

60. *Walk the Line*



*I keep a close watch on this heart of mine
I keep my eyes wide open all the time
I keep the ends out for the tie that binds
Because you're mine, I walk the line*

This lyric comes from Johnny Cash's first big hit single. With lots of temptations about him on tour, he declares his intention to be true to his wife and God.

An old police test for a car driver the officer suspects of driving while intoxicated is to walk the line, heel to toe for a distance on the roadway. If the driver wobbles and struggles with the task, prosecution can follow.

As a teacher I can let my heart go adrift. Work can be arduous and home life routine and not refreshing. My heart seeks solace and stimulation in all manner of places that catch me unawares. Suddenly I am at the threshold, and an impetus pushes me forward, past the flashing amber light of my conscience. I put my foot to the floor and zoom through a red light.

Where is the sanguine teacher of the classroom who spoke of the Kingdom of God not so long ago? What happened to the idealist? The rooster crows and I find myself ashamed and angry at myself. I went for a quick fix, I chose to lash out in anger, I was tired and hungry, so I made a major choice without consulting God, my self talk was defeatist: *Its too hard, I cant keep this up., It wont happen to me because I am mature and strong, its all the fault of my mate/enemy/colleague/pastor/circumstances...*

It looked pleasing, it gratified my pride, it made me feel better, my alluring temptation promised something desirable- but once chosen and the path taken, it turns to ash. The frivolous purchase, the lie to prop up pride, the sarcastic words, the dubious gossip, a flirtation with Eros....all diminish my authority and confidence to stand up in front of my

students tomorrow and radiate Christlikeness. There will be something phony about it all. My teaching ability and spiritual gifts will all function—God won't recall them. But God and I will know there is a phony dimension to my craft. I didn't keep a close enough watch on my heart, I deviated from the line, my eyes left the road to heaven, and I stepped off the narrow way.

How wonderful that there is a way back, a process of recharge, a carwash that will put this matter as far as the east is from the west. God is able to forget as well as forgive. Humans can't forget—we can only forgive an offence. Jesus doesn't treat us as worthless because we fail him. He releases forgiveness and gives the power to go on and triumph over what tests, tempts and opposes us.

*Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness. **Timothy 2:22***

*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. **1 Corinthians 10:13***

*Therefore, put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness on, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. **Ephesians 6: 13-17***

*For in that Jesus himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to assist them that are tempted. **Hebrews 2:18***

*And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. **1 John 2:28-29***

*So let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out. **Galatians 6:9***

*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. **John 7:13***

<http://www.chakpak.com/video/johnny-cash-i-walk-the-line-at-san-quentin/4651514>
Prisoners ministered to by Johnny Cash

A faithful person will be richly blessed Pr 28:20
<http://www.thebiblepost.com/temptation>