

TEMPTATIONS TEST FAITH



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Temptations are met so that spiritual learning can result. Anything a person desires to do involves a learning curve in order to obtain results. Any worthwhile knowledge or skill will involve study to reach a higher level of ability. The most valuable information we will ever obtain, however, is a real knowledge of the living God who created the universe.

Since we begin life with no knowledge of Him, and with no ability to trust Him, it can take many lessons and tests before we begin to learn about God—what His power will do, when we will trust Him in believing faith. These learning sessions can be called difficult trials or serious temptations, but the result will be a test of our faith and trust on God.

The condition of knowing *nothing* about what God will do, has to be changed to knowing *much* about what God desires to do for us—in supplying, protecting, providing, healing, and guiding us as we continue to trust Him in faith.

God's *will* is given in God's *Word*, so we must decide that nothing—not one thing, not one person and no temptation will separate us from the Word John 1:1.

Whether a small temptation or a serious trial, we are to meet them according to the Scriptures and grow in our faith and trust on God. Any temptation not met according to the Word of God, will hinder our knowing God.

Jesus cannot truly be King of our life, until the Word of God is the guide of our life. Where self is trusted, God's power is hindered. John 12:24 *"Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed."*

A real knowledge of God is not learned in a day, but anyone can enroll in His school by a choice to learn from temptations and tests that come our way. It takes a real commitment to know, and a genuine desire to learn, by obeying God's Word with all issues. If we are willing to go through temptations according to the Word, God supplies the ability to succeed through His Spirit in our heart.

1 Corinthians 10:13 *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."* We have to be willing, before God can furnish the power. It is simply a choice on our part that God's Word is the rule and guide of our life.

Bible examples show how trials test faith. The Three Hebrews were told to bow to something man had constructed. That entire situation was a temptation set up by the devil. It was a valuable position to be in, however. A knowledge of God would result, if they met it according to the Word of God.

Temptations are tests to see if we will always place the Word of God first. Every difficult situation or person, and every loss or gain that comes our way, is a test of our obedience to the Word of God.

Millions of professing Christians think that outward piety is what counts. They talk about Jesus, and say *praise the Lord* when going through a difficult situation, but a person can talk like that and still be controlled by self. A true believer does not have to parade their faith

to the public. The Holy Spirit will shine through them, when *true holiness* comes from *true faith and trust* on God.

Any outward show of piety, with no inward trust on God, is another form of a Pharisee. True faith in God is what dying to self is all about. The Three Hebrews had true faith in their heart. The living Word of God is a shining light on our path. These Hebrews believed God, so they would not disobey His Word—even if it meant capital punishment.

They were told that if they did not obey the unscriptural law of the king, they would be sentenced to death by fire. It is of much spiritual value to meditate on this divine principle of truth. It shows a true position of believing faith that every child of God must come to, if they want self to die and Christ to live in their heart.

Real temptations and tests are recorded in the Bible—even though we often think that we are 21st-century martyrs. Hebrews 11:37-39 *"They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith."*

They lived up to the Word and were trained by God for greater blessings, which He has for anyone whose faith is real. Hebrews 11:40 *"God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect."*

Bible examples are those of true faith in the living God. Hebrews 12:1 *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."*

Real *temptations* test real *faith*—to show whether our trust is truly on God for real-life is-

sues. Hebrews 12:2 *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter [Finisher] of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

The Three Hebrews kept their eyes on God when they decided to obey His Word in faith, rather than follow the crowd in idolatry. That command of the king would test their faith in God. Satan inspires legislation today in an attempt to dissolve the faith of believers. His object is to have them depend on the plans of fallen nature, rather than trust on the power of the living God.

Hebrews 12:3 *"Therefore, if you would escape becoming weary and faint-hearted [discouraged], compare your own sufferings with those of Him who endured such hostility directed against Him by sinners."* The situation has not changed since the time that law was passed.

Jesus said Matthew 24:37 *"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."* He meant that people would be going about their lives and being tested in faith through trials, but would not be trusting on God.

The account is more detailed in another gospel. Luke 17:26-27 *"When the Son of Man returns, the world will be like the people were in Noah's day. In those days before the flood, the people enjoyed banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat and the flood came to destroy them all."*

28-29 *"And the world will be as it was in the days of Lot. People went about their daily business — eating and drinking, buying and selling, farming and building — until the morning Lot left Sodom. Then fire and burning sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all."*

Temptations test faith to see if we will swerve from God's Word and cave to the pres-

sure of the world—whether it be financial, medical, or protective plans that Satan has inspired to be written and offered. The Three Hebrews were under tremendous pressure from the command of a ruthless dictator. They had no lawyer and no appeals. They would have to disobey God's Word, or obey it and be burned to death in the fire.

The way to escape that fate would have cost them no money, and would simply be to follow the crowd. They did not have to contact an attorney, or hire the services of a legal defense group. All they needed to do to escape a horrible form of execution was to bend their backs in mock worship. They could easily walk away free and unharmed, but at the cost of denying their faith in God.

The teaching of the Bible is to eliminate the works of the flesh. Everything in the Christian life is to be done by the power of God. John 6:63 *"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing."* It is this way because 1 Corinthians 1:29, *"No flesh should glory in His presence."* Or *"to prevent any mortal man from boasting in the presence of God."*

This dependence on the divine power of God, by faith on His promises, encompasses our finances, our loved ones, our employment, the training of children, and everything else.

All too many think *true religion*, is looking *truly religious* in outward appearance, but when physically oppressed, they take every pill or medical prescription possible, rather than trust God in believing faith.

It is not the praise on our lips, or the outward appearance of our clothes, but the inward attitude of our heart that counts. *'Have we given up our will to be God's will,'* is the issue. Every temptation is a test to determine if the *self way* of the world is gone, and *the Spirit* of

the living God has taken its place. *Our* reply is to be *their* reply.

Daniel 3:16-18 *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."*

The gateway to God's blessings is right here in that reply. Everyone who enters God's kingdom will pass through this narrow—and often difficult—gate. Jesus said that many are called but few chosen Matthew 20:16. We must Matthew 7:13 *"Enter through the narrow gate,"* because the other one leads to eternal fire.

We would do well to face these temptations successfully while we have the opportunity to face them here in this life—it is the only life and the only way to 2 Peter 1:10-11 *"make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things [being tempted in faith, but keeping our trust on God], you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."*



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