

The Way of Escape

"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, that you may be able to endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NASB)

Some observations:

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man". Your situation, whatever it might be, is not unique. You may feel that no one can understand what you are going through, but the truth is that other people have faced similar situations. One of the great things about sharing your struggles with someone else is that you find that you are not alone.

"and God is faithful". GOD IS FAITHFUL. Even when we are faithless. Even when we walk away from Him, He remains faithful. He does not give up on us. He will always be there, waiting for us to return to Him. He is always willing to forgive. Always willing to accept us back. Always willing to cleanse us. One of the things I love so much about God is that He is in the business of redemption. He is a "Plan B" God. Even when we fail, He can redeem the situation. We may still have to live with the consequences of our choices but He does not cast us away. He takes the bad situation and makes it turn out to His glory. His grace is unfathomable.

"Who will not allow you to be tempted". God does not tempt anyone. (James 1:13) However, He does allow temptation to come to us. Why? His reasons are His own. God is Sovereign and seldom explains why He allows us to be tested. I have learned that testing comes to teach us to walk with Him. If you carried your baby everywhere, she would never learn to walk. As we go through trials and temptations, we grow stronger, and we learn what it is to trust God and to walk with Him.

"Beyond what you are able". God is your loving Father. He knows what temptations and trials will stretch you, and which ones will break you. It may seem to you that you just can not bear it but God knows you better than you know yourself. He knows your heart. He knows your potential. And He knows how strong He is. Part of the reason He allows us to go through hard times is so that we learn to lean on His strength and not our own.

"But with the temptation will provide the way of escape also". I said it before, but it bears repeating: God does not tempt us. God does provide a way to escape. God provides it, but you must look for it and you must take it. The truth is that sometimes we WANT to sin. A part of us enjoys it. (Romans 7) We rationalize that we can always ask God to forgive us. It's always easier to ask for forgiveness than it is to ask for permission.

If you are truly honest with yourself, in your heart of hearts, you know when you are about to sin. You do hear that still small voice telling you to stop. But too often, you pretend not to hear. You pretend not to see the way of escape. (If I don't see it, then it's God's fault, right?) Our hearts are so deceitful, we even lie to ourselves. (Jeremiah 17:9) But God sees the truth. When we sin, it is because we CHOOSE to, not because we can't stop it. That is the brutal truth.

"That you may be able to endure it". You have probably wondered if you will ever gain victory over all the sin in your life. You may have even heard some Christians say that they have been set free from sinning. I hate to burst their bubble, but I just don't think it's possible to be entirely free from sin in this life. (Romans 7)

It is true that Jesus set us free from the bondage of sin in our life. That is why we have a choice whether or not to sin. Before we came to know the Lord, we were slaves to sin. We had no choice at all. But Christ redeemed us. He literally bought us back. Now we belong to Him. But we still live daily with the struggle against sin. In fact it is a dangerous thing to arrogantly think that you have beaten a particular sin. (1Corinthians 10:12) This verse is not a promise of victory, but of endurance. You can say "no" to this temptation. You can endure to say "no" to the next one. You have to take it one day at a time. One test at a time.

We know that we will have ultimate victory over sin. Not only that but we will ultimately have victory over Death and the Grave. We know that in Jesus we have overcome!