 4:14, 15, 16-notes; 1Jn 2:1). ([Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

With the temptation - "With the pressure".

Guzik illustrates the deceptive nature of temptation - Temptation works like rocks in a harbor; when the tide is low, everybody sees the danger and avoids it. But Satan's strategy in temptation is to raise the tide, and to cover over the dangers of temptation. Then he likes to crash you upon the covered rocks. God has promised to not only limit our temptation, but also to provide a way of escape in tempting times. He will never force us to use the way of escape, but he will make the way of escape. It's up to us to take God's way of escape. The way of escape isn't the same as mere "relief" from the pressure temptation, which some people find by giving into the temptation! There is often a wrong way to relieve a temptation, and we will often face the same temptations over and over again until we show Satan and our flesh we are able to bear it.. **Barclay** says the word for a **way of escape** is really a mountain pass, with the idea of an army being surrounded by the enemy, and then suddenly seeing an escape route to safety. It isn't necessarily an easy way!

The way of escape - "the outlet" (YLT). Notice that the definite article ([ten](#)) "the" is present in the Greek, signifying not just a way in general but a specific way. **Robertson and Plummer** = "the necessary way of escape"; the one suitable for such a difficulty. ([A critical and exegetical commentary](#))

W E Vine observes that **way** is "not merely "a way of escape" but the way appointed by Him and suited to each temptation. The word rendered "way of escape" is *ekbasis*, lit., a way out. The word is used in the New Testament elsewhere only in Hebrews 13:7. The temptation and the way out always go together. God never allows us to be the mere victims of circumstances. All these are under His control and in all this His faithfulness is manifest. Joseph availed himself of the way of escape when his special temptation came (Ge 39:12). So with Daniel (Dan. 1:8). God orders the circumstances, but it is ours to pass through them victoriously for His glory (cp 1Co 6:20, Mt 5:16-note), and the fulfillment of this lies in the explanatory phrase "that ye may be able to endure it"; cp. James 1:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 (see notes), where the 17th verse has a bearing upon the subject of the way of escape. (Ibid)

John MacArthur on the **way of escape** - **The way** out of the temptation is to endure it as a trial and never let it become a solicitation to sin... which effects a sinful response. The way out is to take it as a test and a trial and not internalize it so that it begins to solicit sin. So you've been wronged, so you've been falsely accused, so you've been maligned and treated unkindly and unjustly, accept it, accept it with joy and you will endure it and that is the way of escape. So someone had promised you something and they didn't fulfill it and you had tied some of your greatest expectations to that promise, accept it, understand it, acknowledge it as a trial that is intended to strengthen your faith and the way out is through it, sustaining it as a test, never letting it be turned into a temptation, that you may be able to bear it, or endure it is *hupophero*, it literally means to get under it and carry it. Usually we're looking for a quick and easy route. The only way out is through it. You remain under it but you endure it as a test with the view that God is using this to bring about my maturity (Ed: compare James 1:2-4-note).

You say, "But how do you do that?" Well you know what the keys are, and I only mention them... meditating on the **Word**, Psalm 119... what does it say in verse 11? "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin." When the test comes, you turn to the Word of God. You don't listen to your own lusts, you don't listen to the solicitations that your own heart will conjure up. When the test comes you turn to the Word of God, you listen to that. **Secondly, you pray**. You pray I think what Jesus taught us to pray in the prayer we call that we call the Lord's Prayer, better called the Disciples Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us..." You turn to God and you cry out to Him to keep this test from becoming a temptation. **A third thing** that you would do would be to take the shield of faith... that means to trust God no matter how the fiery darts may be coming at you, understand that God has a purpose and trust God for that purpose. Another important element, **maybe a fourth one**, is to focus on Christ. He endured every temptation to the maximum and so you can turn to Him and you can say to Him, "My faithful high priest, You know what I'm going through, strengthen me for this." (Ed: While clearly these 4 items are vital, I would add that ultimately it is the Spirit Who will trump the strong desire of the flesh, a desire tempting us to gratify self. So we need to learn to walk by the Spirit as Paul commands in Gal

5:16-note, for He is the one who will enable us to endure! It will never be self-effort, but only Spirit-enablement!)

Simple really, we know these things. When the test comes turn to the Word. When the test comes turn to the Lord in prayer. When the test comes retain your faith in God's purposes through the test. When the test comes look to Christ the faithful high priest who will nurture you through this test. ([Triumphing over Temptation](#))

Way of escape (1545) (**ekbasis** from **ekbaino** = to go out <> **ek** = out + **baino** = to go) is a noun which literally means an exit, a going out, an egress and thus describes a way out or way of escape. God always provides an "escape hatch"!

The only other NT use of **ekbasis** is in Hebrews...

Hebrews 13:7 (note) Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the **result** (**ekbasis**) of their conduct, imitate their faith.

Comment: The idea of "the way out" gives way to the concept of the end or outcome of an event or state which **BDAG** says in the context of this verse in Hebrews is the "result of one's way of life, with implication of success". **Thayer** adds that **ekbasis** here "is not merely the end of their physical life, but the manner in which they closed a well-spent life as exhibited by their spirit in dying."

Barclay - With the temptation there is always a way of escape. The word is vivid (**ekbasis**). It means a way out of a defile, a mountain pass. The idea is of an army apparently surrounded and then suddenly seeing an escape route to safety. No man need fall to any temptation, for with the temptation there is the way out, and the way out is not the way of surrender nor of retreat, but the way of conquest in the power of the grace of God. ([1 Corinthians 10 Commentary](#))

A T Robertson - "**The way out**" is always there right along with (see word study sun/syn) the temptation... It is cowardly to yield to temptation and distrustful of God. (Are you as convicted as I am by Robertson's reproof!)

Jamieson - The Greek is, "the way of escape"; the appropriate way of escape in each particular temptation; not an immediate escape, but one in due time, after patience has had her perfect work (James 1:2-4, 12). He "makes" the way of escape simultaneously with the temptation which His providence permissively arranges for His people.

Matthew Henry - There is no valley so dark but he can find a way through it, no affliction so grievous but he can prevent, or remove, or enable us to support it, and in the end overrule it to our advantage.

Oswald Chambers reminds us that "The moments of severest temptation are the moments of His divinest succor." (Disciples Indeed)

In his background for the occurrence of the following hymn by **Horatio Palmer** writes that "This song was an inspiration. I was at work on the dry subject of 'Theory,' when the complete idea flashed upon me, and I laid aside the theoretical work and hurriedly penned both words and music as fast as I could write them. I submitted them to the criticism of a friend afterward, and some changes were made in the third stanza, but the first two are exactly as they came to me—I am reverently thankful it has been a power for good.

YIELD NOT TO TEMPTATION

([Play Hymn](#))

Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin;
Each victory will help you some other to win;
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

Refrain

Shun evil companions, bad language disdain,
God's Name hold in reverence, nor take it in vain;
Be thoughtful and earnest, kindhearted and true,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

Refrain

To him that o'ercometh, God giveth a crown;
Through faith we shall conquer, though often cast down;
He Who is our Savior our strength will renew;

Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

Refrain

Ask the Savior to help you,
Comfort, strengthen and keep you;
He is willing to aid you,
He will carry you through.

Illustration of the Plimsoll Mark - It was due to the efforts of Samuel Plimsoll (1824-98), British reformer, that the Merchant Shipping Act of 1876 was passed, requiring all ships to bear a mark known as the Plimsoll mark and indicating the maximum load line ([SEE PICTURE ON SIDE OF SHIP](#)). By this act the Board of Trade of England was empowered to detain any vessel deemed unsafe, and the amount of cargo was restricted, thus making the long and perilous ocean voyage of those days much safer. Because of his work, Plimsoll became known as the sailor's friend. The Plimsoll mark, with its gradations and figures, may be seen on the bow of ships near the water line as they lie at anchor in a harbor. In God's sight, each of us has a similar **mark**, though we may not be able to see it **The burdens and responsibilities He gives us may seem unbearable, but He knows our limit, His everlasting arms are underneath, and by His grace we can bear them without sinking. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Cor 10:13b).**—Sunday School Times

SO THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ENDURE IT: tou dunasthai (PPN) hupenegkein. (AAN):

- 1 Corinthians 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

TRIALS CAN BE ENDURED

So that - This phrase is a **terms of purpose or result**. Always use this phrase to cause a pause that you might ponder the test - what is the purpose? What are the prerequisites for the fulfillment of this purpose?, etc.

Robertson and Plummer note that the article "**tou**" is used "with the infinitive (dunasthai - PPN) to express purpose or result is very frequent in Luke (Lk 1:77, 79, 2:24) and not rare in Paul (Gal. 3:10; Php 3:10; Ro 1:24, 6:6, 7:3, 8:12, 11:8, 10). Hupenegkein means 'to bear up under,' 'to endure patiently' (2Ti 3:11; 1Pe 2:19; Pr 6:33; Ps 69:7; Job 2:10). **Temptation is probation** (**Ed**: a critical examination and evaluation of our hearts; a subjection of our character to a divine examination and evaluation), and God orders the **probation** (= subjection of an individual to a period of testing and trial to ascertain fitness!) in such a way 'that ye may be able to endure it.' The power to endure is given "with the temptation"; the endurance is not given; that depends on ourselves (**Ed**: Well yes and no. Yes we have to choose to submit to the Spirit's enablement and then act accordingly, but we cannot endure by depending on our natural strength! See the "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible' \(100/100\)](#)). ([A critical and exegetical commentary](#))

Will be able ([1410](#)) (**dunamai**) conveys the basic meaning of that which has the inherent ability to do something or accomplish some end. Thus **dunamai** means to be able to, to be capable of, to be strong enough to do or to have power to do something. The derivative word **dunamis** (from **dunamai**) refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way, the power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. The word group (dunamai, dunamis, dunatos, etc) gives us our English word **dynamic**, (synonyms = energetic, functioning, live, operative, working) which describes that which is marked by usually continuous and productive activity or change. That which is dynamic is characterized by energy or forces that produce motion, as opposed to that which is static.

The verb **dunamai** is in the [passive voice](#) (some consider it to be middle) which indicates the ability is from an external source which is clearly the indwelling Spirit. The only way a believer is able to endure temptation is by the enabling power (dunamis) of the Spirit. This dynamic is clearly taught in Galatians 5:16+ which teaches that as we walk in Him, He will enable us not to act on the evil desires from our flesh (which is the "beach head" of operations for the temptations that come from the devil and the world). The [present tense](#) speaks of His enabling power as continuous (for the duration of the temptation would seem to be the meaning). In summary, not only does God provide the **way of escape** but the **power to escape**, to walk on the path of that "way." This not "Let go, Let God," but more like "Let God, Let's go!" His part, our part! ([100/100](#))

Adam Clarke rightly observes that "The highest saint under heaven can stand no longer than he depends upon God and continues in the obedience of faith. He that ceases to do so will fall into sin, and get a darkened understanding and a hardened heart."

To endure (5297) (**hupophero** from **hupo** = under + **phero** = bear) means to bear up (from underneath), to bear a burden, to submit to, to put up with, to underpin (to form part of, strengthen, or replace the foundation of as of a sagging building) despite difficulty and suffering. The principle is that one is made able to get under a heavy load and to carry it. The picture in secular Greek was of one who under a burden as for example would be an armor-bearer who is under the arms that he carries. Clearly the present context means to bear up under trouble or difficulty.

There are only 3 NT uses of **hupophero** -

2Ti 3:11 (note) persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I **endured**, and out of them all the Lord delivered me!

1 Peter 2:19 (note) For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man **bears up** under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

In summary, observe that there are at least 4 truths which should encourage you dear saint, the next time you are seized by what might seem at first glance to be an overwhelming temptation or test -

(1) Others have already trodden this same path. Knowing that other Christians suffer (also have suffered and will suffer) these same trials, temptations and afflictions should help strengthen our resolve to cast our burden (Ps 55:22-[note](#); cp Ps 27:14-[note](#); Ps 37:5-[note](#)) upon our faithful God (see His attribute - Faithfulness). Our mortal enemy, the devil (diabolos), who specializes in the strategy of "divide and conquer", wants each believer to believe that their trial is unique and that they alone are suffering alone! (cp 1Pe 5:9-note, 1Pe 5:10-note, 1Pe 1:6-note; 1Pe 2:21-note; 1Pe 3:14-note; 1Pe 4:12, 13-note; Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1Th 3:3-note; 2Ti 3:12-note).

(2) God can be trusted in your trial and temptation. He is sovereign (see His attribute - Sovereignty) and because He is sovereign, He is in control. Therefore He is trustworthy. We can rely on Him as we are experiencing the "winds and waves" of trial and temptation. He will never forsake us and leave us alone in the "dark night" of our trial (even though we may feel that way at times) (Suggestion: If you are doubting the truth of the Father's faithfulness [and most of do from time to time if we are brutally honest] take a moment and ponder [slowly, like when you eat a savory steak - take time to "chew" these wonderful passages that speak about our great and awesome God -- He 13:5, 6-note, Dt 4:31, 31:6, 7, 8, Josh 1:5, 9, Ps 27:1-[note](#), Ps 37:25-[note](#), Ps 46:1-[note](#), Ps 46:2-[note](#), Ps 46:7-[note](#), Isa 41:10, 13, 17, 42:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1Sa 12:22, 1Chr 28:20, 2Chr 20:17, 32:8, Ro 8:31-note, Php 4:11, 12-note, Php 4:13-note; 2Ti 4:16, 17-note). (Related resource: Fear, How to Handle It)

(3) God will not allow too great a temptation or test to come into your life although it might feel that way. He is not trying to destroy us, but to refine us (cp Ps 66:10-[note](#) which speaks of Israel but is applicable to saints of all ages -[Spurgeon's note](#)) and conform us to the image of His Son (Ro 8:29-note; Php 3:21-note) Who was also tested in the days of His flesh (He 2:18-note).

(4). With every temptation or test, there is the way of escape We can be sure of and should be looking for God's provision of the specific way of escape that will allow us to walk through the time of temptation or test and thereby to bear up under it.

Ray Pritchard - While that verse is most encouraging, it must not be taken for granted. The **way of escape** is always there, but if not taken, it may disappear! (ED: YOU MAY WANT TO READ THAT AGAIN!). In most situations it will not be an angel's voice but just a fleeting thought, "This is wrong. Don't do it." (ED: IN ADDITION TO THOUGHTS, I HAVE EXPERIENCED A TIMELY PHONE CALL, CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, APPEARANCE OF A PERSON WHO WAS UNEXPECTED, ETC). Every sin is a choice to do wrong. Before you make that choice, you always have another choice. That other choice is your "way of escape."

Perhaps you've heard about the little boy who was lying under an apple tree. The farmer asked, 'What are you trying to do? Steal an apple?' "No, sir, I'm trying not to," he replied. Many of are trying not to, but we fail because we lie down under the apple tree.

In sexual temptation, the "way of escape" may only last a moment. The sad story of Samson reminds us of what happens a man keeps making the wrong choices. It's too late to decide to do right when you wake up with your head in Delilah's lap. At that point his doom was sealed. The same thing happens to any of us when we let our emotions drive our decisions. But for a moment, before you put the pedal to the metal and go wild, the way of escape is always there. That's why the Bible tells us to "flee from sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18+) and "flee the evil desires of youth" (2 Timothy 2:22+).

When we repeatedly give in to temptation, something deadly begins to happen. Sin builds a certain force in your life that is difficult to overcome. The Bible speaks of a seared conscience (1 Timothy 4:2). When that happens the choice to do wrong becomes progressively easier. The “way of escape” is always there; you simply do not see it any longer. That is the danger of saying yes when you ought to say no. An ingrained pattern of wrong-doing cannot easily be changed. That’s why it’s crucial to say “No” to temptation the very first time.

Sixth, meditate on the Word of God daily. Psalm 119:11 says, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” Jesus prayed, “Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth” (John 17:17 New Living Translation). The Word of God not only tells us how to live, it also provides the power we need to make the right choices.

Seventh, remember that the Holy Spirit lives with you. If Jesus were visibly beside us, how would we act? What would we say? What would we watch? Where would we not go? The problem is that He is not visibly with us, so we feel free to do what we want without visible restraint. But we need to realize that the Holy Spirit is inside us, indwelling us. We are his home, his temple. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20+) So wherever we go, we are taking Him along with us; what we watch, we watch through the eyes of His dwelling place; what we say issues from His home; when we are rude and obnoxious, He is suffering the indignity of such action coming from where He lives.

There is one final thought that will help us in the hour of temptation. Hebrews 12:2+ tells us to “fix our eyes on Jesus.” Take a long look at the Son of God who struggled in the wilderness and won the victory over the devil. If he won the battle, so can we because his divine power is available to us today.

As I have shared these principles with many people, they have discovered that God is indeed as good as His Word. He will never allow us to be tempted beyond our limits. I have seen the weakest Christians triumph over the Goliaths of life through His power.

Temptation is the common experience of the people of God. We will never escape it as long as we live in a fallen world. But God has given us everything we need to win the battle every time.

Stand and fight, child of God. The Lord is on your side. ([From Temptation to Triumph - Keep Believing Ministries](#))

Guzik - The **way of escape** does not lead us to a place where we escape all temptation (that is heaven alone); the way of escape leads us to the place where we may be able to bear it. We are reminded that **to be tempted is not sin**; but to **entertain** temptation, or **surrender** to temptation is sin. When we bear temptation, Satan often condemns us for being tempted (cp Rev 12:10+note, Job 1:9,10, 11, 2:5, Zec 3:1,2), but it is that condemnation from Satan the Christian does not need to accept (cp Eph 6:13-note, James 4:7, 1Pe 5:9-note)! At a market, a little boy standing by some candy looked like he was going to put some in his pocket and walk out the door. A clerk watched the boy for a long time, and finally spoke to him. "Looks like you're trying to take some candy" the clerk asked. The boy replied, "You're wrong, mister. I'm trying not to." For the time being, he was able to bear it!

Charles Hodge comments...

No temptation , i.e. no trial , whether in the form of seductions or of afflictions, has taken you but such as is common to man ; literally human , accommodated to human strength such as men are able to bear. ‘You have been subjected to no superhuman or extraordinary temptations. Your trials hitherto have been moderate; and God will not suffer you to be unduly tried.’ This is the ordinary interpretation of this passage, and one which gives a simple and natural sense.

It may, however, mean, ‘Take heed lest ye fall (1Co 10:12). The temptations which you have hitherto experienced are moderate compared to those to which you are hereafter to be subjected.’ In this view, it is not so much an encouragement, as a warning that all danger was not over. The apostle is supposed to refer to those peculiar trials which were to attend “the last times.” As these times were at hand, the Corinthians were in circumstances which demanded peculiar care. They should not run into temptation, for the days were approaching when, if it were possible, even the elect would be deceived.

As, however, there is no contrast between the present and the future intimated in the passage, the common interpretation is the more natural one.

