

# BIBLE STUDY #14

## Testing

---

---

A recent lesson discussed the issues associated with Satan's attacks. The subject of testing may, at first, seem similar, but the differences are striking. First of all, testing is always intended to "improve you," whereas attacks from Satan are intended to "destroy you."

A time of testing should come as no surprise. Many adults work for companies where employees are regularly tested to insure they are learning and applying the concepts being taught. Success in any profession will only be possible after a time of testing. For example, a lawyer must pass the "bar exam" prior to being licensed to practice law.

The entire Christian experience is about God working in your life to help you become more Christ-like. As a result, God will often send, and allow tests to strengthen your faith and relationship with Him.

Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt God was "testing" you? Explain.

## TESTING FACTS

### TESTING IS FROM GOD

As mentioned previously, testing is something God brings into our lives to help us grow in Christ. Testing is rarely fun. Few people enjoy periods of testing. Testing from God often comes in the form of some kind of affliction, trial, or difficulty to test the depth of our faith.

Read **Deuteronomy 13:1-3**. What does this passage say about testing?

"When visited with affliction, it is of great importance that we should consider it as coming from God, and as expressly intended for our good." – John Calvin

Read **Exodus 16:4**. What was the purpose of testing brought by God?

Read **Genesis 22:1-19**. This is the story of Abraham and Isaac. Verse one says, "God tested Abraham." What did He ask Abraham to do in verse 2?

How did Abraham respond in verse 3?

In verses 10 through 12, just as Abraham is about to kill his son, God intervenes and stops him. What is said in verse 12 about this testing process?

What resulted from this encounter in verses 15-18?

If placed in a similar situation, how do you think you would have responded to this test? Explain.

## TESTING IS A CERTAINITY

As seen in the three previous passages, God may test anyone from single individuals to entire nations. No one, no group, is exempt.

Read **Luke 8:11-15**. This is the explanation for the parable of the sower. Verse 13 is especially relevant for Christians. What happens to these Christians during a time of testing?

What is wrong with them that they respond in this fashion?

A key to success in testing, is being properly grounded in a relationship with Christ. Knowing His Word and having a vibrant relationship with Him is the best chance of victory during a time of testing.

Does verse 13 imply testing is anything less than certain? Explain.

## TESTING INVOLVES FAITH FOR THE UNKNOWN

Testing comes from God and is always intended to make us better Christians. This is true even when we cannot see the outcome. We do not always understand why a test is upon us. We may not even see the potential benefit of enduring the test. This is where faith comes into the picture.

"God permits no suffering or trials without a purpose, even though that purpose may be hidden from us." – Charles Spurgeon

Joseph spent time in jail, Daniel was placed in the lion's den, and Paul was shipwrecked. None of these great men knew the outcome of the test put before them. Yet each trusted that the Lord knew what He was doing in their lives. As a result, God used each of these experiences to strengthen their ministries and their faith.

Read **Job 1:1-4**. The entire book of Job is about a man being tested. What kind of character was Job?

In chapter one, God allows Job to lose mostly everything: his family was kidnapped and murdered; his servants were killed; his livestock was destroyed. In chapter two, Job then loses his health. The rest of the entire book concerns Job's life and encounter with three so-called friends. Through all this, there were no guarantees. Job only had his faith to support him. Why do you think this is important when it comes to the subject of being tested?

Read **Job 42:10-17**. How did Job fare after the test?

You must remember in most tests you will not have any way to know the result of the outcome. Testing is designed this way so we have an opportunity to strengthen our faith.

"When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you do not throw away your ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer." – Corrie Ten Boom

## TESTING IS TEMPORARY

No test lasts forever. God brings these tests into our lives so that, on the other side, we can move into other areas of more mature faith and ministry. At times, this may come as a great source of comfort. This is particularly true if you are in the midst of a significant trial or testing period.

Read **James 1:2-4**. This passage is unusual in that the writer says we are to consider it "joy" when we face trials and tests. Why do you think God tells us to do this, and why is it important?

Are you at a point spiritually where you can do this? Explain.

Verse 3 says the testing of our faith produces perseverance. Verse 4 says the "perseverance must finish its work" in our spiritual development. This implies

an end to testing. Why do you think perseverance is linked with testing?

Read **1 Peter 1:6-7**. How long does this verse say we must endure trials?

Why do these trials come according to verse 7?

"The punishments inflicted by God on his servants are only temporary, and intended as medicine." – John Calvin

## TESTING LEADS TO GREATER REWARD AND RESPONSIBILITY

Read **2 Corinthians 4:17**. What does this verse say our momentary troubles are achieving?

What should this mean for us when we are tested?

Read **Luke 19:11-27**. This is the parable of the ten minas. The man of noble birth tested his three servants as to what they would do with some money. Two servants passed the test. What reward did they receive?

One servant did not do well in the test situation. What was his reward?

What should we learn from this about testing and rewards/responsibility?

Rewards come to us in the obvious forms of things we need and want in life. But rewards also come to us as greater ministry responsibility. Each level of testing that God brings into our lives takes us to a new level of responsibility and ministry opportunity.

## TESTING AND MINISTRY

When it comes to considering your ministries, both now and for the future, you must expect to be tested. In fact, if no testing comes, you may need to evaluate your

ministry and whether or not you are heading in the right direction.

You can expect God to test you both prior to and during your ministry projects. In fact, the discipleship process you are going through right now may be a test.

Read **Exodus 20:20**. What did Moses first say to the people about the testing that was coming?

Why did Moses say the testing was coming?

The same counsel is good advice today. Do not be afraid. Testing is required of anyone wishing to grow, develop, and reach new levels of understanding, relationship, and ministry.

In fact, if you are bold enough, you may even ask to be tested.

Read **Psalms 139:23-24**. The Psalmist asked for four things. What are they?

It takes a bold Christian to pray the same prayer. Most would prefer that God leave them alone and not face any trials and tests. But the wisest of Christians knows that only through testing can real growth come.

"God often puts us into situations that are too much for us so that we will learn that no situation is too much for Him." – Erwin Lutzer

Overall, what do you think/feel God is saying to you through this lesson?

## ASSIGNMENTS

- \_\_\_\_\_1. **Scripture Memory: Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)**, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
- \_\_\_\_\_2. **Bible Study: #14**
- \_\_\_\_\_3. **Quiet Time:** Have at least five quiet times this week.
- \_\_\_\_\_4. **Sermon Notes:** Take sermon notes.