

Questions and Answers #31

The Testing of Your heart

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Last week we read from **1 Peter** chapter **1** concerning the trial of our Faith, and the week before from **James** chapter **1** concerning the attitude we ought to have when undergoing the trial of our faith.

This morning I would like to examine the purpose for these trials that we are going through, because God is sovereign, and he is eternal, and he was content in His solitary existence a whole eternity in the past. So therefore, we can not add to Him nor take from Him. Then all that He does is because of who He is. He is the God of Love, and thus all He has done for us is for us, and not for Himself.

Therefore if God tries us, and places our faith to the test, it is not for His sake that He does so, but for our sake.

Therefore, the trial is not for God's sake, as though He needs to try us so that He can find out if you will pass the test or not, but the trial is for your sake so that you will know what is in your heart, so that you can begin to deal with the unbelief and wickedness that lays in your own heart, so you can deal with it, and rid your own self of your own selfish motivations and self servitude.

Therefore with this little thought planted in our little minds, let's look again at these scriptures this morning.

1 Peter 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* (Now, so far we see this is a completely passive thing that is happening here. You have not one thing to say about what God has already done on your behalf. Peter tells us, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Why? What does Peter say that God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ is so blessed? He tells us it is because of what He has done for you and me...Listen... *which according to his abundant mercy* (Not just mercy but His abundant Mercy, His plenteous mercy) *hath begotten us again unto a lively hope* (That means God without our asking, and without even our knowledge or consent begat us, which means made us to come alive to a living hope, a hope that has been made alive. How, By something you had not one thing to do with.) *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ out from among those that are dead,* (Notice, God has caused us to come alive by the same resurrection that He caused His Only begotten Son to come alive again from the dead. The same Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead comes into us by the new birth, and causes us to come alive with a living hope. A hope that includes as you see in the next verse) **4** *an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that could never fade not away, a Hope that has been reserved or kept guarded in heaven for you,*

Notice in then in the next verse he adds, *5 and You who are kept by the power of God through this faith, this revelation that is to be revealed in the last time that will produce the ultimate salvation which is the redemption of your soul, which is the redeeming or buying back of your soul.* (So we see that the trials are to bring our soul back to the place that God ordained it to be before the foundations of the world when we were still in Him .

Now, notice he is fixing the conversation from what God has already done for you to what you should be doing as a result of what God has already done, and that is to be rejoicing in what God has already set in motion for you. A restoration of the Bride Tree. A complete restoration of Who you really are. The One He knew before the foundations of the world, not the worldly you that you are now, but the real you that He ordained to be there. And that is why we can rejoice.) *6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

Notice what he is saying. Even though you may be in manifold tests at the moment, and to the flesh that may produce a heaviness and sorrow, yet because of what it is to produce in you, you should be rejoicing with a joy unspeakable and full of Glory, because) *7 The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, (Not) might be (as though it might happen or it might not happen, but shall be) found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

And we know the Wuest translation showed us that the tests are for the purpose of approval, because He promised us that he would not place upon us anything that we could not bear.

WUEST TRANSLATION*In which last season you are to be constantly rejoicing with a joy that expresses itself in a triumphant exuberance, although for a little while at the present time if perchance there is a need for it, you have been made sorrowful in the midst of many different kinds of testings in order that the approval of your faith, which faith was examined by testing for the purpose of being approved, that your approval being much more precious than the approval of gold which perishes, even though that gold be approved by fire-testing, may be discovered after scrutiny to result in Praise, Honor and Glory at the time of the Revelation of Jesus Christ;*

Notice that there are three things that our trials are to produce in us. Praise, Honor and Glory. So what is this praise? It is a word that means *the Expression of approval, commendation, or admiration.* **2. The extolling or exaltation of God.**

Hebrews 13: 15 *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

And Paul said this condition that brings us to praise God and not men comes from within the heart and not from the outer man. **Romans 2: 29** *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

And in **Ephesians 1: 12 & 14** Paul tells us the praise is of God's Glory which is His doxa which is His opinion, assessment and judgment, in other words, the very mind of God, The very thoughts of God. *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first*

trusted in Christ. And again in verse 14, the new birth or that living hope which makes us alive is to bring us to the praise of God's Glory which is His doxa, *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* So we see that is what the new birth is all about, to bring us to the place of praising God's Glory, His doxa.

Peter also said in **1 Peter 2: 9** *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

And the Apostle Paul told us how to bring forth this praise in **Philippians 4: 8** *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

So our praise is to be reflective of those things which are pure, and holy, and honest and true, etc.

