

Standing Fast Through Trials

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Introduction

Heb 3:7-4:16

I Cor 10:1-13

Christians, both Jew and Gentile, needed to hear this analogy and thereby be built up in their determination to diligently stand for God. They all had struggles with suffering and temptation. They all faced difficult, sometimes dangerous situations in remaining faithful to God and His truth. But the things they stood to lose were too insignificant, while all they stood to gain in Christ was too important for them to fall away back into sin and unfaithfulness and spiritual death. To bolster their faith through trial, the apostle Paul (by inspiration of God) spoke these words of reassurance and hope – **I Cor 10:13**.

The trials and temptations that you and I face are not different from those faced by the Christians to whom these letters were written! And in these timeless words, we find truths that will help us bear up during times of discouragement, temptation and trial.

I. “No Temptation Is Unique To Me”

- This is not to diminish the seriousness or difficulty of our experience, but to remind us that through any trial we are never fighting Satan alone!
- The trials that we face are “common to man” – no temptation is unique only to me, something that only I ever have to face!
- **Heb 12:1-2**
 - Our brethren now face the same trials; countless faithful brethren who have gone on before have faced the same trials, and they are witnesses to the strength that can be found by placing our faith in God
 - Jesus Christ faced the same trials (**Heb 4:15**), even enduring the torture and shame of the cross, and now He sits at God’s right hand
- **If they could face these trials and temptations and yet remain faithful, and now they live forever in the very dwelling place of God our Father, we can endure, too!**

II. “My Trials Are Bearable”

- What a wonderful truth: we are in the hands of God, and He will never allow us to be tempted beyond our breaking point! No temptation or trial can ever come our way that is just too much for us to bear.
- “To bear” literally means, “to bear up under,” as a person bearing a heavy load on their shoulders (see Vine) – isn’t this a perfect description of trial, suffering, temptation, disappointment, frustration, all the sorrows we face?
- Picture yourself carrying heavy weights upon your back, each one a trial or a frustration or a temptation, and you feel you’re just to the breaking point. If one more thing goes wrong, or if you’re tempted one more time, your spiritual strength is simply going to break. God will never let you reach the point that the load on your back is greater than your ability to stand against the devil! You will not be crushed. You can endure.

III. “God Is On My Side, Ever Faithful, In Control”

- Consider this aspect of “God is faithful” – this verse gives us that God is truly on our side, that He is in control.
- Sometimes we are tempted to blame our trials and temptations on God: “If He were a loving, righteous God, why does He bring these trials upon me?”
- Remember the words of **James 1:12-13** – don’t lose sight of the truth: through our own desires Satan tempts us, but God is always on our side. God is never the one trying to ensnare us in sin.
- In fact, God is so faithful that even the trials we do face are able to be used for our good, for our growth – see **James 1:2-3; Rom 5:1-5**.
- Through trial and difficulty we grow up and become stronger Christians:
 - *School*: homework and research papers and exams are not fun, but one day when your responsibilities are great and your knowledge is truly tested, you will be thankful for those trials
 - *Athletics*: running, lifting weights, watching your diet – none of these activities are fun, but one day when competition demands it or age demands it, you will be thankful for the difficulties you face to remain healthy
 - Truly, we learn everything from the difficulties and defeats that we face: **if we always succeeded and never faced resistance would we ever grow in anything?**
- And God uses our trials in this way: Acts 20:19, trial = experiment; I Pet 4:12, trial = a refining fire!
- **II Cor 12:7-10** – The trial came from Satan, but God’s grace called on Paul to endure it!
- Let us constantly remind ourselves through trial that though the forces of evil are against us, our awesome God is always on our side, captaining our path, ensuring that our trials not only utterly fail to defeat us but actually do the opposite: they make us grow.

IV. “The Greater My Trials, The Greater God’s Confidence In Me”

- The trials we face are faced by all our brethren, too...however, in some sense my particular experience of trial and temptation is unique to me.
- We all are able to bear different loads and different times: God ensures that the load you carry uniquely meets your own abilities.
- Maybe we never think about the verse in this way: **the greater the trial we face, the more confidence the Lord places in us!**
- The devil tries to tear down our confidence, tries to make us think that we are unfaithful and so we face trial:
 - **Job 1:6-12** – We’re not *that* faithful...it’s just that we have all these blessings...
 - **Job 2:1-10** – We’re not *that* faithful...it’s just that we have life and health...
 - **Rev 12:10-11** – Satan is our accuser, but he doesn’t play fair. He tries to deceive us into think that the more we suffer, the weaker we are, the less God cares
- **Nothing could be further from the truth! As much as I suffer, to that very extent God has confidence in my abilities, my strength, and my potential!**