

Principles Of Christian Liberty – Part 3

I want you to back up one verse to 1 Corinthians 9:27 where Paul says, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” He’s going to take that very thought, and it’s going to carry into the first part of this chapter, “I don’t want to be a castaway, so I’m going to practice self-discipline. If I give myself over to my liberties and try to feed my flesh, then I can certainly come into bondage and I won’t be used by God.”

There’s three chapters on this subject, and they all go together—Chapters 8-10. In chapter 8, we learned that an idol is nothing and so we shouldn’t be worried about the idols and whether it’s been offered to meat. What we should be worried about is whether or not what we eat causes someone else to stumble. For us it may not be eating meat, but for others it may be a different issue. We don’t want to use our liberty, if it’s going to cause someone else to be offended or to stumble. In chapter 9, Paul used himself as a minister and that he had the liberty to be supported in the ministry like other ministers, but he let that go so that he could make the preaching of the gospel free of charge. He didn’t want to cause, again, anyone to stumble or get in the way of being used by God.

Tonight, in chapter 10, Paul uses Old Testament stories as examples for us that we should not give ourselves over to idolatry, over to sexual immorality, and things that would bring us into bondage. Paul is warning the overconfident. I want you to peek at verse 12 of our text. Again, this is a central theme and thought. He says, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” That’s a great verse. We’ll get to it in just a moment, but we sometimes get overconfident—we are strong, we think we’re mature, we think we know the Bible, we’ve walked with God for many years. It’s a very dangerous, vulnerable time. Even those that have been walking with God for many years can fall into sin if they’re not vigilant, if they’re not careful, if they like Paul said don’t discipline their bodies, lest by having preached to others, they themselves would become a castaway. Paul, knowing this, uses Israel’s history as an illustration of the danger of overconfidence.

There are three main lessons that we learn in this text. You might want to write these down. First, we’re going to learn that blessings are no guarantee of success. Look at verses 1-4. He says, “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud,”—he’s speaking here about the fathers being the Jewish fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all our ancestors, so to speak, all those who came out of Egypt especially —“and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat”—or food, which we’re going to see is manna —“And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was”—Jesus—“Christ.”

Notice Paul says, “Don’t be ignorant.” He uses the word “Moreover” in my King James translation which sometimes actually is rendered “for,” so it’s a logical conclusion and

application of what he's been teaching prior to this. He says, "[For], brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant." Over and over and over in the New Testament Paul uses that expression, "I don't want you to be ignorant," and to remedy their ignorance, he wanted to give them teaching. One of the ways not to be an ignorant believer...someone said, "The largest Christian denomination in America is the ignorant brethren," and that's true. We have such a lack of knowledge of God's Word. We are ignorant of God's Word. We're biblically illiterate.

It's interesting, there are a couple of areas I'll mention that we're ignorant in. It's funny because the areas where Paul says, "I don't want you to be ignorant," guess what? We're ignorant. One of them is about the rapture. He said in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren,"—I don't want you to be ignorant—" . . . that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." Then, he went on to say, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus"—or have died—"will God bring with him"—and we will be—" . . . caught up together with them in the clouds . . . and so shall we ever be with the Lord,"—their bodies resurrected and we being translated, so don't be ignorant about the rapture of the Church.

The second area, we'll get it in our study of Corinthians, is spiritual gifts. He said, "I don't want you to be ignorant about spiritual gifts." I'm excited to get there on Wednesday nights. We'll be talking about spiritual gifts, and I think that the Bible has a lot to say about them, especially in this epistle, to the believers there in Corinth. So, Paul says, "Don't be ignorant brethren."

Paul used a word five times in these four verses. I don't know if you caught it, it's the word "all." The focus is that all our fathers, look at verse 1, " . . . all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses" In verse 3, "And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink." Listen carefully. What he's trying to point out is that these were blessings that were true of all of them. They don't all go into the Promised Land, but they all had the blessings. Here's the point, we can start with blessings and we can end, I'll say, with bummer. We can start with blessings, and we can end with not being all that God wants us to be. So, he's going to contrast the "all," and then in verse 5, with " . . . many of them God was not well pleased" Like these children of Israel that came out of Egypt, I believe it's true of the Church.