But God is faithful . He has promised to preserve His people, and therefore His fidelity is concerned in not allowing them to be unduly tempted. Here, as in 1Co 1:9, and every where else in Scripture, the security of believers is referred neither to the strength of the principle of grace infused into them by regeneration, nor to their own firmness, but to the fidelity of God. He has promised that those given to the Son as His inheritance,

should never perish. They are kept, therefore, by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, 1 Peter 1:4 (note). This promise of security, however, is a promise of security from sin, and therefore those who fall into willful and habitual sin are not the subjects of the promise. Should they fall, it is after a severe struggle, and they are soon renewed again unto repentance (cp Ps 51:10-[Spurgeon's note](#)). The absolute security of believers (1Pe 1:5-note; cp Jn 10:29, Jude 1:24, 25, Ro 8:38,39-notes), and the necessity of constant watchfulness, are perfectly consistent. Those whom God has promised to save, he has promised to render watchful.

Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, i.e. able to bear. This is the proof of his fidelity.

But will with the temptation make a way of escape This means either, that when the temptation comes, God will make a way of escape; or, that when God brings the temptation He will also bring **the way of escape**. In the latter sense God is regarded as the Author of the temptation, in the former He is not. The latter is to be preferred on account of the sun, with (word study - sun/syn). 'He will make with the temptation a way of escape,' i.e. He makes the one, He will make the other. The apostle James indeed says, "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man," James 1:13 (note). To tempt there, however, means to solicit, or attempt to seduce into sin. In that sense God tempts no man. But He does often put their virtue to the test, as in the case of Abraham (Ge 22:1, He 11:17-note, Jas 2:21-note cp Dt 8:2, 3, 13:1, 2, 3, 1Pe 1:6, 7-notes). And in that sense he tempts or tries them. What the apostle here says is, that when God thus tries his people it will not be beyond their strength, and that he will always make a way of escape that they may be able to bear it. This expresses the design of God in making a way of escape. (The genitive *tou dunasthai*, etc., is the genitive of design).

Oswald Chambers exhorts us to...

Steadfastly endure the trial and you will get direction from it. "What I tell you in the darkness, that speak ye in the light" (Matthew 10:27). Darkness is the time to listen, not to speak; if you do speak, you will speak in the wrong mood; you will be inclined to criticize God's providential arrangements for other lives and to tell Him He has no business to allow these things. As long as you are in the dark you do not know what God is doing; immediately you get into the light, you discover it. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience..." (Revelation 3:10-[note](#)). The test always comes along the line of patience. (He Shall Glorify Me)

From an article in **Discipleship Magazine** on enduring temptation in area of sexuality...

As you develop your moral filter, don't presume on its strength. Our minds can be so quickly overwhelmed with ungodly stimuli that we can no longer sift it out or reject its implications. (cp 1Sa 11:2... could David have been going to the roof to have some time alone with God? If so it points out the ever present danger of temptation) Like a dam that restrains water, our grid may withstand a certain level of pressure from immoral input. But also like a dam, when the pressure is too great, the grid will succumb to it. Once weakened, a dam collapses (Pr 25:28 - Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit.). Once collapsed, the forces formerly controlled reign supreme, wreaking devastation and ruin. Many Christians—including Christian leaders—have overestimated the strength of their mental dams. They carelessly let tiny rivulets of impurity join forces into streams and ultimately a mighty river too powerful for the dam of moral conviction to restrain. The once guarded territory of their minds (see value of taking every thought, repeat every anti-God thought, captive - 2Cor 10:5-note) is ruthlessly flooded by forces they can no longer control. Achan's confession in Joshua 7:21 contains an instructive progression of verbs: He saw, he coveted, he took, then he hid (cp Pr 28:13+ Nu 32:23+). His sin was not in seeing the robe, silver, and gold, but he permitted his eyes not only to glance, but also to gaze upon these forbidden treasures (cp Job 31:1, 7+= note relation between eyes and heart; Ps 101:3+- note effect of Mt 5:27-note, 1Sa 11:2-5)

Adam Clarke...

that is, small, short, moderate. Your temptations or trials have been but trifling in comparison of those endured by the Israelites; they might have been easily resisted and overcome. Besides, God will not suffer you to be tried above the strength he gives you; but as the trial comes, he will provide you with sufficient strength to resist it; as the trial comes in, he will make your way out. The words are very remarkable, "*He will, with the temptation, make the deliverance, or way out.*" Satan is never permitted to block up our way, without the providence of God making a way through the wall. God ever makes a breach in his otherwise impregnable fortification. Should an upright soul get into difficulties and straits, he may rest assured that there is a way out, as there was a way in; and that the trial shall never be above the strength that God shall give him to bear it.

Albert Barnes...

God knows what his people are able to endure, and as he has entire control of all that can effect them, he will adapt all trials to their strength, and will enable them to bear all that is appointed to them. This is a general promise, and is as applicable to other Christians as it was to the Corinthians. It was to them a positive promise, and to all in the same circumstances it may be regarded as such now. It may be used therefore, as a ground of encouragement to those who are in temptation and trial. God knows what they are able to endure; and he will sustain them in their temptations. It matters not how severe the trial; or how long it may be continued; or how much they may feel their own feebleness; yet he who has appointed the trial is abundantly able to uphold them. They may, therefore, repose their all upon him, and trust to his sustaining grace.

John Gill...

(that ye may be able to bear it) for God does not always think fit to remove at once an affliction or temptation, though at the earnest request of his people, as in the case of Paul, (2 Corinthians 12:7,8) yet he gives them grace sufficient to endure and stand up under it, yea, to get the victory of it, to be more than conquerors, and triumph over it.

Jay Adams writes that...

One of the words which is taboo in nouthetic counseling with Christian clients is the word "can't." A catchword of nouthetic counselors is, "You can't say can't." In 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul makes that point quite vividly. He says that there is no test which has overtaken you but such as is common to others. God allows no Christian to plead that his case is unique or special. There are, of course, unique features about everyone's problems. No two cases are exactly the same. But the basic elements of the problem are not significantly different from those which others have faced. Christ faced the same problems of hunger, sleeplessness, misunderstanding, hatred, discouragement and pain that Christians today must experience. Countless other Christians, in following him, also have faced these problems successfully. Knowledge of this fact brings encouragement and hope.

If the doctor says an operation is needed, it is very encouraging to know that others have successfully undergone a similar operation. Clients need such encouragement in the hour of trial. That is why Paul declares that no test is unique. But such encouragement also removes that any possibility of excusing one's self on the grounds that "my case is an exception to the rule." 1 Corinthians 10:13 allows for no such exceptions. Christians can't say "can't" because God says they can. They can cope with their problems just as Christ did, and as thousands of other Christians have done.

Secondly, Paul says that Christians can't say "can't," because even though the basic designs are not unique, temptations and tests are tailor-made to each individual; and God is the Tailor. He will not allow the Devil to tempt them above that which they are able to withstand. The book of Job stands as a sturdy witness to this promise. At any given period in his life, what a Christian is able to withstand may differ from his previous ability or from that which God will enable him to endure at a future time. But whatever the test may be at any moment, it is not beyond his ability to withstand in Christ. **Given the grace (help) of God, given his knowledge of God's Word, given the sanctification that is his to that point, given the resources of the Holy Spirit, no test is beyond his ability to withstand. It may be that it is only in stepping out to do God's will that the strength will come. God does not promise dying grace before it is time to die.**

That this is an important promise to which to refer in counseling, is evident in counseling. Most Christians who come for counseling use speech studded with the word "can't." A Client's language not only indicates what he thinks, but also influences the way he acts and reacts. If Christians continually say, in effect, "I can't do all that Christ asks me to do," instead of saying, "I can do all things that Christ requires me to do," (cp Php 4:13-note) they soon begin to believe their own rebellious lie. The lie is so flagrantly rebellious because of the nature of the promise; it is based upon the faithfulness of God. Paul introduces the promise with the words, "God is faithful..." The promise that God will not allow Christians to be tested beyond their capacity is as certain as God's nature itself. To deny it is to call God unfaithful, and a liar. So in nouthetic counseling the very use of certain words sometimes must be counteracted, because words are not only indicative of but also influence thinking, attitudes and behavior.

Counselors often come down hard on the word "can't" when they find Christians using it in counseling sessions, and they say, "You can't say 'can't.'" For so long some Christians have excused themselves with the idea that their case is unique or that they have some overwhelming "cross to bear" (a misinterpretation of the phrase) that when someone for the first time confronts them with the promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13, they are astonished. They sometimes protest and say, "But, you see, it's different with me." And yet Paul was very careful to note that no matter how difficult, their problem is not significantly different. Eventually, after an evasive attempt or two, most Christians agree that they have been living according to a false notion of responsibility and reluctantly accept Paul's promise as referring to them. When they do, an important gain has been made; a reversal of attitude has occurred, and God's promise gives rise to a growing hope. (Ibid) (Bolding added)

Frederick Godet...

the epithet **human** (refers) to the nature of the temptation: "A temptation proportioned to the strength of man;" but without isolating man from God, for **God only can give man victory even in the slightest temptation.** (Ed: Amen!) And to account more fully for this unprecedented expression, must we not contrast it with an angelic temptation? Suppose the Corinthians, impatient of the apostle's exactions, should in their ill-humor express themselves thus: "We should require to be angels to live as he demands!" "No," Paul would answer; "I do not ask of you superhuman sacrifices in the name of your Christian profession. Your faith has not put you into a situation which a weak man cannot bear; but God is faithful, and He measures the temptation to the amount of strength."

Then the apostle adds, that if the situation became difficult to such a degree as to **appear** utterly intolerable, the faithfulness of God would show itself by putting an end to such a situation. Thus everything seems to me to find its natural connection.

The words **beyond what ye are able**, come as a surprise. Has man then some power? And, if the matter in question is what man can do with the Divine help, is not the power of this help without limit? But it must not be forgotten, that if the power of God is infinite, the receptivity of the believer is limited: limited by the measure of spiritual development which he has reached, by the degree of his love for holiness and of his zeal in prayer, etc. God knows this measure, Paul means to say, and he proportions the intensity of the temptation to the degree of power which the believer is capable of receiving from Him, as the mechanician, if we may be allowed such a comparison, proportions the heat of the furnace to the resisting power of the boiler. It is evident from the words: with the temptation, that God cooperates with it in the sense we have spoken of above, and this is precisely the reason why He can also bring it to an end at any moment He chooses.

The issue (way out), **ekbasis**, may be obtained in two ways. Either God by His providence can put an end to the situation itself, or by a ray of light from on high He can rid the believer's heart of the fascinating charm exercised over him by the tempting object, and change into disgust the seductive attraction which it exercised. Of the two ways, the struggle to the death between inclination and duty issues in the victory of the believer. The conclusion is this:

"Victory being assured over the temptations which God sends you, seek not to throw yourselves into those which He does not send" (1Cor 10:14).

Hofmann rightly observes, that nothing rendered the breach (the break) of the converted heathen with his past and with his surroundings so conspicuous as his refusal to take part in the sacrificial feasts. And so, many Corinthians sought to persuade themselves that they might harmonize this participation with their Christian profession. Had they not declared the nothingness of idols? Such a feast, therefore, had no longer for them the character of a sacrifice; it was a purely social act, to which the great maxim of Christian liberty in regard to external things applied: "All things are lawful for me." (1Co 10:23) Paul well knew that here was the most difficult sacrifice to be obtained. Accordingly with what prudence does he proceed! His whole handling of the question is a masterpiece of strategy. In chaps. 8 and 9 he treats the Corinthians as strong; only for the sake of their brethren does he ask them to deny themselves meats offered to idols; he encourages them by describing the sacrifices which he has made and is daily making for the Churches and the gospel. Then suddenly (1Co 9:23) he passes to an entirely new order of considerations: "And if I act thus," he adds, "it is also for the sake of my own salvation, which I should certainly compromise by acting otherwise." Then he demonstrates the reality of this danger by the case of the Israelites who drew down on themselves the Divine condemnation by revolting against the self-denial which the wilderness life imposed on them. "Do ye also, therefore, fear to fall by refusing to God the sacrifices which He asks of you!" ([Godet Commentary Online](#))

Charles Hodges commentary on 1Corinthians 10:13...

No temptation, i.e. no trial, whether in the form of seductions or of afflictions, has taken you but such as is common to man; literally human, accommodated to human strength such as men are able to bear. 'You have been subjected to no superhuman or extraordinary temptations. Your trials hitherto have been moderate; and God will not suffer you to be unduly tried.' This is the ordinary interpretation of this passage, and one which gives a simple and natural sense.

It may, however, mean, 'Take heed lest ye fall (1Co 10:12). The temptations which you have hitherto experienced are moderate compared to those to which you are hereafter to be subjected.' In this view, it is not so much an encouragement, as a warning that all danger was not over. The apostle is supposed to refer to those peculiar trials which were to attend "the last times." As these times were at hand, the Corinthians were in circumstances which demanded peculiar care. They should not run into temptation, for the days were approaching when, if it were possible, even the elect would be deceived (Ed: Jesus' warning in Mt 24:24 referring to the time of Jacob's distress or the **Great Tribulation**). As, however, there is no contrast between the present and the future intimated in the passage, the common interpretation is the more natural one.

But God is faithful. He has promised to preserve His people, and therefore His fidelity is concerned in not allowing them to be

unduly tempted. Here, as in 1Cor 1:9, and every where else in Scripture, the security of believers is referred neither to the strength of the principle of grace infused into them by regeneration, nor to their own firmness, but to the fidelity of God. He has promised that those given to the Son as His inheritance, should never perish (Jn 10:28, 29). They are kept, therefore, by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, 1Peter 1:4-note. This promise of security, however, is a promise of security from sin, and therefore those who fall into willful and habitual sin are not the subjects of the promise. Should they fall, it is after a severe struggle, and they are soon renewed again unto repentance. The absolute security of believers, and the necessity of constant watchfulness (cp Pr 4:23-note), are perfectly consistent.

**Those whom God has promised to save,
He has promised to render watchful.**

[\(Online\)](#)

John MacArthur emphasizes that when we encounter a test or temptation...

The way out is **"through."** Listen carefully, the way out of the temptation is to **endure it as a trial and never let it become a solicitation to sin** which effects a sinful response. The way out is to take it as a test and a trial and not internalize it so that it begins to solicit sin. So you've been wronged, so you've been falsely accused, so you've been maligned and treated unkindly and unjustly. Accept it, accept it with joy and you will endure it and that is the way of escape.

So someone had promised you something and they didn't fulfill it, and you had tied some of your greatest expectations to that promise. Accept it, understand it, acknowledge it as a trial that is intended to strengthen your faith and the way out is through it. Sustaining it as a test, never letting it be turned into a temptation. That you may be able to bear it or endure it is, hupophero. It literally means to "get under it and carry it." Usually we are looking for a quick and easy route, but the only way out is "through it." You remain under it, but you endure it as a test, with the view that God is using this to bring about my maturity.

You say, "But how do you do that?" Well, you know what the "keys" are, and I only mention them:

1. Meditating on the Word. (Ps 1:1-note, Ps 1:2-note, Ps 1:3-note; Joshua 1:8-note) Psalm 119, what does it say in verse 11? "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin." When the test comes, you turn to the Word of God, you don't listen to your own lusts, you don't listen to the solicitations that your own heart will conjure up. When the test comes you turn to the Word of God, you listen to that.

2. Secondly, you pray. I think what Jesus taught us to pray, in the prayer called the Lord's Prayer, better called the Disciple's Prayer. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us." (Mt 6:13-note, cp Mt 26:41) You turn to God and you cry out to Him to keep this test from becoming a temptation.

3. A third thing that you would do, would be to take the shield of faith (Ep 6:16-note) That means to trust God, no matter how the fiery darts may be coming at you, understand that God has a purpose—and trust God for that purpose (cp Pr 3:5,6+, 2Chr 14:11, 12, 20:20, 21, 22, 23, 24; Ps 4:5-[Spurgeon note](#)), Ps 9:10-[Spurgeon note](#), Ps 37:5-[Spurgeon note](#); Ps 91:2-[Spurgeon note](#); Isa 12:2, 26:3, Jer 17:7, 8)

4. Another important element, maybe a fourth one, is to focus on Christ (cp Heb 12:2-note) He endured every temptation to the maximum and so you can turn to Him, and you can say to Him, "My faithful High Priest, you know what I am going through? Strengthen me for this."

Simple, really, we know these things:

--When the test comes, turn to the Word.

--When the test comes turn to the Lord in prayer.

--When the test comes retain your faith in God's purposes through the test.

--When the test comes look to Christ (He 12:2-note), the faithful High Priest who will nurture you through this test (He 2:18-note)

No, there is no test that is more than we can bear. When we fall and the test becomes a temptation, and the temptation becomes a sin, it is not that we are victims, it is that we made bad choices. We chose not to turn to the Word of God, but rather to listen to our own hearts and our own lusts enticed us. We chose not to cry out to God and ask Him to lead us away from this and deliver us from evil, but rather we pursued the evil because we wanted the hankering of our own flesh to be fulfilled. We failed to trust that God had a divine purpose in the test, and that we could enjoy the test not for its own sake, but for what it yields and we wanted it immediately removed. We turned away from God, perhaps even angry at Him. And if we failed it's because we

took our attention away from Christ, the faithful High Priest who could nurture us through it and focused on something else.

It should be true of us, that the next time we come back to the Lord's Table the list should be shorter. Know this, nothing is going to happen to you between now and the next time, that is so powerful, that you can't possibly deal with it. You can. One thing happened at your salvation--sums it up. It is this: Sin no longer has dominion over you. ([Ref](#))

Have you allowed the test
to become a temptation?
And the temptation
to become a sin?

I have sadly fallen into this trap too many times. And what was initially only temptation turned into sin and fellowship with the Father was disrupted. But just as our Faithful Father provides the "way out" for each trial, He also provides the "way back" from each sin, though confession (1John 1:9), repentance, restoration and rest (cp Acts 3:19, 20 - referring to the initial experience of salvation for Peter's Jewish audience but applicable to all saints when we experience the times of rebellion which come from our fallen flesh!). Come to Him now and receive His offer of cleansing and renewal as did King David (cp Ps 51:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)

Alan Carr...

A. There are three words to remember when facing temptation: **Flight, Faith, Fight.**

B. To Overcome The Flesh We Need Flight - The key to defeating fleshly temptations is to flee from them. (1Co 6:18 - "flee fornication"; 1Co 10:14 - "flee idolatry"; 2Ti 2:22 {note} - "flee youthful lusts") (Ill. You cannot expose yourself to fleshly temptation and expect to walk away untouched - Pr 6:27 {see note} - Ill. Situations to avoid!) (Ill. Joseph and Potiphar's wife - Ge 39:12)

C. To Overcome The World We Need Faith - Faith that Jesus will take care of us when we willingly give up the attachment to worldly things. If we are loving the world, we are not loving God - 1Jn 2:15; Jas 4:4. If you really want victory over the world, then love Jesus more than you love it - He12:2 {note}. Ill. It is our faith in him that offers us the victory - 1Jn 5:4.

D. To Overcome The Devil We Must Fight - If we stand up to him and fight, he will flee - Jas 4:7. You cannot run away from him, but you can drive him away from you. You must face him in the power of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. He doesn't fear you, but he trembles before the blood of the Lamb! Fight Satan and he will flee! (Ep 4:27 {note}; 1Pe 5:8 {note}) (Jesus and His temptations - Mt 4:1, 2, 3, 4ff) ([1 Corinthians 10:1-13 How To Tame Temptation](#))

ILLUSTRATION - Load Limits - Joe Stowell

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" 1 Corinthians 10:13

Daddy, can I help you?" It was my four-year-old son, Matt, who was watching me carry cartons of empty pop bottles to the car. Back then you could return them for a dime apiece, so after months of stacking them up in the garage, I was off to collect the cash bonanza.

