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Things the Bible Didn't Say

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Have you ever tried to lift something on your own that you shouldn't have? Something that was never meant for one person to carry? Unfortunately, in the world we live in, we often celebrate strength—but sometimes to our own detriment. We live in a culture that prizes independence. From a young age we're taught to stand on our own two feet, solve our own problems, and avoid being a burden to anyone else. We often admire the person who never asks for help, who keeps pushing through, who carries every burden without complaining. We tell people to "stay strong" and "you've got this." Before long, we begin to believe that if we're struggling, we've somehow failed, or we just need to try harder.

I remember a specific moment around 10 years ago in my teaching career when I reached this point. This wasn't something I needed physical strength for, but a lot of mental strength, to do a job, that I knew I could do, but tried to do it on my own. As more and more expectations were placed on me, mostly by myself, I tried to keep pushing through on my own strength. I kept telling myself, I got this. But then my own strength started to falter, and I came crashing down. I felt like

a failure, that I hadn't tried hard enough, that I wasn't strong enough. I had never failed at something in my life before like that and I didn't know what to do.

Even as Christians, that mindset can creep into our faith. We hear someone say, "God won't give you more than you can handle," and we think the goal is to become stronger. But you see, we were never meant to walk this road alone. Now, yes, in Genesis we hear that God created a companion so that Adam wasn't alone, we were meant for fellowship with each other, but even before that, and always, there was God. You see, we were never meant to walk this road without God.

God never intended us to carry life's heaviest burdens, or any burdens, by ourselves. The problem isn't just that we overestimate our strength; it's that we underestimate our need. We often wear self-sufficiency like a badge of honour, believing that asking for help is a sign of weakness. Yet the Bible paints a very different picture. Again and again, God allows His people to come to the end of themselves—not to shame them, but to teach them to depend on Him.

The myth says, "God won't give you more than you can handle." Where does this myth come from? Many attribute it to an incorrect reading of 1 Corinthians 10:13. Here is a reading from 1 Corinthians 10:1–13 "I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all

passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it."

As we hear in verse 12 (1 Corinthians 10:12 "So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall."), Paul has a strong warning against self-confidence. Those in Corinth who believed they were spiritually

mature and immune to temptation were actually in the greatest danger. True knowledge is not merely understanding theological truths but loving God and turning away from idolatry. This warning reminds believers that confidence should be in God, not themselves. In this context, "fall" refers to coming under God's judgment, as happened to many Israelites in the wilderness and even to some Corinthians because of their misuse of the Lord's Supper. Paul's point is clear: spiritual pride leads to downfall, while humble dependence on God leads to faithfulness.

As Paul continues in the next verse (1 Corinthians 10:13 "No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.") As one commentary writes, "Here Paul relates the phrase to the fact that God will not allow believers to encounter a temptation that they are unable to bear, but that also God will provide a way out. Not all of the Israelites succumbed to the wilderness temptations, only "some" of them did. The clear implication is that God is faithful to provide the way of escape for his people in a time of temptation. Sinful though we still are, God's grace is sufficient in every case. The very next verse, specifies the way of escape for the situation at hand, "Flee from idolatry!" The path of escape is often a path we are unwilling to

take."

If, God doesn't give us more than we can handle, why do we find so many people in Scripture facing situations they couldn't possibly handle on their own? Let's take a closer look, at a few individuals within Scripture.

Moses. When God called Moses from the burning bush to confront Pharaoh and lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses immediately protested. We hear in Exodus 3:11 "But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" God didn't respond by saying, "You can handle this." Instead, He said: Exodus 3:12 "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." The answer to Moses' inadequacy wasn't greater self-confidence—it was God's presence. Moses believed he lacked the ability. Moses even argued that he wasn't a good speaker. Exodus 4:10 "But Moses said to the Lord, "O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."" Again, God didn't reassure Moses that he was secretly more capable than he realized. Instead, God replied: Exodus 4:11–12 "Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go, and

I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak." God didn't remove Moses' dependence; He increased it. After leading Israel into the wilderness, the people's constant complaints became overwhelming. Moses cried out to God: Numbers 11:14 "I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me." Notice how honest Moses is. He doesn't pretend he's okay. He doesn't "power through." He tells God, "This is more than I can handle." God agrees—not by rebuking Moses for weakness, but by providing help. God instructs Moses to appoint seventy elders and places His Spirit upon them to share the burden. Numbers 11:17 "I will come down and talk with you there; and I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them; and they shall bear the burden of the people along with you so that you will not bear it all by yourself." Even Moses, one of history's greatest leaders, wasn't expected to carry the weight alone. God intentionally gave Moses more than he could do. Leading many through the wilderness...confronting Pharaoh, enduring rebellion, judging disputes, receiving God's law, shepherding a stubborn nation. No human being could have done this alone. Moses' entire life and story points to one truth: God's calling exceeded Moses' capacity so Moses would continually depend on God. Moses' story isn't about discovering the strength that was inside him. It's about discovering the strength that was with him. Every objection Moses raised—"Who

am I?", "I can't speak," "This burden is too heavy"—was met, not with God saying, "You've got this," but with God saying, "I'm with you." That's the difference. The promise of Scripture isn't that we'll always be strong enough for what we're facing. The promise is that God will be present and sufficient when we aren't.