Sometimes you hear me speak when I'm teaching, and I'm talking about some doctrine or some issue, I'll say, "This is true of all believers." I say that a lot because a lot of times we get this class kind of idea that there's the "super" saints, there's the "Deeper Life Club," these Christians have something I don't have; and I think it's important for you to understand that all Christians have all the same blessings. They have all the same potential, all the same opportunity. You have the Word of God; you have the Spirit of God; you have the Son of God. You've been forgiven of your sins. There's no classes in Christianity. The ground is all level at the foot of the cross. Well then why do some grow more than others or are used more than others? Because I believe they learn what they have, they believe it by faith, and then they move ahead and just live for the Lord. They don't let anything get in the way. They believe the Word of God and accept what the Word of God says about them is true. They are all blessed,

but not all of them ended with being blessed or entered into the Promised Land.

What were the blessings that all Israel enjoyed? There are five of them. Let's look at them real quick. The first is in verse 1, they were all “. . . under the cloud . . .” This isn't talking about being depressed. They didn't need some medicine to get them out of their depression—all under a cloud, they're all kind of doom and gloom. No. He's talking about the cloud that God provided for them as they journeyed to the Promised Land. Think about that! That was out in the Sinai Peninsula, a very hot, very desert place.

Have you ever been out working in the yard on a hot day and think, Man, it would be so nice if a big cloud would just block the sun. Sometimes the sun is blocked by a cloud, and it's like, “Oh, that feels great,” and it just relieves you from the heat. We know the story about God provided a cloud by day, and what did He provide for them at night? A pillar of fire. Can you imagine that? All day long they had this big shady cloud which kept them cool, which is awesome.

I was listening to my friend, Skip Heitzig, teach on this passage, and he was relating that to the Christian life. He said, “It's cool to be a Christian. It was cool to be a child of Israel, God provided a cloud to cool you down, so it's a cool life.” It's a blessing that all of them possessed. At night, they had a night light. They could look out the tent, and there's this big pillar of fire at night. I mean, what other nation has had that provision? What a blessing it was that they had. In Exodus 13:21-22 it says, “And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: 22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”

This speaks of God's presence, and they remembered God was with them; it speaks of God's protection, that God was protecting them; and it speaks of God's guidance, God was guiding them. Whether it be the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar by night, when that pillar of cloud or the fire began to move, guess what? Break tent, break camp, grab the kids, grab the donkeys, and let's go. Grab the supplies, and they just take off because God was leading them. God was guiding them. What a blessed life they must've been.

Notice the second blessing that they possessed in verse 1, they “. . . all passed through the sea.” Again, this is the story of their exodus out of Egypt. In Exodus 14, when they were coming out and came to the Red Sea, and there were mountains on either side and the Red Sea was in front of them and behind them was Pharaoh and the pursuing armies, they started freaking out, right? They cried out to Moses, and Moses said, “. . . stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD,”—and he lifted up his rod and the Red Sea parted.

I know some of you right now are thinking of the movie, The Ten Commandments, and you see Charlton Heston with his stick and the water parting. I've never really seen any stories on the Bible that I felt like do justice to what it must've really looked like. Can you imagine walking through on dry land, and you have two big fish aquariums on both sides, and maybe some of the fish were jumping out of one and hitting into the other side and swimming around. What a

blessing that must've been. They were freaking out. They were going to all die, and God put a big cloud to protect them from the army coming, and then God parted the Red Sea and they walked across on dry ground. They got to the other side and started to celebrate, and the Egyptian Pharaoh and his armies rushed out into the Red Sea, and the waters came down and wiped them out. Miriam grabs her tambourine and gets Pentecostal on the spot and starts dancing around playing her tambourine and singing one of the most glorious songs ever recorded for us in the Old Testament. Again, this is a blessing that they had. They had the cloud, they had the fire, they had the parting of the Red Sea as they went through, which again reminds us of redemption.