I said, "Sure, Matt," and he picked up a carton of bottles and put them in the car. When we got to the store, he grabbed his carton of bottles and shuffled along next to me across the big parking lot. About half way to the store, obviously exhausted, he looked up and said, "Dad, I can't carry this anymore."

Count on it, I didn't say, "Listen, Kid, you started this, so pick up that carton right now and finish what you started!" Of course not!

I took the carton out of his hands, because I knew it was too heavy for him to handle. As his earthly father, I understood what his limits were and helped him carry the load.

Thankfully, our heavenly Father understands our **load limit** and comes alongside to help. It's hard to stick it out during difficult times when the trouble in our lives seems far **too heavy** and there is **no end in sight. It's in times like these that we feel like giving up—like we can't go on.** But God's Word reminds us that

"God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will

also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

It's important to note that this verse is talking about more than just bearing up under **temptation**. In the original Greek, the word temptation actually means "**all kinds of trials**."

Ever feel like you're in the middle of all kinds of trials? The problem with problems is that they have a tendency to drain us of our strength—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And that's when our adversary likes to launch his attack. When we're weak, he haunts us with thoughts like:

- How could a loving God allow this to happen?
- God has brought you to this place and has just left you here.
- Or, You're beyond help—God can't help you now.

But when you start thinking these thoughts (**ED: AND REMEMBER THE BATTLE IS NOT A "POWER STRUGGLE" WITH THE ENEMY [YOUR FLESH OR THE DEVIL] BUT IS IN OUR MIND [WE BEGIN "THINKING THESE THOUGHTS"] AND THE STRUGGLE IS OVER TRUTH AND WHAT GOD SAYS IS TRUE ABOUT US!**), you need to know that they are flat out lies from the pit. You can be sure that they don't reflect God's heart for you during difficult times.

In the Old Testament, one of God's names is [Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide](#)—our Provider—and He always lives up to His name. He stands ready to provide abundant grace so that we can bear up until He has finished His work in the trial (2 Corinthians 12:7-10[±]). He gives us a peace that passes understanding as we trust and rely on Him with a grateful heart (Philippians 4:6-7[±]). He gives wisdom to see our tough times from His point of view (James 1:5[±]). He gives us the assurance that He will stick it out with us and not leave or forsake us, so that we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What man can do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6[±]).

So, chin up! Our troubles and trials have not escaped the notice of the One who comes alongside to help when it seems like the load is too much to bear. The One who knows your load limit promises to limit your load!

YOUR JOURNEY...

- **Think back to a time when God helped you "bear up" under the pressure of difficult circumstances** Write a paragraph in your journal about how God's power helped you through.
- **What promises of God can you claim to find strength in your time of trouble?** Pray them back to God with a thankful heart until you sense His peace and presence in the midst of your pain.
- **Write a prayer of thanksgiving for a specific event that God helped you through.**
- **Read the following Scriptures for examples of Moses and Hannah who did this:** Exodus 15:1-18; 1 Samuel 2:1-10.
- **Find someone who needs help "bearing up."** Use Scripture to encourage that person through a written note or a phone call.
- ([Strength for the Journey](#))

Victory Over Temptation- Wanda Johnson, a single mother with five children, was on her way to the pawn shop, where she was hoping to get a loan of \$60 for her TV set. Then something bizarre happened. As an armored truck filled with sacks of money drove past her, its rear door flew open, and a bag dropped out. Wanda stopped and picked up the sack. When she counted the cash, she found that it totaled \$160,000.

A battle raged in her soul. That money would pay all her bills and provide for the needs of her children. But it wasn't hers to keep.

After a fierce 4-hour struggle with her moral convictions, Wanda called the police and turned in the money. Her sense of doing the right thing won a victory over the temptation to keep what wasn't hers to keep.

How strong is your ethical fiber? Will it break down if you are faced with an enticing chance to do something wrong? Adam and Eve, as well as Jesus, were attacked by Satan on three fronts: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Our first parents succumbed to the serpent's solicitation (Genesis 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). Jesus did not (Matthew 4:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

No matter what evil is pressuring us, let's follow Jesus' example and do what's right.— Vernon C. Grounds [Our Daily Bread](#). [Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin—

Each victory will help you some other to win;
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus—He will carry you through.—Palmer

To withstand temptation, stand with Christ.

Ice-Cream Man - Little Jeff was trying his best to save money to buy his mother a present. It was a terrible struggle because he gave in so easily to the temptation to buy goodies from the ice-cream man whenever the brightly colored van came through the neighborhood.

One night after his mother had tucked him in bed, she overheard him pray, "Please, God, help me run away when the ice-cream man comes tomorrow." Even at his young age he had learned that one of the best ways to overcome temptation is to avoid what appeals to our weaknesses.

All believers are tempted to sin. Yet they need not give in. The Lord provides the way to be victorious over evil enticements (1Corinthians 10:13). But we must do our part. Sometimes that involves avoiding situations that would contribute to our spiritual defeat.

The apostle Paul admonished Timothy to run away from the evil desires of youth (2Ti 2:22-note). He was to keep his distance from the temptations that might cause him to yield because of their strong appeal. That's good advice.

If possible, we should never let ourselves be in the wrong places or with people who will tempt us to do the things we should be avoiding.

Be sure to run from the "ice-cream man"!— Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It's wise to flee when tempted—
A fool is one who'd stay;
For those who toy with evil
Soon learn it doesn't pay. —D. De Haan

We fall into temptation when we don't flee from it.

Yield Not- Imagine a song with a message so powerful it could stop a prison riot. According to one account, the song [Yield Not To Temptation](#) served that purpose. As the story goes, a group of women prisoners had been allowed out of their cells to listen to a visiting speaker. During the meeting, the supervisor gave an order that some of the prisoners didn't like, so they began to scream and hurl threats at her. The confrontation was escalating.

The supervisor sent for help, and it came in an unusual way. A voice was heard singing over the tumult of the upset prisoners: "Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin; each victory will help you some other to win." Amazingly, the rebellion quieted, and the women joined in singing as they filed back to their cells.

We save ourselves a lot of trouble by not yielding to the temptation to let anger control us. Likewise, we protect ourselves when we "yield not." Yielding not to the temptation to lie protects us from a loss of respect and further misrepresentations. Yielding not to the temptation of greed helps us avoid a gnawing dissatisfaction. But most important, when we "yield not" to temptation, we please God.

With each temptation God provides an "escape" (1Corinthians 10:13). You'll find it as you yield to Him. — Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Ask the Savior to help you,
Comfort, strengthen, and keep you;
He is willing to aid you—
He will carry you through. —Palmer

To escape temptation, flee to God.

Tested And True - A young nurse was assisting a surgeon for the first time. As he was completing the operation, she told him he had used 12 sponges, but she could account for only 11. The doctor curtly replied that he had removed them all from inside the patient. The nurse insisted that one was missing, but the doctor declared he would proceed with sewing up the incision.

The nurse, her eyes blazing, said, "You can't do that! Think of the patient!" The doctor smiled and, lifting his foot, showed the nurse the twelfth sponge, which he had deliberately dropped on the floor. "You'll do fine!" he said. He had been testing her.

Daniel's three friends faced a different kind of test (Daniel 3:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30), but they too would not budge. They knew their refusal to worship the image might result in their death, yet they never wavered. They proved they were true to God by standing firm.

The Lord still permits trials and temptations to enter the lives of His children. The challenge may come as an opportunity to gratify the lusts of the flesh, or as a series of disheartening circumstances. Whatever form it takes, we must not yield. Rather, we must stand for what is right and trust God to supply the grace we need (1Corinthians 10:13).

Are you "tested and true"? — Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**A gem cannot be polished without friction,
nor can we be perfected without trial.**

God is faithful, who ... with the temptation will also make the way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

In 1346, during the Hundred Years' War, the English army of King Edward III met a French battalion at Crecy, France. The King's son, Prince Edward, led one vital division of the British force while Edward III stood nearby with a strong band of soldiers, ready to send relief if needed. Soon after the battle started, the prince thought he was in danger, so he sent for help. But the king didn't come. Young Edward sent another message, pleading for immediate assistance. His father responded by telling the courier, "Go tell my son that I am not so inexperienced a commander as not to know when help is needed, nor so careless a father as not to send it."

This story illustrates the heavenly Father's relationship with believers as we battle temptation and sin. Often we cry out for help, but it seems that God sends no relief. Yet at no time does He withdraw His eye from our precarious position. He never allows us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, and when He sees that we are about to be overcome He rushes to our aid or provides a way to escape. So we need not get frantic—our Father is aware of our situation. In 1 Corinthians 1:9 the apostle Paul said, "God is faithful." Commenting on this, Ambrose Serle noted, "He is wise to foresee and provide for all my dangers. He is faithful to perfect and perform all His promises."

No matter how hot the conflict, the Lord is ready to intervene at the right moment. He is always standing by. —P. R. Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**When God sends us,
He also goes with us.**

Concerned about his personal life, Ed went to his pastor for help. After listening to the young man's mild list of supposed sins, the wise preacher felt that he had not been completely honest. "Are you sure that's all?" the preacher asked. "Yes, pastor," Ed said. "Are you positive you haven't been entertaining any impure thoughts lately?" the pastor continued. "Oh, no," Ed replied, "but they've sure been entertaining me."

Temptation may be defined as a desire for sinful pleasure. If it didn't offer pleasure, it would be easy to resist. Perhaps that's why we understand the truth behind the cartoon in which a man says, "I don't mind fleeing temptation—as long as I can leave a forwarding address." And, if we're honest, we admit that sin often takes place first in our mind. For many people, illicit sexual thoughts provide pleasure.

Temptation is not sin. For it to develop into sin, we have to welcome it, dwell on it, and enjoy it. For example, the temptation to get back at someone who has hurt us is wrong only when we begin to think about ways to harm that person and get revenge. Paul said that every thought must be brought "into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2Co 10:5).

When we allow wrong thoughts into our minds, we must confess them as sin, ask God to help us, and then fill our minds with good

and pure thoughts. When we submit to God and resist the devil, we can say no to tempting thoughts. —D. C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Character is shaped by what the mind takes in.

Be Careful! - Several years ago my wife Carolyn and I were hiking on Mount Rainier in Washington when we came to a swollen, glacial stream. Someone had flattened one side of a log and dropped it across the river to form a crude bridge, but there was no handrail and the log was slippery.

The prospect of walking on the wet log was frightening, and Carolyn didn't want to cross. But she found the courage, and slowly, carefully she inched her way to the other side.

On the way back we had to walk on the same log, and she did so with the same care. "Are you afraid?" I asked. "Of course," she replied, "that's what keeps me safe." Again, fully aware of the danger, she made her way to safety.

Much of life poses moral danger for us. We should never assume in any situation that we're incapable of falling. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1Corinthians 10:12). Given the opportunity and circumstances, any of us are capable of falling into any sin. To believe otherwise is sheer folly.

We must watch and pray and arm ourselves for every occasion by putting our total trust in God (Ephesians 6:13-note). "God is faithful" (1Corinthians 10:13), and He will give us the strength to keep from falling. — David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The hand of God protects our way
When we would do His will;
And if through danger we must go,
We know He's with us still.
—D. De Haan

God provides the armor, but we must put it on

Load Limit - We've all seen load-limit signs on highways, bridges, and elevators. Knowing that too much strain can cause severe damage or complete collapse, engineers determine the exact amount of stress that various materials can safely endure. Posted warnings tell us not to exceed the maximum load.

Human beings also have their load limits, which vary from person to person. Some people, for example, can bear the pressure of trial and temptation better than others; yet everyone has a breaking point and can take only so much.

At times, circumstances and people seem to be pushing us beyond what we can bear. But the Lord knows our limitations and never allows any difficulties to enter our lives that exceed our strength and ability to endure. This is especially true when we're enticed by sin. According to 1Corinthians 10:13, "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able."

So when trials and temptations press down on you, take courage. Remember, your heavenly Father knows the limits of your ability to stand up under life's pressures. Draw on His strength; no temptation will ever be greater than that! — Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When sorrows assail us or terrors draw nigh,
His love will not fail us, He'll guide with His eye;
And when we are fainting and ready to fail,
He'll give what is lacking and make us prevail.
—Anon.

If you yield to God, you won't give in to sin

Afflictions

- **Deliverance from, promised to Believers** - Job 5:19 Ps 91:3, 116:8 Isa 46:4 1Co 10:13 2Co 1:10 2Ti 4:18 He 2:15 2Pe 2:9
- **Often Blessings in Disguise** -Job 5:17 Job 23:10 Job 34:31 Ps 119:67 Eccl 7:2 Jn 2:2 Zech 13:9 2Co 4:17 He 12:11 Re 7:14
- **Special Comforting Passages** Job 5:19 Job 11:16 Ps 27:5, 30:5, 42:5, 103:13, 119:50, 138:7 Isa 46:4, 61:3, 63:9 Mt 5:4 Jn 14:1 Ro 8:28 1Th 3:7 1 Th 4:13
- **Despondency, Moments of, in the Lives of Good Men**
- **Moses** -Numbers 11:15
- **Joshua** -Joshua 7:7
- **Elijah** -1Kings 19:4
- **Job** -Job 10:1 Psalms 31:10
- **David** -Psalms 42:6, 69:2, 73:16, 137:1
- **Jeremiah** -Jeremiah 15:10 Micah 7:1
- **The Disciples** - Luke 24:17
- **True Believers do not Faint under** - 2Co 4:1, 4:16 Ga 6:9 Ep 3:13 He 12:5 Re 2:3
- **Crying to God in, examples of** -Ex 2:23, 14:10, 17:4 Jdg 3:9; 4:3; 6:7 1Sa 7:9 1Ki 17:20 1Chr 5:20 2Chr 13:14, 14:11 Ps 34:6, 61:2, Lam 2:18
- **Sometimes Prolonged** - Psalms 6:3, 13:1, 35:17, 79:5, 80:4, 89:46, 90:13, 94:3 Hab 1:2 Zech 1:12

PROMISES CONCERNING

- **Promises to the Afflicted** - Job 11:16
- **Brighter Days** -Psalms 30:5
- **Deliverance** -Psalms 34:19, 34:20
- **Divine Care in Sickness** -Psalms 41:3, 50:15, 94:12, 138:7
- **Comfort of God's Presence** -Isaiah 43:2
- **An Eternal Home** -John 14:1 John 14:2
- **All Things work for the Believer's Good** -Romans 8:28 2 Corinthians 4:17
- **Sufficiency of Divine Grace** -2 Corinthians 12:9
- **Fellowship in Christ's Sufferings** -1 Peter 4:12 1 Peter 4:13
- **Membership in the Company of the Redeemed** -Revelation 7:13 Revelation 7:14
- **Final Deliverance from Sorrow and Pain** -Revelation 21:4
- **Refining Influence of** - Job 23:10 Ps 66:10 Isa 1:25, 48:10 Je 9:7 Zech 13:9 Mal 3:3 1Pe 1:7, 4:12

REJOICING IN TRIBULATION, EXAMPLES OF

- **Famine** -Habakkuk 3:17, 18 Matthew 5:12 Luke 6:23
- **Persecution** -Acts 5:41
- **Imprisonment** -Acts 16:23 Acts 16:25
- **Poverty** -2 Corinthians 6:10 Colossians 1:24
- **Loss of Property** -Hebrews 10:34
- **Fiery Trials** -1 Peter 4:12 1 Peter 4:13

RESIGNATION IN TRIAL, EXAMPLES OF

- **EI**

Torrey's Topics: Affliction, Consolation Under

- God is the Author and Giver of -Ps 23:4; Ro 15:5; 2Co 1:3; 7:6; Col 1:11; 2Th 2:16,17
- Christ is the Author and Giver of -Is 61:2; John 14:18; 2Co 1:5
- The Holy Spirit is the Author and Giver of -John 14:16,17; 15:26; 16:7; Acts 9:31
- Promised -Is 51:3,12; 66:13; Ezekiel 14:22,23; Hosea 2:14; Zechariah 1:17
- Through the Holy Scriptures -Psalms 119:50,76; Romans 15:4

- By ministers of the gospel -Is 40:1,2; 1Corinthians 14:3; 2Corinthians 1:4,6
- Is abundant -Psalms 71:21; Is 66:11
- Is strong -Hebrews 6:18
- Is everlasting -2Thessalonians 2:16
- Is a cause of praise -Is 12:1; 49:13
- Pray for -Psalms 119:82
- Saints should administer to each other -1Th 4:18; 5:11,14
- Is sought in vain from the world -Ps 69:20; Eccl 4:1; La 1:2
- To those who mourn for sin -Ps 51:17; Is 1:18; 40:1,2; 61:1; Mic 7:18,19; Lk 4:18
- To the troubled in mind -Ps 42:5; 94:19; John 14:1,27; 16:20,22
- To those deserted by friends -Psalms 27:10; 41:9, 10, 11, 12; John 14:18; 15:18,19
- To the persecuted -Deuteronomy 33:27
- To the poor -Psalms 10:14; 34:6,9,10
- To the sick -Psalms 41:3
- To the tempted -Ro 16:20; 1Co 10:13; 2Co 12:9-note; James 1:12; 4:7; 2Pe 2:9; Re 2:10
- In prospect of death -Job 19:25,26; Ps 23:4; John 14:2; 2Co 5:1; 1Th 4:14; He 4:9; Re 7:14, 15, 16, 17; 14:13
- Under the infirmities of age -Psalms 71:9,18

Afflictions Made Beneficial

- In promoting the glory of God -John 9:1, 2, 3; 11:3,4; 21:18,19
- In exhibiting the power and faithfulness of God -Psalms 34:19,20; 2Corinthians 4:8-11
- In teaching us the will of God -Psalms 119:71; Isaiah 26:9; Micah 6:9
- In turning us to God -Deuteronomy 4:30,31; Nehemiah 1:8,9; Psalms 78:34; Isaiah 10:20,21; Hosea 2:6,7
- In keeping us from again departing from God -Job 34:31,32; Isaiah 10:20; Ezekiel 14:10,11
- In leading us to seek God in prayer -Judges 4:3; Jeremiah 31:18; Lamentations 2:17-19; Hosea 5:14,15; Jonah 2:1
- In convincing us of sin -Job 36:8,9; Psalms 119:67; Luke 15:16-18
- In leading us to confession of sin -Numbers 21:7; Psalms 32:5; 51:3,5
- In testing and exhibiting our sincerity -Job 23:10; Psalms 66:10; Proverbs 17:3
- In trying our faith and obedience -Genesis 22:1,2; Hebrews 11:17; Exodus 15:23-25; Deuteronomy 8:2,16; 1 Peter 1:7; Revelation 2:10
- In humbling us -Deuteronomy 8:3,16; 2Chronicles 7:13,14; Lamentations 3:19,20; 2Corinthians 12:7
- In purifying us -Ecclesiastes 7:2,3; Isaiah 1:25,26; 48:10; Jeremiah 9:6,7; Zechariah 13:9; Malachi 3:2,3
- In exercising our patience -Psalms 40:1; Romans 5:3; James 1:3; 1Peter 2:20
- In rendering us fruitful in good works -John 15:2; Hebrews 12:10,11
- In furthering the gospel -Acts 8:3,4; 11:19-21; Philippians 1:12; 2Timothy 2:9,10; 4:16,17

