

THE PURPOSE OF TESTING #3

The Testing of Our Patience

Part 2

Introduction

Jesus said, “You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free”.
John 8:32

The late Jamie Buckingham wrote a book with an add-on:

Jamie Buckingham

“The truth *will* set you free; but first it makes you miserable.”

The greatest truths in the Bible can make us uncomfortable!
And so it’s been with our series on “The Purpose of Testing”; we are learning that *testing, trials and troubles are unavoidable* in the Christian life; but *God has a purpose for the testing*, which is to conform us to Christ and bring us to maturity.

Theme

The greatest tests of Christian faith produce patience; and patience and faith produce the purpose of God; Christ-like character that God can use.

Faith and patience must work together...

Hebrews 6:11-12

...do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Let me say it this way: God is at work in all our testings, troubles, trials and tribulations to conform us to the image of His Son.
It will take a lifetime! It will take faith. But, as the great Scottish Pastor said...

George MacDonald

“The principal part of faith is patience.”

There is great power in patience; but there is great peril in impatience!

The human race fell away from God because of impatience

and the desire to be independent from Him. And the only way back to God is through the kind of faith that can pass the test of patience and waiting.

Franz Kafka

“There is only one cardinal sin. Because of impatience we were driven out of Paradise; and because of impatience we cannot return.”

Even born again believers must learn the lesson of the testing of patience.

Derek Prince

None of us naturally desires to depend on God. We are born of Adam and Eve; but God wants us totally dependent upon Him! And patient waiting is the only way God can deal with our fleshly nature. His great plan can never unfold for our lives until He has dealt with our independent spirit.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote this...

Lamentations 3:25-26

The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

The prophet Isaiah put it this way...

Isaiah 64:4 NIV

Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

God allows us to languish as long as we think we can get by without Him! But...

Derek Prince

“This one fact about this unique God: He acts on behalf of those who wait for Him. Do you want God to act on your behalf? Wait on Him. What happens while you wait? You will become more and more dependent on God and less and less dependent upon yourself. And nothing will do it but waiting.”

All of God’s dealings with us are designed to bring us back to our proper place; a full and complete dependence upon God alone. But the only way we learn this lesson is when our patience is put to the test and all we can do is wait!

Psalm 40:1-2

**I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay,
and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.**

Let us look at some amazing examples of how God how some heroes of the faith were tested for patience

I. Examples of the Testing of Patience

A. Abraham

1. Abraham is one of the greatest men of faith in the Bible. Childless at 75, God promises him he will have a son. But he had to wait 25 years for the promise to come to pass.

2. Remember the model of the Christian life we gave you last week?

PROMISE-PROBLEM-PROVISION

- a. For ever promise of God there is a provision-a fulfilment.
- b. But between the problem and the provision there is always a problem!
- c. In many cases the problem is patience and waiting. For Abraham it was 25 years!

Derek Prince

“Why 25 years? To teach him to be totally dependent upon God. He had to wait until all hope of having a son was dead to him according to his natural power of strength. The purpose of the delay and the waiting upon God was that he come to the end of himself. When he came to the place of total dependence the son came.”

3. 1700 years later, the Apostle Paul speaks of this test in...

Romans 4:19-21

And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

4. Notice that the testing of his patience actually strengthened his faith; when we come to the end of our own strength our faith in God really begins.

B. Moses

1. One of my favorite Bible characters!

- Miraculously spared at birth
- Raised in great privilege in the courts of Pharaoh
- Educated in the best schools
- But at age 40, he discovers he is a Jew

2. He realizes that he is to be the great Deliverer; the one who would bring Israel out of Egyptian bondage. But he is impatient; he will not wait for God's timing.

Exodus 2:11-12

Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

3. When we get ahead of God we may kill one Egyptian and deliver no one; if we wait on God we need not kill anyone and deliver everyone.

4. The crime is quickly discovered and Moses is forced to flee out of Egypt; it would be 40 years before he returned.

a. I want to show you a video clip from "The 10 Commandments", one of my favorite movies, where Director Cecil B. DeMille brilliantly describes how God brings a man to the end of himself.

b. This is so personal to me; because I've been there. And because it has always made me realize that God is using my most terrible times of testing to prepare me for His use!

