



## **February 15, 2025 *God Won't Give You More Than You Can Handle?***

### **Scripture:**

No temptation has seized you that isn't common for people. But God is faithful. He won't allow you to be tempted beyond your abilities. Instead, with the temptation, God will also supply a way out so that you will be able to endure it. *1 Corinthians 10:13*

God is our refuge and strength, a help always near in times of great trouble. That's why we won't be afraid when the world falls apart. *Psalms 46:1-2*

### **The half-truth: no temptation can force you to sin**

#### **MONDAY 2.16.25 1 Corinthians 10:11-14**

People usually base "God won't give you more than you can handle" on verse 13 (God "won't allow you to be tempted beyond your abilities"). Paul was explicitly talking about temptation, notably the temptation to go back to serving false gods (verse 14). Israel fell into that trap in the desert (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:1-10). It was a very live issue for the Corinthian Christians. Paul said that no temptation could force them to sin, to abandon their devotion to God. He did not say all life situations are within our power to "handle."

- Temptations to worship pagan gods abounded in Corinth. Many business dealings and relationships came about at feasts honoring pagan idols. Social status often relied on attending such feasts. "Priestesses of Aphrodite" (i.e. prostitutes) had many clients. What powers and pressures today can push you to compromise, abandon or hide your commitment to Christ? Can any of them leave you with no choice but to give up your faith?
- Pastor Kenneth Chafin wrote, "[Some] in the church in Corinth felt that the fact that they had been baptized and had partaken of the Lord's Supper made them immune to the temptations of idol worship ... We cannot trust in religious ceremony that does not usher us into a different kind of life." Have you ever hoped that your service to others, your church attendance or your giving made you spiritually "immune"? Ask God to "nudge" you inwardly if you need to heed verse 12's warning in some area of life: "Those who think they are standing need to watch out or else they may fall."

**Prayer:** O Lord, I want to excuse myself when I've wandered off your path, to say, "I had no choice—I had to do it." Remind me that that's never true, and keep me living in ways that are responsive to your principles. Amen.

### **What you face may not come from God at all**

#### **TUESDAY 2.17.25 John 9:1-5, James 1:13-17**

"God won't give you more than you can handle" is flawed because it assumes that God is the source of any issues you face. As we saw when we studied "Everything happens for a

reason,” that is not a Biblical teaching. Both Jesus and his half-brother James taught that our God is the source of good gifts, not of traumas and tragedies.

- James was unequivocal: “No one who is tested should say, ‘God is tempting me!’” When something that strains your faith has happened, have you ever said (or had someone say to you), “Why is God doing this?” How can James’ assurance that “Every good gift, every perfect gift, comes from above” serve to correct and reassure you when you’re tempted to blame God for bad things?
- Jesus did not see this man’s blindness as something God had given him. He also did not see it as a trivial thing the man should just “handle” (though certainly many of God’s children have had to learn how to go on with their lives even with blindness). What does Jesus’ eagerness to heal the man (and God’s promise to ultimately wipe away all tears— cf. Isaiah 25:8) tell you about God’s heart when we face troubles?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you came to bring healing and light, to pour out on us all good and perfect gifts. Remind me that there are other sources of problems, and keep me from blaming you for what goes wrong in my life. Amen.

**Moses: “I can’t bear this people on my own”**

**WEDNESDAY 2.19.25 Numbers 11:10-17**

Freed from slavery in Egypt by a series of miraculous events, the Israelites still complained about the discomforts of trekking through the desert. They even went so far as to tell Moses they had been better off in Egypt! Moses found the situation discouraging and distressing— more than he could “handle.” But God didn’t scold him. God agreed Moses couldn’t handle it alone, and told him to enlist help to bear the burden.

- Review Moses’ complaint to God in verses 11-15. Note the words and phrases that indicate the Israelite complaints had pushed Moses past the point of what he could handle—that he was at the end of his rope. Can you remember situations you’ve faced in which you could identify with Moses’ feelings of being desperate and overwhelmed?
- One reason people often repeat “God won’t give you more than you can handle” is that our culture places a high premium on our ability to single-handedly “handle” any challenges life throws our way. Have you ever been embarrassed to ask for help in dealing with a situation? How does God’s guidance to Moses point to the importance of being willing to admit we can’t handle everything alone?

**Prayer:** Lord God, when Moses was overwhelmed, you didn’t tell him to handle it, but to enlist others to help him. Give me a willingness to ask for help when I need it, too. Amen.