We, like them, we're in bondage to sin, and they took the lamb and shed its blood. They put it on their house, the death angel passed over (that's why we call it the Passover), and then they were free to go. They were redeemed by God, and we too are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb who died on the cross for us. This was a supernatural deliverance—was purchased by the blood of a lamb—even as we are supernaturally redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Look at blessing three that they had, they were all baptized unto Moses. This is in verse 2. It says, "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." I don't want to get too bogged down on this idea of baptized, but you know the word baptízō actually means more than just literally to be immersed in water. I think we do an injustice to the word when we assume it always means to be dunked in water. That may be strictly what it means, but it's used also in a different sense, in a figurative sense. Even the baptism of a believer in water has a significance and has a meaning and gives a picture. What is it? It is a meaning and a significance or the picture of being identified with Jesus Christ. You're baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and that you are identified with Christ in your following Him—death to the old life, significance of identification with Christ to the new life.

When you were saved, when you were born again, you were actually baptized into Jesus Christ. You were taken in position out of Adam and placed in Christ. That's what water baptism symbolizes. This is why I believe in 1 Corinthians 12:13, and I'll talk about it more when I get there, it says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" I believe every Christian, the moment they are born again, are regenerated. That means they're born again, they're saved, that they were baptized in Christ by being placed in the body of Christ and that we all as believers share this blessing the same—we're all baptized by the Spirit into Christ, and we're positionally in Christ. We are His body, we are His bride, we are His people, and we are identified with Him.

It has kind of a symbolism in that we're identified with Christ because you notice one thing about "baptized unto Moses," they never got wet. There was no wet experience. They didn't get wet. They didn't go under water. It means that they were identified with God. They were separated from Egypt and were set apart unto God and to be God's people with Moses. Again, I give to you 1 Corinthians 12:13. You should check that out. It's clear that all believers have been baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, and I believe that happens to every one of

us believers equally and places us positionally in the body of Christ.

Notice the fourth blessing, they all ate the spiritual food. Verse 3, “And did all eat the same spiritual meat”—food. You say, “What? What do you mean “spiritual food”? It’s an interesting way to describe it, but it’s pretty well accepted there, and I agree, that Paul’s talking about the manna. Now, don’t you love the story of manna? They’re out in the wilderness...and by the way, they could’ve left Egypt and been in the Promised Land in just a month or so, just walked straight in, but they wandered around because of unbelief and fear. We’re going to get to that in a minute. When they were hungry, what did God do? He said, “I’ll feed you. I’ll lead you, I’ll feed you, I’ll take care of you.” They woke up in the morning and there’s these little muffin cookies on the ground. They picked it up, and they’ve never seen anything like it. They said, “What is it?” and that’s what they named it—manna. It means, what is it?

Can you imagine, go into a restaurant, “I’ll have some ‘what is it.’” God provided manna, it was food from heaven. I’m convinced it tasted really good, and I hope there’s a sample of them when we get to heaven because I love baked goods. I have a confession, I ate two scones today. They were on the counter in the kitchen and I just couldn’t resist. We’re going to talk about temptation tonight, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man,”—and God makes a way of escape, but I didn’t take it. The way I escaped was I ate the temptation. I imagine it was just an amazing thing, but again, we’re going to see they grumbled and complained, and got all upset because they became sick of the manna—manna in the morning, manna for lunch, manna for dinner. For forty years, manna, manna, manna. They probably came up with a manna cookbook and “manna-cotti” was on the top of the list, manna meatballs, manna malts, ba”manna” bread, all the recipes. The manna was spiritual because it came from heaven, and because of its significance, it actually pointed again to Jesus Christ.

Listen to John 6 where Jesus said, “Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world . . . I am the bread of life,” John 6:35. Again, manna was a picture which is called the *týpos* or a type of Jesus Christ. Just as eating the manna gave temporary physical life, so the eating of Christ—believing and receiving Him by faith—brings eternal life to those who put their trust in Him.

