



Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries
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TEMPTATION: TESTING

1 Corinthians 10: 13 James 1:2-4 1 Peter 1:6-7

The Lord repeatedly reminded His disciples that temptation is a very real and a very great danger. He did not see temptation as a minor interruption or--as we sometimes do--as something enjoyable. He saw it as a threat to spiritual well-being. He warned in Luke 8:13 of the tremendous danger of temptation and challenged his disciples to be constantly alert to the things by which they were tempted.

Because of the great danger, Jesus saw temptation as a cause for disciplined prayer. His position was that the first step in facing and overcoming temptation is to anticipate temptation by constant prayer. In praying for deliverance from temptation, we are acknowledging that in our flesh we are powerless to resist, but that God is able and willing to deliver us (Matt. 6:13, 26:41; 2 Pet. 2:9).

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Cor. 10:13)

The Greek here literally says that all our temptations are "of the human kind." Any temptation we have is a human type of temptation. There are temptations that are beyond the human kind, but we are not going to be faced with them. The Lord Jesus Christ not only faced every human kind of temptation, but He also faced the superhuman kind (Heb. 4:15; Matt. 4:1-11).

However difficult our particular temptations may seem, they are no more difficult than anyone else's. We all have a tendency to think that no one has ever been tempted as greatly as we have or that no one has ever sinned as terribly as we have. But that is simply not true. All our temptations are typically human temptations.

In any case, no matter how difficult our temptations, God is faithful. This faithful God, who is perfect, designed a perfect plan for imperfect people. In eternity past He anticipated every problem that would ever be and designed the solutions before the problems existed. And He set a limit on every temptation that we would ever face.

At this point the sovereignty of God enters the equation. While we are here on this earth, we are tempted from many directions--from the world, the flesh, the devil. But God, who is sovereign, still controls human history. He is able to keep all our temptation within the limit He set in eternity past. And that limit is given here: He will never allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able.

Our temptations will be limited to things that we can handle. As we grow and gain strength, our temptations will become stronger and more intense. But they will never be beyond our level of growth or our ability to discern.

"Able" is dunamai, the Greek word for inherent power. Every believer has the inherent power necessary to overcome the temptations he faces. "Temptation" is peirasmos, a word that indicates solicitation to evil, something that can never come from God. He will test faith, but He will never solicit to evil.

In our temptations, He will provide a way of escape never away from, but always through, the problem. He provides the way of escape so that we will be able to endure, from hupophero, which means "to bear by being under, bear up; to bear patiently." Endurance is the key in temptation and trial.

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)

Why does God allow us to be tempted at all? James tells us. The word that dominates these three verses is the word "consider." The Greek hegeomai has a number of meanings including "to consider; to lead the way; to go before." Originally a mathematical term, it means to add up the facts, to weigh and compare the information at hand.

James says that when we find ourselves in testing situations we need to take into consideration all the facts about that testing and then let joy lead the way through that temptation. What are the facts we need to weigh--that God is faithful to limit testing to our spiritual and physical abilities; that while not all things are good, God works everything together for good for those who love Him; that temptation is a trial of our faith allowed with a view toward reward; that in times of adversity and opposition we have the opportunity to advance more rapidly in the faith. If under testing we will stop and add up the facts that we know about who God is and why this is happening to us, then joy will lead the way through.

Jesus had to add up the facts as He faced the cross. Hebrews 12:1-3 says He considered the purpose of the cross and the results of the cross and when He did, He was able to endure the humiliation and the pain and even the judgment of the Father for the joy that He saw before Him.

We have the opportunity to add up the facts in a variety of trials. "Various" is poikilos, a word that means multicolored. Satan offers temptations in colors that we like. He studies and analyzes us and brings just the things that are beautiful to our particular area of weakness in the sin nature.

When we face these different temptations in their lovely hues, we have to keep something in mind: there is a reason for it all. God is limiting this temptation, and it does have a divine purpose. The secret of letting joy lead the way is knowing what is happening. "Knowing" is the perfect form of oida, and it means that we have complete information on which to act. Oida is used for mature, complete understanding. We know that the testing of our faith produces endurance.

