

Daily Devotional, May 22, 2020 Passing the Test

17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son,⁸ even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Hebrews 11:17-18 (NIV)

God tested Abraham, and he passed the test with a perfect score. No test could be more challenging. Isaac was Abraham's most precious possession. He was the child of promise through whom God's future purposes would be fulfilled, yet Abraham is asked to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering.

Abraham believed in and trusted God. He believed that in the end God would do the perfectly right thing, and so in faith he obediently builds an altar on the mountain and lays his son on the altar. This test seems to be God's way of learning just how much Abraham honors and respects Him.

These verses from the book of Hebrews, reprise the promise given to Abraham earlier in Genesis 12:2-3. Here we see the test of obedience placed on Abraham. When Abraham passed this crucial test, having proved his obedience to and love for God, the original promise from God was confirmed with a divine oath. The fulfillment of God's promises to make a great nation, is coupled to Abraham's faithful obedience.

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

We too will have times when our faith is tested. The way we have been forced to live our lives presently must seem to be one unbelievable test. What we need to remember is, the promises of God in Scripture are always linked to obedience. Faith is ongoing. We grow in faith as we trust God and take steps of obedience. As we obey in the smaller things, He trusts us with the greater things. So, how can we consider this to be pure joy?

Trials can be considered

pure joy only when there is knowledge that they are designed by God for a purpose. They are tests of faith given in order to develop perseverance, thereby producing maturity in our Christian character. ***"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance." (Romans 5:3 NIV)***

I have to tell you that I don't like tribulation. I don't like it, but I have grown to understand it, and also, where I need to place my trust. God seeks proof of genuine love, faith, and growth in the lives of God's people. God tests all of God's people in various ways. For, testing is the means through which the genuineness of our faith is proven, and our Christian character developed.

But thanks be to God that He promises help during testing: ***When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. (Isaiah 43:2 NIV)***

My friends, our faith will be tested. It will not always be pleasant, but with our minds and eyes fixed on God, it will produce such a blessing, that when we receive it, we will not be able to contain our joy. At those times when you believe that your faith is being tested, that is the perfect time to go to a place where you can call on the Lord and pray. That is the time to ask God to strengthen and enlighten you as you walk through your trial. It is also the perfect time to gather prayer partners around you to agree to pray with you. Prayer is a natural part of our worship: to know God is to want to worship him and pray to him. Prayer demonstrates our absolute dependency on God.

In times of testing, faith and obedience go hand in hand. Our willingness to obey God is a measure of how much we trust Him. Is there a test that you need to pass? Is there some situation in your life today

where you need to take a leap of faith and trust God with the outcome? Open your heart and allow God to enter in.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank You that You test our faith and our obedience. Thank You that You refine us and cleanse us and make us stronger. Teach us to turn towards You when we face testing. Teach us to call upon You in prayer and praise. Thank You for the promises of Your Word that the testing of our faith will develop our patience, and patience will bring about perseverance so that we can run the full race and not fail. Forgive us Lord when we think that giving up is a better answer than to persevere. Give us strength for the journey. In Jesus Name. Amen.