So we see the trial of our faith is to deal with our heart so that we can see what God sees in our heart and then we can willingly just get out of the way so God can mold us into His very image. Remember, under the Elijah ministry of Malachi 4 it is to change our hearts.

1 Corinthians 4: 5 *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*

And in what other age have we seen Hebrews 4:12, the Word as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Did you ever stop to think of why God manifested that Word to us? Why did God manifest the discerning of the heart to us? So he could show us just how rotten and downright ugly we can be in our hearts to one another. And He allowed this to be so we will be more than willing to want to change our hearts.

1 Peter 1:8 *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:* (so you pass the test because you are ordained to pass the test. God has you in the place where he wants you, because he has opened your own soul to yourself and you don't like what you see, and yet God in His mercy placed a seed of God-life in you before the foundations of the world, that when you see what is in there you don't like it because you know it doesn't measure up to what you know you were called to be. And OOOHH that is the beauty of it all. For in opening yourself to the correction of His Word, you are)**9 Receiving the end of your faith,** (the outcome or goal of your faith) *even the salvation of your souls.*

Now, notice then that we are told that the trial of our faith is to be considered more precious to us than Gold that has been tried by fire. Now, we all know the story of how the artisans would beat the gold out until all the dross and impurities were removed from it leaving it so perfect that the artisan could see his own image in the gold. Well, that is what God wants to see in us, but the tests are performed for your sake so you can see the dross inside, and then allow God to beat it out of you. In fact you will want Him to do whatever it takes to remove all the dross from within.

Now, in studying this subject on the trial of our Faith, we also read where James said in, **James 1:2** *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers testings. (Why?) 3. Because you know something. You know that the trying of your faith works patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

So you see that when the trial work in you patience, you come to the place that you are not in too big a hurry to do anything, but you are content to let God have His way, and to help you through no matter what trial you have or what need that comes your way. You are content is Christ, because you know that all things are working together for your good, because you love the Lord and are His Elect.

Romans 5:1: *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope* (in this living Hope of receiving) *the glory (or doxa) of God. 3 And not only that, but we glory in testings also: knowing that testings works within us patience; 4 And patience produces experience which is character; and character produces yet a true earnest expectation: 5 And a true earnest expectation makes us to be not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

So the trials are ordained to show us in our hearts the true condition of our hearts as God shows us in **James 3: 14** *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.*

Now, in **Deuteronomy 8: 2** we hear God speak to Israel saying, *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no.*

Most people who read this Scripture read it as though the Lord put the people to the test so that He could find out what was in them. That is not what this scripture is saying at all. Here we find that God put the pressure on them for forty years *to try their hearts, to put their hearts to the test*, not that He could know what was in their hearts, because he knows our hearts. But God put Israel to the test for 40 years so they could know what was in their own hearts. Look, how can God change you if you don't think you need any changing. So God allows you to open your mouth to expose what rottenness is deep seated down inside your own heart, *for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*

Luke 6: 45 *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*

You see the test will allow us to know what is in there, and also we are given words to measure up to, so that our measure of Faith is the measure God has ordained for us to have.

In **1 Corinthians 4:12** we read, *“And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:”* Now, that is the measure we have been given, and when we examine our own hearts by listening to what we say, it reveals where we need the most help in. Just be honest and listen to yourself sometime. Do you spout off and think it is ok for you to do so, but then when you hear some else do the same, what do you think about them? That will show if you have a hypocritical spirit in you or not. And if God shows it to you then let it go. You can’t get rid of that devil if you don’t want to get rid of it.

God wanted Israel to know their own hearts, and so for 40 years He tried them to show them, and you know what? They never did get it. They never did let go and let God. So God said they will not enter into His Rest. And they died in that wilderness, eternally separated from God. That is what William Branham said. They are everyone dead. Eternally Separated from God. What finality that is. So the next time you are corrected by the Word, take the correction and say, God forgive me, I am a sinner saved only by your Grace.

And as David said in, **Psalms 139:23** *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Proverbs 17: 3 *The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.* Who tries the hearts? God does? Why? For your benefit.

Hebrews 4: 12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Now, Deuteronomy did not say that God didn’t know what was in their hearts, and so He tried them so he could find out what was in their hearts. He wanted **them** to know what was in their hearts. So, God their very Creator, put the pressure on them, and He put them to the test, and they soon found out what they had inside of themselves. You see?

So, you see, brothers and sister, it’s not your action that God is looking at. It’s your reaction that pins you down and tells what is inside of you, whether you are a Christian, or not, because He said, “When a man smites you on the cheek, you will say ‘here you go, you missed this side, so just go ahead, it’s free, it’s on me.’”