Exemplified

- Joseph's brethren -Genesis 42:21
- Joseph -Genesis 45:5,7,8
- Israel -Deuteronomy 8:3,5
- Josiah -2Kings 22:19
- Hezekiah -2Chronicles 32:25,26
- Manasseh -2Chronicles 33:12
- Jonah -Jonah 2:7
- Prodigal's son -Luke 15:21

Afflictions General Scriptures

- God appoints -2Kings 6:33; Job 5:6,17; Psalms 66:11; Amos 3:6; Micah 6:9

- God dispenses, as He will Job 11:10; Isaiah 10:15; 45:7
- God regulates the measure of -Psalms 80:5; Isaiah 9:1; Jeremiah 46:28
- God determines the continuance of -Ge 15:13,14; Nu 14:33; Isa 10:25; Je 29:10
- God does not willingly send -Lamentations 3:33
- Man is born to -Job 5:6,7; 14:1
- Saints appointed to -1 Thessalonians 3:3
- Consequent upon the fall -Genesis 3:16-19
- Sin produces -Job 4:8; 20:11; Proverbs 1:31
- Sin visited with -2Samuel 12:14; Psalms 89:30-32; Isaiah 57:17; Acts 13:10,11
- Often severe -Job 16:7-16; Psalms 42:7; 66:12; Jonah 2:3; Re 7:14
- Always less than we deserve -Ezra 9:13; Psalms 103:10
- Frequently terminate in good Ge 50:20; Ex 1:11,12; Dt 8:15,16; Je 24:5,6; Ezek 20:37
- Tempered with mercy -Ps 78:38,39; 106:43, 44, 45, 46; Isa 30:18, 19, 20, 21; La 3:32; Mic 7:7, 8, 9; Nah 1:12
- Saints are to expect -John 16:33; Acts 14:22
- Of saints, are comparatively light -Acts 20:23,24; Romans 8:18; 2Corinthians 4:17
- Of saints, are but temporary -Ps 30:5; 103:9; Isa 54:7,8; Jn 16:20; 1Pe 1:6; 5:10
- Saints have joy under -Job 5:17; James 5:11
- Of saints, end in joy and blessedness -Ps 126:5,6; Isa 61:2,3; Mt 5:4; 1Pe 4:13,14
- Often arise from the profession of the gospel -Matthew 24:9; John 15:21; 2Ti 3:11,12
- Exhibit the love and faithfulness of God - Dt 8:5; Ps 119:75; Pr 3:12; 1Co 11:32; He 12:6,7; Re 3:19

F B Meyer in his book **"The Call and Challenge of the Unseen"** and an instructive chapter entitled...

THE FIERY ORDEAL OF TEMPTATION

"Christ was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin."--Heb. 4:15

WHAT is God doing at this moment? He may be creating new worlds; may be working up into new and beautiful shapes what we should account as waste products; or may be preparing to unveil the new heavens and the new earth. But there is one thing of which we may be sure: He is bringing many sons unto glory! In order to help these to the uttermost, the Son of God was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. It was real temptation, for He suffered being tempted; but being perfected through the terrible ordeal, He has become the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. Let us learn His talisman of victory!

This bringing of many sons unto glory is a long and difficult process, for three reasons:

- (1) It is necessary that we should be created as free agents, able to say "No" as well as "Yes."
- (2) We have to choose between the material world, which is so present and very attractive to our senses, and the eternal, spiritual, and unseen. But the choice is inevitable if we are to really know things. We can only know a thing by contrast with its opposite:
- (3) There is a realm of evil spirits constantly regarding us with envious hatred, and bent on seducing us from the paths of goodness and obedience. They are adepts at their art.

If it be asked why we are placed in circumstances so perilous, so trying, the answer, so far as we can formulate it, is that we are being tested with a view to the great ministries awaiting us in the next life. We are to be priests and kings! There are vast spaces in the universe that may have to be evangelized or ruled or influenced for righteousness. It may be that important spheres of ministry are needing those to fill them who have learned the secret of victory over materialism on the one hand, and over the power of Satan on the other. We know that there was war in heaven before Satan and his angels were cast down to earth, and there may be another, and yet another. Therefore earth may be the school, the training-ground, the testing-place for the servants and soldiers of the hereafter. This thought need not be in conflict with, the ideals of rest and worship which we are wont to associate with the future life. Eternity will give opportunities for all! But, if it became Him of whom and through whom are all things to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through the suffering of temptation, it stands to reason that His comrades and soldiers must pass through the same, that they may become more than conquerors, and, having overcome, may sit with Him on His throne, as He overcame and is set down with His Father on His throne.

The First Temptation

The first temptation on record is that of our first parents in Eden. It is a masterpiece of psychology. The experience of all after-time

has added nothing to this marvellous analysis.

1. Temptation is more formidable when we are alone f Solitude is full of peril, unless it is full of Christ!
2. Some outward object, or some fancy of the mind, attracts our attention. It may be an apple, a face, a gratification, the lure of popularity, or money. The longer we look at it the stronger the fascination grows. Some birds are mesmerized by the fixed gaze of their foe at the foot of the tree. The longer we gaze at something forbidden, the stronger its mesmeric power. While we continue to look, the tempter covers the walls of imagery with more definite and attractive colors, and his ideals imperiously demand realization in act. Our only hope is to tear ourselves away from those basilisk eyes; to hasten from the haunted chamber; to escape, as Joseph did in the house of Potiphar.
3. If we linger, many thoughts will gather to ply us--all of them suggested by the tempter, who speaks through the voice of our own soul. These suggestions will question the love and wisdom which have forbidden. "Perhaps we have placed an exaggerated interpretation on our limitations and prohibitions. Are they not rather arbitrary? Would it not be good to know evil just once, that it might be avoided ever after? Besides, is it not necessary to know evil in order to realize good? Perhaps it would be better to satisfy the inner craving for satisfaction by one single act; then the hungry pack of wolves would at least be silenced! After all, is it not probable that if one were to know the forbidden thing it would be so much easier to warn others?" Such are the reasonings in which the tempted shelter themselves, not realizing that the only certain way of knowing evil is not by committing, but by resisting it.
4. Finally, we take the forbidden step, eat the/or-bidden fruit; the garment of light which veiled our nakedness drops off; the tempter runs laughing down the forest glade; a shadow falls on the sunshine, and a cold blast whistles in the air. Our conscience curses us, and we die, i.e. we cease to correspond to our proper environments, which are God, purity, and obedience. Eve ought to have dropped that apple like a burning coal, and hurried from the spot; but, no; she lingered, ate, and gave to "her husband; so sin entered into the world; and sin opened the door to pain, travail, sorrow, the loss of purity, the loss of God's holy fellowship in the cool of the day, the fad-hag of the garden, and the reign of death and the grave.

The Temptation of our Lord

1. It came after the descent of the Spirit as a dove. We may always expect deep experience of the tempter to follow close on the highest moments of spiritual exaltation. Where you have mountains you must look for valleys!
2. He was led of the Spirit to be tempted; clearly, then, temptation is not sin. A holy nature might go through hell itself, assailed by clouds of demons, and come out on the farther side untainted. So long as the waves of evil break on the outward bulwarks of the spirit they are innocuous. Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.
3. The sword of the Spirit and the shield, against which the darts of evil fall blunted to the ground, are the words of the ever-blessed God, and the upward glances of a steadfast faith. Remember how Jesus said, "it is written "; "it is written again." He is also the Pioneer and Perfection of faith!
4. Each temptation which He overcame seemed to give Him power in the very sphere in which it had sought His overthrow.

He was tempted to use His power to satisfy His own hunger; but, having refused to use it selfishly, He was able to feed five thousand; and four thousand men, besides women and children.

He was tempted to cast Himself from the wing of the temple to the dizzy depth below, in order to attract attention to Himself; but having refused, He was able to descend into Hades, and then ascend to the Father's throne; to lay down His life and take it again for a world of sinners.

He was tempted to adopt Satan's method of gaining adherents by pandering to their passions; but He refused, and adopted the opposite policy of falling into the ground to die, of treading the winepress alone, of insisting that it is not by yielding to passion, but by self-denial, self-sacrifice, and the Cross that salvation is alone to be obtained. Therefore, a great multitude, which no man can number, have washed their robes and made them white in His blood, and stand before the throne.

Having, therefore, met temptation in the arena, and mastered it in its threefold spheres--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--Jesus is able to succor them that are being tempted; and if they should fail He is able to understand, because He has gone every step of the way Himself, and is well acquainted with its perils. He can easily trace the lost sheep on the mountains, because He has The Fiery Ordeal of Temptation marked every pitfall and the lair of every enemy. He has looked over the cliff-brink to the bottom, where those who have missed the track "in the cloudy and dark day" may be lying; and when He has found them He brings them home on His shoulder rejoicing.

Our Own Temptations.

We all have to pass through the wilderness of temptation, the stones of which blister our feet, and the air is like a sirocco breath in

our faces.

1. All God's sons are tempted. As we have seen, we only know light by darkness, sweet by bitter, health by disease, good by evil resisted and overcome.

"Oh, where is the sea?" the fishes said,
As they swam through the crystal waters blue! ""

They had never been out of it, and .so were in ignorance of that which had always been their element.

2. The pressure of temptation is strictly limited. When Satan approached God with regard to Job, he was on two occasions restricted to a fixed barrier, beyond which he might not go. In the case of Peter also, when he obtained permission to approach him, he could only go so far as to sift him as wheat; he might rid him of chaff, but not hurt anything essential. Remember also that glorious announcement "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

3. As you live near God the temptation gets deeper down in your nature. You are aware of it in subtler forms and disguises. It attacks motives rather than the outward habits and actions.

One summer afternoon, when I came down to the Auditorium at Northfield, Massachusetts, I found Mr. Moody and his brother on the platform, and between them a young apple tree, just dugged up and brought from the neighboring orchard. There were about a thousand people in the audience. When I reached the platform the following dialogue took place:

Mr. Moody to his brother: "What have you here?" "An apple tree," was the reply. "Was it always an apple tree?"

"Oh no, it was a forest sapling, but we have inserted an apple graft."

Mr. Moody to me: "What does that make you think of?"

"You and I were forest saplings," said I, "with no hope of bearing fruit, but the Jesus-nature has been grafted into us by the Holy Spirit."

To his brother: "Does the forest sapling give you trouble?"

"Why, yes," said the gardener. "It is always sending out shoots under the graft, which drain off the sap."

"What do you do with them?"

"We pinch them off with our finger and thumb; but they are always coming out lower down the tree."

Then he turned to me and asked if there was anything like it in the spiritual life, to which I replied: "It is a parable of our experience. The old self-life is always sending out its shoots, and we can have no mercy on them; but if we deal with the more superficial sins on the surface of our life, as we get older we realize their deeper appeals, and to the end of life shall be more and more aware of their sinister power. The quick sensitiveness of age must not be ignored or overlooked. It may be as strong a shoot in the old forest sapling as the manifestations of passion in earlier life. Old men, for instance, may be jealous of young ones, and quick to take offence if there are symptoms of their being put aside."

4. Temptation is not in itself sin, but we cannot say, as our Saviour could, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." We cannot appropriate those last words. We know that all the inner gunpowder magazines are not emptied. Therefore it is just as well, after a severe time of testing, as the demons leave us, to ask ourselves if there has been some subtle response in the depths of our nature it may be forgiven. We must not risk the loss of ship or cargo because the combustion is so slow and so deep in the hold.

5. In the hour of temptation affirm your union with your all-victorious and exalted Saviour! Stand in His victory! (cp Jas 4:7, Ep 6:11, 12-note) You are part of" His mystical Body; take your rightful position! God has set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies; be sure to come down on your foe from the heights of the throne (cp Ep 2:6-note). It is always easier to fight down from the mountain slope than up from the lowland valleys. You can be more than a conqueror through Him that loved you (Ro 8:37-note); but abide in Him (Jn 15:4, 5, 6, 7, 1Jo 2:28).

6. Always ask the Saviour to hold the door on the inside.Satan will burst it open against your feeble strength; but when Jesus stands within all hell will be foiled. Though ten thousand demons are at you, in your patience possess your soul!

7. One other point is of immense importance. Be sure to claim the opposite grace from Christ.The fact that an attack is being

made at a certain position in your fortifications proves that you are weakest there. When therefore the tempter advances to the attack, and you are aware of his strategy, take occasion to claim an accession of Christ's counterbalancing strength. When tempted to quick temper, "Thy patience, Lord!" To harsh judgment, "Thy gentleness, Lord!" To impurity, "Thy purity, Lord!"

"By all hells hosts withstood,
We all hews hosts o'erthrow;
And conquering ,till by Jesus" blood,
We on to victory go."

Sometimes temptation will come upon us in the hatred and opposition of man, and we shall be strongly tempted to use force against force, strength against strength, and to employ weapons of flesh and blood. This is not the best. The raging foe is best encountered by the quiet faith and courage which enable a man to go boldly forward, not yielding, not daunted, not striking back. Hand the conflict over to the Captain of your salvation. It is for you simply to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Love the truth more than all, and go on in the mighty power of God, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ (2Ti 2:3,4^{note}); in nothing daunted by your adversaries, but witnessing a good confession (1Ti 6:12, 13)), whether man will bear or forbear. "Greater is he who is in you than he that is in the world." (1Jn 4:4)

It may be that this earth on which we find ourselves is the Marathon or the Waterloo of the universe. We are as villagers who were born on the site and are implicated in the issues of the war. We are not merely spectators but soldiers, and whether in single combat or in the advance of the whole line, it is for us to play a noble part. Full often in the history of war the achievements of a single soldier have changed the menace of defeat into the shout of victory. Think of David's conflict with Goliath; of the three that held the bridge in the brave days of old; and of the Guards at Waterloo! From their high seats the overcomers, who in their mortal life fought in the great conflict for the victory of righteousness and truth, are watching us. Are they disappointed at our handling of the matter? Are we worthy to call ourselves of their lineage, or to be named in the same category? Fight worthily of them, whether in private secret combat, or in the line of advance, that you may not be ashamed at the grand review!

Fight first against the wicked spirits that antagonize your own inner life. Repeat the exploits of David's mighties: of Benaiah, who slew a lion in a pit in time of snow; of the three who broke through the Philistines' lines and drew water from Bethlehem's well for their king; of Amasai and his host, the least of whom was equal to a hundred. Every lonely victory gained in your closet and in your most secret sacred hour is hastening the victory of the entire Church. Listen! Are not those the notes of the advancing conquering host? Are not the armies of heaven already thronging around the Victor on His white horse?

It is high time to awake out of sleep! The perfecting of God's purpose is at hand! The return of the Jews to Palestine; the budding of the fig tree; the bankruptcy of politicians and statesmen; the threatened overthrow of European civilization; the rise of Bolshevism; the new grouping of the nations for war, notwithstanding the appeals of the League of Nations; the awful havoc of Spiritism; the waning of love; all these are signs that we stand at the junction of two ages (Ed: How much more should the signs of the times motivate saints today to fight the good fight of faith. 1Ti 1:18, 6:12, 2Ti 4:7-note; cp Da 11:32b, 1Chr 12:32). The one is dying in the sky, tinting it with the sunset; the other is breaking in the East, and the cirrus cloudlets are beginning to burn. Let us then put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life (Ro 13:11, 12, 13, 14-note), that when He shall come in His glorious majesty to receive the kingdom of the world, we may rise to the life immortal, through Him Who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, blessed for evermore!

"Fight the good fight with all thy might,
Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right;
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally."

COMFORT FOR TRIED BELIEVERS.

NO. 2912

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"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." — 1 Corinthians 10:13.

THIS verse immediately follows the warning to "him that thinketh he standeth to "take heed lest he fall." We none of us know what

stuff we are really made of until we are tried and tested. It is a very easy thing to imagine yourself to be strong, but it is a very different matter to find that you have sufficient strength when you actually need it. It has even been found possible, in these modern days, for some brethren and sisters to believe themselves to be perfect, — to believe that sin is entirely conquered within them; but I will warrant you that you will find that the practice of perfection is not nearly so common as the profession of it, and nothing like so easy. And I will venture to go even further, and to say that, if you watch those in whom sin is said to be dead, you will find that, if it is dead, it is not buried, and that it smells remarkably like other dead things, which ought to be buried. It is, possibly, worse than when it was alive, for it has become alive again, in an even worse sense, with a double putridity. Let no one of us imagine himself to be perfect, or to be proof against the temptations of Satan, or even the grosser vices to which the flesh is prone. It may only need for you to be attacked at a certain point, and in a certain way, and you will be overcome even as others have been. The wisest way is to believe thyself neither to be wise nor strong, and therefore to lie humbly at his feet who can make thee both wise and strong, and to look, away from thyself, up to him who will keep the feet of his saints. It ought to cool the hot blood of self-conceit, in any man, to remind him that, although he thinketh that he standeth, it is simply because he has not been tempted as others have been, who have fallen; or, if he has been tempted in a way which overthrew them, while he has stood fast, yet, if the temptations were still further increased, and he were left to himself, he would find that, at the last, the fierce wind from the pit would sweep him off his feet even as it has swept off other men, who thought that they could never be moved.

After the apostle Paul had, by this warning, rebuked the boastings of these who thought they were standing securely, he thought of the far larger number of persons who never think that they can stand, but who are in constant terror lest they should fall. They say they are not the people of God; yet, in almost the next breath, they say they are afraid that they will lose what they just said they had not got! They sometimes hope that they are saved, yet they quickly doubt if it is so with them; and they are troubled with the fear that, even though they are saved, they may yet fall and perish. Their feelings are a strange mingle-mangle of incorrect caution and incorrect doubt; and Paul seems to me, in this verse, to give them a cordial by which their fainting spirits may be revived, and I would like to pass it on to any of you who also need it. You may be tried in two senses, — trial will come, and the trial will often be a temptation, while the temptation will always be a trial.

I. Now comes in the comfort, and the first comfort, even in great trouble, is, that We Have Not, After All, Been Tried In Any Very Unusual Way: “There hath no temptation (or trial) taken you but such as is common to man.”

YOU may think, my dear brethren and sisters, that you have been tried more than others; but it is only your want of knowledge of the trials of others which leads you to imagine that your own are unique. There are many others, besides yourself, in the furnace, and in quite as hot a part of it as that in which you are now placed. Note what Paul says: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.” It is a human temptation, not a superhuman one, which has assailed you; that is to say, one which can be withstood by men, — not one that must inevitably sweep them away. You have never been tempted with an angelic temptation. Satan has tempted you, young man, but not with the same temptation with which he allured the angels who kept not their first estate. There may be other orders of intelligence, for whom there are other forms of temptation, because their intellects are superior to yours; but God has allowed you to be assailed in a way which is suitable as a best to you as a man. The trials, that have come upon you, have been moderated to your capacity as a man. The Lord knows that you are but animated dust, so he has not permitted you to be treated as if you were made of steel or iron. He has himself dealt with you as an earthen vessel, — a thing of clay in which he has caused life to dwell. He has not broken you with his rod of iron, as he would have done if he had smitten you with it.