"Produce" is katergazomai. Ergazomai means "to work," kata means "according to a norm and standard." The testing of our faith is working, according to a norm and standard, endurance in us. The word translated "endurance" here is not the same word used in 1 Corinthians 10:13. In that passage the word is hupophero, "to bear patiently." Here the word is hupomeno, "to abide under, to persevere." It carries the idea of refusing to flee or recede, of enduring bravely and calmly. Hupomeno is persistence, tenacity, the ability to endure, to last. The only thing that will produce this in us is the testing of our faith.

When James talks in the first part of the verse about "various trials," the word he uses for "trials" is from peirasmos, which is almost always translated "temptation" (as in 1 Corinthians 10:13). The word he uses for "testing," dokimazo, means "to put to the test for the purpose of approval." Both words refer to the same situation. When we are in a tempting situation, the temptation is coming from the source of our old

sin nature backed by Satan and the cosmic system. But the test is coming from the Lord. The temptation is to sin, but the test is to exercise faith.

Because it is the testing of our faith that produces endurance, God permits us to be tempted. So we should "let endurance have its perfect result." The "perfect" result is from *teleios*, which means "brought to its end, finished; full-grown, adult." James is not talking about sinless perfection; he is talking about spiritual maturity.

This is how it works: As believers, we start moving forward in the Christian way of life, functioning in the realm of faith. Faith will run into testing. When we pass a test we take a step upward to stronger faith. That faith will meet with a stronger form of testing. When we pass the next test, we come to a stronger form of faith. And that form is going to have a stronger and more subtle form of testing, and on and on and on. That is the rest of the Christian way of life. It is the testing of faith.

How does God test the faith? With our knowledge of doctrine, of His Word. The test proves not what we have written down in our notebooks, not how great is our intellect or our academic prowess. The test proves what we really know and understand and believe of the Word of God.

God is a good teacher. He gives us exactly the information we need, He lets us know that we are accountable for that information, and then He tests us on that information. He gives us the information in the Word, and that is why Bible class is so important, because the class we skip may be the one where God is giving the information we are going to need for a big test that week.

It is not unfair for God to allow the test to come to us on information that was covered in the class we skipped. If we did not show up, we did not get the information, but that is not God's fault. It is just like cutting class in school. We cannot blame the teacher when we fail a test because we cut class. The C- teacher can say with all honesty, "I gave the information, and you chose not to be there, or You were there but YOU Were C thinking about other things while the class was being taught. God can say the same thing. God makes teaching available; we will be tested. Whether we pass or fail is based on our ability to use the information that was available to us.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:6-7)

Peter, like James, reminds us that we will face multicolored tests and trials in life. The purpose for the tests is, as in James 1, related to the *dokimazo*, the testing or proof of our faith. God wants us to know how strong our faith is, so He is going to allow us to be tested to the limit so we can find out how we will respond.

In the ancient world a goldsmith would put gold in a vat. Underneath was a fire and as the heat from the fire melted the gold, it became molten metal. With the heat, the impurities would come to the top. The goldsmith would skim off and throw away all the alloy and the Impurities, and he would turn up the heat.

When we start out in the Christian life, we are given baby heat. Impurities rise to the top, and they are skimmed off and thrown to the side. As we advance, our faith increases, and the heat is turned up. The hotter it gets, the more impurities will rise to the top.

What does this process do? It keeps us from thinking that we have "arrived," that we are as good as we can possibly be. God makes sure that things get hotter and hotter in our lives, because if they did not, then

our impurities, our flaws, would not rise to the top to be cast off. And we might start thinking we were perfect believers. God does not want anyone thinking he has attained perfection. Paul makes that clear in Philippians 3:12-14.

When things get so hot in our lives that we snap under the pressure and ugly comes out of us, we should be encouraged. That is exactly what was supposed to happen. The whole purpose of the pressure is to show us our flaws so we can deal with them.

When the goldsmith could look down into the molten metal and see his face reflected, he knew that he had the pure gold he was working to produce. In God's plan the goal is that we be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. What will it take to work that in our lives? Heat. A lot of fire. We will have to pass a lot of tests and get rid of a lot of flaws and impurities. They all have to come to the surface and be dealt with one at a time. The Lord's desire--His purpose in the tests--is to one day be able to look down into our lives and see the reflection of His own face. With every test, that we pass, the reflection grows clearer.

Lesson 4-4: Proving--faith-rest Hebrews 4: 1-3 Philippians 4:6-7 Daniel 6: 16-23

We live in a world designed to rob us of inner peace, to drive us crazy with frustration, turmoil, and fear. What we need is the ability to rest. It just so happens that what we need is exactly what God wants us to have. And so He holds out to each of us the possibility of finding true rest, that inner Peace and tranquility through which alone we will be able to become heroes in the fray.

