

Every Christian, whether lay person or minister, finds himself in a “test” and the problem can be “what is happening?” or “Why is this happening to me?” Here are a category of “tests” you may encounter in your Christian walk. They are given to help you identify what and why of where you are?

Keep in mind that we are really the results of our tests! Character is not produced by tests, only revealed and sometimes honed to a finer quality.

Paul said “I glory in tribulation” which was another way of saying he welcomed the tests that resulted in his being a better servant of the most High!

May God bless you as you understand a bit more about the tests which are the crucible that melts out the dross and excess things in us and makes us a more effective, and profitable worker for Him!

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SPIRITUAL TESTS

TIME TEST

Definition: In the Time Test, by all outward appearances, God does not seem to be fulfilling the word He gave in the past. This tests your patience, forcing you to trust God to fulfill His word in His own time and way.

Purpose: This test gives you an opportunity to grow in faith. Every man has been given a measure of faith but it is necessary for it to grow and develop. “The trial of your faith is more precious than gold..” I Peter 1:7 This also purifies your motives and attitudes. During a time of delay you can see how your own impure, selfish or proud motives and attitudes can cloud your desires before the Lord. God desires transparent motives and attitudes in each of us.

Abraham’s delay in the arrival of Isaac is a classic Biblical example of the Time Test.

WORD TEST

Definition: In the Word Test you experience circumstances that seem to nullify the written or living Word of God. “How can the known will of God possibly come to pass in my life?” The Word Test is no accident. God purposely allows contrary situations in your life and during these times God has not forgotten or contradicted His promise.

Purpose: God uses the Word Test to cause you to reject your own resources and depend solely on God’s strength to bring His Word to pass. This also is used to strengthen your faith.

Joseph’s dream and long delay in fulfillment is a Biblical example of the Word Test.

CHARACTER TEST

Definition: In the Character Test you are surrounded by ungodliness that attempts to pull you in their direction. You may be tempted to sin in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the pride of life.

Purpose: This test will show you the weakness of your own personality. Every person has some character weaknesses (see Hebrews 12:1) and this test helps you realize, and overcome, those weaknesses. Many need to be confronted with evil so they will stand up boldly for the name of the Lord and His righteousness.

Samuel is a good example of one passing this test. He was born in a very corrupt time when Eli was priest but maintained his integrity and became one of Israel's greatest prophet.

MOTIVATION TEST

Definition: This is a heavenly "examination" in which God exposes what inner and outer forces influence your decision-making processes. God will arrange situations to reveal your true inner intentions, thoughts, values and priorities that cause you to make choices or act in a certain way.

Purpose: God uses the Motivation Test to disclose those inner drives and to purify them in desires for the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and the edification of the Church.

Balaam is an example of the Motivation Test when he stated the Lord had told him not to go with the elders of Moan to curse the people of Israel.

THE SERVANT TEST

Definition: In the Servant Test, an individual is asked to do menial tasks that seem below his calling or abilities. No menial task is below any true servant of God. The role of servant is one of the highest callings.

Purpose: The Servant Test reveals whether we simply want to be recognized or if we really desire to help and serve. Those in authority will see how well one passes this test. Every task in the church is one which requires dedication and faithfulness, even that of cleaning the church.

Stephen is a good example of the Servant Test when he was assigned to "wait tables" and later was elevated to the position of the first martyr.

WILDERNESS TEST

Definition: In the Wilderness Test you are guided directly or indirectly in to a materially and/or spiritually dry and desolate place. When your prayers seem to bounce off the ceiling, your finances become depleted and you start to wonder “where am I or why am I here?” you are in the Wilderness Test.

Purpose: The Wilderness Test makes us appreciate the good times and good things the Lord provides for us. It also teaches us to discern whether the Lord alone sustains your spiritual life, or you simply draw from others. In the time of this Test your prayer life and study of the Word should not diminish.

Moses is an example when he had to run to the “wilderness” for 40 years and herd sheep.

MISUNDERSTANDING TEST

Definition: The Test of Misunderstanding is when people misinterpret or mistake the true significance of your actions, words, attitudes or motives. We all want to be an integral part of the group and when we are misunderstood this may be a sign of the Misunderstanding Test.

Purpose: The Test of Misunderstanding causes one to look for new and better ways to communicate. It also causes you to examine your basic attitude and motivations. Sometimes people misunderstand you simply because your attitude, at the time, is too harsh, hard or angry when you express yourself. This Test will also help you make room in your heart for some misunderstanding. The key here is to keep anger and resentment from rising and allow the Lord to turn the situation around, as you maintain an humble attitude.

