

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

August 3, 2025

Does the Bible Really Say That?

“God Won’t Give Us More than We Can Handle”

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

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In one of my all-time favorite movies, *The Princess Bride*, the evil villain, Vizzini (Vi-zee-nee) uses the word “INCONCEIVABLE!” every time he is in disbelief or shock over events that he finds to be impossible to believe or understand. Eventually, the great swordsman, Inigo Montoya, is tired of hearing Vizzini use the word far too much. Inigo then turns to Vizzini and says what has become a classic phrase, *“You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.”*

In this August sermon series, we are looking at phrases we as Christians often use, but ones that maybe we need to give further thought as to whether the Bible really says that or not. We might then say, “I don’t think that phrase means what you think it means.” The first one we are looking at is the often-used phrase, **“God won’t give you more than you can handle.”** The place in the Bible where we find a very similar statement is in *1 Corinthians 10*. In this chapter, the Apostle Paul is giving a history lesson to the Corinthian church. He takes the Corinthians, and us today, back to the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. Paul reminds them even though God went to miraculous lengths to take care of the Israelites through guiding them with a cloud during the day, splitting open a sea for them to pass safely on dry land, and giving them food and water, they rebelled against God. Almost every person in the entire generation died in the wilderness because of their rebellion against God through worshipping idols and participating in all kinds of sinful practices. Paul cautions us to learn from what the Israelites did wrong and not repeat their sinful rebellion against God. Then in verses 12-13, Paul instructs how we are to handle temptations that will come our way in our own journey of life.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

12 If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. 13 The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

1) DO NOT OVERESTIMATE OUR ABILITY TO OVERCOME LIFE'S TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

When we are facing various trials and temptations, the Bible tells us: **1) Do Not Overestimate Our Ability to Overcome Life's Trials and Temptations.** The passage could not be any clearer as *verse 12* says, *"If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall."* When we are facing a temptation or going through a significant trial, we are to not be overconfident in ourselves, in our ability to handle trials and temptations. Those who are the most vulnerable are those who think they are not vulnerable, that they can handle anything on their own. This is something called pride and it can be very deceptive. *Proverbs 16:18* puts it this way, *"Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall."* Another way we often hear this verse summarized is, "Pride comes before the fall." The higher we are on our high horse of self-importance, independence, self-confidence, and pride, the greater our fall will be when faced with a trial which is more than we can handle on our own. We are all frail sinners and there is an evil one. His forces are doing all they can to take advantage of our weaknesses with the hopes we will fail miserably. Saint Bonaventure said, "When you are too sure of yourself, you are less on guard against the enemy. Be alert, therefore, for the devil, who, if he can claim even one hair of your head, will lose no time in making a braid of it." We are not as immune to trials and temptations as we might think. Therefore, it is wise to heed this warning in Scripture to not overestimate our ability to handle a temptation or trial and also to not underestimate the power of a temptation or trial we are facing.

2) GOD ALLOWS US TO EXPERIENCE LIFE'S CHALLENGES

We are reminded in *verse 13* that when we are dealing with trials and temptations: **2) God Allows Us to Experience Life's Challenges.** The writer says when we are going through a hard time in life, the reality is countless others have faced the same or very similar trials. Also, we can count on it that tough times will come our way no matter how good a life we live. I am so thankful I have never been able to see the future because if I had seen in advance what kinds of trials would come my way, it would have been too much to handle. There are times when God allows us to face certain trials and even temptations that are more than we can handle on our own. We don't have the capacity, the strength, or the resources within ourselves to handle all of life's challenges. The Bible is full of examples of God's people facing insurmountable trials that they were not equipped to handle on their own and, when they tried to handle them on their own, they failed miserably. Again, Paul used the example of the Israelites who faced test after test, trial after trial in their wilderness wanderings. The ones in which they failed miserably were those they tried to handle on their own terms, in their own power, without seeking God's help.

The writer of *1 Corinthians*, the Apostle Paul, says this in *2 Corinthians 11:23-28* about the many temptations and trials he suffered in his ministry, *"²³I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. ²⁴ Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes.*

²⁵ *Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea.* ²⁶ *I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not.* ²⁷ *I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.* ²⁸ *Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches.”* The Bible is filled with stories of people in divinely ordained situations that faced far more than they could handle on their own.

As Mother Teresa once said, “I know God will not give me anything I can’t handle. I just wish He didn’t trust me so much.” While *1 Corinthians 10* is written concerning how to handle temptations, it can also apply to how to handle all trials and struggles of life. The Bible is clear that God does allow trials to come into our lives, but for the express purpose to build us up. On the other hand, the devil works nonstop to turn our trials into temptations that are meant to tear down.

3) GOD IS FAITHFUL

Paul tells us that when facing various trials and temptations, we are not handling them on our own because **3) God is Faithful!** We just heard Paul’s list of the many ways he suffered for serving the Lord. Listen to what Paul learned from all of this suffering. He writes in *2 Corinthians 1:8-11*, “⁸ *We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. **We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it.*** ⁹ *In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, **we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.*** ¹⁰ *And he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and he will continue to rescue us.* ¹¹ *And you are helping us by praying for us. Then many people will give thanks because God has graciously answered so many prayers for our safety.”* Paul admitted the trials and temptations he experienced were more than he could handle on his own. He could only face them with God’s help. Paul learned to rely not on himself but on God’s faithfulness.