We can also look to Gideon. When God called Gideon to deliver Israel from the Midianites, Israel had been oppressed for seven years. The Midianites would invade every harvest season, destroying crops and leaving Israel impoverished (Judges 6:1–6). Hear, God's first words to Gideon. Judges 6:12 "The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior."" Gideon didn't feel like a mighty warrior. He was secretly threshing wheat in a winepress to hide it from the Midianites (Judges 6:11). His response reveals his insecurity. Judges 6:15 "He responded, "But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."" Gideon doesn't say, "I've got this." He says, "I'm the least qualified person you could have chosen." God's answer was not "You're stronger than you think." Instead, God replied. Judges 6:16 "The Lord said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike down the Midianites, every one of them."" This is a recurring pattern throughout Scripture. God doesn't build Gideon's confidence in himself. He builds Gideon's confidence in God's presence. God

then deliberately made Gideon's task impossible. Gideon gathered an army of 32,000 men. The Midianite army was enormous. Even with 32,000 soldiers, Israel was badly outnumbered. But God said something astonishing. Judges 7:2 "The troops with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand. Israel would only take the credit away from me, saying, 'My own hand has delivered me.'" God intentionally reduced Gideon's resources. Why? So no one could claim the victory belonged to them. As you can read in Judges 7:3–7 God reduced the army from 32,000 to 300. Imagine Gideon standing there thinking, "I thought this was impossible before... but now it certainly is." God had taken Gideon from unlikely odds to humanly impossible odds. Even after choosing the 300, God knew Gideon was fearful. So He graciously told him to sneak into the enemy camp at night. There Gideon overheard a Midianite soldier describing a dream that predicted Israel's victory.

God didn't shame Gideon for his fear. He strengthened Gideon's faith. The 300 soldiers didn't charge into battle with swords drawn. Instead they carried: trumpets, empty jars, and torches. At Gideon's signal they broke the jars, blew the trumpets, and shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" God threw the Midianite camp into confusion so that the soldiers turned on one another. Israel won without relying on military strength.

If the saying "God won't give you more than you can handle" were true, God would have left Gideon with 32,000 soldiers—or perhaps given him even more. Instead, God intentionally reduced his army to just 300. God didn't make the challenge easier; He made it humanly impossible. Why? Because He wanted Gideon and all Israel to know that the victory came from the Lord. As God Himself said, "lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me'" (Judges 7:2).

Gideon's story teaches that God sometimes allows us to face situations we cannot handle so that we learn to depend on His strength instead of our own. The miracle wasn't that Gideon discovered hidden courage or ability. The miracle was that God was with him, and God's power accomplished what Gideon never could. This echoes Paul the Apostle's words in 2 Corinthians 12:9 "but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

Throughout Scripture, God often chooses the weak, the unlikely, and the overwhelmed so that His power—not human ability—receives the glory.

We also hear in Scripture that Jehoshaphat couldn't face the invading armies or Paul admitted he was so utterly burdened beyond his strength that he despaired of life itself" (2 Corinthians 1:8), and so many more.

Their stories weren't about discovering hidden inner strength—they were about discovering the sufficiency of God.

Sometimes it's a physical army, as we heard in the story of Gideon and sometimes it's a mental army, as we heard in parts of Moses' story. You see, years ago when I lied in bed, under the weight of many concussion symptoms, I would have relied on my own strength, had I not learned during that teaching moment years prior, that it wasn't about my own strength, but about leaning on God, every single moment of the day. When there were so many things I couldn't do in life anymore at that moment, I turned to Scripture, prayer, and solitude with God. Was it easy? No. God never said it was going to be easy. But he does say, he will be with us until the very end of time. Remember what is written in 2 Corinthians 12:9 "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." The power of Christ dwells in all of us.

You see, the problem with the saying, *"God will not give you more than you can handle,"* is that when life inevitably becomes more than we can bear, we begin to think the problem must be us. We wonder, *"What's wrong with me? Why can't I cope?"* Or we ask, *"What have I done wrong for God to allow this to happen?"* We

carry guilt, shame, and the false belief that if our faith were stronger, we would somehow be able to handle it all on our own. But that isn't the message of Scripture.

The Bible is filled with people who faced circumstances that were far beyond their own strength. Moses couldn't lead the people alone. Elijah collapsed in exhaustion. Jehoshaphat admitted, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." Paul wrote that he was "under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure," so that he would learn "to rely not on ourselves but on God" (2 Corinthians 1:8-9).

Perhaps God doesn't promise that we will never have more than we can handle because He never intended for us to handle life by ourselves. Instead, He invites us to depend on Him. The real question is not, "*Can I handle this?*" but, "*Who am I leaning on?*"

When our strength runs out, God's strength does not. When we reach the end of ourselves, we discover that Christ is still enough. Sometimes God allows us to experience circumstances beyond our own ability precisely so that we will stop relying on our own resources and begin relying more fully on His presence, His power, and His people.

So the question isn't, "Can I handle this?" The better question is, "Am I trying to carry something God never asked me to carry alone?" Because the promise of

Scripture isn't that we will always be strong enough. The promise is that God will be present enough. And if His grace is sufficient, then I don't need to pretend I am. So when I am weak, I will lean on Him. When I am overwhelmed, I will run to Him. When I cannot carry it, I will trust the One who can. And I will say with Paul: "When I am weak, then I am strong—because Christ is in me." Remember the real question is not, "*Can I handle this?*" but, "*Who am I leaning on?*" Hallelujah and Amen.