Luke 16: 15 *And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.*

1 Corinthians 3: 20 *And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.*

A man comes along and takes your coat, instead of getting ready to fight, you should say, *“Well, that’s alright, and while your at it, this one will look good on you as well.”*

If your heart is right with God, then you’ll enjoy it, knowing that all things will work out for your own good, for God takes an active participation in watching over His Children.

In **2 Thessalonians 1:3-5** *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; 4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and testings that ye endure: 5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:*

God says it's a manifest token of His approval of you. If you are His son? He's trying to make you strong. He's trying to give you character. It's your reaction that tells the real story.

1 John 3: 9 *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;*(That means he does not initiate sin or an act of unbelief) *for his (God's) seed remaineth in him: and he (the one who is born of God) cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

Therefore, no real saint of God will ever start anything. Show me in God's Word where a saint of God ever started anything. You say, "David did!" No he didn't. That woman stripped in front of the public. He really didn't mean it. I don't believe he did. But in that moment, it was too late. Christians don't start things; but, when somebody else starts it, they often finish it. See?

David didn't go out looking to sin, but he fell into sin, and there is a big difference in initiating it verses falling for it. When David was reviled, he never reviled back. When Jesus was cursed and hung on the cross, He said, "**Father, Forgive them.**" He didn't cry out to God for vengeance upon those that spitefully used Him. And the Bride does not cry for vengeance either. She cries for forgiveness. She understands and says, "**I'd be in the same place, if it wasn't for the grace of God.**"

So God puts pressure on you so you can see your own reaction, because how you react to any stimulation will prove what you are inside. And in this day the pressure is going to come from God as never before. It has to, because we are awfully green. We're not mature. We have not laid in the presence of God to ripen as we should.

We should be aware of God's Presence with us at all times. And knowing he is the judge it ought to make you walk very humbly and reverently.

Hebrews 10:35-36: *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. So your confidence in God has a great reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*

Look, Abraham did not receive his promise until after he was tried and found patient. Then God gave him his promised son.

God said, "**You need character,**" "**which can only come by patience.**" You need character! You think you need healing. No! You think you need a new car. No! Need a new home. No! No! You don't need those things. Oh, you do, yes, but not like you need character. Not like you need patience. "**You have need of patience.**" See?

Hebrews 10: 36 *For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*

Now, listen carefully, because this is a principle of faith, and this is what it all boils down to right here. From the time that you prayed the prayer of faith until the time the answer came, there is a path that every Christian must walk upon: and it is the path of Christian character development, and it is on this path that you will receive your answer or lose it forever. Paul said in **Romans 8:17**, *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

You will not share in God's glory, nor have His very mind without suffering first to get that character in you that was in Him. Why? *Because power apart from character is the satanic, but power with character is from God.* You and I are not fit to be trusted with power, unless we have character.

That is the reason why the governments of the world today are in shambles? There's no character. And with no character to rule, then the rule goes hay-wire. There's no men of honor amongst the world leaders today. That's what's wrong with the world? Just read your world history and that of the Catholic Church and see what the popes were like. One of the Popes, I believe it was Julius II had 22 illegitimate children. And these were the spiritual leaders of the church? May God save the church from it's leaders.

Power without character is satanic. Power with character alone is fit to reign, and God wants us to reign with Him. If we're going to do it, we've got to have character. That's sensible. That's what He teaches us. That's what the Bible teaches us.

Now, listen. Let me show you what happens, according to God's Word. Turn to **Psalms 106:7-15**. *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt.* They didn't have a clue as to what God was doing down there. And people don't change. They are the same today. They didn't have a clue as to what God was doing with his chosen Prophet William Branham. And they still don't have a clue as to what God is doing here in the form of the Pillar of Fire leading us to the Millenium. God takes His man, but never His Spirit. His Spirit is still here leading. *Israel understood not the miracles of Egypt. They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea.*

And who did they provoke? It was Moses they provoked, but God said it was Him they provoked. See? They told Samuel they didn't need him any more, but God said it wasn't Samuel they rejected but Himslef. And so Israel couldn't take the trials. When times got tough, they really turned their backs on God. *8. He rebuked the Red sea also 9 nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake... 9 He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. 10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. 11. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. 12 Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. (Notice they had their little revivl but) 13. They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel:*

See? They didn't care about His Word. Just give them loaves and fish. **15:** *And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their souls.* Now, this word leanness means **Not**

productive or prosperous; meager: In other words, like the Laodicean church, Not cold nor hot, but just lukewarm.

