"THE WAY OF ESCAPE"

INTRODUCTION

A. **James 1:12** *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."*

It is encouraging to know that endurance against temptation yields a reward from God.

B. **1st Corinthians 10:13** *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."*

It is even more encouraging to know that God gives us a way out of every temptation. *"The way of escape"* includes the following strategies.

I. THE WAY OF PREPARATION

A. **Psalm 119:9-11** *"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You."*

Temptation can be dealt with remedially or preventatively. Knowledge of God's word serves as prevention.

B. **Romans 7:7** *"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'"*

Knowledge of God's word is beneficial in that it identifies sin, so that one may know what to avoid.

C. **Psalm 37:30-31** *"The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice. The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide."*

We can maintain sure footing on the narrow path if God's law is in our heart.

D. **Matthew 4:1-11** *"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' But He answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."' Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: "He shall give His angels charge over you," and, "In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone."' Jesus said to him, 'It is written again, "You shall not tempt Jehovah your God."' Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, 'All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship Jehovah your God, and Him only you shall serve."' Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him."*

This is how Jesus dealt with temptation.

II. The Way of Discernment

Having prepared one's heart with God's word, the Christian must then apply that knowledge judiciously.

A. **Philippians 1:9-10** *"This I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."*

To stand before Christ the Judge without offense, that is having triumphed over temptations, requires that one approves excellent things, which cannot

be done without discernment, the ability to recognize truth from error, right from wrong, righteousness from iniquity.

B. **Hebrews 5:12-14** *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

The word "discernment" simply means "judgment." God expects us to apply judgment to recognize right from wrong. To do otherwise is immature.

III. The Way of Prayer and Awareness

A. **Matthew 6:13** *"Do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."*

Jesus taught the importance of praying for deliverance from temptation.

B. **Matthew 26:41** *"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

He also instructs us to couple prayer with watchfulness. That is to say, we must be aware.

1. **1st Peter 4:7** *"But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers."*

Ephesians 6:18 *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."*

With an eye toward eternal judgment, we should be watchful in prayer.

2. **1st Peter 5:8** *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."*

Watchfulness is necessary because Satan stalks us.

IV. The Way Of Resistance

A. **1st Peter 5:9** *"Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."*

Being aware of Satan's predatory advances, we are obliged to resist him.

B. **Ephesians 6:11-13** *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."*

Resistance is active, not passive. It involves definite action on our part.

C. **James 4:7** *"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."*

If we put up a fight, we can scare the devil off.

V. The Way Of Flight

A. **1st Corinthians 6:18** *"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body."*

1st Corinthians 10:14 *"Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."*

Rather than fight temptation, it is sometimes more prudent to simply run away from it.

B. **1st Timothy 6:11** *"But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness."*

2nd Timothy 2:22 *"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."*

Of course, when running from sin, we must always be running toward righteousness.

CONCLUSION

A. *"The way of escape"* is:

1. The way of preparation.

2. The way of discernment.

3. The way of prayer and awareness.

4. The way of resistance.

5. The way of flight.

B. **2nd Peter 2:9** *"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment."*

God grants deliverance from temptation through these means. If we do not take advantage of them, then He dispenses punishment accordingly.