

CITY OF THE LIVING GOD

TRIED & TESTED

17

SERIES

In dedication to all the soul-winners that need a Bible study on spiritual maturity achieved through passing the tests of the Christian walk.

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“Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers. And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you. Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him” (Deut. 8:1-6, NKJV).

Although we are God’s chosen people that serve and love Him, God will nevertheless prove that devotion. Our profession of faith, our faithfulness, and our testimony do not completely validate our sincerity to God. These are well and good; yet God will often times subject us to some severe testing and trial in order to prove our dedication. Lip service and noble thoughts are not the criterion upon which rewards and approval from God are granted. Approval from God comes to the proven saint who stands every test and excels in faithfulness during these times of trial.

THE TESTING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Almost every product sold on the market today has to meet certain requirements before it is sold to the public. Automobile manufacturers put their cars through hundreds of tests on various testing grounds, testing parts and performance before they are put on the market for sale. Underwriter's Laboratories place their seal of approval on products they test only after they meet certain requirements. Any type testing, whether in material things or with people, is to determine its performance, durability, limitations, and usefulness. Those that fail under testing have no seal of approval placed upon them.

Christians are not exempt from this discipline. Many things arising in our lives will prove to God our abilities, sincerity, and consecration. Bragging and boasting dies on the proving ground. Shakable things are removed in order for the unshakable to remain. Testing removes the insincere, hypocrite, lazy, and weak from the ranks. We are in a race, and soldiers in a battle, striving for a crown at the close of life. Only the proven will achieve it. Are you willing to dedicate fully in order to be approved of God?

1 Corinthians 9:24

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain."

Hebrews 12:27

"Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain" (NKJV).

THE PURPOSE OF THE TESTING

While studying the meaning of this important word, keep in mind that God has chosen these things, not to destroy us, but to mature, and edify

us. The word, prove in Scripture means to test, tempt, try, scrutinize, entice, discipline, and examine. In the case of Israel, God wanted to know several things about them as well as develop some needed virtues in their lives. For forty years He led them through the wilderness determining these things about each of them.

- To humble them.
- To prove them.
- To know what was in their heart.
- To know whether they would keep His commandments.
- To make them know that man does not live by bread alone.

WE ARE PROVEN BY THE WORLD

Our environmental position is an important factor in our living for God. All around us sin exists in every form and fashion. In such an environment God wants a people saved by grace and taught by that same grace, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. God wants us, and will enable us, to live in the midst of abounding sin and yet retain a character that is unspotted and unblemished by this world (Ephesians 5:26-27).

Titus 2:11-12

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age” (NKJV).

James 1:27

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (NKJV).

Ephesians 5:26-27

“That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (NKJV).

Between the Christian and the world there must ever be a clear line of demarcation. We are in the world. Jesus didn't pray for us to be taken out of the world, but kept while in the world (John 15:18-19; 17:14-20). God's Word gives us the proper perspective we are to have toward the world: (a) We are not to love the three elements of the world, (b) We are not to abuse this world while having to use it (I Corinthians 7:29-31), (c) We are not to be a friend to this world, and (d) We are to be crucified to the world and the world to us (Galatians 6:14).

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty” (NKJV).

2 Corinthians 7:1

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

1 John 2:15-17

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that

is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

James 4:4

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

WE ARE PROVEN BY TEMPTATION

Temptation is used in the Scripture in two different forms. Distinguishing and discerning which is spoken of, and the sense in which it is used is absolutely essential. Defining the source or type is important to our spiritual well-being.

- Enticement To Evil – Temptation of this type always comes from and through Satan using lust found in our Adamic nature (study closely James 1:12-16). David fell while under this type temptation (II Samuel 11:1-4). Joseph was proven through this type temptation and passed the test (Genesis 39:1-23). God cannot be enticed with evil, neither does He entice men to do evil; always keep this cardinal truth in mind. When you are tempted to do evil its origin isn’t from God.
- Testing for the Purpose of Approval – God may: (1) Purposefully try or test you Himself through some means or measure. (2) He may ALLOW you to be tested and tried by Satan for the stated purpose.

Both of these types of temptation will be the lot of every saint of God. Our prayer should be that we would not be led into temptation (Matthew 6:13). When you are facing the trial of your faith that Peter said would come (I Peter 1:7), always keep this promise in mind:

1 Corinthians 10:13

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

WE ARE PROVEN BY FALSE DOCTRINE

After you come to the knowledge of the truth, your love for that truth will be tested by winds of false doctrine. Our love for truth must take precedence over anything or anyone in this world. Anything superseding truth in our lives ultimately becomes our idol. Though we are commanded to love our families, yet our love for truth must take precedence over them (Deuteronomy 13:1-11). Heresies will find their way among the righteous for the purpose of proving us (I Corinthians 11:18-19; II John 1:7-11). God has given us safeguards through His Word, the ministry, and the Holy Ghost to protect us from falling into false doctrine (Ephesians 4:11-14; Hebrews 13:9).

Balaam (Numbers 22-24), and the man of God out of Judah (I Kings 13:1-31), listened to the wrong advice and paid tremendous prices for it.

God grant us wisdom and grace to say no to every false doctrine we may encounter. You will be tried by false doctrine; it abounds on every side, but faithfulness to church where we hear sound Bible preaching and teaching and a good personal knowledge of the Bible are good safety measures against being deceived by false doctrine.

PROVEN BY OUR WILLINGNESS TO DEDICATE

Somewhere in your Christian experience you will be put to the test in the area of dedication and consecration. When called upon for sacrifice, will you obey and follow? This test is applied to every Christian, some pass, others fail; which will it be for you?

God chooses many means and methods to prove our love for Him, so be assured they will come your way. If there were no darkness light would never be known. True disciples of Christ radiate His glory best in the midst of a sinful, dark, and evil environment. Those that are His would never be known to Him or us were it not for the tests that prove our spiritual fitness (Psalms 66:10). David wanted God to prove and examine him (Psalms 26:2).

God's Word is the only comparison chart we are to use, since measuring and comparing ourselves among ourselves is inadequate (II Corinthians 10:12-18). Through God's proving ground and training field we must pass before the final analysis is made for rewards. Our great eternal Assayer will assay us through various trials before we come forth as gold (Job 23:10; I Peter 1:7; James 1:2-3).

Soon our proving days will be over, and then God will reward us for every inconvenience we have encountered. Again I remind you, God is not trying to destroy you through testing, He only wants to prove who and what you really are. Testing is only for a season, but the rewards are eternal. Whatever you are facing NOW, go to God for grace to help in your time of need; His grace is sufficient.

For more Information
Paul Baumeister
P.O. 2366, Elk Grove, CA 95759

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