“But I am very sorely tempted,” saith one. Yes, perhaps you are; but the Lord has given you the history of the children of Israel in the wilderness, to let you see that you have not been tempted more than they were. “Ah!” says another, “but I find myself placed in a very peculiar position, where I am greatly tried. I have to labor hard, and I have much difficulty in earning my daily bread, and I am beset with trials of many kinds.” Well, dear friend, even though what you say is perfectly true, I am not certain that your position is any more likely to bring temptation than was that of the children of Israel in the wilderness. “Ah!” you say, “but they had not to work to earn their bread. The manna came to them every morning, and they had only to gather it, and to eat it. They were not engaged in commercial transactions, there were no markets in the desert, — no Corn Exchange, no Stock Exchange, no Smithfield, no Billingsgate, — no taking down the shutters in the morning, and putting them up again at night, and going a great part of the day without any customers. They were separated from all other nations, and were in a peculiarly advantageous position. Yet, dear friends, you need not wish to be placed in such a position, because, advantageous as it was, in some respects, the Israelites there were evidently tempted to all sorts of sins, and fell into them very grievously. Having often read the story of their forty years’ sojourn in the wilderness, you know their sad history. With so favorable a position granted to them, under the Lord’s own special guardianship, and enriched with many choice mercies, we might have expected that they would have been free from temptation; — or, at any rate, that they would not have fallen into its snare; yet it was not so, for the devil can tempt in the wilderness quite as well as in the city, as we know from the experience of Christ himself. The devil would tempt you even if your bread was given to you every morning, instead of your having to earn it; he would tempt you if you had no business to attend to, and never had to go into the world to meet with your fellow-men. In fact, the story of the Israelites teaches me that it is best for you to work, and best for you to

be poor, and best for you not to make money as fast as you would like, and best for you to be surrounded by cares of various kinds. I think I judge rightly that the people of God, the saved ones, do not fall into such- gross sins as the Israelites did in the wilderness; so that the saints' position, though it may appear worse than that of Israel, is really better.

To what, my dear brethren and sisters, are you tempted? Are you tempted to lust after evil things? They lusted after the meat that was not suitable to the climate, nor good for their health; and they despised the manna, which was the very best food they could have. Do you ever get a craving for what you ought not to desire? Are you growing covetous? Do you long for ease? Do you wish for wealth? Do you love pleasure? Well, dear friends, this temptation has happened to others before; it happened to those people in the wilderness. You are not the first to be tempted in that fashion; and if divine grace has helped others to overcome the covetous desire, and the lusting of the spirit, it can help you to do the same; but, mark also that, if others have fallen through such temptations, and perished in the wilderness, you, too, apart from divine grace, will do the same. Therefore have you urgent need to cry to the Strong for strength, lest you also should fall even as they did.

Are you tempted to idolatry? It is a very common temptation to make an idol of a child, or of some particular pursuit in which you are engaged; is there anything in the world that is so dear to you that the very thought of losing it makes you feel that you would rebel against God if he took it away from you? Remember what John was inspired to write: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." But if you are tempted to idolatry, do not forget that this is a thing that is common to men. In the wilderness, the Israelites were tempted to set up a golden calf, and to worship it, and even to practice other idolatrous rites which were too foul for me to describe. They were tempted to idolatry, so it is not an uncommon temptation; and if you also are tempted in a similar fashion, you must cry to God for grace to resist and to overcome the temptation.

Are you tried, sometimes, even with that terrible temptation which is mentioned in the verse where Paul says, "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed"? Has strong passion sometimes suggested to you that which your soul abhors? Have you been, at times, forced to the very brink of that, dread abyss of uncleanness, till you have had to cry, with the psalmist, "My feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped"? Ah! this temptation also is not uncommon to men and even those who live nearest to God, and are the most pure in heart, sometimes have to blush before the Lord that such evil suggestions should ever come into their minds.

And have you, too, been tempted "to tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents"? They wanted God to change his plans and purposes concerning them; and they found fault with him, and said that he had brought them into the wilderness to destroy them. Do you feel that your present troubles are too severe, — that they should not have been sent to you, — at least, not so many and so heavy as they are? If so, and if you feel that you have a cause for complaint against the Most High, and that you want him to change his methods of dealing with you so as to suite your whims and fancies, — alas! sad as such a state of mind is, it is only too "common to man."

And, possibly, you may also have been tempted to murmur, "as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." I must withdraw that word "possibly," for I am greatly afraid that many professing Christians do murmur, and that they do not always realize what a gross sin it is to murmur, seeing that it is an act of distinct rebellion against God. But, should you, as any time, feel a murmuring spirit rising up within your heart, you must not say, "This is a trial which nobody else has ever experienced." Alas! it is a very human temptation, which is exceedingly "common to man."

So, summing up all that I have been saying, and looking round upon this congregation, and upon all of you who know the Lord, — although it would be impossible for me to recount all the different forms of temptation and trial through which you have gone, yet this is a matter of fact, — "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." We are all in the same boat, brothers and sisters, so far as temptation and trial are concerned. We are all warring the same warfare; your duty may call you to one part of the field, and mine may call me to another part, but the bullets whiz by me as well as by you. There is no nook so quiet but it hath its own special dangers, and there is no Valley of Humiliation so lowly but, it hath its peculiar temptations. Sins are everywhere; they sit down with you at your board, and they go with you to your bed. Snares are set for you in your home and in the street, — in your business and in your recreations. Snares are not absent from your pains, and they are abundant in your pleasures. Everywhere, and under all circumstances, must we expect, to be tried; this experience is common to men. The remembrance that it is so ought to be somewhat of a comfort to us in every time of trial and temptation.

II. But, secondly, in our text we have a far better source of comfort than that; it is this: but God Is Faithful. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."

"God is faithful." Oh, how I love those words! They sound in my heart like heavenly music. "God is faithful." You are not faithful, my brother or sister; at least, I know I am not, in the full sense of the term, faithful, — full of faith, and faithful. "But" — oh, that blessed

“but,” — “but GOD is faithful!” “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful,” — always true to every promise he has made, — always gracious to every child whom he has adopted into his family, — “a very present help in trouble,” — preserving us from sinking in our seas of trouble, and delivering us from the trouble when it has accomplished the purpose for which it was sent.

“God is faithful,” — faithful to that first promise of his which came into thy soul when thou didst yield thyself to Jesus, and he whispered to thine heart, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Dost thou remember that promise, and has not the Lord been faithful to it? “God is faithful” also to that promise which he made of old concerning his Son, Jesus Christ: “He shall see his seed.” He has seen his seed in thee, and he will see thee to be his seed for evermore.

“God is faithful” to all his promises; and in thy experience, my brother or sister, he has been faithful to the promises which met thy case in all thy changing circumstances. Has he not been faithful? Canst thou put thy finger upon a single page of thy diary, and say, “God was unfaithful then”? Thy friend, who ate bread with thee, has lifted up his heel against thee; but has thy God forsaken thee? Even thine own children have been unkind and ungrateful to thee; but has the Lord ever treated thee ill? Where thou hadst the most hope, among thine earthly friends and acquaintances, thou hast had the most disappointments; but has Jesus ever been a wilderness unto thee? “All men are liars,” thou hast said, in the bitterness of thy spirit, when thou hast trusted in them, and they have failed thee in the time of trial; but hast thou ever found Christ false to his Word? Canst thou not join thy testimony with that of all the saints above, and the saints below, and say with Paul, “God is faithful”?

Even if any of you are looking forward to a dreaded sickness, or to a painful operation, or to business losses which may sink you from your present comfortable position to one of great trial and poverty, — think of this blessed truth, “God is faithful.” The whole world may reel to and fro, like a drunken man; but the Rock of ages stands secure. The shooting stars of temporary prosperity may die out in everlasting night, but God is “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” “God is faithful.” Whatever thy future briars are to be, put thou this short sweet sentence into thy mouth, and keep it there, as a heavenly lozenge which shall sustain thee at all times. Make it also into a jubilant refrain; and, as thou goest on thy way, sing, again and again, “God is faithful.” Trials and temptations will assail you; “but God is, faithful.” Friends will fail and forsake you; “but God is faithful.” wealth may be lost, and property may vanish; “but God is faithful.” What dost thou want more than this, soldiers of Christ? Here you have breastplate, helmet, sword, shield, spear, — yea, the whole panoply of God.

III. The third comfort for a tried and tempted believer arises from GOD’S POWER, for Paul says, “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.”

God, then, has power to limit temptation; it is clear, from the Book of Job, that Satan could not tempt or try the patriarch except by divine permission; and, even then, his power was limited; nor can he tempt us unless God allows him to do so. Although the devil had great power over the elements, so that he brought disaster upon poor Job, yet there, was a very definite limit to his chain, even when the Lord let him loose to a certain extent; and when God set up his barriers, Satan could not go beyond them. You remember that the Lord first said to Satan, concerning his servant Job, “Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.” When the devil again intruded himself among the sons of God, the Lord let out more links of his chain, but there was still a most emphatic limit to his power over the patriarch, “Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.” The devil would have liked to kill Job outright, but he could go no further than the Lord allowed him to go; and God still has unlimited power over the devil and over every form of temptation or trial that, can ever come upon you. If the Lord appoints for you ten troubles, he will not suffer them to be increased to eleven. If he ordains that you shall be in trouble for six years, you will not be in it for six years and a day; but, when the allotted time has expired, you shall come out of it. Nothing can resist, the might of the omnipotent Jehovah, “who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.” He can put a bit in the mouth of the tempest, and rein in the rushing steeds of the storm; and the fiercest of thy trials and temptations must feel the force of his overruling and restraining hand. When thou art on the dunghill, recollect that God is on his throne. Well did the psalmist sing, “The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice;” but much more may his own people rejoice because his sovereignty is pledged to defend them. Why, if all the armies of the devil were, let loose upon a single saint, who felt himself to be weak as a worm, and the Lord said to them, “I am his defense, and ye shall not touch him;” they could not touch him, and he would be able to say, with the utmost confidence, “Greater is he that is for me than all that can be against me.” The adversaries of the righteous may rage as much as they will; but they will have to spend their strength in raging, for that is all they can do against God’s people without his express permission. Not a hair of their head can be scorched by the fires of persecution unless the Lord allows it. The waters of the Red Sea cannot drown them: they march between the watery walls dryshod. The lions cannot devour them: Daniel enjoyed a good night’s rest even in the lions’ den. Even the waves of the sea become the servitors of the saints, for “Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights;” in preparation for future service for God. All his people are kept by his almighty power. How greatly this ought to comfort you who are sorely tried! Every twig of the rod of correction has been made by God, and every stroke of it is counted by him. There is not a drop more gall in your cup than the Lord has ordained. He has weighed, in the scales of the sanctuary, every ingredient of your medicine, and mixed it with all his infallible skill so that it may produce the cure of all your ills; should not this make you rejoice in the Lord all the day long, and in

the night seasons as well?

IV. Fourthly, not only should tried believers rejoice in God's power, but they should also rejoice in God's Judgment, for Paul says, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."

Who beside God knows how much we are able to be? Our consolation arises from the fact that God knows exactly how much we can bear. We have no idea, ourselves, what we can bear. I have, many a time, heard a person say, "If such-and-such a thing were to happen, I should break my heart, and die." Well, that very thing has happened, but the person concerned did not break his heart, and he did not die. On the contrary, he behaved himself as a Christian in trial should; God helped him wondrously, and he played the man, and became more than conqueror, and was the brighter and the braver, ever afterwards, for all the affliction through which he had passed. Brother, your own strength, in some respects, is greater than you think, and, in other respects, it is less than you think; but God knows just how much you can bear, so leave yourself in his hands.

I have known some people who have wished for trouble; it is a great pity that anybody should be so foolish as that. I remember one, who used to think that he was not a child of God because, he had not had much trouble. He used to be fretting all the day long because he had nothing really to make him fret. I once heard a woman, in the street, say to her child, who was screaming lustily, "If you cry for nothing, I'll give you something to cry for." So, when a man wants trouble, he will probably get it; but it is a very silly child or man who asks for the rod. Be content to have as little of it as you really must; you will have quite enough of it before you get to heaven. Do not ask for it; you will have it in due time. God knows, to an ounce, just what his children and his servants can carry, and he never overloads them. It is true that he sometimes sends them more trouble than they could have carried by themselves; but, then, as he increases the weight of their burden, he also increases the strength of the back upon which he places it.

I have often admired the lovingkindness of the Lord to many of my own flock here, and have noted the great joy that our young Christians have had for a number of years, and observed how remarkably God has preserved them from temptation without and from trials within. The Lord does not send his young children out to battle. He does not intend such little boats as these to go far out to sea. He will not overdrive these lambs. Yet the advanced Christians are just as happy as the young people, are, and they are stronger and more fit for stern service and more able to sympathize with others, who are in trouble, because of what they have themselves passed through. As they have grown stronger, God has given them more fighting to do for him, while the raw recruits have been kept at home to be drilled and disciplined. You know that, when there is a desperate fight being waged, and the issue of the battle seems in doubt, the commander orders "the old guard" to the front. That is part of the privilege of being an old guardsman, — to go into the hottest place on the field of battle; and it is one of the privileges of the advanced children of God to be tempted more than others, and to suffer more than others. If I could have any trial or temptation, which, otherwise, would fall upon a young brother, who has only known the Lord a week or two, I would gladly say, "Let me have it." It might stagger him, and I should be sorry for him to be staggered by it, so I will willingly endure it. You tried believers must not imagine that God does not love you as much as he did in the days of your spiritual youth, when he did not test you as he does now. He loves you quite as much as he did then, and he trusts you even more than he did then; because he has made you stronger than you used to be, he gives you the honor and privilege of marching with the vanguard of his army, or leading the forlorn hope, or standing foot to foot with old Apollyon.

God knows exactly how much temptation or trial you can bear, and he will not suffer the trial to go beyond that point. But, mark you, it will go right up to that point, for there is no such thing in the world as faith that runs to waste. For every grain of faith that God gives, he usually gives the equivalent, trial of some sort or other; for, if faith could ever be in excess, it would degenerate into fanaticism, or some other unholy thing. If the Lord supplies us, at our back door as it were, with his good treasure, we are to dispose of it in our front shop in our holy trading for him.

V. Fifthly, our text seems to intimate that God Hath In Store Something To Go With Our Temptations: "He will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that, ye may be able to bear it."

You know how you treat your own child. There is a dose of nasty physic to be taken, and the little one does not like it. The very sight of the spoon and cup makes it feel queer. But mother says, "Now, Johnny, take this medicine, and then you shall have this lump of sugar, or this fruit, to take away the taste of it." And when God sends a trial or trouble to one of his children, he is sure to have a choice sweetmeat to go, with it. I have heard a child say, "I do not mind taking the physic so long as I get the sugar;" and I have known some of the Lord's people say, "We will willingly bear sickness, pain, bereavement, temptation, persecution, if we may but have our Savior's presence in it all." Some of us will never forget our experiences in sickness; when our pain has been sharpest; and worst, it has also been sweetest and best, at the same time. What do I not personally owe to the file, and the anvil, and the hammer in my Master's workshop? I have often said, and I say again, that the best piece of furniture in my house is the cross of affliction. I have, long ago, learned to prize it, and to praise God for it, and for that which has come, to me with it, for I have often

found that, with the trial, the Lord has made a way of escape, that I have been able to bear it.

Even with the temptation to sin, the Lord often sends, to the tempted soul, such a revelation of the sinfulness of sin, and of the beauty of holiness, that the poison of the temptation is quite neutralized. Even with temporal trials, the Lord often gives temporal mercies; sometimes, when he has been pleased to take away a man's wealth, he has restored to him his health, and so the man has been a distinct gainer. I have known several instances in which that has occurred. And when one dear child has been taken away out of a family, there, has, perhaps, been the conversion of another of the children, which has been a wonderful compensation for the trial. And, oftentimes, trouble has been attended with an unusual delight in the Lord. The Word of God has been peculiarly sweet at such a time, and the minister has seemed to preach better than ever he did before, his message exactly fitting your condition just then. You have been surprised to find that the bitterness, which came with the trouble, has passed away almost before you were aware of it; and, as death is swallowed up in victory, like one bitter drop in a glass of water, so your trouble has been diluted with sweet wine, and you have swallowed it, and have scarcely tasted its bitterness. Thus the Lord, by his grace, and presence, and comfort, has made you so glad that you have hardly known that you have been in such trouble, because of the superabounding mercy which came with it. Ought not that to comfort us, and to make us ready for whatever the Lord pleases to send to us, or to permit to come upon us?

VI. Now, notice, in the last place, that God Makes A Way Of Escape For His People: "He will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

I will read that over again: "He will with the temptation also make a way to escape" — "that you may get out of it?" Oh, no! — "that you may not have to endure it?" Oh, no! — "that ye may be able to bear it." That is a curious way to escape, is it not? Here is your way of retreat blocked up, and the opposing army is in front of you, yet you are to escape. You say to the Lord, "Which way am I to run?" But the Lord replies, "You must not run away; your way to escape is to cut a road right through your adversaries." That is a singular way to escape, but it is the most glorious way in the whole world. The best way for an army to escape is by conquering its foe. It is not the best way for the pilgrim to go, to the right, into the dark mountains, or to the left, into the thick forest, to escape from his enemies; the best way for him to escape is to go straight forward, despite all his adversaries; and that is the only right way for you to escape.

Now, beloved brother or sister, you may, at this moment, be expecting some very heavy affliction; and you have been asking the Lord to make a way of escape for you. You have said, "Oh, that I might not have to come to that hour of trial!" But you will have to come to it. But cannot that dear one's life be spared? "I hope it may; but it is possible that it may not." Then, how am I to have a way of escape? Your way of escape is not to avoid the trial, but to be able to bear it. What a mercy it is that God, though he will not let his people escape trial, will really let them escape, for this is a way of escape for them, and the best way of escape, too. It is a way of escape from all the sin of the temptation, and from all the evil of the trial; you must have the trial, but you will only have the beneficial part of it. Brother, you must be plunged into that sea of sorrow; but it will not drown you, it will only wash and cleanse you. Sir, you must go into that fire, your Lord has so ordained it; yet you are going to escape the fire. Do you ask, "How can that be? Why, thus, — none of your gold shall be destroyed, only the dross shall be consumed, and you shall be all the purer for passing through the fire; so again I say that this is the very best way to escape; for if we could escape in any other way, we should lose all the benefit of the trial.

