

SPIRITUAL TESTS

Have you often wondered how your Christian walk has ruts and bumps in the way? Have you wondered why sometimes you push forward in the things of God and then fall back? Have you wondered why your walk has not been smooth sailing and things that are seemingly insurmountable confront you. Have you ever thought that this Christian walk just gets too hard and you want to quit. Well you are not alone in these thoughts. If you want to “run the race” “fight the Good fight” then you have to come to a realisation that there are going to be **Spiritual TESTS**.

These Spiritual Tests are of a divine nature. For you to realise these tests you first must have an understanding what methods God’s uses to test you. If you don’t have an adequate understanding then you can become easily confused into thinking it is Satan doing it instead of God. A note to remember is that God will use Satan to achieve God’s purposes ref.. JOB.

God’s purpose is to mould you and to shape you into the image of his son Jesus. It is his desire to have a close communion with you. Like all relationships this is a two way street. You have a role to play in it and depending on your submission and your willingness to surrender all unto him, then God’s purposes will be revealed in your life.

Let us then have a look at what some of these methods are. I have chosen Seven ways. Seven is the biblical number for divine perfection. Let us look at the first method God uses. I must make a point in saying that these methods are interrelated and go hand in hand.

1: God may test you by demanding from you Great Sacrifices. Has God ever demanded that from you? If so what was your reaction?

Let us turn to Genesis and see what a man named Abraham’s response was.

GEN 22v1-2

The KJV says that God tempted Abraham? Does God Tempt or does he Test.

Looking at the Hebrew, the word for “tempt” is NISSAH (5254) and it means to “put to the test”. It also gives the idea of testing the quality of some one or something through a demonstration of

stress. A point to be aware of is that in 1611 when the KJV was translated 'to tempt meant to test' and over time word meanings change and tempt today means entice to do wrong. To answer the question I asked Does God tempt man, the answer is NO. ref: James 1 v 13

God was testing or refining the character of Abraham. He did the same with Hezekiah and he will do the same with you. Abraham passed the test because he was faithful and believed God,. How would you handle this situation. If God asked you to give up something that was precious to you , how would you react? God put him under enormous stress. He applied the Blowtorch to him . I wonder what was going on in Abraham's mind. Isaac was the Child of Promise a Gift from God and God wanted to take him.

Another example of placing you under great stress is that he may ask you to leave everything and go into the mission field or to go to the remote jungles of Borneo. The stresses that it would cause on your finances, your lifestyle and your way of thinking would dramatically change the way you live.

2: The second method God may use to test you spiritually is by leading you by a different way. Everyone's walk is different I know not of any Christian whose walk is identical. It cannot be because God has to deal with heart issues ,which are different in everyone. God had to deal with Israel and to test them ,he led them into a wilderness ,and for 40 years he tested them Forty is the number in scripture for probation, trial and chastisement and not judgement.

Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness.

Moses was on the mount for 40 days.

The spies spent 40 days checking out the lie of the land, and there are many other examples.

Why did God lead them in a different way?

Turn to DEUT 8 verse 2.

Note it was to Humble thee, in other words to knock the pride out of them. Note to prove thee, to make sure that they were worthy vessels ,

Note: to know what was in their hearts.....

To see if they would remain faithful in serving God, by keeping his commandments.

In all seriousness how do you stack up against this list?

God ways are higher than our ways. Normally God wants to take us down a certain road and we want to go down another road usually in the opposite direction. We kick and scream and pout when God turns us around, and normally God has to use a 4x2 to make us stop and listen. The path we have to walk usually is a difficult one as God wants to get rid of the baggage we have accumulated, but we being human like to keep the baggage so we normally keep going around in circles until we deal with it. God is patient and allows us grace in which we stumble and foul up and then by his merciful hand he lifts us up and restores us.

3: The third way in which God may choose to test us is by giving us opportunities of Choice.

1 KINGS 3v 5 .

Solomon asked for wisdom. If God appeared to you in a dream, what would you wish for. Riches material pleasures. I would ask for Grace and wisdom.

God may come to you at night to test you. Look what Ps 17v 3 says.

The word tried is tsaraph (6884) means thisto fuse metal, to REFINE, to PURGE Gold or Silver by fire in order to separate from it impurities. One's moral character is forged through suffering.

God gives us choices, make sure you use them wisely. Pray and meditate on them.

4: The Fourth way God tests us is by proposing hard TASKS.

John 6v 5 and 6

To Prove (3985) PEIRAZO means to try, to prove in a good sense.

Here you have set before you an impossible situation, You have to feed the 5000 and all you have to feed them with is a few small fish and a few barley loaves. Only a miracle will work.

God may set before you a task such as reaching out to tens of thousand Muslims and you only have very limited resources. How do you go about it. Do you shirk from your responsibility or do you step out in faith and start.

Look at Gideon. He had an army of 30000 whittled down to 300 and he was given the task to take on an army of hundreds of thousands. What did he do? What would you do? Can I suggest fervent prayer at this time.

God wants to test your mettle. He wants to see if you have stick ability, so then he will be able to use you. It is all about Character,

i.e., Christ like character. Do you possess it ? or are you lacking it at this time. Please do not feel any shame or condemnation as God is still, working in and through your life. The more you bend and yield ,the more he can use you. Amen

5: The fifth way God can test you is through suffering.

Acts 16v23 .2 Cor 11v23-27

Through suffering we learn obediencePatient endurance Hope..... expectation.....Courage..... and Love. I call this the test in the storm of life.

God uses delays to try men's courage and patients

Jesus Sufferings , Paul and Silas, The Apostles, Millions of Martyrs under the Inquisition and Today, The blood of the persecuted Church.

When things seem very dark and Grim that is when Jesus is the closest. When you are at the lowest point in your life Hang on to your saviour with all the strength you can muster and he will not forsake or leave you.

6: The sixth way that God can test you is by permitting Temptation.

God will use Satan as a tool to test you. James 1-3

This is for the purpose of testing your faith.

Draw near to God ,resist the devil and he will flee. That is the promise from God. When you come under temptation to sin .Here is what you do. Firstly, Stop you have a choice you can either sin or not to sin.. Second draw near to God., Heart and soul and Mind. Third RESIST Take action NO I choose not to sin Eg Joseph And Potipher's wife.

Jobopportunity to curse God but he refused.

What God does here is test your moral fibre, to see what you are made of and these temptations usually always come when you are at your weakest and vulnerable. Point. You will see Satan won't temp you when you are strong.

Jesus was tempted in the wilderness but what did he use as a weapon The used the sword of the Spirit –the Word.

1 COR 10 v11

7: The seventh method God uses is to test your faith directly.

He may test it in a way you least expect. Many have failed this test and fallen by the way. God may use a circumstance where you are placed in a situation whereby you have to solely depend on God Fullstop. You have no other Choice. All the doors are locked behind you and you have nowhere to turn. Have you ever been in that position? FINANCES ,HEALTH, CHILDREN.

The word of God says without faith it is impossible to please God. Read the faith Chapter in Hebrews 11. All of them were in this particular situation with their backs to the wall, but it was their unshakeable faith that saw them through.

Look at Elijah and the widow of Zerahaphth. .

Look again at Gideon. Do you see that God uses a number of tests on them ? can you see the spiritual pressure being applied?

Summing up God wants to test and try you for your own good .He tests the inward man and puts you through a refining process, then tests you in the Storm (under fire) and the Final Test is this 1Cor 3v13.