

## WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: SECTION TWO

### Three Promises That Encourage the Hurting – Promise One/Enough is Enough

God has provided three significant promises specifically designed to provide encouragement to His people during times of adversity. The first is expressed in **1 Corinthians 10:13**. The encouragement contained in this promise? No matter how difficult our life may become, our adversities will always be within, and never beyond, our ability to handle. This is the essence of the promise found in 1 Corinthians 10:13, consisting of several facets which we will consider one at a time. The first aspect of this all-important promise can be stated as follows: *“Our trials are not unusual.* It is derived from the expression: “no temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man.”

The general context of the promise consists of Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth. Even a casual reading of this epistle reveals that the Corinthian Christians were spiritually immature (3:1-3). The specific setting for the promise is chapter 10, where Paul warns the church not to respond to adversity as the Israelites did in the wilderness (10:1-11). This indicates that 1 Corinthians 10:13 is especially designed for the Christian who is not well-grounded in handling difficult times. His lack of spiritual maturity in coping with suffering creates the potential for a reaction which would lead to several wrong conclusions about the trial he is facing. This is why Paul begins with a negative point of emphasis. The very first word of the promise is “no!” The apostle’s desire is to immediately confront this incorrect response in order to say, “No, that is not true. Stop thinking that way about what you are going through.”

The first false thought which Paul seeks to correct is the notion that our personal pain is somehow unique. He wants us to know that it is not, and does so by means of the expression “common to man.” That phrase was often used to describe a circumstance or event that belonged to the general realm of human existence, the very opposite of something unusual or unique. As we have already learned, fallen people living in a fallen world will go through suffering as a shared and common experience.

Yet thinking that our trials are unique is anything but unusual. It is rather easy to draw such a conclusion because of one particular characteristic of adversity: it often comes upon us suddenly. Consider the way in which Solomon describes such a time in Ecclesiastes 9:12 –

**“Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.”**

One minute everything seems to be going well and the next, our lives are shattered by some unexpected and devastating occurrence. Paul uses the word “overtaken” in order to acknowledge the frequently sudden nature of suffering and the negative effect it can have upon our thought/response process. But trials can also present the Christian with an opportunity for further spiritual growth. In our next segment, we will discover what that opportunity is and how to make the most of it.