

More Than We Can Handle or More Than He Can Handle?

“God won’t give you more than you can handle.” We hear it all the time. And here are a couple reactions it provokes: “Yeah, I’m strong; I can get through this,” and, “I must be pretty awesome for God to give me harder stuff to deal with than other people.” Neither of these are what God is in the business of doing—puffing up our self-sufficient self-esteem.

God is in the business of helping us look to Him and **depend on Him** instead of ourselves. He actually will give us more than we can handle to get us to desperately depend on Him. He is glorified by us depending on Him since He is the **all-sufficient great I AM**, not us. His **grace** is sufficient, not ours.

And besides being utterly false and far from **God’s plan** for our life, it leads to thinking people who have hard things going on in life have more faith and can “handle more” than those who don’t. God doesn’t allow **hard things** to come into our lives to prove how strong we are but rather how sufficient He is. He allows hard things to refine us and reveal Himself as **Comforter, Redeemer** and a thousand other things.

Jesus told us hard times will come to those we perceive as strong and those we perceive as weak, but we can have courage because Jesus has overcome the world. He didn’t say hard things will come only to those who are extra strong. Nope, He was talking to all of us, all who feel strong and all who feel or seem weak.

So where did this come from? First Corinthians 10:13 says, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a

way out so that you can stand up under it.”

This sure can seem like it’s saying God won’t give us more than us and our strong selves can handle, right? Well, let’s look at it.

“You are able” in Greek is the word *dunamai* and *dunamis*, which beautifully is the same word used when talking about the Holy Spirit living through us. It means “to show ability (and power); able (enabled by God), empowered; power to achieve by applying the Lord’s inherent abilities. Power through God’s ability.” Pretty awesome, huh? Basically, it is saying God will give us more than we can handle but not more than He can handle. After all, when we are weak, then He is strong!

One other interesting thought I’ll throw out is the word *tempted* is the Greek word *pelrazo*, which means “to test, trial, try and tempt.” Exodus 20:20 says, “Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.” God does test us, and that testing can come as hard times, but Proverbs 27:21 says it can also come in the form of praise: “The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.”

When we are tempted, let’s turn to the Lord and yield to Him, letting the Holy Spirit enable us to endure. *To endure* means (Gr. *hupopphero*) “to bear by being under.” It’s the word picture of being carried away by an underwater current. As we yield our own self-sufficiency of being able to get through it by ourselves by being strong, the Holy Spirit will give us the strength the Lord provides, and we will be carried along with the strength and ability He provides.

This verse is all about the Lord being strong in our weakness, not about us being strong by the power of our own might. Let’s desperately depend on the Lord today!

Laura Krokos, the creator and host of *Missional Women is*

married and has four kids, two of whom are adopted. Laura and her husband have been missionaries to college students for 11 years serving with Master Plan Ministries. Laura is the Staff Women's Development Coordinator and has disciplined over 150 girls, led over 30 Bible studies and speaks to college and women's groups. Laura has authored 5 books, including an award winning 12 week Bible Study on First Samuel, Beholding Him, Becoming Missional, Reach; How to Use Your Social Media Influence for the Glory of God, and A Devotional Journey through Judges, a devotional to accompany the free online Bible study at .