

When You're Tested

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Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. Luke 4:1-2

A tested faith can be trusted.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,⁷ so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ... 1 Peter 1:6-7 NASB

God is like a refining fire.

... For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years. Malachi 3:3-4

See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. Isaiah 48:10

God will work through the fire of testing in your life to...

- **Purify your heart.** (Luke 4:3-4; Deuteronomy 8:2-3)
- **Refine your character.** (Luke 4:5-8; Deuteronomy 6:13-14)
- **Strengthen your faith.** (Luke 4:9-12; Deuteronomy 6:16)

When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. Luke 4:13-14

Taking our cues from Jesus...

- **Face the test.** (Luke 4:1-2)
- **Put your faith in the Lord.** (Luke 4:4, 8, 12)
- **Fight using the Word of God.** (Luke 4:4, 8, 12)

Let's Connect

- Do you like taking tests? Why do you think most people don't like taking tests?

Let's Talk About It

Most of us don't enjoy taking tests. They're hard, difficult, and uncomfortable. But the Scriptures talk about how the testing that God does as a positive thing. Only a faith that is tested can really be trusted. God will work through the fire of testing to purify our heart, refine our character, and strengthen our faith. When you find yourself being tested, take your cue from Jesus... Face the test, put your faith in the Lord, and fight using the Word of God.

Luke 4:1-14; Malachi 3:1-4; Isaiah 48:10; 1 Peter 1:3-7; Deut 8:2-3; 6:13-14; 16

- Which part of the message impacted or challenged you?
- Read 1 Peter 1:3-7. Why is it that "a tested faith can be trusted"? Where has your faith been tested recently, and what is God revealing to you through it?
- Read Malachi 3:1-4 and Isaiah 48:10. How have you seen God act as a refining fire in your life? How is God's purifying work in your life a source of hope?
- Read Luke 4:1-13. Jesus' response to testing was so different than the Israelites' (and from ours at times). Where is God at work, purifying your heart, refining your character, and strengthening your faith?
- Read Luke 4:14. Jesus returned from his time of testing in the power of the Spirit. How will trusting in the Lord to purify your heart, refine your character, and strengthen your faith allow God to work powerfully in you and through your life?

Take a Step

- Practice leaning into God and allowing Him to purify your heart, refine your character and strengthen your faith through your testing.
- Face the testing, put your faith in the Lord, and fight with the Word of God.
- Don't give up! Trust His Spirit to fill you and empower you to stand firm.

Here's My Prayer

Father, please refine me—purify my heart, refine my character, and strengthen my faith—so I can stand strong, more loving, trusting, and joyful (even in trials). As impurities come to the surface of my heart, please remove them and teach me to face times of testing with courage, to put my trust in You, and to fight using the Word of God as my weapon. And when I've passed through the test, work powerfully through my life. In Jesus' name, amen.