

You Are Being Tested



David Wilkerson July 2, 2012

If you desire to walk righteously before the Lord, rest assured you will be tested. In fact, the deeper your walk with Christ the more intense your testing will be. The Bible makes this clear: "The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits... When they fall, they shall be aided with a little help... And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time" (Daniel 11:32, 34-35).

A great time of testing is coming upon "those of understanding." Who are these people to be tested? They are the righteous, those who do exploits for the Lord, who walk with God and have the wisdom of Christ. Perhaps you've wondered lately, "Why am I being tested? Why is all this happening to me?" Go back to your schooldays. When a test was given, it revealed how much you had actually learned of what you'd been taught. Paul speaks of a different school, one where we are "learning Christ" and are "taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:20-21). If you belong to Jesus, you are in his school. If you have served him for some years, you may have thought you'd graduated. But none of us graduates until we are in glory with him.

David spoke often of being tested and tried: "I know also, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness" (1 Chronicles 29:17). I want to talk about three tests common to every Christian.

1. **We are tested** by afflictions and sufferings, both our own and those of other believers.

One of the most difficult things for Christians to deal with is the suffering of the righteous. Up to the time of Christ, Jews associated prosperity and good health with godliness. They believed if you were wealthy, blessed or in good health, God was with you. This was why the disciples had a hard time understanding Jesus' statement, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:24). The disciples asked the Lord, "If this is so, who can be saved?"

Even today there is a mistaken doctrine that says those in covenant with God will never suffer. But all the heroes of the faith mentioned in Hebrews suffered, including stonings, torture and violent deaths (see 11:37). Peter explains to us, "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13). Peter adds to this, "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:6-7).

We must understand that Jesus is our teacher. And while we are being disciplined, we may call on him as much as we want, but he will not move until we have learned what he wants to teach us. There are eternal truths only he can embed in our hearts, and only in his way.

You see, when Christ allows suffering and trials in our lives, he is after one thing. It's the same thing he was after when he asked Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. God allowed Abraham to lead Isaac up the mountain and raise the knife above him. It was only then the Lord stopped him, saying, "No!" What was God after? Simply

this: "Abraham, do I mean more to you than the object of your deepest earthly affections?" Abraham proved that he was willing to lay down all that was dearest to his heart – his son, the very object of God's promise to him – and to put his future in God's hands. He gave all to the Lord.

We can be tested as well by the suffering of others, especially righteous, holy servants of God. At times, this testing can be the most difficult of all to understand. The Bible tells us, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19). Yet so many don't seem to be delivered. We see so many devoted Christians dying before our eyes. Some suffer agonizing pain. Still, I am convinced we don't understand the kind of marvelous deliverance the Lord has in mind for us. His ways are far above ours. I've been around suffering Christians in hospitals who had more faith and hope than all the Christians around them who were praying for healing. When you have that kind of hope in you, you're not living for this world – you're living for eternity. The truth is, those who have suffered and died in faith have received their ultimate healing. For them it means Christ's presence in its fullness. Peter says these saints "partake of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:13). The faith they demonstrated on earth will bring great glory to God.

The Lord wants to plant something in our hearts through all our testings. He wants us to be able to say, "Jesus, you are my protector, and I believe you rule over the events of my life. If anything happens to me, it's because you let the wall down and you have a purpose in doing it. If I know I am walking in righteousness and I have your joy in my heart, then my living and my dying will bring glory to you. You may have some prepared glory, some eternal purpose that my finite mind doesn't understand. Either way, I say, 'Live or die, I am the Lord's!'"

2. **We are tested** by delayed answers to our prayers.

Most of us pray as David did, "Do not hide your face from me in the day of my trouble; incline your ear to me; in the day that I call, answer me speedily" (Psalm 102:2). "I am in trouble; hear me speedily" (69:17). The Hebrew word for "speedily" means, "Right now, hurry up – in the very hour I call on you, do it." David was saying, "Lord, I put my trust in you. But, please, hurry up and answer!" Yet, beloved, God is in no hurry. He doesn't jump at our commands. In fact, at times you may wonder if he will ever answer. You cry out, weep and fast, but days go by, weeks, months, even years, and you receive not the slightest evidence that God hears you.

Why does God delay answers to sincere prayers? It isn't because he lacks power. He could merely wink an eye or think a thought and the work would be accomplished. And he is most willing, even more than we are, for us to receive from him. The answer is found in this verse: "Then he spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart [faint]" (Luke 18:1). The Greek word for "lose heart" means "relax, become weak or weary in faith, faint, give up the struggle, no longer wait for completion."

Paul tells us, "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9). The Lord is seeking a praying people who will not relax or get weary of coming to him. These people will wait on him; they won't give up until the work is completed. And they will be found waiting when he brings the answer.

Once, during a season when I had tarried long in prayer, the Lord whispered to me, "David, I don't build your faith on my answers. I build your faith on my delays."

Anybody can believe when answers to prayer are flooding in. Who's going to believe after a year, two years, three years? As time goes on we abandon our prayers and the belief that God will answer, and we move on to something else. We tell the Lord, "I will be faithful to you. But don't expect me to have faith to wait for answers to prayers anymore."

Jesus gives us a parable to prove that he waits on us, that we are to dig in and determine not to give up. It is the parable of the distressed widow who kept coming to the judge and requesting justice (see Luke 18:2-8).

The judge finally granted her request only because he didn't want to be worn down by her constant pleading. "Shall God not avenge his own elect who cry out day and night to him, though he bears long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7-8).

For most of us, the hardest part of faith is the last half hour, when it looks as if God won't answer. We're tempted to give up, put it all behind us and go on to something else. We think we are surrendering to God's providence and

trusting in his sovereign will. We say, “Lord, do what you think is best,” or, “God, you must not have wanted this after all.”

No, that is not what God intends! When you are praying for what is obviously the will of God – say, salvation of family members – you have every right to hold on and never give up until Jesus answers. You have every reason not to listen to the devil, to ask God to plant the faith of Jesus Christ in you, and not to relax until you see completion.

This has happened to me at least a dozen times. I’ve given up and said, “Oh, well, this must not have been God’s will. It’s simply an impossible situation.” Sometimes the answer came within an hour of my words!

That may be exactly what’s happening with you. You’ve given up, no longer pressing in anymore. But in truth God is already at work, and your answer is just about to arrive.

3. We are tested by our falls and failings.

I do not mean that Christians who fall back into old sins and turn back to the world are being tested. No, those believers face a shipwreck of faith. Peter warned, “You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness” (2 Peter 3:17). Peter is warning believers who are growing in holiness and are set on following the Lord.

Maybe you have taken a fall of some kind – surrendering to anger, lust, unbelief – after years of serving him. You gave in for a moment, in spite of all the progress you’ve made in the Lord. If you are being tested in this area, you may think, “I am so unworthy. How much ground have I lost? Does God still love me?”

Dear saint, if you have truly repented, you haven’t lost any ground whatsoever. God puts his loving arms around you and says, “I allowed that to happen so you would see what is in your heart. But you are making progress. You have said you want to walk with me, and I am teaching you. I want all of your heart, and I will allow you to be tested until I have it all.”

Are you being tested? If so, pray this prayer: “Lord, you have put your finger on some areas in me. Pluck them out of me. I don’t want to go backward. Jesus, I want to go forward with you!”

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