



Passing Your Tests in Life

Why, God, why?" It's a common question, and one we often ask in the midst of hard times when we feel that we've been forsaken. But I've learned through my own trials and painful experiences that no matter what I'm going through, God is with me through it all (Heb. 13:5) and He will redeem it...He'll make something beautiful out of it. This is true for every single person who puts their trust in God.

Proverbs 3:5-8 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones" (NIV). Notice that verse seven says "Do not be wise in your own eyes." In other words, don't ever think you're smart enough to figure out how to solve your problems on your own. And verse eight shows us that if we trust in God and follow His ways, it will bring health to our bodies and nourishment to our bones.

When I look back and think about what I was like years ago before I got serious about growing up spiritually, I can honestly say I am a much different person today. Back then, I believed in Jesus and loved Him as much as I knew how to love Him, but I had every kind of character problem you could possibly have.

I was not a nice person even though I went to church every week and was on the evangelism team. The problem was I was religious but not Christlike! Thankfully, this daily journey with God that I've been taking for more than 45 years now has brought radical transformation to my life in so many ways.

See, it's the challenges we face that God uses to reveal the things in us that need to change, because we can't deal with our weaknesses if we don't know what they are. Then He works through them to transform us into the character of Christ little by little, one day at a time (2 Cor. 3:18.).

These situations are tests that God uses to help us become

everything He has created us to be. Now, I'm not talking about major disasters or crises like sickness, the loss of a loved one or some other kind of evil trauma. The tests God gives show us ways we need to grow spiritually and prepare us to move forward in His plan for our lives.

For example, I used to be a very impatient person. I still get impatient sometimes, but I have grown a lot in this area throughout the years. I remember when I would get so frustrated all the time with people who were slow or with situations that created inconveniences for me. After all, I had important things to do and was always in a hurry.

Well, God used clerks in stores to help me see my bad attitude and work patience into my soul. There was a time when it seemed that whenever I went to the grocery store, I'd get in the slowest line. The person in front of me would have items with no prices on them, so we'd have to wait for someone to look them up, or the customer wouldn't have enough money to cover their total bill and have to decide what to send back.

I finally knew for sure that God had my number when I went to a department store one day and tried to buy something, but I couldn't find a clerk to take my money. I went from slow clerks to no clerks!

These situations taught me that the best thing I can do is decide to have a good attitude and enjoy waiting. Because in God's school of life, we don't fail; we just get to keep taking the same test over and over until we pass it.

The good news is when we pass our tests, there's a promotion coming! We're changing and being prepared to do bigger and better things for Christ, and we'll have much more peace and joy in our everyday life.

So, what bugs you? What really grates on your nerves and causes you to get frustrated, stealing your peace and joy? I want to encourage you to remember Proverbs 3:5-8 and use it as a practical guide in these situations. Let the tests you take make you better—more like Christ—and keep moving forward in every good plan God has for your life!

"Don't ever think you're smart enough to figure out how to solve your problems on your own."

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