What shall I say, then, in closing, but this, brethren and sisters? Are you troubled just now, and are you inclined to despair? Take wiser counsel; the storms that are beating about your barque are only such as beat about your Master's vessel, and the ships and boats in which his apostles sailed across the sea of old. The storms are not supernatural; they are not beyond what believe in Jesus are able to bear. Put your vessel's head to the wind, like a brave sailor; do not try to avoid that fierce blast. Sail in its very teeth, for there is a power within you which can overcome all the winds and the waves, for is not the Lord himself with you as your Captain, and is not the Holy Ghost with you as your Pilot, and have you not a faithful God to trust to in the stormiest night you will ever know? True, your foes are many and mighty; but face them like a man. Have no thought of turning back, and flinging away your shield; but resolve, in the mighty power of faith, that, since, the Lord has said that, "as thy days, so shall thy strength be," to the end thou shalt endure; and that, with Job, thou wilt say, "Though he slay me, yet, will I trust, in him." It will not be easy to keep that resolve, yet the Lord deserves that we should keep it. Think of yourself, beloved brother, in the worst conceivable condition; and then know that there is no sufficient reason, even in such a condition as that, for you to doubt your God. Suppose yourself brought to your last penny; yet remember that there was a time when you were not worth a penny, a time when you could not put food into your own mouth, and could not put on your own garments. You were cast upon God in your first childhood, and he took care of you then; and if you grow to be a child again, and the infirmities of age increase and multiply, he who was so good at the beginning, will be quite as good at the end. Remember his ancient promise: "Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." Such a promise as this, if God the Holy Spirit will bless it, will make the most tried believer rejoice in the Lord, and go on his way defying every foe who may be in his path.

What I cannot understand is, what people do who have not, a God to trust to. I often go to see poor sick people, full of aches and pains, and it charms me to hear them talk of the goodness of the Lord to them. In talking, this week, with one of our brethren, who is very sick and ill, he spoke with such holy joy and boasting of the Lord's goodness to him, that I could not help saying that it would take a great many infidel arguments to make me doubt the power of true religion after I had listened to him. I like to see God's tried people dying full of joy, praising and blessing the name of the Lord who is their All-in-all in their most trying hour. It is not so with all of you; then what do you do, when trial comes, without a God to help you? You have not much of this world's goods, and you have to work hard; yet when you die, you have no home to go to, you have no hope of going to heaven. Oh, you poor No-hopes! "Oh!" says one, "we are not all poor; some of us are quite well-to-do." But you are poor, for all that, even if you have all your heart can wish for here. If you have not a God, where do you carry your troubles and your griefs, for I am sure that you have some! O my dear friend, may the Lord make you feel that you cannot do without him! And when your heart has come to this resolve, "I cannot do without my God, I will not try to do without him; I feel that I must have him, "then you shall have him. He waiteth to be gracious, and he hath said, "They that seek me early shall find me." May you seek him now, and find him, and to him shall be the praise for ever and ever! Amen.

James Hastings - Great Texts of the Bible

1 Corinthians 10:13

Trust in God and do the Right

God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.—1 Corinthians 10:13.

1. The reason for our confidence that every temptation can be overcome is that God is faithful. "God is faithful," says the Apostle, "who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." Notice, the Apostle does not give as his reason for confidence that man is strong, but that God is faithful. Men who have faced temptation confiding only in their own strength have come to grief. It is the men who, distrustful of self, have leaned upon God who have come off more than conquerors.

2. Should we be disposed at any time to doubt this, we may reassure ourselves by remembering how God's faithfulness is guaranteed.

(1) God cannot be true to His purpose of grace and yet allow us to be overcome by the sheer weight and pressure of evil without a possibility of escape. For what is the purpose which we see revealed in the gift of Christ? It is that we may be saved from sin; and salvation from sin implies that we shall be strengthened against the temptations by which it seeks to prevail. God is faithful to His purpose, and His purpose is to save and keep all those who put their trust in Him. He never departs from this. He has it always before Him. It is the end to which He makes everything subordinate. He is never off His guard, never asleep, never too busily engaged to attend to the wants of the very least of His children. Sin can lurk nowhere without being detected by His all-seeing eye. It can devise no stratagem without being clearly visible to Him. Still less can it strike down or fatally wound any who look to Him for help.

(2) But not only would it be inconsistent with His purpose of grace were God to suffer overwhelming evil to assail us, it would also place Him in contradiction to Himself. His nature is to love goodness supremely, and He has pledged Himself by the gift of His Son to leave nothing undone to give it the victory. But if He were to stand aside, and see us beaten down by sin without interposing; if He were to allow temptations to muster in irresistible force; this would not only defeat His manifested purpose, but destroy His character for holiness. The very fact that God is good, that He loves and cherishes with a compassionate eye every movement of a human soul to purity and truth, involves His doing everything that wisdom, and power, and pity can do to make us triumphant over sin.

When man thus considers the wealth and the marvellous sublimity of the Divine nature, and all the manifold gifts which He grants and offers to His creatures, amazement is stirred up in his spirit at the sight of so manifold a wealth and majesty; at the sight of the immense faithfulness of God to all His creatures. This causes a strange joy of spirit, and a boundless trust in God, and this inward joy surrounds and penetrates all the forces of the souls in the secret places of the spirit.¹ [Note: M. Maeterlinck, Ruysbroeck and the Mystics, 140.]

A beautiful instance is recorded in the life of Catherine of Siena. The plague was abroad, and Father Matthew, the Director of the Hospital, caught the infection while ministering to a dying person. The next day he was carried like a corpse, livid and strengthless, from the chapel to his room. The physician said that every symptom announced the approach of death. But Catherine loved him sincerely, and when she heard of his illness she went to his room and cried with a cheerful voice, "Get up, Father Matthew! Get up!"

As she left the house, another friend—Raymond of Capua—was entering, and said to her, “Will you allow a person so dear to us, and so useful to others, to die? I know your secrets, and I know that you obtain from God whatsoever you ask in faith.” She bowed her head, and, after a few moments, looked him in the face with her countenance radiant with joy, and said, “Well, let us take courage; he will not die this time.” The good Father immediately recovered, and sat down to a light meal with his friends, chatting and laughing gaily with them. Catherine believed in the promise, “The prayer of faith shall save the sick.” She was bold in appealing to the truthfulness of the Divine Healer, and she was not disappointed. “Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God; the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him” (Deuteronomy 7:9). We very seldom put the veracity of God to the test. But the more we venture on Him and on His gracious words, the stronger and clearer is our faith bound to become.¹ [Note: J. A. Clapperton, *Culture of the Christian Heart*, 52.]

I sometimes think that in the case of those who are not tried by sharp outward temptations to break God’s commandments, the trial may come in inward temptations to distrust His grace. It would be a bad business for us if we were not tried in some way.² [Note: *The Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham*, 544.]

There are two possible ways of looking upon trial. The first is that God is angry with the sufferer and is taking His revenge. It is a view old as the fears and the morbidness of man. The friends of Job are its champions in every generation. It seems so obvious to those who hold it that few of them give any pains to think it out to its issues, or realize how small a God this of theirs must be. Those who seriously believe in God at all will have little difficulty in passing to the second way of looking upon trial, and if their faith is worthy of the name, it will be quite as obvious as the former. Once seen it can never again be doubted, though it may sometimes require a strong effort to realize and hold by it. When we hear that certain troops have been sent into the most dangerous and trying post on the battlefield, how do we judge of them? Is it that their general has wished to punish them, or is it not rather that he believed in them best of all? And is not such confidence an honour greater than all other praise? To look at life under that light is to be done with fears and doubts. And along with that we take the further assurance that God sends no man into any battle that he may fall. None of all His troops are ever sacrificed to the exigencies of the field.³ [Note: J. Kelman, *Honour towards God*, 52.]

And this shalt thou know most surely, God breaketh His faith with none.

Teach thy thoughts ne’er from Him to wander, since Himself and His ways are One.”

3. “God is faithful,” says St. Paul, and proceeds to point out to the Corinthians the ways in which God’s faithfulness is shown towards them in the matter of their temptations. He tells them (1) that God permits the temptation, suffers them to be tempted; (2) that He proportions the temptation to their strength of resistance, not suffering them to be tempted above that they are able; (3) that He provides the way of escape from every temptation. So we have

I. The Control of Temptation.

II. The Adjustment of Temptation.

III. The Escape from Temptation.

I The Control of Temptation

The term “proof,” “temptation,” comprehends all that puts moral fidelity to the proof, whether this proof has for its end to manifest and strengthen the fidelity—it is in this sense that God can tempt,—or whether it seeks to make man fall into sin—it is in this sense that God cannot tempt, and that the devil always tempts. It may also happen that the same fact falls at once into these two categories, as, for example, the temptation of Job, which on the part of Satan had for its end to make him fall, and which God, on the contrary, permitted with the view of bringing out into clear manifestation the fidelity of His servant, and of raising him to a higher degree of holiness and of knowledge. There are even cases in which God permits Satan to tempt, not without consenting to his attaining his end of bringing into sin. So in the case of David. This is when the pride of man has reached a point such that it is a greater obstacle to salvation than the commission of a sin; God then makes use of a fall to break this proud heart by the humbling experience of its weakness.¹ [Note: F. Godet, *Commentary on Corinthians*, ii. 70.]

When Jehovah asked the question: “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth?” Satan said, “Hast thou not put a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?” I am very thankful for Satan’s own confession of the security of this servant of God. “The hedge was so high,” says one of the old Puritans, “that the big demons could not get over it, and so thick that the little demons could not get through it.”² [Note: J. G. Mantle.]

1. Since God controls the temptation, and is testing us by it, we ought to bear it faithfully, believing in His faithfulness. We know God’s faithfulness to us only when we are honestly faithful to ourselves. He is no paternal despot who will make us good by force; and no more shameful cry than that petulant demand exists. He preserves our independence; it is dear to Him; He will compel us to work out our own salvation with resolute labour, and in this more than in all else His faithfulness to us is shown. That fidelity is often

stern enough, it inflicts our due penalties, it proves to us the weaknesses of our nature by the trials in which they break down, it reveals what is strong in us by testing it sometimes to the last strand of the rope, and we quiver under the severity of the test; but what is the worth of our manliness, and what the use of a long experience, unless we are sufficiently strong of heart to realize that faithfulness is often sternness, and love sometimes apparently cruel?

We shall all be tempted, but the effects of the temptation depend upon ourselves. Fling into the same flame a lump of clay and a piece of gold, the clay will be hardened, the gold will melt; the heart of Pharaoh hardened into perfidious insolence, the soul of David melted into pathetic song. Bear temptation faithfully, and it will leave you not only unscathed, but nobler.¹ [Note: F. W. Farrar, *The Silence and the Voices of God*, 112.]

O Beauteous things of earth!

I cannot feel your worth

To-day.

O kind and constant friend!

Our spirits cannot blend

To-day.

O Lord of truth and grace!

I cannot see Thy face

To-day.

A shadow on my heart

Keeps me from all apart

To-day.

Yet something in me knows

How fair creation glows

To-day.

And something makes me sure

That love is not less pure

To-day.

And that th' Eternal Good

Minds nothing of my mood

To-day.

For when the sun grows dark

A sacred, secret spark

Shoots rays.

Fed from a hidden bowl

A Lamp burns in my soul

All days.¹ [Note: Charles G. Ames.]

2. We must trust Him in the darkness of our temptation. He is faithful; but to us in our blindness, ignorance, waywardness, He does not always seem so. To the strong man when he sits, despairing and stricken, amid the ruins of his life, to the father whose erring son causes him agony and shame—to these the sun shines not, and the stars give no light, the heavens above their heads are iron, and the earth beneath their feet is brass. Yet, how gently He heals even for these the wounds which His own loving hand has made;

how do the clouds break over them and the pale silver gleam of resignation brighten into the burning ray of faith and love. For our path in life is like that of the traveller who lands at the famous port of the Holy Land. He rides at first under the shade of palms, under the golden orange-groves, beside the crowded fountains with almonds and pomegranates breaking around him into blossom. Soon he leaves behind him these lovely groves; he enters on the bare and open plain; the sun burns over him, the dust-clouds whirl around him; but even there the path is brodered by the quiet wayside flowers, and when at last the bleak bare hills succeed, his heart bounds within him, for he knows that he shall catch his first glimpse of the Holy City, as he stands weary on their brow.

There came a cloud; it fell in shining showers.

Lo! from the earth sprang troops of radiant flowers.

Grief o'er a joyous heart its shadow threw.

Lo! in the darkness love's sweet graces grew.

The golden sun dropped sudden out of sight.

Lo! silver stars made glorious the night.

Death came. The soul, affrighted at its guise,

Was led protesting into Paradise.

3. Because God is faithful, He sends temptation to drive us to Himself. There is no escape from His love; no escape from the restlessness He will excite in our hearts till we find rest in Him. A thought will rise in our minds, we know not whence, a dim emotion kindle there which will seem to have no cause; they are the inspirations of God. In early times we have heard, as Samuel heard, His voice, and, unlike Samuel, we have forgotten. In after years, in issuing into life, we have met Him, in our first loneliness, as the infinite Inspirer. He has kindled in our hearts a fire of duty and hope and aspiration; but we have lost the music of that vision in the din of business and the clangour of the world. But He will not lose us; we forget, but not He. Again He comes to make our life shake in the tempest. If tenderness will not touch us, perhaps this stern education will. Therefore, there comes keen testing—"thrilling anguish," the death of earthly hopes, the hours in which life seems a dreadful dream out of which we cannot wake. For only so can some be awakened to feel that they are not their own, but God's; that the invisible is the real, and the visible unreal; that this world is, to us, children of immortality, no more than one flash of the shuttle through the loom, in comparison with the eternal world in which we are at one with Him.

Many men are distressing themselves, when they think of their trials, by imagining that they must have done something wrong, or God never could have sent such afflictions to them personally or to their household. That is a mistake. There are trials that are simply tests, not punishments; trials of faith and patience, not rods sent to scourge men because they have been doing some particular evil thing. God's people are tried. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." The honour is not in the trial, it is in the spirit in which the trial is borne.¹ [Note: J. Parker.]

4. It is an awful thought, this unremitting faithfulness of God, for it means, if we resist Him, stern, unrelenting work upon us. It is in vain that we say to Him, "Let us alone, torment us not." He never takes offence; He has none of the jealousy of vanity; He is never unkind, though His strokes are hard; never wanting in swift reciprocation of the faintest utterance of love, the faintest cry for forgiveness; always ready to listen with tenderness, though wise enough not always to grant our prayer; always reasonable, always just, so that He can make excuse, can weigh the force of trial on our character, can understand the force of the circumstances which betrayed us into guilt. He knows all, and there is infinite comfort in that.

You may assure your soul, when you are marching forward into the darkness of some valley of the shadow of death, that God would never have sent you to face that trial unless He had known that you could master it. Life is often difficult: it is never impossible for the man that has to live it. If the trial be very sore, if it shake your strength and strain your patience almost to the breaking-point, if the agony of conflict surprise you, then that only shows that you are stronger than you took yourself to be. Had you been unfit for it, this post of danger would never have been assigned to you. Your God has gauged your powers of resistance with exact knowledge, and the duty He shall set you will always be well within the limits of these powers.¹ [Note: J. Kelman, Honour towards God, 53.]

5. In the face of such faithfulness, we dare not do less than our best. It is a shame to sink wilfully below that which we know we ought to be. There are those who talk of their weakness, their yielding nature, as if it were something beautiful to be feeble; as if there were some poetical quality in giving way to that which they choose to call Fate; as if ideals were given them in order that they might sigh sentimentally over their unattainability, and not in order that they may pursue them with a resolute will. This is the infidelity of life—far worse than all else, when it is worst—turned into the ghost of an artistic dream and made the ground of vanity. Feebleness is never beautiful, and to choose feebleness as the rule of life is disgraceful in man or woman, however we may deck it with fine fancies. The real beauty of life is in health of mind, strength of will, vigour of purpose. The real poetry of life is in the noble

effort which does not rest till it has accomplished its end; in the undying pursuit of that which we know to be best; in the battle for right; in the resolution and the power to live above the standard of the world; in the ravishment which is born of seeing truth, love, justice, purity, as they are seen by God; and in unresting, yet unhasting endeavour to become at one with them.

Led by God's Spirit to the battle-ground, there is no assault in which any man is doomed to be defeated, and there is no temptation which it is impossible for a man to overcome. The conditions of life that tempt us are but the challenges that incite a man to assert his mastery. The lusts of the body, the pride of life, the meaner parts of human nature that offer a morbid pleasantness,—all that they can do at their worst is to give him the choice whether he shall respect himself or bow his neck. Let him remember that God has trusted him for this conflict also, trusted him to assert his best manhood, and to show its mastery. Let him remember that he is upon his honour, and that God counts on him to keep his honour bright as his sword.¹ [Note: J. Kelman, Honour towards God, 57.]

Was the trial sore?

Temptation sharp? Thank God a second time!

Why comes temptation but for man to meet

And master and make crouch beneath his foot,

And so be pedestaled in triumph? Pray

“Lead us into no such temptations, Lord!”

Yea, but, O Thou whose servants are the bold,

Lead such temptations by the head and hair,

Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight,

That so he may do battle and have praise.² [Note: Browning.]

II The Adjustment of Temptation

We are to believe that whatever our trial or temptation may be,—however heavy, however formidable,—it will, at least, never come in a light, random way to us. It is all measured before, and it is in strict order and proportion to something. He who made our body and our mind, and who knows exactly our every sensitive fibre, and the capacity of each—what each can and cannot endure—has fitted everything accurately to our constitution, to our circumstances, to our body, to our mind; and this sense of adaptation or proportion will of itself be an immense strength to us. It gives such dignity to affliction, and establishes at once a limit beyond which it can no more go than the sea can pass high-water mark. The mere knowing that there is a boundary line perfectly defined, though we do not see it, will give us courage to bear all that falls within that line. It will come to pass thus. It will sometimes happen to us to feel in our suffering—“If this trial were to go one inch further, I could not bear it; it would crush me.” But it will never go that inch. We shall not be crushed.

The words beyond what ye are able come as a surprise. Has man then some power? And, if the matter in question is what man can do with the Divine help, is not the power of this help without limit? But it must not be forgotten that, if the power of God is infinite, the receptivity of the believer is limited: limited by the measure of spiritual development which he has reached, by the degree of his love for holiness and of his zeal in prayer, etc. God knows this measure, St. Paul means to say, and He proportions the intensity of the temptation to the degree of power which the believer is capable of receiving from Him, as the mechanician, if we may be allowed such a comparison, proportions the heat of the furnace to the resisting power of the boiler.¹ [Note: F. Godet.]

1. There are two factors in every temptation, the sinful heart within, the evil world without, and they stand to one another much in the relation of the powder-magazine and the lighted match. Temptation originates in the heart, says St. James, and that is absolutely true. The heart is the powder-magazine. But for the lusts raging there, the allurements of the world would be absolutely powerless for harm. Temptation comes from the sinful world, says St. Paul; that is also true. The world is the lighted match; but for the allurements and incitements of the world, the sinful desires of the heart would never be called into play. It is when the match is applied to the powder-magazine that danger arises. So the power of the temptation may vary and the power of resistance may vary.

2. There is no greater mystery of providence than the unequal proportions in which temptation is distributed. Some are tempted comparatively little; others are thrown into a fiery furnace of it seven times heated. There are in the world sheltered situations in which a man may be compared to a ship in the harbour, where the waves may sometimes heave a little, but a real storm never comes; there are other men like the vessel which has to sail the high seas and face the full force of the tempest.

(1) That which is a temptation at one period of life may be no temptation at all at another. To a child there may be an irresistible

temptation in a sweetmeat which a man would never think of touching; and some of the temptations which are now the most painful to us will in time be as completely outlived.

