

Leadership Testing

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In **I Tim. 3:10** the Apostle Paul is speaking of the expectation of those who are to carry his Word and build His house. He states concerning God's principle of development for such men and women - "*And let these also first be proved...*"

If you are called and want to accept what ever area God has for you. You will be tested. Each of us in the Body of Christ have gifts and callings on our lives given by Father. Each are called to lead in our homes, work places and communities. Each are called to share the "**Good News**" of Christ with the lost. Each and everyone by no less standard is called to walk in the righteousness of Christ and the Word of God. If you call yourself a Christian and believe you will not receive much of this self same testing you do not understand Father's intent to make you more like Him.

When God brings opportunity to grow in our lives He does two things:

1. He uses any means to determine the quality of ones commitment, presence, or the genuineness of ones heart and motives.
2. He assess the true inner attitudes and motives of those He calls or even those who are called by His name.

Hebrews 12:26-30 tells us of God's methods of molding and shaping us, getting out of us all that stands in the way until only His righteousness remains. "*26Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29For our God is a consuming fire.*"

God is a testing fire. Depending on your perspective of who God is in your life and what your motives are relative to His will in your life, you will either run to His fire and welcome His shaking up of things in your life or you will run from it or only get as close as is comfortable for your flesh. If you desire to all He wants them you welcome whatever it takes to get you to where He wants you to be.

God proves leadership even though He knows their weakness. Moses sees the burning bush and is drawn to it. Then God tells Moses to do some challenging things. Often we perceive that these things were to prove God when in many cases they were not to prove God but to prove Moses and his obedience to God. To pick up a snake it has been long known that you take him from behind by the head so as to control him and his direction of movement. However, God tells Moses to throw the rod down and it turns into a serpent. This was to prove God's power to Moses. But then God tells Moses to pick the serpent up by the tail. Obviously not the smartest thing to do but this was to prove Moses to God. With Gideon, God answered the test of wet fleece to prove God to Gideon. But to take on an entire army with a few hundred holding lamps. This was to prove Gideon to God. We find other examples where God does not always prove Himself first. God asks Noah to build an ark and prove Noah to God. Once the ark was built, God proved Himself to all. The point is that **God proves us in the obedience of our weakness but God does not have to prove Himself. When He proves Himself it is for our benefit. When He proves us it is for His glory.**

The Apostle Paul said in **2 Tim. 1:12**, "*For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" and in **Romans 8:17-18** "*17And 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. 18For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*" Paul's perspective and attitude was that "Nothing can move me except God move me. And when God moves me I will be moved by God for His glory." With Paul, all that had happened to him, nothing could

compare to the glory of serving God in absolute surrender.

Throughout Scripture we find this principle and pattern of God's "Proving His People". In the pattern we find twelve things God is testing in us:

1. **Test of Time:** When to us, God doesn't seem to be fulfilling what He told me in the past. Let us consider Abraham in **Genesis 12 through 18**. God makes a promise to make him the father of many nations. Yet, looking at the age of he and his wife, it did not seem time was on his side. To make it tougher, God then tells him to cast out Ishmael and to sacrifice Isaac. I could imagine Abraham saying, so when exactly is this promise supposed to happen? **James 1:1-8** tells us of Godly patience that proves us to God not God to us, "*1James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. 2My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. 5If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*"
2. **Word Test:** This is when we question the sovereignty of the Word of God to manifest in our space and time of which we know as reality. How can the known will of God in His Word actually come to past in my life? I know God says this or that in His Word but I just cannot see it happening or Him doing it for me for whatever reason. The disciples struggled with this until Peter makes a statement of resolve in **John 6:67-69**, "*67Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*" Peter resolves, "What else is there but Your Word? What else in all creation is more certain or that I can trust my whole life in except the living Word of God?"
3. **Character Test:** This is when it seems you are surrounded by ungodliness and temptation. We find many examples throughout Scripture from Noah, Daniel and the three Hebrew sons, Joseph, Samuel, Elijah and even Jesus. All, in the midst of cultural corruption did not compromise the least little bit but stood true to the righteousness of God with unquestionable integrity. Did they show signs of weakness? Yes. But did they compromise the righteousness of God in their lives? No.
4. **Motivation Test:** Here God exposes both the inner and outer forces that influence you decision making. In **Numbers 22-24** we find the story of the Prophet Balaam whose decision to do and say the opposite as God had told him was influenced by the riches and motives of others around. It cost him his ability to hear the voice of God and almost cost him his life. Instead of just trusting and doing as God told him regardless of what he perceived, he allowed himself to be manipulated by his and others selfish motives and the situation around him as he seen it resulting in some poor decisions.
5. **Servant Task Test:** Her God asks you to do menial tasks that you may see as being below your ministerial stature. God asks, "Are your motives those of a people pleaser seeking vain glory of men? Are your motives right only in the public eye? Or, do you have a sincere motive to serve?" Look what was said of the servanthood of the Prophet Elisha in **2 Kings 3:11**, "*11But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.*"
6. **Wilderness Test:** Have you ever found yourself in a spiritually, materially, physically, mentally, or emotionally dry and desolate place? You find yourself wondering where God is, is He still there, has He forsaken you for the moment? Maybe you feel like Moses in **Exodus 2-3**, you were called by God for a purpose but you have been put on a shelf and your purpose on hold for 40 years. But look what happened to Moses. Suddenly God shows up and begins to remind him who God is, who Moses is to God, and God's purpose for Moses.
7. **Patience Test:** It is like the time test except it is not a question of when God will do what He said but why He hasn't done it yet. It is motivated by a frustration and ambitiousness to help God out or do it our way when God does not fulfill things in accordance to your schedule. I can attest personally that it is