VIDEO CLIP FROM "THE 10 COMMANDMENTS"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwBWdeQgWvo&list=PLCr_UYmHNIF0NAfpwI8Uwh5bbk_zjZfpj&index=11

5. Listen to these words from the script and ask yourself, if you have ever been in this situation.

Cecil B. DeMille

“Learning that it can be more terrible to live than to die, he is driven onward, through the burning crucible of desert, where holy men and prophets are cleansed and purged for God’s great purpose. Until at last, at the end of human strength, beaten into the dust from which he came, the metal is ready for the Maker’s hand.”

C. The Crucible of Testing

1. He uses the term “burning crucible”. What does it mean?

Crucible

a test of faith, patience, or strength

Synonyms

cross, fire, gauntlet, ordeal, trial, tragedy, trouble, tribulation, baptism of fire

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

2. The image is of how God uses all our testing like a fire to purify us and make us ready to be used of Him!

a. Listen to what God said to the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 48:10-11

Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it...

b. Hear what King David said to the Lord:

Psalm 66:10-12

For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but You brought us out to rich fulfillment.

c. Hear what Solomon said to his son:

Proverbs 17:3

The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the hearts.

Solomon also says...

Proverbs 25:4 KJV

Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.

Proverbs 25:4 TEV

Take the impurities out of silver and the artist can produce a thing of beauty.

d. And of all the characters in the Bible, none suffered more than Job; here is how he spoke of God to his friends:

Job 23:8-10

"Look, I go forward, but He is not there, And backward, but I cannot perceive Him; when He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him; when He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him. But He knows the way that I take; and when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.

3. Here is a whole new theology on suffering: every test and trial, even every wilderness has a purifying purpose in our lives!

Deuteronomy 8:2

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.

4. The Old Testament ends with the promise of the coming Messiah; but many never notice what it says.

Malachi 3:1

"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the Lord of hosts.

a. Sounds great; but keep reading...

Malachi 3:2-3

"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness."

5. Come over into the New Testament and you find the same thing; from Saint Peter, who knew something about suffering and trials...

1 Peter 1:6-8

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...

a. Rejoice! God is working all things for good! So...

1 Peter 4:12-13

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.

D. Back To Moses

1. I haven't forgotten about Moses. Remember he was 40 years old when he got impatient and killed the Egyptian.

2. So God got him out of Egypt and he ended up in Midian where he got married and spent the next 40 years tending his father-in-laws sheep. 40 years!

3. Now he is 80! And God appears to him to send him back to Egypt to deliver His people. Talk about patience!

4. Someone once asked Bob Mumford why Moses had to spend 40 years in the desert...

Bob Mumford

"Why did Moses have to spend 40 years in the desert? Because God couldn't do it in 39!"

5. And we need to learn the same lesson. God has determined to have all of you...no matter how long it takes!

Helen Keller

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved.”

6. Moses had it all but it got him nothing. It took 40 years of waiting to whittle away any kind of idea he could do it without God.

“God brings us from independence to dependence by waiting.”

Derek Prince

III. Conclusion

A. What God is After

A.W. Tozer

“God wants the whole person and He will not rest until He gets us in entirety. Part of the man will not do.”

1. In his book “Crushing: How God Turns Pressure Into Power”, Bishop T.D. Jakes tells of all the years he spent working in the church before God ever allowed him to preach. He was “crushed”, discouraged and broken. But then God showed him why it took so long to put him in the spotlight...

T.D. Jakes

“There was no way God was going to present to the world an unrefined, unfermented, underdeveloped product.”

a. It takes time to make fine wine; grapes must be crushed in the winepress; and fermentation takes time...

T.D. Jakes

“Everything the Master does is for a distinct purpose. We are the ones who fail to recognize this. He never gives up on us and he never abandons us when we’ve decided to handle things our own way. He simply allows us to come to the end of ourselves.”

2. Christian maturity comes when we accept the pattern God established for His people in the Bible-both Old and New Testaments.

3. The idea is summed up in this quote by an unknown author...

Anonymous

“Everything that comes to us is a blessing or a test. That's all you need to know in this life... just the certainty that God's got his eye on you, that He knows what you are made of, what you need to grow on. Questioning is a sin; it's pointless. He will show you your path in his own good time.”

Title