(2) One of the chief powers of temptation is the power of surprise. It comes when we are not looking for it; it comes from the person and from the quarter we least suspect. The day dawns which is to be the decisive one in our life; but it looks like any other day. No bell rings in the sky to give warning that the hour of destiny has come. But the good angel that watches over us is waiting and trembling. The fiery moment arrives; do we stand; do we fall?

(3) Every man has his own trials; and every condition and circumstance of life its own peculiar temptations. Solitude has its temptations as well as society. St. Anthony, before his conversion, was a gay and fast young man of Alexandria; and, when he was converted, he found the temptations of the city so intolerable that he fled into the Egyptian desert and became a hermit; but he afterwards confessed that the temptations of a cell in the wilderness were worse than those of the city. It would not be safe to exchange our temptations for those of another man; every one has his own.

In speaking of Knox's Rambles, and the effects of association with men in sharpening the intellect, you remark that this seems inconsistent with the fact that great spirits have been nursed in solitude. Yes, but not the ploughman's solitude. Moses was forty years in Midian, but he had the education of Egypt before, and habits of thought and observation begun, as shown in his spirit of inquiry with regard to the burning forest. Usually, I suppose, the spark has been struck by some superior mind, either in conversation or through reading. Ferguson was, perhaps, an exception. Then, again, stirring times set such master-minds to work even in this solitude, as in Cromwell's case. I remember, too, a line of Goethe's, in which he says:

Talent forms itself in solitude,
Character in the storms of life.

But I believe both your positions are true. The soul collects its mightiest forces by being thrown in upon itself, and coerced solitude often matures the mental and moral character marvellously, as in Luther's confinement in the Wartburg. Or, to take a loftier example, Paul during his three years in Arabia; or, grander still, His solitude in the desert: the Baptist's too. But, on the other hand, solitude unbroken from earliest infancy, or with nothing to sharpen the mind, either by collision with other minds, or the expectation of some new sphere of action shortly, would, I suppose, rust the mental energies. Still there is the spirit to be disciplined, humbled, and strengthened, and it may gain in proportion as the mind is losing its sharpening education.¹ [Note: F. W. Robertson, in *Life and Letters*, 222.]

Trench, in his poem "The Monk and Bird," shows that the very blessedness of the consecrated life may become a temptation.

Even thus he lived, with little joy or pain

Drawn through the channels by which men receive—

Most men receive the things which for the main

Make them rejoice or grieve.

But for delight, on spiritual gladness fed,

And obvious to temptations of like kind;

One such, from out his very gladness bred,

It was his lot to find.

When first it came, he lightly put it by,

But it returned again to him ere long,

And ever having got some new ally,

And every time more strong—

A little worm that gnawed the life away

Of a tall plant, the canker of its root,

Or like as when from some small speck decay

Spreads o'er a beauteous fruit.

For still the doubt came back,—Can God provide
For the large heart of man what shall not pall,
Nor through eternal ages' endless tide
On tired spirits fall?
Here but one look tow'rd heaven will oft repress
The crushing weight of undelightful care;
But what were there beyond, if weariness
Should ever enter there?
Yet do not sweetest things here soonest cloy?
Satiety the life of joy would kill,
If sweet with bitter, pleasure with annoy
Were not attempered still.
This mood endured, till every act of love,
Vigils of praise and prayer, and midnight choir,
All shadows of the service done above,
And which, while his desire,
And while his hope was heavenward, he had loved,
As helps to disengage him from the chain
That fastens unto earth—all these now proved
Most burdensome and vain.¹ [Note: Trench, Poems, 13.]

3. The severity and the variety of man's temptations, together with the persistently lofty and urgent appeals addressed to him, are a supreme tribute to the grandeur of his moral nature. In a race the severity of the handicap is an indication of the capacity of the runner. A great deal is expected from a man who can give another a hundred yards' start. The runners are not all of equal calibre, and they are not handicapped above that they are able. Can we not see here what God is doing? Can we not see how He is dealing with us, according to this Pauline statement? So far from making things too difficult, He is trying to make them easier; He is tempering the strife to each man's strength; He does not want us to lose, but to win; not to fail, but to overcome. That is not harshness, it is kindness; that is not undue severity, it is magnanimity, it is compassion, it is fair-play. Let us not allow ourselves to curse our circumstances, or to arraign God and His plans and His world, as if they were all in special conspiracy against us. The fact is that most of us are in conspiracy against ourselves—perhaps without knowing it. We have groaned about our difficulties, instead of accepting them and using them as stepping-stones to success. We have kicked against our limitations, instead of allowing them to develop our resources. We have resented our hardships and our handicaps, instead of making them contribute to our manhood. We have sat and gloomed at our temptations and roundly cursed our fate, but we have never considered the ways of escape. Thus we have been at once unfair to God and have courted failure for ourselves.

You all know the story about the Black Prince at the battle of Crecy, how his father refused to send help to him when he was hard pressed. It would have been easy for the king to keep the prince out of reach of danger; but no, the father said to those who came appealing for help, "Let the boy win his spurs, and let the day be his."¹ [Note: F. de W. Lushington, Sermons to Young Boys, 24.]

III The Escape from Temptation

1. God will "with the temptation make also the way of escape." Sometimes we want to see the way of escape before the temptation, but the way of escape comes with the temptation, not before it.

It may have happened to us, in some of our visits to the grandest scenes of nature, to be wending our way along a lake or river where mountains are before us, so close and so encompassing that they appear not only to bar our own progress, but to leave not the smallest outlet for our little boat. But, as we neared these vast barriers which edged us in, we gradually descried an opening

between the hills which, as we went on, grew clearer and clearer, and wider and wider, till, safely and smoothly, our little bark floated on by a channel just made for us from within apparently impenetrable masses, to other regions which now range before us in their loveliness. So when the hindrances are the thickest, and the difficulties the most insurmountable, we feel that our faithful God, who made these fastnesses for this very end, will Himself provide the issue, and with the temptation make also the way of escape, that we may be able to endure it.

2. God is said here to make the temptation as well as the way of escape. Nor is this without a purpose. He knows precisely the strength we need, because He has prepared the occasion on which we shall be called to use it. It will never fail through any miscalculation or ignorance on His part. It will never be too feeble or too long upon the way. We may always be sure His succour will be at hand, a very present help in every time of trouble. Even in those moments in which our temptation comes upon us most suddenly, so that it may seem to have taken even God Himself by surprise, His way of escape will be close beside us. For the swiftest and most unforeseen of temptations are all equally under His control.

I leave you to call this deceiving spirit what you like—or to theorize about it as you like. All that I desire you to recognize is the fact of its being here, and the need of its being fought with. If you take the Bible's account of it, or Dante's, or Milton's, you will receive the image of it as a mighty spiritual creature, commanding others, and resisted by others: if you take Æschylus's or Hesiod's account of it, you will hold it for a partly elementary and unconscious adversity of fate, and partly for a group of monstrous spiritual agencies connected with death, and begotten out of the dust; if you take a modern rationalist's, you will accept it for a mere treachery and want of vitality in our own moral nature exposing it to loathsomeness or moral disease, as the body is capable of mortification or leprosy. I do not care what you call it,—whose history you believe of it,—nor what you yourself can imagine about it; the origin, or nature, or name may be as you will, but the deadly reality of the thing is with us, and warring against us; and on our true war with it depends whatever life we can win. Deadly reality, I say. The puff-adder or horned asp is not more real. Unbelievable,—those,—unless you had seen them; no fable could have been coined out of any human brain so dreadful, within its own poor material sphere, as that blue-lipped serpent—working its way sidelong in the sand. As real, but with sting of eternal death—this worm that dies not, and fire that is not quenched, within our souls or around them. Eternal death, I say—sure, that, whatever creed you hold;—if the old Scriptural one, Death of perpetual banishment from before God's face; if the modern rationalist one, Death Eternal for us, instant and unredeemable ending of lives wasted in misery.

This is what this unquestionably present—this, according to his power, omni-present—fiend, brings us towards, daily. He is the person to be “voted” against, my working friend; it is worth something, having a vote against him, if you can get it! Which you can, indeed; but not by gift from Cabinet Ministers; you must work warily with your own hands, and drop sweat of heart's blood, before you can record that vote effectually.¹ [Note: Ruskin, *Time and Tide* (Works, xvii. 365).]

3. The way of escape must be sought for, or it may not be found. It is not always forcibly obtruded. It reveals itself to the humble and watchful eye—the eye that has become single, and waits only upon God. And if we are tempted, and can see no mode of relief, then we must search for it. Gradually it will open and widen before us.

4. How is it that God makes the way of escape? Notice that it is not a way, but the way of escape; the one separate escape for each separate temptation.

(1) Sometimes the only victory over a temptation is not to argue with it, not even to wrestle with it, but simply to get away from it. “Brethren, let us not be righteous over-much!” St. Paul, indeed, uses no grandiloquent speech as to what a man should do when he finds himself beset by temptations. He does not in this place recommend a man to draw his sword, and plant his right foot forward, and clench his teeth, and do many another strenuous and showy thing which looks so well in a picture and sounds so well when addressed to a great audience, but which is all, as a matter of fact, futile in those hot, and terrible, and lonely hours when we are sorely tempted to do wrong. No; St. Paul tells us here that when we are tempted, the first and only thing to do is to get away from the spot, to run in fact for our life. This is one of those simple and obvious things which never occur to any of us until a genius arises to say them—when you are hard pressed by evil, move on, get away, escape. That may sound tame. It may sound less than the highest; but it is the very highest. Nay, it is the only truth and fact of the matter. There are situations in life, dark turnings in the moral world, sheer precipices where we must not trust ourselves, where the only sensible and religious course is to get away.

In passing through the “Inferno,” Dante's spiritual guide would not allow him to stand still for a moment.

“What!” a wayward youth might perhaps answer, incredulously; “no one ever gets wiser by doing wrong? Shall I not know the world best by trying the wrong of it, and repenting? Have I not, even as it is, learned much by many of my errors?” Indeed, the effort by which partially you recovered yourself was precious; that part of your thought by which you discerned the error was precious. What wisdom and strength you kept, and rightly used, are rewarded; and in the pain and the repentance, and in the acquaintance with the aspects of folly and sin, you have learned something; how much less than you would have learned in right paths can never be told, but that it is less is certain. Your liberty of choice has simply destroyed for you so much life and strength, never regainable. It is true you now know the habits of swine, and the taste of husks: do you think your father could not have taught you to know better habits

and pleasanter tastes, if you had stayed in his house; and that the knowledge you have lost would not have been more, as well as sweeter, than that you have gained?¹ [Note: Ruskin, *Queen of the Air* (Works, xix. 409).]

(2) The way of escape may be very near the entrance gate. It often is. And the victory may be won by watchfulness over the thoughts. As is the fountain, so will be the stream. Quench the spark, and you are safe from the conflagration. Crush the serpent's egg, and you need not dread the cockatrice. Conquer evil thoughts, and you will have little danger of evil words and evil ways. The victory over every temptation is easiest, is safest, is most blessed there.

Wasps' nests are destroyed when the wasps are only grubs like caterpillars, and before they have learned to fly. You get a squib, like those they fire off on the fifth of November, and light the end and put it into the hole in the ground where the nest is, and cover it over with a turf. And then all the grubs in the nest are suffocated by the smoke. If you wait till the grubs have wings and have learned to fly, then a ton of dynamite will be of little use; for the wasps will be buzzing all round your ears, and stinging you, and then flying away.² [Note: W. V. Robinson.]

(3) Sometimes prayer is the only way of escape. Sometimes the doors are all shut upon human sympathy and understanding, but there is always a way of escape towards God. "I have been driven many times to my knees," said Abraham Lincoln, "by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."

There is a picture by one of our great artists of a young knight on the verge of a dark wood through which he has to pass. That wood contains all manner of lurking perils and stealthy enemies, and before entering it the young knight has taken off his helmet, and is pouring out his soul in prayer. And the legend at the foot of the picture is this: "Into thy hands, O Lord." We too stand, like that young knight, face to face with all manner of dangers and perils; fierce and deadly temptations of many a kind will assail us as we make our way through the mystic wood. What better can we do than commit ourselves into the keeping of the same gracious and mighty God? "Into thy hands we commit ourselves."¹ [Note: J. D. Jones.]

I was in the Puzzle Garden one day at Hampton Court (there they call it a maze), and after getting to the centre, I had the greatest difficulty in getting out. But in the centre of that garden there is, not a summer house, but a raised platform. And a man stands on it, and he can see every one in the maze. Soon I heard him calling to me: "Turn to the left, sir," "To the left again," "Now to the right," until I got out. Life is like a puzzle garden sometimes. We do not know which way to turn, whether to go forward, or to turn to this side or to that; but if we look up to God in prayer, He will show us the way, and bring our souls out of trouble. We shall hear a voice behind us saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it."² [Note: W. V. Robinson.]

A young lieutenant who had seen one campaign—alone, and without any of the means and appliances of such war as I had been apprenticed to—I was about to take command, in the midst of a battle, not only of one force whose courage I had never tried, but of another which I had never seen; and to engage a third, of which the numbers were uncertain, with the knowledge that defeat would immeasurably extend the rebellion which I had undertaken to suppress, and embarrass the Government which I had volunteered to serve. Yet, in that great extreme, I doubted only for a moment—one of those long moments to which some angel seems to hold a microscope and show millions of things within it. It came and went between the stirrup and the saddle. It brought with it difficulties, dangers, responsibilities, and possible consequences terrible to face; but it left none behind. I knew that I was fighting for the right. I asked God to help me to do my duty, and I rode on, certain that He would do it.³ [Note: Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*, ii. 318 (Ruskin's Works, xxxi. 495).]

(4) There is the way of submission and resistance. It is all summed up in that word of St. James: "Submit yourselves therefore unto God, but resist the devil." That is the way of submission and resistance, and it is the secret of victory in the hour of fierce temptation. "Submit yourselves to God." Let us yield our nature absolutely and unreservedly to Him. Make an unconditional surrender. Then trust Him to come in the Person of His Spirit, and garrison every part of that yielded being, and undertake the battle for us. Then, when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. As the flood rushes onwards carrying everything before it, so the tempter comes upon men, if perchance he may find them unprepared and sweep them off their feet. What happens to the man who is submitted to God? The Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against the enemy. An ungrieved Spirit will always mean victory in the hour of temptation. First submit, and then resist. Trust Him to undertake the conflict and then resist.

In an old Continental town they will show you a prison in a tower, and on all the stones of that prison within reach, one word is carved—it is "Resist." Your guide will tell you that years ago a godly woman was for forty years immured in that dungeon, and she spent her time in cutting with a piece of iron on every stone that one word, for the strengthening of her own heart and for the benefit of all who might come after her, "Resist!" "Resist!" "Resist!"¹ [Note: J. G. Mantle.]

I hoped that with the brave and strong,

My portioned task might lie;

To toil amid the busy throng,
With purpose pure and high;
But God has fixed another part,
And He has fixed it well;
I said so with my bleeding heart,
When first the anguish fell.
Thou, God, hast taken our delight,
Our treasured hope away;
Thou bidst us now weep through the night
And sorrow through the day.
These weary hours will not be lost,
These days of misery,
These nights of darkness, anguish-tossed,—
Can I but turn to Thee:
With secret labour to sustain
In humble patience every blow,
To gather fortitude from pain,
And hope and holiness from woe.
Thus let me serve Thee from my heart,
Whate'er may be my written fate:
Whether thus early to depart,
Or yet a while to wait.
If Thou shouldst bring me back to life,
More humbled I should be,
More wise,—more strengthened for the strife,—
More apt to lean on Thee:
Should death be standing at the gate,
Thus should I keep my vow:
But, Lord! whatever be my fate,
O let me serve Thee now
Trust in God and do the Right

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Nisbet's Pulpit Commentary

1Cor 10:13

A WAY TO ESCAPE

'God ... will with the temptation also make a way to escape.'

1 Corinthians 10:13

The promise is not that we shall be not tempted, nor that our natural strength shall be the measure of the temptation permitted. We have no power of ourselves to help ourselves.

I. What God promises is the adaptation of the tempting power to the supernatural strength given; and the making with the temptation 'a way to escape.' This word is very remarkable; literally it means 'the exit,' 'the way out.' God promises that with the temptation, which He Himself does not make but merely controls, He will also make 'a way out.' It is His promise to the believer in Christ; and if He did not make this 'exit' He would not be true.

II. The promise is literally true.—There is a moment in every temptation, a pause between the suggestion and the execution of every wrong thing, when God provides this exit, this 'way of escape.' An angry retort, a profane jest, a cruel stab is upon your tongue, but it need not become articulate. A passionate impulse, a sinful desire is in your heart, but if you seek His aid you can resist that last

volition which constitutes the actual doing of the sin itself. When lust conceives, it bringth forth sin. The conception and the birth are separate from each other.

III. Away then with all excuses for being what we are.—You do not stand alone in the ranks of fallen beings, that you can make your temptations a pretext for weakness, for worldliness, for self-indulgence, for lack of influence. Despise yourself till, with St. Paul, you are able to confess 'No temptation has taken me but that which is common to man.' But, if God adapts the temptation to the strength, you must pray. There is no promise for the strength of grace but to the praying man; and finally, when the temptation is upon you, look out for God's way to escape.

IV. God has made the way to escape.—Take heed that you miss it not. Each act of sin is a sort of lifetime, with beginning, middle, and end. There is no room here for debate, for weighing, for judging; there is just room for a prayer. This is God's Will—your sanctification; this is God's will—that you should be saved. Trifle not, but buy up the opportunity, which is the life of time.

Dean Vaughan.

Homilies from Pulpit Commentary

Temptation 1 Corinthians 10:13 J.R. Thomson

With warning the inspired teacher conjoins encouragement. The self confident are admonished lest their high opinion of themselves should be the occasion of their fall. And, in the next verse, the timid are cheered by the assurance that, although they must be tempted, a Divine Deliverer shall appear upon their behalf, and they shall be led in the path of safety. This is an assurance consolatory to all who are desirous to turn the discipline of life to high spiritual account, and especially to the doubtful and the diffident.

I. TEMPTATION IS PERMITTED BY GOD.

1. Seeing that it is allowed by Providence to be an incident of human life, none need expect to escape. The young are tempted by the pleasures of sense and of society; the old by avarice and the love of ease; the learned by self confidence; the great by ambition; the pious and the useful by spiritual pride.

2. There is in this very fact an element of consolation. To every tempted soul it may be said, "Your case is not peculiar; all the good have attained to goodness by passing through the fiery furnace of affliction and persecution, of doubt and spiritual conflict." Christ himself was sorely tempted, and the disciple is not above his Lord. It is the common lot, in which we have fellowship with one another and with Christ.

II. TEMPTATION IS WITHSTOOD THROUGH THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

1. God has undertaken to defend and deliver his servants: "He knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." The faithfulness of a true and unchanging God is the anchor by which the tempted shall ride out the fiercest storm.

2. God effects this by the instrumentality of his Word. This is "the sword of the Spirit." When Jesus was beset by the adversary, he warded off every thrust by the power of the Scripture.

3. God encourages his people to call upon him in the day of trial. The sentry does not advance to meet the approaching foe; he falls back, and gives warning to the garrison and the commander. So, when tempted, should we arise and call upon our God.

