

## “COMMON TO MAN”

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We are familiar with 1 Corinthians 10:13: *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer 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.”* One amazing thing about the Bible is that rereading familiar passages often brings new insights to light.

Notice the expression, *“common to man.”* These words translate one word in the Greek text, the word *atropines*. This is an adjective with the essential meaning of “human.” It is used in the Greek translation of Numbers 5:6 to refer to sin that men commit. We find a form of it in Romans 6:19 where Paul said, “I speak after the manner of men” It is also seen in 1 Corinthians 2:13: *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth...”* So we see that the word is used to mean that which is common to humanity and as such, in contrast to God. All human beings are subject to temptation.

What is “temptation”? The word (*peirasmos*) has the basic meaning of “a test or trial.” It has in it the idea of “enticement to sin” as in Luke 4:13. When we add this up we learn that God will not allow (“suffer” in the KJV) us to be tested or tempted above our ability to successfully resist. The passage is therefore, what I call an encouraging warning. I am glad to have this kind of strong encouragement to faithfulness. We face tests daily that are common to humanity. We know we can make it through these tests because God has said we could.

Why did Paul put this unique encouragement right here in the letter? Well, he was about to “get after them” concerning problems they were having with each other and in their worship. The Corinthians church was facing a test, a test that if failed, would lead to sin. The general context bears this out.

Now look to 1 Corinthians 10:12. *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”* What is this? A man who thinks he has got it made and does not need help or direction from anyone, including God, is a prideful man. Pride is common to man. A reading of the Corinthian correspondence reveals that these were at times a prideful people. They liked to divide up (chapter 1). They liked to think some were better than others (chapters 10-14). They even thought they knew enough to condone sin (chapter 5). Paul had told them there *Your-glorying-is-not-good* (5:6). This is a picture of self-deception. It is common to man to think we are standing even when we are just about to fall.

Consider verse 14. *Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.* If one test was that of pride, another must have been idolatry. But what kind of idolatry is Paul thinking of? There is no evidence of statues and icons being a problem. But there was the problem of how a Christian was to deal with eating meat that was part of a carcass that had been sacrificed to idols. Gentile butchers would use such suppliers.

The Corinthians faced a difficult test. Paul taught that the solution was not simple. He (and they) knew that idols were nothing. They were going to have to be careful about this. They had to consider not only where their meat came from, but the minds of those with whom they were eating. They must not leave the impression that they thought there was anything to the idols. But they also had to consider the impression they might leave in the minds of people who had not advanced to that level of understanding. This is a challenging thing to have to do. But, as Paul said, with the test comes a way to escape (10:13), and he describes that way in verse 23-33.

So it is with us today as we face the difficult and complicated challenges of being a Christian in this mixed up world. Our tests are all common to man. God makes a way for the faithful and obedient.