There has never been a leaner group of people today than there are in this late hour. But talk about prayer lines; they've got them. Talk about the shortcuts; they've got them. But they haven't got the Word. They said, *"when he is discerning he never misses, but watch out for his doctrine"*.

Didn't Israel get results here? Huh? Sure, they got results. For His great Name—He did the mighty works over His Name, but It said, "He sent leanness into their souls." Notice it was their soul that became lean. They had no character. You want God to work, but you don't want to go the way God says you have to go... You want to get prayed for without knuckling down to God? Go ahead, a worse thing will come upon you. I've got to say that's true, because God said it was. You say, "God, I'd like this." God says, "I want your character; I want your patience." You've got need of it. God wants you to have both of them.

Psalms 103:7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

Israel never learned from the miracles. You've got to learn from the Word. Moses learned the way of God; suffering, patience, then power. They said, "Power, bless God, and that's it." That's the devil; that's not God. You say, Aren't these people doing great miracles? Isn't that God's power?" It sure is. Balaam had the power of God; so did Judas have the power of God. But Jesus said, *I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.* And what is iniquity? You know to do right and you don't do it. So these men were workers of iniquity yet with the power of God.

Where's character today? The big shots are all begging for your money and say they can't do the work of God without it. I'm living proof that you can go into all the world, (164 countries that I know of to date) with only a shoestring budget. Yeah, our website cost \$154 for two full years, and we gave away 82 laptops that we got free from God. And we purchased another 30+ new ones for very little money, and gave away over 160 complete sets of Brother Branham Sermons for just a little more than \$1,000 and we have given the bride of Christ a search engine to thousands of believers all over the world that cost us pennies on the dollar to make. God gave us \$3,600 worth of Software through the University of \$15, so don't tell me you need your millions to do less than what we have done for pennies. Don't tell me it can't be done, because we've done it.

God wants your patience which gives you character, which makes you fit to rule on the throne. He made known His ways unto Moses, the meekest man ever known, but all Israel got was to see His acts and they couldn't make hide nor tail out of what was going on. Now, what do you want. You want healing? You want a loaf of bread? You want a better house? You want a better car? What do you want? Or, do you want what God wants you to have? Now you can have both. You can have both.

Mark 10:29-30 There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive

an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

You know I have pastored this church for 25 years without taking a salary. That's not your fault, that was my own decision. But I've done it and Paul was my pattern and he worked so that he would not be accountable to any man. And he traveled to a lot more places than any other apostle in his day. Br. Branham worked two jobs for the same reason until his travel took him all over the world, and away from home so much that it was impossible for him to hold down a job, and that has been my pattern as well.

See? You can have it. God said you can have it, but you get it God's way. If you get it any other way, you will have leanness of soul; something is going to happen to you. You want a fat soul today or a lean soul?

Do you really want God? If you do, you had better be willing to suffer. You say, "I want to get healed." How patient are you? I remember a woman who claimed to believe that I met years ago, and she had migraine headaches all the time. Well, she went to her doctor and he told her to cut off her hair. It was too long and it caused her headaches. So she cut off her hair. Now, I am sorry, but if I had long enough hair as a woman to cause me headaches, I would say, Jesus you told me not to cut it, because if I cut it you won't even hear my prayers. So I am going to bear these headaches with joy in my heart that I know I am suffering for your Word sake. And if I suffer with you, then I will be fit to rule with you. No, that woman who cut off her hair showed she didn't have a clue as to her healing. If she would have said, "God, I'll pay the price and if it pleases you give me even greater headaches, because all I want is to be pleasing to you." With that attitude the devil would have to take flight.

So Get quiet before God. And if you just ask for character straight, it won't work. Don't ask for patience straight out either, because God cannot give you patience. It is affliction that brings patience; it is persecution that works in you patience.

Church Age Book Chapter 4 - The Smyrnaean Church Age P:18 *Why does He stand by? The reason is in Romans 8:17-18, "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Unless we suffer with Him we cannot reign with Him. You have to suffer to reign. The reason for this is that character simply is never made without suffering. Character is a VICTORY, not a gift. A man without character can't reign because power apart from character is Satanic. But power with character is fit to rule. And since He wants us to share even His throne on the same basis that He overcame and is set down in His Father's throne, then we have to overcome to sit with Him. And the little temporary suffering we go through now is not worthy to be compared to the tremendous glory that will be revealed in us when He comes. Oh, what treasures are laid up for those who are willing to enter into His kingdom through much tribulation.*