III. TEMPTATION IS ITSELF TEMPERED BY AN OVERRULING PROVIDENCE. It shall not exceed our powers of endurance and resistance. It may be subtle; it may be sudden; yet the watchful, prayerful soul shall repel and overcome. The dart which would pierce the unarmed falls broken from the coat of mail; the flaming torch, which would explode the powder did it fall into a powder magazine, drops harmless into a pool of water; and the Ruler of all can both moderate the force of the onset and impart strength to stand in the evil day.

IV. TEMPTATION IS, IN THE CASE OF GOD'S PEOPLE, ACCOMPANIED BY A MEANS OF ESCAPE. The same God who delivered Daniel from the lions' den, and Peter from the prison, makes a path of safety for all who trust in him. The experience of every Christian verifies this assurance. The story of the soul is the same as the story of the Church; dangers and distresses ever recur, but they ever afford to the Divine Lord an opportunity for revealing his compassion, and for effecting an interposition and securing a deliverance. It is only when Christ's followers have entered the gates of heaven that they will be beyond the reach of the tempter's arm. - T.

The Hour Of Temptation 1 Corinthians 10:13 E. Hurndall

I. TEMPTATION COMES TO ALL. It came to the writer of this Epistle, to all the apostles, to Christ himself. It has come to the great and good in all ages, as well as to the insignificant and evil. It will come to us. The conditions of our life on earth make it unavoidable. It must not be regarded as indicative of Divine disfavour or as an evil altogether. The salutary effect of the hour of temptation has often been shown in the hour after temptation. Many who have fallen "into manifold temptations" have been led to "count it all joy" (James 1:2).

II. TO BE TEMPTED IS NOT TO SIN. We need to remember this. Some sensitive natures conclude that they must be very sinful because they are so much tempted, whereas multiplicity of temptation is often rather an evidence of faithfulness and integrity. The strongest attacks are made upon the strongest forts. Satan does not waste his ammunition. He would not be so earnestly seeking to capture us if we were already completely his captives. Repeated temptation argues the existence of resistance. Sin is consent to the temptation. Where there is no acquiescence there is no sin. The greatly tempted Christ was the perfectly sinless Christ.

III. TEMPTATION IS NOT COMPULSION. Some dread temptation, because they think it will force them to that which is evil. But since the world was, no man has ever been compelled to commit a single sin. Satan has no power of compulsion. Indeed, to be "compelled to sin" involves a contradiction in terms; if we are compelled, there can be no sin. We could not be responsible if we were under compulsion. Temptation at its strongest is only inducement. Satan said to Christ, "Cast thyself down;" he can say no mere to us; he cannot cast us down. Here the responsibility of sin comes in. Every sin that we commit is voluntary. We do it - no one else.

IV. GOD'S GRACIOUS PROVISION FOR HIS TEMPTED PEOPLE.

1. He will not allow them to be unduly tempted. Our temptations are under his control. His eye is upon us whilst we are tempted. His hand is stretched out. His voice says, "Thus far." Though he never tempts us in an evil sense, every temptation is weighed by him before it reaches us. He is faithful to his covenant with believers (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

2. He will provide the appropriate means for dealing with the temptation. A "way of escape," not necessarily from the temptation, but from the peril of it. As with Job, Daniel, Paul (2 Corinthians 12:8, 9). "The way of escape" as it should be rendered - the precise way in which the temptation should be received, borne, resisted. This way of escape comes with the temptation: when the temptation comes, this comes also; to the true believer the two are inseparable. With the sickness comes the cure, with the shaft the shield. In temptation we should look to God; from him cometh our help. When the enemy comes in like a flood, he lifts up the standard against him. The promise is only to those who are in alliance with God. Others go down under temptation, not because they are compelled, but because to the invitation from without there is a quick response from within. We should enter into covenant with God through Christ; then we shall be in his hands who can "keep us from falling" and who will. - H.

The Commonness Of Our Temptation 1 Corinthians 10:13 R. Tuck

No temptation taken you but such as is common to man. In Christian experience there is constant fresh surprise at the forms which temptation can take; and one of our gravest difficulties arises from our fear that the forms are special to us - such as no others have known. We are thus led to think that we must battle with the temptation alone, since we can hope to gain no real help from the sympathy or the experience of our Christian brethren. It is a great joy to us when we find out that all the ages are linked together in a common experience of the possible forms of temptations. Human nature is the same in every age and every place. The corruption of human nature shows itself in the same forms among all classes. Even in what we think to be quite subtle and peculiar forms of sinful inclination and passion, we are really but sharing a common experience; our temptation is one that is common to men. Again and again, as life advances, we find this out, often with a great surprise; and, although the finding it out does not relieve us from the conflict with the evil, it does relieve us from the strain of feeling that our experience is unique, our tempter a hitherto unconquered one. We seem to gain new strength when we can say, "Our brothers have mastered this very foe many a time; and God has adapted his grace to those tempted just as I am over and over again." The Revised Version gives a somewhat different turn to the sentence: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear;" i.e. such as is fairly within the limitations of a human and earthly experience.

I. TEMPTATION IS A COMMON HUMAN EXPERIENCE. It is a necessity of our probationary state; it is the condition of our changing the mere innocence of ignorance for the virtue that comes by knowledge and will. If God were pleased to give us, as moral creatures, the discernment between right and wrong, with a distinct understanding that he stood by the right, then he must set his creatures in the midst of circumstances which would test their good will towards the right. So, in one sense, temptations around us, taking their thousandfold forms, make the battle and the bitterness of our human life. But, in another sense, our surrounding of temptation is but the great sphere in which we are to win holiness and virtue. None of us can get out of the way of temptation. It goes with us where we go, because God will not leave us alone: he wants us to be holy.

II. CHRISTIAN LIFE IS NOT EXEMPT FROM TEMPTATION. It cannot be too fully shown that becoming a Christian never alters a man's circumstances; it only alters his relation to the circumstances. The laws of life rule on for the Christian and the unrenewed man; and, from his higher position, the Christian has still to see all virtue wrung from the remitter. Temptation may even take more subtle and perilous forms for the Christian. His new thought and feeling may even discover temptations where duller souls would miss them.

III. THE RELATIONS IN WHICH GOD STANDS TO TEMPTATION, AS AFFECTING THE CHRISTIAN. Here three points need treatment.

1. God modifies the temptation to the bearing power of the man to whom it comes. We may be sure that God will "not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able."
2. God will provide the necessary escapes either from or through the temptation.
3. God comforts with gracious promises and assurances, to which he is ever faithful. "God permits the temptation by allowing the circumstances which create temptation to arise, but he takes care that no fate bars the loath of retreat." Then "all that a Christian has to do is to live in humble dependence upon him, neither perplexed in the present nor anxious for the future." - R.T.

Seven Ways To Break Bad Habits
Proverbs 5:21-23; 1 Corinthians 10:13
Rob Morgan
September 5, 1999

(Ed. Comment - See caution note appended to point number 6 below. If the bad habit is a sin, then run to Romans 8:13 and put to death the sin by the enabling power of the Spirit. Flesh will never cast our flesh! Self-effort will never trump Spirit-enablement in this area. Beware of placing yourself under some ritual, routine, vow, etc, all of which are really subtle forms of legalism which will blunt the flow of transforming grace and the quench the Spirit's work!)

Today we are continuing our series of messages entitled "Trade Secrets of Successful People: 54 Helps, Hints, and Habits for Strengthening Your Life." Our topic today is "Seven Ways to Break Bad Habits," and our Scripture reading is from Proverbs 5:21-23:

For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths. The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.

Here is a man who has developed some sinful habits; he has some flaws in his character and behavior. Those flaws and faults are habitual, and they are described as "cords." The cords of his sin hold him fast. The New Living Translation says: They are ropes that catch and hold him.

That description reminds us of what Horace Mann, the great educator, once said: "Habits are like a cable. We weave a strand of it every day and soon it cannot be broken."

I recently read an article in ParentLife Magazine which told of a teacher who wanted to show her pupils the power of habits, and how they are formed through repeated actions or thoughts. Taking a roll of thread, she wrapped it one time around a student's wrists when placed together. "That," she said, "represents your doing something one time. Can you break the thread?" The student easily did so.

Then she wrapped the thread around his wrists, two, three, four, five or more times. The effort to break the thread became more and more difficult until finally the child was unable to free his hands at all. "That," she said, "is what happens when acts are repeated until they become habits."

The famous American psychologist William James said that by allowing separate acts to reoccur until they become habits we are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone....

Samuel Johnson put it this way: The chains of habit are generally too small to be felt until they are too strong to be broken.

I wonder what bad habits are represented by the hundreds of us gathered here this morning? Some of you may be struggling with:

- Smoking

- Drinking
- Oversleeping
- Nail-biting
- Cussing
- Impulsive spending
- Complaining and nagging
- Pornography
- Losing your temper

We could go on making an increasingly lengthy list, but perhaps you already know what your bad habit is, and you want to be able to break it. Well, today I'd like to give you seven ways to break that bad habit.

1. Call That Bad Habit a Sin, and Put It Under The Blood of Christ

Erwin Lutzer, pastor of Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, wrote: The Christian must see that bad habits are ultimately spiritual issues. In his book *How To Say No To A Stubborn Habit*, he continues: "We are responsible for our own sin--including those sins 'which so easily beset us.' The fact that we do something wrong habitually does not relieve us of responsibility. On the contrary, it may make the sin all the worse. So we must take personal responsibility for our own habits and not shrink from calling them sin."

I think it helps us to realize that we aren't just trying to break a bad habit, we are endeavoring to root out and overcome a sinful tendency in our lives.

Listen to these verses from Ephesians 4-5:

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood (in other words, get out of the habit of telling little white lies!) and speak truthfully to his neighbor (get into the habit of telling the truth)

In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry (get out of the habit of losing your temper!)... He who has been stealing must steal no longer (break the habit of stealing), but must work, doing something useful with his own hands that he may have something to share with those in need (get into the habit of working hard and of giving generously).

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths (get out of the habit of being foul-mouthed), but only what is helpful for building others up....

/But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, for these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk, or coarse joking, which are out of place....

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All these items are sinful habit patterns that God wants to deal with in our lives--sins committed so habitually that they become life-patterns for us; but the Lord wants to overturn them in our lives and to replace them with a new set of behaviors.

I think it helps to realize that. The other day I was mowing around my house, and, turning over a board, I saw a little snake. Well, I didn't think much about it, because it was a harmless little blacksnake that eats bugs and mice, and it was some distance from my house. But suppose I had recognized it as a rattlesnake or a copperhead. I would have taken it much more seriously, and would have done everything in my power to kill it before it bit one of my children.

It may be that there's something in your life or in mine that we view as a little harmless habit, a little weakness to which we frequently succumb. But God views it as sin with a capital "S" and it needs to be confessed as such and put under the blood of Christ. (**Ed**: And put to death by the Spirit - Ro 8:13-note = we are 100% Responsible while at the same time 100% Dependent! Mysterious? Paradoxical? Yes, but Biblically true!)

2. Walk in the Spirit

Second, memorize (**See Memorizing His Word**) and obey (**Ed**: But even this obedience being enabled by the Spirit - faith = renounce self-effort and rely on Spirit-enablement!) Galatians 5:16: Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh". I

had a professor once, Otis Braswell, who talked about this verse one day in class, and he made an interesting comment. He said that many Christians read this verse backward. They think that if they are not fulfilling the lust of the flesh, they can walk in the Spirit. And so they try with all their might to overcome their addictions and lusts, and they try to do it in their own energy. They turn over a new leaf. They make a new resolution. But we can never overcome our besetting sins by ourselves. We must come in full surrender to Jesus Christ, confessing our sins, and yielding ourselves to him so that by his grace we can walk in the Spirit. And as we walk in the Spirit, the indwelling Jesus Christ, by the power of his Spirit, begins to live his own life--the Christ-life--through us. And when that happens we find that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

3. Make No Provision For the Flesh

Now, we certainly need to cooperate in the process, because the same Bible that tells us to walk in the Spirit also tell us in Romans 13:14 (note) to make no provision for the flesh. In other words, with the help our indwelling Christ, we need to make strategic changes in our lives that will starve the bad habits and encourage the new ones.

Some time ago while we were on an extended vacation, I asked a friend to water and spray my rose bushes. When I returned, I couldn't see the rose bushes for the weeds that had sprung up. I told my wife Katrina, "I don't know where those weeds came from. They're taller than the rose bushes." Well, come to find out, my friend saw the weeds starting to come up, and thinking I they were bedding plants of some sort that I had planted among the roses, she sprayed and fertilized and watered them!

Our lives are very much like a flower garden. The weeds--the bad habits--grow very quickly, and they can take over. The good habits--the disciplines of life--the roses--have to be carefully cultivated. Too many of us water and spray and fertilize the weeds.

I'll give you an example. I have a friend who works in an office in Chattanooga, and who has struggled in the past with a habit of watching pornography. He came to Christ, but so far he has refused to clean out the little locked drawer in his entertainment console where his pornographic videos are kept. He says, "Well, I just don't know what to do with them. I paid a lot of money for them, and I hate to throw them away, but I don't feel that I should give them to anyone else, so I just have them locked up there in that drawer that I never open."

Well, I know exactly what he should do with them. He should do with them what the Ephesians did in Acts 19 with their sinful books and occultish materials, and that is to burn them, to destroy them.

Or, to use another example, suppose you want to break the smoking habit. In her advice column, Ann Landers recently suggested if you seriously want to stop smoking, you make a little ceremony out of smoking your last cigarette, you say goodbye to it, and then you dispose of all tobacco products and paraphernalia. Throw away the ashtrays, lighters, and everything else.

4. Launch A New Habit As Strongly As Possible--Then Stay With It

William James, philosopher and pioneer American psychologist, wrote this about habits in his classic book *Psychology: Briefer Course*. "In the acquisition of a new habit, or the leaving off of an old one, there are four great maxims to remember: First, we must take care to launch ourselves with as strong an initiative as possible..."

In his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey describes the breaking and making of habits to the launch of a spacecraft like Apollo 11. To get to the moon, writes Covey, those astronauts "literally had to break out of the tremendous gravity pull of the earth. More energy was spent in the first few minutes of lift-off, in the first few miles of travel, than was used over the next several days to travel half a million miles.

"Habits, too, have tremendous gravity pull--more than most people realize or would admit. Breaking deeply imbedded habitual tendencies such as procrastination, impatience, criticalness, or selfishness that violate basic principles of human effectiveness involves more than a little willpower and a few minor changes in our lives. 'Lift off' takes a tremendous effort, but once we break out of the gravity pull, our freedom takes on a whole new dimension."

One expert suggests making a list of the reasons you want to change, and carrying it around with you. Some people say that you should commit to your decision publicly. At least, gather some friends and tell them and ask for their assistance.

Then stay with it. Make up your mind you're going to have victory over that bad habit, and never give in. Never give up. How long does it take to establish a new habit? There's a little couplet that says: A bad habit takes 21 days to break; a good habit takes 21 days to make. But in preparation for this message, I read another expert who asserts that it takes 90 days for an old habit to be broken and a new habit formed. But stay with it, and don't let yourself grow discouraged. The Bible says to put your hand to the plough and don't look back.

5. Develop A Support Group

It is also important to have a support group to encourage you and with whom to be accountable. I know a man who wanted to begin

a new habit of running every morning at the track. He wanted to get up early and build up to three miles, arriving at the track each day at 6 am. But morning after morning he slept in. Finally he made an agreement with a friend that the two of them do it together. After that, when the alarm went off and he was tempted to sleep in, he thought of his friend waiting there for him at the track, and it got him out of bed. He was able to establish his habit.

I remember when I was in college, my roommate in the dormitory was a military brat, and his father had spent a lifetime in the armed forces. He had taught Bill to clean off his desk after every project. Well, Bill's desk was always clean and tidy, every pencil and paper in its place. Mine was a mess, and I couldn't find anything.

One day Bill gave me a military style lecture about the efficiency of keeping one's desk clean. "After every project," he said, "put everything back in its place, file things carefully, and clean your desk for the next project." I made a decision to do just that, but I can tell you that my motivation for the longest time was knowing that Bill would pass my desk several times a day in the room. So launch your new habit as strongly as possible, and get a support group going.

I read this in the newspaper recently: Dear Abby: I am engaged to be married to a wonderful young lady. Although I am usually well behaved, I have a terrible temper and sometimes swear and use bad language -- a habit I want very much to break.

"Cheryl" and I consulted a psychologist about this problem, and she suggested that I wear an elastic band around my wrist, and every time I start to lose my temper, I should snap it. I tried it a few times, but Cheryl said I wasn't snapping it hard enough, so at our next session, the therapist suggested that Cheryl snap it whenever I started to get nasty. And snap it hard enough to make it sting.

(Ed comment - While this is an interesting illustration which seemed to work, I would submit that it has just a hint of self-effort or self-reliance. The truth is our best efforts can never suppress the flesh's desire to bring a temptation to birth! The only One Who has the power to do this is the indwelling Spirit. So if the snap of the rubber band reminds of our desperate need to depend on the Spirit's enabling power, then I say "Amen!" Just be careful that what you do does not cross the line into self-effort, because that will eventually fail and cause frustration. This same warning actually applies to all of these steps, for even memorizing Scripture can be a subtle form of self-effort! I know, because I have tried and failed miserably!)

I know this may sound funny or even childish, but the rubber band treatment worked for me! The therapist said that this technique is used to stop smoking, drinking, and obsessive thoughts.

Pass this on to your readers if you think it will help. It helped me.--John M. in Bridgeport, Connecticut

Having a friend willing to do something as simple as snap a rubber band was all it took to help that man overcome his problem.

6. Memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13

I don't know of a better verse for people who are trying to break free from a besetting sin than 1 Corinthians 10:13: No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful who will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.

Lynette Morgan's father, Dr. LaVerne Miley, was a missionary physician in the Ivory Coast for many years. One day he was greatly disturbed to learn that four of his prime converts had fallen into sexual sin. One of them, Benjamin, spoke for them all when Miley confronted them. "Monsieur," Benjamin said, "I believe the Bible, but some parts of it only work for you white folks. Black men have a stronger sex drive than you."

Dr. Miley turned in the Bible to 1 Corinthians 10:13 and asked Benjamin to read it. Then he asked, "Benjamin, does that promise specify skin color?" The young men were silent, then they began to weep. They confessed their sins as the doctor prayed with tears in his own eyes.

That verse will work for us any time day or night, regardless of our background, regardless of our circumstances, regardless of our skin color or the land or our origin.

7. If You Fall, Don't Give Up, Get Up

Proverbs 24:16 is a verse I frequently give out to people who are trying to overcome deeply entrenched negative patterns in their lives: "For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in time of calamity."

Someone else put it this way: First we form habits, then they form us. Conquer your bad habits, or they'll eventually conquer you.

Well, we can't conquer them by ourselves (**Ed**: Amen and Amen!), but in Christ Jesus our Lord, we are more than conquerors (**Ed**: For He has sent His Spirit to give us daily victory over sin!). For...

He breaks the power of cancelled sin
And sets the captive free.
His blood can make the foulest clean
His blood availed for me.

Seeing, then, that we are encompassed by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.