followed by a sense of despair and feeling of failure on your part. You begin to question your callings, purposes, gifts, and think maybe you should just quit and go do something else. It leads to the next test.

8. **Frustration Test:** This is when everything “you” try fails and “your” ministry, etc. is not as successful as “you” think it ought to be. Paul expresses such frustration with the attitudes of the people of the church in Corinthians 11. Do you think that maybe Joseph experienced a little frustration regarding the dreams God had given him while he lay in the bottom of a pit or sit in a prison cell again and again? But look what happened to Joseph in **Genesis 39:2-23** “*20And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. 21But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.*”
9. **Discouragement Test:** In **1 Kings** Elijah wins an amazing victory over the false prophets of Baal and then because the people of Israel did not turn to God immediately he gets discouraged, hides in a cave and says “God just let me die. I am the only one left who honors you in all of Israel.” I can just hear God saying, “Do you think Elijah. Maybe you're right. We should just quit, pack it up, take our toys and go home. Why, do you think I should just quit. I mean, I am God and if I cannot do it with you the mighty Elijah maybe I should just quit.” As if Elijah has a pity party, invites God, and they both wallow in pity cake together. I don't think so. Instead, God reminds Elijah of who God is and who Elijah is and begins to change his perspective and motivation.
10. **Warfare Test:** Sometimes God wants to know if you are willing to fight for or pay the price of what He has promised. Sometimes God ask, “What is it really worth to you?” Do you have the tenacity and audacity to do whatever it takes to embrace His purposes? Are you willing to give you all? Are you willing as Joshua and Caleb to face the opposition of your peers or even fight Amalek in the valley? Are you willing as Jacob to wrestle with the flesh or even the supernatural and not let go until you see the fulfillment of God's promises and purposes in your life? Or will you be satisfied with what comes easy?
11. **Usage Test:** This is when it seems as if no doors open for you, no invitations, it seems as if you are not being used anywhere for anything by anyone much less God. Okay God? What's the deal? I did what you said, no where are the results? You said you open doors no man can close and close doors no man can open. Well, all I see are closed doors. Are you going to use me or not? All kinds of issues, questions, and doubts run through your spirit at this point. The real question is what do you do? Do you get frustrated, discouraged, quit? Or do you begin to do whatever you can, when ever you can, where ever you can? You start knocking on doors and leave the opening up to God.
12. **Test of Promotion:** You are not promoted as fast as you think you should have been or given the position you thought you deserved. You do not receive the recognition or appreciation you think you deserve. Or maybe you do receive recognition or promotion into an area of service of which you do not think you deserve or are ready for. Either way, it is a test of your response to promotion by God. It is a test to see what promotion or the lack thereof does to your hearts attitudes and motives.

The most encouraging, promising and hope filled positive of each of these is that if God is doing this in your life it means He is preparing you for something awesome in His Kingdom. He is preparing you to used for His purposes. He is getting you ready for a release of His promises and power to make a difference. It means you are on the cutting edge of what God is doing and about to do.