Notice a fifth blessing, they all drank the same spiritual drink or the same water, verse 4, “And did all drink the same spiritual drink . . .” So, they “ . . . were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses . . . And did all eat the”—manna—“And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

Remember the story when they are at Rephidim, Exodus 17, and they were thirsty. They were crying out for water and God told Moses to take his staff, his rod, and strike the rock, right? So, he hit the rock and out of the rock came gushing forth water. There are a couple million people out in the desert. Can you imagine camping for forty years with two million people out in the desert, and they all began to die off? So, Moses struck the rock and out came the water.

Again, this is a beautiful type or picture of Christ. Later on, when they again were screaming for water and Moses lost his patience, God just said, "Speak to the rock, and it will bring forth water." Moses said, "Must I smite this rock for you?" and he got angry and smote the rock. The water came out, but God called Moses on the carpet and said, "Look, you failed to sanctify Me in the eyes of the people, so you're going to be punished for that." It's a picture, again, of Christ the Rock being smitten on the cross to bring forth the life of the Spirit, the forgiveness of sins, and the blessings that we have to be able to drink of Christ and partake of Christ.

So, the danger of falling into sin, even after we experience these blessings. Spiritual privileges never give us license to sin. Let me say that again. Spiritual privileges never give us license to sin, and I'm probably getting a bit ahead of myself, but there's just as much danger in being a mature Christian as being a young Christian. So many times we worry about the young Christian, and rightfully so, but we should be just as concerned about a mature Christian. How many men in ministry after many years of preaching the Word have fallen into sin, and that's why we're going to see in the Scripture tonight, ". . . take heed lest he fall,"—if you think you stand. It's a very dangerous thing even in being a mature believer.

The second point that we want to look at and learn from is in verses 5-10, that is, a good beginning does not guarantee a good ending. Look at verses 5 and 6. He says, "But with many of them God was not well pleased"—so all the blessings, verses 1-4, all of them equally sharing them, blessed by God—"But with many of them God was not well pleased." I would say that's kind of almost an understatement, "But with many of them God was not well pleased"—many of them were not pleasing to God—"for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Everyone from forty and up would not go into the Promised Land. They would die on the longest death march in human history. So, ". . . they were overthrown in the wilderness."

Verse 6, "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." Verses 5 and 6 are a general statement introducing verses 7-10, but he's referring, it's believed and I think again it's true, to what happened when they came to the border of Kadesh Barnea. When they came to the border of Kadesh Barnea in Numbers 14, they were hesitant to go into the Promised Land, so God told them, "Okay, you can send some spies in," and they sent twelve spies in to check out the land of Canaan.

You remember basically what happened, out of the twelve spies, ten of them brought back an evil report and said, "Well, it's true the land is flowing with milk and honey, but there are giants in the land, and we're like grasshoppers in their sight." Erwin Lutzer calls this the grasshopper complex. "They're like giants, and we can't, so we need to go back to Egypt." They wanted to actually have...after all God had done, they wanted to go back. They started to cry and to wail and freak out. Well, two of the twelve spies were Joshua and Caleb, bless them. Joshua and Caleb said, "Yes, there's giants in the land, but we can take 'em. It's been promised by God. We need to believe God. We need to trust God. We need to look to God. God will go with us. God's brought us out of Egypt. He's provided for us in the wilderness. God will take care of us." But they wouldn't trust their words, so they did not listen to Joshua and Caleb. God actually said, "Okay, you're not going to go into the land. You're going to die out in this

wilderness, and only Joshua and Caleb will be allowed to go into the Promised Land.” So, it was fear and unbelief—not believing God’s Word and fear—that kept them from experiencing all the blessings that God had for them. The same thing is true of us in the Christian life.

Notice verse 6, “Now these things”—the things that took place in Kadesh Barnea and in the wilderness with the children of Israel—“were our examples, to the intent”—for us—“we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” Why are these stories in the Old Testament for us? To teach us to learn from their mistakes. If you don’t learn from history, what happens? You’re destined to repeat it, right? So, go back and read about their sin and their faults, and learn from their sin and learn from their faults, and don’t repeat the same sin.

