

TESTED FAITH

#2 TEST BY UNANSWERED PRAYERS & TIMING

1 Peter 1:6–7 (KJV 1900)

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

I. INTRODUCTION:

All faith will be tested. What is a test? It is an adverse circumstance that God allows in our life for spiritual development.

Faith is believing in something that you cannot see. That means that there will inevitably be times when those things that we do see or feel will challenge the things that we say we believe.

If our faith is going to be strong and effective, it must be tested. Tested faith is trusted faith.

Why does God allow our faith to be tested?

1. Testing of our faith reveals areas of personal weakness we may not be aware of.
2. Testing of our faith refines our character and deepens us spiritually.
3. Testing of our faith strengthens our faith and makes it more effective.
4. Testing of our faith allows us an opportunity to glorify God in our trust.

II. FAITH IS TESTED WHEN OUR PRAYERS APPEAR TO GO _____:

Apparent unanswered prayers will put one's faith to the test. Will we continue to trust God, even when it looks as if God is not there, is incapable, or perhaps does not care?

Our faith should never be based on God's _____.

Our faith must be in God's _____.

God wants to move us from performance-based faith to promise-based faith.

Too many times we interpret God's inactivity as divine indifference.

Our faith must mature to the point that we are not reliant on physical, visible or tangible proof that God is faithful to His Word and to His people.

Unanswered prayers and divine delays force us to _____ our own hearts and to decide what we _____ about God.

Unanswered prayers may reveal that there are things in our prayer life that need to be adjusted.

III. REASONS FOR SOME UNANSWERED PRAYERS:

1. _____prayers are never answered:

James 4:1–2 (KJV 1900)

1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

Do I have an expectation that I have not shared with God?

2. Prayers prayed with a _____:

James 4:3 (KJV 1900)

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

3. Praying for things _____:

1 John 5:14 (KJV 1900)

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

Jesus ensured that His prayers were in line with the will of God (Matt 26:39-42)

4. Prayers that ask God to act _____ to _____:

- a. God will not override the _____ of another person.

Proverbs 1:24 (KJV 1900)

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

- b. God will not act against His _____.

Numbers 23:19 (KJV 1900)

19 God is not a man, that he should lie; Neither the son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

(See the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:27-31)

IV. SO WHAT DO WE DO IF WE PRAY WITH THE RIGHT MOTIVE, FOR THE RIGHT THING, BUT GOD STILL DOES NOT ANSWER?

We must learn to _____!

Psalm 27:13–14 (KJV 1900)

13 I had fainted, unless I had believed To see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

14 Wait on the LORD: Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: Wait, I say, on the LORD.

How we respond to _____ reveal the genuineness and strength of our faith.

Waiting is a spiritual discipline every Christian must become proficient in.

Waiting is a part of God's plan in the lives of His people:

- Noah waited for God to close the door of the ark.
- Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Hannah all waited for children.
- David waited for Saul to die.
- Joseph waited for it all to make sense.
- Simeon waited to see the Messiah.
- Saul waited for Ananias to come pray for him.
- Abraham waited for the “set time” of Isaac's birth (Gen 17:21)
- Job waited and God restored Him and gave him a double portion

James 5:10–11 (KJV 1900)

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

- The 120 Disciples waited in the Upper Room and were filled with the Spirit of God

Luke 24:49 (KJV 1900)

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Acts 2:1 (KJV 1900)

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Negatively:

1. Abraham & Sarah failed to wait and led to a _____:

Genesis 16:1–2 (KJV 1900)

1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

2. Israel failed to wait and slipped into _____:

Exodus 32:1 (KJV 1900)

1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

3. Saul failed to wait and slipped into _____:

1 Samuel 13:8-9 (KJV 1900)

8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

V. SOMETIMES GOD'S CLOCK SIMPLY DOES NOT MATCH OURS. GOD OPERATES IN AN _____.

God has His own timing:

Acts 7:17 (KJV 1900)

17 But when the _____ drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

When God's timing does not match our timing, we take a test of faith.

2 Peter 3:8-9 (KJV 1900)

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1. The test of timing reminds us to take our eyes off the _____ and to get our eyes on the _____.
2. The test of timing reminds us to rest in God's sovereignty.

Mary & Martha – Jesus delayed to come for reason no-one else could understand.

John 11:5-7 (KJV 1900)

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

John 11:28 (KJV 1900)

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

VI. PURPOSE BEHIND THE DELAY. WHY DOES HE MAKE US WAIT?

1. Time spent waiting is not _____. We are _____ and _____ in seasons of waiting.

Romans 5:3–4 (KJV 1900)

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

Romans 5:3–4 (NLT)

3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.

4 And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.

Romans 5:3–4 (The Message)

3 There's more to come: We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us,

4 and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next.

Trials = _____ (patience)

Patience = Strength of _____

Strength of character = _____

Hope never disappoints!

2. Faith is sometimes like _____ – time is required.

James 5:7–8 (KJV 1900)

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

What is God doing while I'm waiting?

Psalms 105:17–19 (KJV 1900)

17 He sent a man before them, Even Joseph, who was sold for a servant:

18 Whose feet they hurt with fetters: He was laid in iron:

19 Until the time that his word came: The word of the LORD tried him.

He is doing something bigger than you. Joseph's waiting was part of a bigger plan.

He is taking you deeper. Joseph's waiting was part of the process that prepared Joseph for His destiny.

VII. ACTIVE WHILE WE WAIT – WAITING IS AN ACT OF FAITH, NOT AN ACT OF

_____:

Isaiah 40:28–31 (KJV 1900)

28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, That the everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding.

29 He giveth power to the faint; And to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall:

31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings as eagles; They shall run, and not be weary; And they shall walk, and not faint.

We can worship or worry

We can fellowship with Him or fight with Him

We can surrender our will or struggle to understand