The only "problem" with His offer is that we can take Him up on it only by faith. Every one of us will choose whether to accept or reject His rest. If we accept it, we will be equipped to move on to spiritual greatness. If we reject it, we will waste our lives in bitterness in the wilderness.

Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. (Heb. 4:1)

The author of Hebrews is writing to warn the Jewish believers in Jerusalem that God's judgment is coming on the nation. He wants these people, who have turned away from the reality of fellowship with Jesus Christ to dead ritual, to have a healthy fear of one thing: failing to enter the faith-rest life. To teach this lesson, he points, beginning in Hebrews 3, to Moses and the Exodus generation.

One year after their exodus from Egypt, the Jews reached Kadesh-Barnea near the border of Canaan, the promised land. God had given His Word that in that land He would give them rest. He told Moses to send 12 men to spy out the land (Num. 13). When the 12 came back, they brought a report of a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey, yet a land with fortified cities and strong inhabitants. Two of the men--Joshua and Caleb--were all for going in and taking the land. They knew, because God had promised, that they could conquer it. But the other ten convinced the people that they were not able, that the enemies were too strong, that the land would devour them. Joshua and Caleb had faith-rest. The others did not.

So God took the Exodus generation on a circuit through the wilderness for 39 more years, and every test that came their way was a test of their ability to rest in faith. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul describes what took place during those years. Every time God tested them, they failed. He pulled them miraculously out of one difficulty after another, testing them over and over again looking for a spark of faith. He never found one. And so every adult in that generation--with the exception of Joshua and Caleb--died in the wilderness.

The land of Canaan is not a picture of heaven; it is a picture of the faith-rest life. In the promised land there were giants; there were enemies to fight. But the Jews were not expected to go in alone; with them

was the God who had proved He is able to deliver. The younger generation went in and did what their parents could have done; they claimed the land by faith, by constantly obeying in faith-rest.

When the author of Hebrews says, "Let us fear." he is urging his generation to learn the lesson from the Exodus generation. He is saying, "They failed; you can too. Their children succeeded; you can too. And this is one place where you ought to be terrified of failure."

None of us knows how many years of life on this earth God has allotted to us. Whatever our individual allotment, it is just enough for us to fulfill the destiny God has set before us. There is no time to waste. As believers we ought to be afraid of living out our lives in a wilderness experience--test-failure, test-failure, test-failure. We should not fear death; we should not fear our enemies; we should not even fear sin. But we ought to fear failing to take God at His Word, failing to enter the promised land.

God has the same kind of experience waiting for us, the same promise of blessing and victory and joy that he had for the people in the Exodus generation. The author does not want these people to 'come short,' from hustereo. The word means 'to fall down on the track and fail to finish.'

God planned for every believer to progress from salvation pictured in the Passover and the Exodus, through testing and spiritual growth, pictured in the trek through the wilderness, to maturity, pictured in the Canaan experience. And what is waiting in the land of spiritual maturity? Great blessings and giants.

What the Exodus generation had faced in the wilderness looked small compared to what they saw ahead in the promised land. So they let their fears stop them at the border. But their children did not. They said, 'We can take it.' And so at Jericho they faced their first big test. All God wanted to find out was how well they could take orders. He told them He did not want them to do a thing except march around this fortified city once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day. Do those instructions sound at all strange?

If we want to enter the faith-rest life, we should study those instructions, because someday we will be given orders just as strange. When we in our spiritual growth come to the point of cracking the maturity barrier and entering the promised land, we will face a fortified city, and it will probably be one inside us. God will likely give us instructions that sound totally illogical. It is His way of asking, 'Do you trust Me? How well can you do nothing? How well can you rest?' Jericho was a test of the Jews' ability to rest. Every one of us will face a Jericho somewhere in our lives.

For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest. (Heb. 4:2-3)

God made provision for the Exodus generation, but they failed because they did not believe. They had one of the greatest Bible teachers in all of history and yet all they could do was criticize. They knew all of Moses' faults. They could always find things that Moses did that he should not do and things he did not do that he should have done. But their problem was not the communicator. Their problem was that they never mingled the message with faith. Moses constantly challenged them to believe God and His promises. But they would not.