In his book, *Against the Flow*, Oxford professor John Lennox notes when God calls us to do something difficult, He gives us the strength when we need it, not before we need it. Lennox illustrates this biblical principle with a story about an encounter with a Russian follower of Jesus who spent years in a Siberian labor camp for the crime of teaching his children about the Bible. Lennox writes: “He described to me that he had seen things that no man should ever have to see. I listened, thinking how little I really knew about life, and wondering how I would have fared under his circumstances. As if he had read my thoughts, he suddenly said: ‘You couldn’t cope with that, could you?’ Embarrassed, I stumbled out something like: ‘No, I am sure you are right.’ He then

grinned and said: 'Nor could I! I was a man who fainted at the sight of his own blood, let alone that of others. But what I discovered in the camp was this: God does not help us to face theoretical situations but real ones. Like you I couldn't imagine how one could cope in the Gulag. But once there I found that God met me, exactly as Jesus had promised his disciples when he was preparing them for victimization and persecution.'" Lennox adds, "We can be confident, then, that the Lord will give us a sufficient amount of grace to handle whatever comes our way, whenever it comes our way—and not necessarily a moment before!" When we are facing various trials, God says to us the same thing He told Joshua in *Joshua 1:9* as he was getting ready to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, *"This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."* Our Faithful God is with us in whatever we face, and in that way, God will then never give us more than we can handle with Him at our side.

4) GOD PROVIDES A WAY OF OUT

How does God enable us to handle all our trials and temptations? **4) God Provides a Way of Out.** As Paul shared earlier in *1 Corinthians 10*, God was with the Israelites every step of their journey out of Egypt to the Promised Land. They never would have made it without God. When they were up against the shorelines of the Red Sea with the Egyptian army coming to wipe them out, there was no chance of them surviving. Yet God made a way by doing the impossible, opening the Red Sea, drying up the ground so that several million Israelites and all their livestock were able to cross the seabed safely to the other side. Then God miraculously closed the sea back up at just the right time to wipe out the Egyptian army. God made a way where there didn't seem to be a way. When the Israelites began their journey in the wilderness and became thirsty, God gave them water out of a rock. When the Israelites become hungry God gave them manna in every morning's dew and, eventually, even meat. God also showed them where to go by leading the way through a cloud during the day. As the Israelites travelled through the wilderness and faced other nations who wanted to wipe them out, God fought for them and won their battles. God made a way in every battle, every temptation, every trial the Israelites faced when the Israelites turned to God to make a way.

5) GOD GIVES US THE STRENGTH TO ENDURE

Paul tells us one way God makes a way for us to not fall into temptation in the trials we face is: **5) God Gives Us the Strength to Endure.** I have learned that sometimes when we ask God to take away a trial, or a temptation, sometimes God will not remove the problem but will give us the strength to endure it to the end. Think about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. When He faced suffering and testing beyond what any human could ever face, He asked His Heavenly Father to remove it, but God did not it. Instead, God gave Jesus the strength to endure even the worst of suffering. Sometimes God gives what we ask for in our prayers and other times, God in His infinite wisdom, gives us the strength to endure. That reminds me of the very well-known poem, *Footprints in*

the Sand that says, "One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each, I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints; other times there was only one. During the low periods of my life I could see only one set of footprints, so I said, 'You promised me, Lord, that you would walk with me always. Why, when I have needed you most, have you not been there for me?' The Lord replied, 'The times when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you.'" Sometimes when we cannot stand, God stands for us, when we cannot take another step in the midst of an overwhelming trial, God holds us and takes the step for us, or when things are so bad that we do not even have the strength to hold on to God, God holds on to us. As someone once said, "If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it." If any of us are struggling through any kind of trial, God says to us these words from *Isaiah 41:10*, "*Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*"

When we yield to temptations we fall into sin, but when we endure trials, it leads to growth. ***Sometimes we experience troubles we can't handle ourselves so that we learn to depend on Christ within us.*** I invite you to listen to how *The Message* paraphrases the words of *1 Corinthians 10:12-13*, "*Don't be so naive and self-confident. You're not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it's useless. Cultivate God-confidence. No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it.*" Our greatest example is Jesus, who fully immersed Himself in our trials and temptations and overcome all of them with the help of the God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: (Books marked with * are available to be checked-out in the Asbury Discipleship Resource Center)

- *The Holy Bible* (Several FREE copies are available in the DRC)
- *Against the Flow*, John Lennox

Icebreaker I – What is a popular phrase you once thought was in the Bible, but later discovered it wasn't?

Icebreaker II – Can you share a time you saw God “make a way” in your life when the situation seemed impossible?

1. In 1 Corinthians 10:12, Paul warns, “*If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall.*” How can overconfidence in ourselves make us more vulnerable to temptation?
2. The sermon reminded us that God sometimes allows us to face more than we can handle on our own. How does this truth change the way we respond to trials compared to believing God will never give us “too much”?
3. Paul’s list of hardships in 2 Corinthians 11:23–28 is intense. How does his example challenge our definition of what it means to “rely on God” rather than ourselves?
4. Rev. Fordham said God “provides a way out” in temptation and trial. What are some practical ways we can look for and take that “way out” in daily life?
5. Sometimes God removes a trial, but sometimes He gives us the strength to endure. How can we discern whether God is calling us to pray for removal or to pray for endurance?
6. The Message paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, “*Cultivate God-confidence.*” What does “God-confidence” look like in real life, and how is it different from self-confidence?
7. What impacted you most from the sermon? How might you apply this week’s sermon to your life?
8. How might this group pray for you this week?