

#51 “Keep Resisting the Devil”

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Sin is typically the easy way out, being often a source of fun, pleasure, or distraction, albeit a temporary and destructive one (Hebrews 11:25). But sin is not God’s way, and the call for us as believers is to do what is hard and requires great faith and self-control. We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that sin is ever acceptable. Even if circumstances are ridiculous, horrible, or extremely difficult, we cannot justify or rationalize sinning. The reason for this is described in one very powerful verse. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, “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.” Every Christian needs to be aware of this verse, the truths it implies, and the promises of God which it reveals.

This verse teaches us that temptation is a common, ordinary reality of life on this earth. Believers and unbelievers alike are tempted by the devil. We must expect to be engaged in a spiritual battle for our hearts and our purity before God. Satan doesn’t rest, and he seeks to lead us astray, taking advantage of our weak points, mercilessly trying to exploit us and deceive us. We can pray that God will “lead us not into temptation” as the Lord’s prayer says (Matthew 6:13), but sometimes God will allow us to be tempted (Luke 22:31-32). This is just the reality of the human experience. Humans all will give in (Romans 3:23), and even Christians will stumble at times (James 3:2). *But the message that Paul says by inspiration of the Holy Spirit is that we don’t have to give in.* We do give in because our faith is weak, but our sinning is a choice. We are not helpless because God is faithful, and He will never allow Satan to tempt us beyond what we are able to resist as we place our trust in God. In other words, we are fully responsible for our own sin. We cannot blame the devil, another person, a circumstance, or a feeling. We can’t even blame God, even though it wouldn’t make sense to do so given that He doesn’t do the tempting (James 1:13). We are ultimately responsible because we have the power to choose. Unbelievers are not able to free themselves from the power of sin, though they are responsible for keeping themselves in such a state and failing to receive the grace of God in Christ. Such is their choice. Believers, on the other hand, are able to resist the devil because of the power of Christ in them. They have no excuse because God has given them “everything pertaining to life and godliness” in Christ (2 Peter 1:3). We can never be justified in our sinning because God has made available to us the strength, self-control, and perseverance which we need. When we sin, it is because we choose to sin. The resources to do right are ours in Christ, and we must take advantage of them.

Let us not be surprised when temptation comes our way (1 Peter 4:12). Let us not be taken off guard, but let us be ready to fight. The world needs more Christians who are willing to stand their ground against the devil. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:34, “Become

sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.” Many will proclaim allegiance to God but then quit standing for truth when the battle gets tough. Some will get excited about serving Jesus on a Sunday morning but then fail to live out Christ during the week. God needs soldiers who don’t run from the battle but who stand their ground, and there is a world dying in their sin which needs to see lives changed by Christ as Christians stand against sin.

The promise God gives us is that if we resist the devil, he will flee (James 4:7). God doesn’t say that he might flee or that he will only flee in selected instances. It says that if we resist him and stand firm in Christ, he *will* flee. He might wage a war for a good long time, but we have the resources in Christ to stand for as long as we need because God is faithful. He will provide the way of escape and give us strength so that we can endure whatever Satan tries to throw at us.

God’s command to us when it comes to battling sin and the devil is in Ephesians 6:10-11 which says, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.” God’s call for Christians is not to be wimps against sin and the devil but to stand our ground. We need to win in our own lives so that we can be strong to serve others and support them in their fights against sin and the devil. We must keep our shield of faith raised because if we doubt, we will be vulnerable (Ephesians 6:16). We must keep the belt of truth wrapped around us so that lies don’t take us down (Ephesians 6:14). We must know the Word of God so that we are able to stand our ground and not be tricked into giving in unnecessarily to the devil (Ephesians 6:17). We must keep our helmet of salvation on so that we remember who we are in Christ and just Who is standing in our court (Ephesians 6:17). Our strength is nothing compared to the devil’s, but the devil’s strength is nothing compared to Christ’s strength which is with us. By faith in God’s Word and His promises, we can win the battle. To win, we must put on Christ, trusting in His strength and infallible Word. Life is tough, and Satan is merciless. But our God is stronger, and He will deliver us from evil. He may not spare us the temptation, but He will enable us to walk away unscathed from sin. May God enable us to walk by faith such that we resist the devil, forcing him to flee, so that we can go on advancing the kingdom of God. Battles will come, and may we, like good soldiers, stand firm.