What were some of their sins that they had committed and angered the Lord and kept them from the blessing of the Promised Land? You’ll notice the first one is in verse 7, “Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” They weren’t playing checkers or chess. This is sexual immorality. They were having a drunken orgy. This is actually a reference to Exodus 32 when Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, on the two tablets of stone. They were getting tired of waiting for Moses, and he didn’t show up. They said to Aaron, -remember that?- “Make us gods like the Egyptians had to lead us back to Egypt. We need a god that we can see. We can’t see Moses. We don’t know where he is. We don’t know what’s happening. We want a god that we can see.”

God had done all these things for them that we just read about, but now when Moses is on the mountain, they can’t see him, they’re freaking out. They want a god that they can see, so Aaron had them bring all their gold that they had taken from the Egyptians when they came out in the exodus and had them put in this big pot and melted all the gold. Then, as he put all their gold into the big pot, he said later to Moses, that “Out popped this golden calf.” Yea, it just popped... that’s what happens when you put gold and melt it, golden calves pop out; and when a golden calf pops out, what else is there to do put take off your clothes and dance around, get drunk, and get naked. They just got turned into this wild party. It’s just so insane. You just read verses 1-4, now they’re actually dancing around a golden calf in idolatrous worship like the pagans that surrounded them. How sad. So, “ . . . these things were our examples,”—we should learn not to be idolators as they rose up to eat and to play.

The second sin, and Paul doesn’t pull any punches here and he knew his Bible well, he says, verse 8, “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.” So, twenty-three thousand of them died in one day because they committed sexual immorality which was tied together with idolatry. This is a reference to Exodus 32, and the story here is the story of Balaam. It’s recorded in Numbers 25 when the children of Israel were being attempted by Balak the king to have them cursed, and he hired Balaam. He couldn’t curse them, so he told Balak the king, “I can’t curse them, but I’ll tell you how to bring a curse on them. You send your Moabite women into the camp with their false gods and you entice the men to get involved with these women,” and part of that would be to worship these false gods, and God would actually curse them Himself. It would bring a curse

upon them. So, we have idolatry, and it's tied right in to Numbers 25, the story of Balaam and Balak the king, sexual immorality.

Some see a discrepancy here in verse 8 where it says, “. . . in one day three and twenty thousand . . .” So, there were twenty-three thousand, but the point is that it was in one day. The total number when we learn from the Old Testament was twenty-four thousand, but in the “one day” was twenty-three thousand; but the total was twenty-four thousand, so the judgment that was so widespread that came upon them—the spiritual idolatry and the fornication.

In Revelation 2:14 it says it was Balaam, “. . . who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication”—or sexual immorality. So, it brought a judgment upon them.

The third sin that they were committing was they were tempting the Lord. This is there in verse 9, “Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.” This is a reference to Numbers 21 and Exodus 17 when the people started to complain and murmur and God sent snakes into the congregation of Israel and started biting them, and they started dying.

I don't know about you, but I'm not a snake guy. I don't touch snakes. Even if they're not a poisonous snake, I'll just look at it from a distance. If you come walking at me with a snake, I'll start to back up. If you come aggressively, I'll start to run. I don't even like to look at them through glass. They just freak me out. They're so creepy.

Can you imagine? They were dying by these serpents, the fiery serpents. What was the remedy that God provided for them? God provided actually a serpent of brass made by Moses, put on a pole and lifted up. He told them, “Whoever is bitten by the snake and going to die, if you just look at the serpent of brass, you will be healed.” Again, John 3, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Jesus was that serpent of brass—dying, taking our sin on the cross—and by faith as we look to Him, we are saved, John 3:14-15. So, let's not tempt Christ.

Again, in verse 10, we have the fourth thing that they did, and this is a little convicting here—murmuring. So, we have idolatry, fornication, tempting the Lord, and murmuring. “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.” This is believed to be Numbers 16 where you have the rebelling in of Korah and Dathan as they came against Moses and Aaron and in their leadership, and they were divided as a congregation. They were complaining about their leaders and causing division.