**Jeremiah: “Why was I ever born?”**

**THURSDAY 2.20.25 Jeremiah 20:7-9, 14-18**

Jeremiah the prophet had a deeply unpopular (many of his countrymen would have said “unpatriotic”) message. He urged Israel to face reality, and cooperate with the powerful invading Babylonian army (see, for example, Jeremiah 27:1-22). Most Israelites, especially the kings, hated and persecuted him for that. Jeremiah spoke bluntly to God about the awful pain he felt as an outcast.

- Most Israelites had forsaken God’s ways, but still wanted to claim God’s protection and favor (cf. Jeremiah 7:5-11). When Jeremiah exposed their wicked actions, they blamed him for speaking out, instead of looking within to see if his message was true. Have you had some part of your way of life challenged, either by a human speaking for God or by God’s Spirit working directly in your heart? How do you stay open to let God call you to a “course correction” when you need one?
- Does it shock you that Jeremiah spoke to God in such a blunt, pained way? In *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* Phillip Yancey told of a hospice chaplain who met a distraught patient in the final stages of cancer. The patient said his hope of eternal life was gone—he’d spent the previous night ranting and swearing at God. The chaplain asked, “Do you know the Christian word that describes what you were doing? The word is ‘prayer’—you spent the night praying.” “Our no-holds outbursts,” Yancey concluded, “hardly threaten God.”

**Prayer:** Lord God, often I’m grateful, but sometimes I’m hurt, angry or overwhelmed. Thank you for being a God who listens and cares when I speak, no matter in what inner state I come to you. Amen.

### **Acknowledging our weakness takes strength**

#### **FRIDAY 2.21.25 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

It was the Christians in Corinth to whom Paul wrote that God “won’t allow you to be tempted beyond your abilities” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Almost as though to show how that differed from “God won’t give you more than you can handle,” Paul wrote to those same Christians that he faced a load of suffering “so far beyond our strength” he thought he might die. With gripping honesty, he shared the process by which he learned to accept his own weakness, rather than demanding that he must always be strong.

- Paul didn’t hide even his overwhelming struggles. His honesty sprang from a principle he wrote about in his first Corinthian letter: “the weakness of God is stronger than human strength ... God chose what the world considers weak to shame the strong” (1 Corinthians 1:25-27). Can you be honest and vulnerable about your struggles, or do you feel ashamed and try to hide them? Who do you know who helps you recognize the strength in honestly facing weakness?
- So where’s the strength in weakness? The *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* noted, “Paul nowhere condones weakness of character ... Christ has partaken of human weakness but without sin, and his perfect ministry is not without a loving discipline that calls out to ‘strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees’ (Heb 12:12) ... Weakness in this case images an opportunity for faith, not for self-pity and a victim mentality.” In what ways are you allowing God’s power to be “made perfect in weakness” in you?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I’m not as invulnerable and indestructible as I sometimes imagine I am. What a gift it is to know that, even when I am weak, your grace is with me, and your power can work through the weakness I wish I didn’t have. Amen.

### **Nothing, bearable or unbearable, can separate us from God’s love**

#### **SATURDAY 2.22.25 Romans 8:35-39**

Moses, Jeremiah, Paul (and millions more of God's people) found that even trials they could not handle on their own could not separate them from God's steadfast love. Paul wrote, "We are experiencing all kinds of trouble, but we aren't crushed. We are confused, but we aren't depressed. We are harassed, but we aren't abandoned. We are knocked down, but we aren't knocked out" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). He knew all about "trouble, or distress, or harassment, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword" (verse 35). Those are the parts of life we often cannot handle. God allows us to face them, but God never leaves us while we face them. They may go way beyond our strength—but they cannot separate us from God's love. That is always with us.

- Review Paul's list of life's obstacles—"trouble, or distress, or harassment, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword." Which of those most often leave you feeling overwhelmed, not sure you can handle them? When you face something you cannot handle, what difference can it make to your frame of mind to know that God's steady, unfailing love continues to enfold you at those times? How can you keep building your confidence in that love, a love that never lets you go?

**Prayer:** All-powerful God, whatever comes my way, hold me close in the shelter of your love. Thank you that even when I'm overwhelmed, you can win a sweeping victory through me in "all these things." Amen.

**Family Activity:** As a family, discuss how you prepare for events. Do you save money for a vacation, study for a test or walk often to build stronger muscles? Typically when we prepare, we are able to handle the event or activity in a more healthy and helpful way. Since life will bring about times of struggle and challenge, we can prepare now by growing stronger in our faith. Talk about how you might do this together (consider learning Scripture, being in prayer, serving others, being in worship and sharing in Christian community). Then choose one or two ways to build your "family faith muscles" over this next year. Ask God to give you strength. Remember, God is always with you!