

THE FAITH EXAM - 3

(How God Tests Faith)

ATTENTION:

⁶ Now without faith it is impossible to please God - Hebrews 11:6

- The nature of faith - It is a living thing:
 - It's something that either grows, stagnates or dies.
 - It's not an inanimate object like a rock, podium, etc.
 - It must be nurtured and cultivated in order to be maintained and to grow.

ATTUNE:

- **2 weeks ago**, we spoke of *faith as muscle* that must be worked out in order to grow – It must be tested.
 - We looked at [James 1:2-4](#) which tells us that trials are a test of our faith – give our faith a workout.:
² Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.
James 1:2-4
- **Last week** we discussed that God's commands test our faith – give our faith a workout.
 - One passage we used was Exodus 16:4 which tells us God's commands are a test of our faith – give us a faith workout.
⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This way I will test them to see whether or not they will follow my instructions.
Exodus 16:4

Today we are going to consider 2 other ways our faith is tested – given a workout:

BODY:

Our Faith Is Tested By Dollars/Money

- What is money? Money is many things.
 - Money is something people are willing to accept in exchange for goods and services.

- It's the power to have things and get things done in the world.
- Almost everybody likes to have money, because even if you don't like it, you can give it away to someone else who needs it, and be a blessing to them.
- Have you ever considered just how effective money is at giving your faith a workout?
 - The workout occurs with things like this:
 - When we go through financial problems.
 - When we go into debt.
 - When we are asked to give.
 - When we experience a financial windfall.
 - These kinds of things are a faith test - workout
 - God warns us against *the love of money*.
¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.
1 Timothy 6:10
 - The good seed of the word of God is kept from being fruitful in our hearts by the deceitfulness of wealth
¹⁹ but the worries of this age, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
Mark 4:19
 - The craving of wealth can destroy us spiritually!
*⁵ Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for he himself has said, **I will never leave you or abandon you.***
Hebrews 13:5
 - The decision of what we treasure is a part of this test
¹⁹ "Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
Matthew 6:19-21

- Our reaction to opportunities to give of our \$ is also a test.
...in your love for us—excel also in this act of grace (Giving as the Macedonia Christians had given). ⁸ *I am not saying this as a command. Rather, by means of the diligence of others, I am testing the genuineness of your love.*
 1 Corinthians 8:7b-8

- There is definitely a direct relationship between how we handle our money and the spiritual depth in our life!

Our Faith Is Tested By Delays.

- If every prayer were immediately answered, every need automatically met, and every problem instantly solved you wouldn't need faith at all.
 - But it is not that way.
 - We hate to wait on things.
 - *Do you do this? Driving up to a red light and there are two cars one in each lane. As you drive up you decide which one you think will get off faster.*
 - We hate to wait in lines, traffic at the Doctor's office.
- Example of waiting:
 - When Israel in the OT was on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land.
 - Could have made it in two or three weeks.
 - BUT it ended up taking them 40 years and God led them all the way and tested them!

² *Remember that the Lord your God led you on the entire journey these forty years in the wilderness, so that he might humble you and test you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands...*
 Deuteronomy 8:2

- Have you ever been in a bigger hurry than God was?
 - We start asking the “**when**” questions while we wait.
 - When is my marriage going to get better
 - When am I going to find that right person and get married?
 - How long will it be before I get well?
 - When are we going to have a baby?
 - When am I going to find just the right job?

- Some of you are waiting on something right now.
 - Maybe you've been waiting a long time.
 - While you're waiting God is there.
 - He does not leave you alone.
 - It just may be a faith workout.
 - God uses difficulties, demands and dollars to build our faith but He also uses delays.

*From ancient times no one has heard,
 no one has listened to,
 no eye has seen any God except you
 who acts on behalf of the one who waits for him.*
 Isaiah 64:4

- Remember, while you're waiting God is working!
 - Waiting in faith that God is working is essential to our faith's health.
 - God is doing things in your heart and other people's hearts that you cannot even see.
- If I really want to be a person of maturing faith I must learn to wait with God at my side!

PROJECT:

- Let's go back to the beginning passages:

⁶ *Now without faith it is impossible to please God - Hebrews 11:6*

⁵ *The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.” Luke 17:5*

- Chances are real good that you are going through a faith workout right now!
 - **Going through incredibly tough times.**
 - You need to pray,
“Father, help me to learn to be at peace because I know You're in control. I know I'm not alone. I know You have a plan and I know You will give me the strength to make it through.”

– **Wrestling with the commands/demands of God.**

- What is it in your life that God tells you to do but you haven't done it yet?
 - Maybe it's be baptized.
 - Maybe it's start reading the Bible.
 - Maybe it's to forgive a grudge against a person.
 - ETC.
 - You pray,
"Lord, help me to obey. Give me the faith to do what you want me to do, whatever that might be."

– **Struggling with financial struggles.**

- You can hardly make ends meet.
- Medical bills, home repairs, getting older without security, etc.
- You pray,
"Lord, I know you own everything and that even what I have in my hands is Yours. Please walk with me as I do what I can do and trust you for what I really need."

Bewildered as you wait for God.

- What is it that you've been expecting God to do in your life and it just hasn't happened yet?
- You're thinking, God when?
- God, how long?
- God, why haven't You answered my prayer?
- You pray,
"Lord, forgive my impatience and please bring me peace as I wait with you at my side."

ACTION:

- Every day your faith is being tested – given a workout!
 - Every decision, challenge, victory as well as defeat is a faith workout - test
 - Part of the problem is, we don't realize it's a test and God is trying to help us grow.
- God's encouragement to you again and again is, NEVER GIVE UP!
- Know that God is with you.
- Know that He is increasing your faith
- Know He is working out His plan.

Please Lord increase my faith!

There really ought to be a sign upon my heart
Don't judge him yet, there's an unfinished part
But I'll be better just according to His plan
Fashioned by the Master's loving hands

In the mirror of His word
Reflections that I see
Makes me wonder why He never gave up on me
But He loves me as I am and helps me when I pray
Remember He's the potter; I'm the clay

Chorus:
He's still working on me
To make me what I ought to be
It took him just a week to make the moon and stars
The sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars
How loving and patient He must be
'Cause He's still workin' on me