Now the first-century author of Hebrews is saying, 'We have had the same message preached to us. Are we going to believe or to doubt. If we believe, we will enter the promised land. If we fail, we will live in the wilderness.'

Until we learn the principle of doing nothing in our faith, of standing still and simply believing that the battle is the Lord's, we will not see victory. God does not deliver through strength or power or speed; He delivers through His Spirit.

This is not to say we will not be afraid of the giants. In fact, it is our fears that should constantly drive us to fellowship, to occupation with the person of Jesus Christ. As we keep on believing, we enter a new realm of life, the realm of faith. The consistency of passing tests in fellowship will bring us to the place of rest.

This place of rest is not in the world; it is not outside us. The refuge God designed for us--the place where we can be refreshed and strengthened for the battles of life--is in our souls, and its door only opens to faith.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7)

"Be anxious for nothing" is the verb *merimnao*, a present active imperative, with the negative *me* prefix, "nothing." *Merimnao* means "to be anxious, troubled, fretful; to worry." The phrase literally means, "Stop worrying!" By using this particular construction, Paul is urging the Philippians to stop doing something they are habitually doing: "Stop being anxious."

"In everything" is simply the positive of "nothing." The "nothing" says, "Don't worry." The "everything" says, "Give thanks." They are two sides of the same coin.

Paul uses four different words for prayer to explain the alternative to anxiety. "Prayer" is *proseuchomai*, meaning "to approach face to face." This is a word used only of prayer to God. By praying to Him we admit that He is able to take care of our needs.

"Supplication," *deesis*, means "to ask for something, to make a petition." *Deesis* is used for prayer that recognizes great personal need. The giants in the promised land are there to make us realize that we cannot do anything on our own. We need God.

"Thanksgiving" is *eucharistia*. The root of this word is *charis*, "grace." When we give thanks, we acknowledge that everything comes to us from the grace of God. "Request" is from *aito*, a word used for petitions made to someone who is superior to the petitioner.

When we find ourselves tempted to be anxious, if we will simply go face-to-face to God, communicate our needs and desires, and give Him thanks for the situation and for the solutions He has already provided, then we will have peace.

This is not just any peace, but the peace of God. The definite article indicates that this is specifically God's peace, the peace that He has all the time. God is never ruffled, never upset, never anxious. The perfect peace of God reflects His control of all circumstances. This peace is above and beyond all comprehension, above all human reason and beyond all human ability to grasp.

This is not a peace man can produce. It is the peace that only God has, but that we can share. *Eirene* is peace that results from reconciliation (Rom. 5:1). It is the birthright of every believer. Jesus warned that in the world we will have tribulation (John 16:33). But with the warning He gave a promise of His peace--the only power that can see us through the tribulation (John 14:27, 16:33).

The peace Jesus Christ gives will guard our hearts and minds. The word "guard" is phouveo. It refers to a garrison, to the posting of warriors on guard. When the guard has been mounted, the city is safe. When the Peace of God becomes the garrison of our souls, we have an absolutely secure place to rest and find refreshment even in the heat of battle.

Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you.

And a stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing might be changed in regard to Daniel.

Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him and his sleep fled from him.

Then the king arose with the dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den.

And when he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O King, I have committed no crime. "

Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. (Dan. 6:16-23)

In this wonderful illustration of faith-rest at work we see a king pacing in a palace and Daniel resting in a pit. King Darius, who had been tricked into signing an injunction that would condemn this faithful commissioner to death, was deeply distressed at the prospect of feeding Daniel to the lions. But there was nothing he could do--except entrust Daniel to God.

Darius, surrounded by luxury and abundance, spent a miserable, sleepless night. Because he did not know how to rest, the king had to rush out in the morning to see if what he feared would happen had happened. The believer, by the way, who is waiting on God never has to hurry. God is never in a hurry and neither are those who rest in Him.

When the king heard from Daniel's lips that God had been able to deliver him, he was delighted. This is the life of those who live in the wilderness--up and down, up and down, their emotions always swinging wildly back and forth. They are very happy and then suddenly they are very miserable, and then just as suddenly they are very happy again.

But Daniel knew how to trust his God. He did not need anything changed. He was not living under his circumstances, and so no matter how hungry the lions looked, Daniel was able to relax. He got a good night's rest. Nothing puts the enemy to shame like faith-rest in the believer.