

# ALPHA COUNSELING SERVICES

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September

Celebrating Thirty Six Years of Service

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Dear Friends,

As an adult, I have always enjoyed September for a number of reasons. For one, routine arrived back at our house with the starting of school. I found it so much easier to get up and get going when there was so much to do on a school day. There was no way to be tempted to lounge when so many people had to cycle through the bathroom, eat breakfast, pack lunches, catch rides, and possibly find that homework that got lost during the night. Unofficially summer is over and the fruit trees are bursting, gardens are ending a generous year, and the hunting and fishing are soon to begin their peak as well.

I used to make the joke, which was not that funny, that I could resist anything but temptation. The idea I grew up with was that temptation is evil and it is wrong to be tempted.

I came across Chamber's thoughts on the topic of temptation from I Corinthians 10:13: *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man...."*

*"...the word temptation has come to mean something bad to us today, and we tend to use the word in the wrong way. Temptation itself is not sin; it is something we are bound to face simply by virtue of being human. ....temptation comes to me, suggesting a possible shortcut to the realization of my highest goal- it does not direct me toward what I understand to be evil, but toward what I understand to be good. ....Temptation is not something we can escape; in fact it is essential to the well-rounded life of a person. Beware of thinking that you are tempted as no one else- what you go thought is the common inheritance of the human race. God does not save us from temptations - -He sustains us in the midst of them."*



**"Submit therefore to God.  
Resist the devil,  
and he will flee from you"  
James 4:7**



I would like to look at just one aspect of this important verse, (I Cor. 10:13). Many Bible versions translate the last phrase as *"God...with the temptation will provide 'A' way of escape."* The impression I have had for years was that when temptation came God would always cause something to happen to help me say no to temptation. The phone would ring, or someone would walk into the room as I rush to the refrigerator for comfort food, etc. However, my opinion has changed partly because so many of us don't stop in spite of some external situation. And often there is no outward intervention. So did God, through Paul, not speak the truth? Why are so many Christians yielding to temptation? Are all our temptations within our ability to resist?

The New American Standard Bible uses a different word at the end of verse 13. Instead of 'a way' it translates 'the way' of escape. THE WAY! Some time ago my mind went to John 14:6 where Jesus says *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* My mind connected the two verses. The only Being to ever successfully resist all temptation is Jesus the Messiah. What if God doesn't provide various ways to escape temptation but one, Jesus!

My search lead me to Hebrews 2:14-18. For the sake of space I will only look at verse 18. *"He Himself was tempted...He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."* Hebrews 4:15-16 - *Because Jesus was tempted in all things but without sin!* In verse 16, we are to draw near or run to the source of grace to receive mercy and help when we are needy. When we are being tempted?

In 2 Corinthians 11:3 Paul is concerned that as the serpent Satan deceived, or tempted Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Could Satan be continuing his cunning ways by leading us to make difficult what God has made simple. Instead of complex ways to overcome our temptations we are to abide in Christ. John 15:5 says: *"Without ME you can do nothing."* This includes resisting temptation repeatedly and victoriously

Richard