Moses was instructed by God to tell everybody that's with Korah and Dathan, “Stand on one side over here,” and everybody that's with Moses is to stand over here, and whoever God wants to lead will lead, but whoever's opposing God's plan, the earth would swallow them up—the earth would open up and swallow them. You know, that would eliminate a lot of church splits

really quick - wouldn't it? - and divisions in churches. If God would just open up the ground and suck them right into the earth. So, the earth began to shake under Korah and his congregation, and the earth opened up and they just SHWOOO! right down to the ground, the earth shut up, and Moses said, "Anybody else want to rebel?" "No, sir, we're with you, man. We'll follow you." But they were complaining and griping. They weren't submitting to the spiritual leadership that God had placed over them. These are the sins that we need to be on guard against: idolatry, sexual immorality, tempting the Lord, murmuring.

Now, here's the third division or section of our text, that is, verses 11-13, and this is what we learn here: God can help us overcome temptation. You come to this point and go, "Man, I'm kind of discouraged here. I've been a Christian a long time and you're telling me that I'm in danger and that I could fall, that I could lose out the blessings of God?" So, Paul gives us an admonition, he gives us a warning, and then he gives us a promise to remember.

Look at verses 11-13, Paul says, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition,"—so, two things, they are to be examples to us both positive and negative, what to be, what not to be; and he says—"upon whom the ends of the world are come,"—which is probably a reference to the Church. Then, in verse 12, he says, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall,"—that's the warning—"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man,"—notice the context of this often-quoted verses—"no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful"—I love that—"who will not suffer you"—allow 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."

Paul's giving them first an admonition. Israel's history is an admonition to us, a warning designed to change our past behavior, to introduce new patterns of living, an admonition; a warning too, verse 12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Solomon said in Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall,"—right? One of the most dangerous things you could ever fall into is to think that you've got it all together, that you are invincible, that you cannot fall. You don't say, "There by the grace of God go I," you say, "I would never go that way." Be careful. Be very careful. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Remember Peter had a fall. It started with overconfidence. Jesus said, "You're all going to betray Me; you're all going to forsake Me." He said, "You're all going to forsake Me." What did Peter say? He said, "Not me." He said, "No way. Maybe these other guys, but never me." Secondly, he wasn't praying the way he should in the Garden of Gethsemane. Thirdly, he was following, when Christ was arrested, from a distance far off. Fourthly, he was warming himself by the enemy's fire. Lastly, he stumbled and fell and denied that he even knew Jesus Christ—Peter's great fall. Even Peter fell, so then he warns us.

Then, Paul reminds us, verse 13. He says, "There hath no temptation,"—it's true the word "temptation" can also be translated trial or testing, and it depends upon the context as to how it

should be interpreted, so I believe primarily here it's referring to a temptation to sin. A temptation to sin doesn't come from God, it comes from our own lust, James 1, but it is allowed by God to serve a purpose—for our good and for His glory and to make our faith stronger. Many times what starts with a trial or testing can turn into a temptation to sin. If you're being tried and tested right now, Satan wants you to sin in the midst of that trial and testing. Don't let that happen. Know that God has allowed it, that it's a refining process. He's trying to do it for your good and for His glory. He says, "Remember this when you're being tempted and tried, that there's no temptation taken you but what is common to man: God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you're able; but will with the temptation make the way to escape, that you may be able to bear it." So, temptation or tests are part of the believer's life. They're common human experience. You're not alone. If you're being tempted to sin, others have been tempted, too. You are not alone.

Notice also the source of temptation, as I said, as James points out, is our sinful lusts. But notice that God is faithful. I love that statement in this verse, ". . . but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" The Scriptures tell us that God is faithful. In Lamentations, "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness,"—and God will not allow—" . . . you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape"

Sometimes God makes the way for you to escape by simply fleeing. By simply running from sinful lusts, God makes the way for you to escape. Amen? So, we need to run, we need to get grounded in the Word, and we need to keep our eyes and our focus on Jesus Christ and live in humble dependence on Him. Let's pray.