Jesus is a prime example when he said “eat my flesh and drink my blood” and his disciples began leaving him.

PATIENCE TEST

Definition: The Patience Test happens when your expectations in God are not fulfilled “on schedule.” Patience is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22) This word comes from a Latin word which means “to suffer.” God is challenging you to endure some tribulation without complaint. To grow in patience one must bear pain or trouble without losing self-control or becoming a disturbance to others.

Purpose: To pass the Patience Test one must have yielded your rights to Jesus so that you are able to wait for Him to return his expectations to you His own timing, and as undeserved blessings. “In your patience, possess ye your souls.” Luke 21:19

Noah is a good example of patience. Preached for 120 years and had only 7 converts.

THE FRUSTRATION TEST

Definition: The Frustration Test is when you feel your life or goals cannot be achieved. People or circumstances may prevent you from gratifying your conscious or unconscious desires and goals. When it seems people don't appreciate what you are trying to do this may be the beginning of the Frustration Test.

Purpose: This Test causes you to re-examine your spiritual priorities. Are you giving enough time to prayer and the Word? Are you giving enough attention to family? God will bring frustration into your life when your priorities need re-adjustment.

Paul expresses frustration in II Corinthians 11.

DISCOURAGEMENT TEST

Definition: You enter the Discouragement Test when you allow people or circumstances to dishearten you and deprive you of courage in the Lord. The danger is you may also lose your confidence or hope in God, His provision, His promises, or even His love and concern.

Purpose: The Discouragement Test causes one to go to God in prayer and renewal of our faith in Him. Discouraging times of stress and trial will come but our attitude must not be one of self-pity or feelings of discouragement. God is faithful to His promises!

Elijah became very discouraged when Jezebel was attempting to kill him. (I Kings 19)

WARFARE TEST

Definition: The Warfare Test is when you encounter violent spiritual opposition to your progress in the Spirit. Though it happens in the realm of the Spirit, it can find natural expression in conflicts with people, lack of response to ones effort or struggles of various sorts (including the feeling of unbearable temptation to sin).

Purpose: Spiritual warfare forces you to become stronger in the Spirit. In this, the spiritual realm is like the natural realm, where a muscle becomes stronger only through exercise and resistance. See Hebrews 5:14.

Paul exhorted Timothy to give his all to excel in the test of spiritual warfare. I Tim 1:18. 4:7, 6:12 and II Tim 2:3,4.

SELF WILL TEST

Definition: When the Lord, or church leadership, asks you to do something that counters your own plans or desires, the Self-will Test has begun. God has to break the self-will and personal ambition of every person He uses, so that He can trust him or her to do whatever He requires in His kingdom.

Purpose: The Self Will Test subjects man's will to God's Word. Man's sinful nature pits his natural will against the spiritual will of God. God must therefore crucify our desires, on occasion, so that He can accomplish His desire in His own way.

Jesus again is our prime example when he prayed "Not my will but thine be done!"

VISION TEST

Definition: The Vision Test begins when circumstances, and sometimes people in the church, try to get you to lose the vision and purpose you have, and the church has, in the plan of God. There is *always* a "doubting Thomas" but we must have eyes of faith to see the vision of the church clearly, and HOLD ON TO IT.

Purpose: The Vision Test shows how shallow our spiritual vision really is. What God promises to do, He will accomplish but we must maintain the vision of it happening. Our own natural vision and insight must be disregarded in favor of the spiritual vision given us by the leader who has been empowered by the Lord to see much farther than we can.

Nehemiah is a good example of vision when he saw the needs and answers for Israel. His efforts were rewarded in seeing the wall rebuilt in 52 days. He did not allow the enemies of Judah to discourage him.

USAGE TEST

Definition: The Usage Test begins when you feel there is no opportunity, need, demand, invitation, results or expected occasion to exercise your "ministry." "Put on the shelf" is a common description for this situation.

Purpose: The Usage Test may be to humble you, remove pride or cause you to realize you must depend upon Jesus for results. This also gives the Lord opportunity to purify motives in His people.

John the Baptist is a clear example of the Usage Test when he underwent a long period of preparation for a very short ministry (about 6 months).

NOTE: These tests can come to any of us at any time since the Lord knows what we need to make us better vessels for Him.