

The Way of Escape

When either man or animal feels trapped, panic sets in. It is the instinctive fear of injury or death that prompts the panic response. Loss of liberty and control over circumstances can lead to desperation. Desperation causes unpredictable behavior, and in the case of man, foolish decisions often result. If the situation seems hopeless, then despondency sets in along with resignation to an inevitable fate.

The situation just described should never apply to a Christian in the event of temptation. At the point of temptation, a Christian should be calm and controlled rather than panicked and desperate. The source of a Christian's peace in the midst of such a storm is the assurance of God that he can escape the trap of temptation without sin. The word of God gives this assurance in 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.

The promise of God concerning temptation is filled with absolutes and certainties that every Christian can trust. There is no vagueness about these guarantees. Consider them again carefully.

- No temptation is unique. Every category of temptation has been previously experienced and overcome by someone else. The Lord Jesus Himself is the certainty of this guarantee, for He “has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).
- God is faithful, which means that we can trust Him in every situation. He has never broken a promise and is incapable of telling a lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). We know for certain that His promises are true.
- There will never be a temptation that exceeds our ability to resist. The power of Christ in us is greater than the power of the tempter in the world (1 John 4:4). Through Christ, we have the armor of God for this battle of resistance (Ephesians 6:10-17), so we can always win. Therefore, we can never excuse our sin by saying, “The devil *made* me do it.”
- There will always be a way of escape from temptation. Rather than panicking in the midst of temptation or succumbing, finding the ever-present way of escape must be our calm focus. The most obvious path of escape is given in the next verse after this promise, which is simply to flee from the sin (1 Corinthians 10:14; also 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22).
- The end result of these guarantees is success: “You will be able to endure it.” God has put victory over temptation well within our reach so that we can have great confidence in the moment of trial.

Are you actively seeking the way of escape from temptation? No one seeks to be physically trapped and captured, but many people intentionally walk into tempting situations, close their eyes to the way of escape, and become spiritually ensnared in sin. May this never be true for Christians. God provides a way of escape, but He will not physically snatch us from the situation or miraculously intervene. We must seek the way out, or else we will be trapped in a prison of our own device.