

This Is Only A Test!

"Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience." James 1:3 (NKJV)

We will all be tested during our journey here on earth. We never know how we are going to respond to the test until it appears. It's easy to say I will stand before the testing begins. I'm often reminded of the Apostle Peter's declaration that he would remain faithful to the Lord even if no one else would. Peter was immediately tested in that area.

To be tested means to be *proved by fire*. The question may be asked, why are we tested? Since God knows the end from the beginning, why is testing necessary? Sisters and brothers, we are tested so we, and others can know if the faith we profess to have is real. Talk is cheap! How do you know whether or not you will stand unless you are tested? A faith that hasn't been tested cannot be trusted. So be careful what you openly declare, you just might be tested in that area.

Below are a few examples of those whose faith was proved by fire:

1. **Abraham** - After waiting over 25 years for his promised son, Abraham was asked to sacrifice him to the Lord. Abraham's faith allowed him to carry out God's orders, because he trusted in God's promise that through Isaac, his seed would be blessed. He felt that if Isaac died God would raise him up. God blessed him tremendously for his faith and obedience. Abraham, the father of the faithful is also called the friend of God. (Isaiah 41:8, Hebrews 11:17-19, James 2:23)
2. **Joseph, the son of Jacob** - Joseph was the favored of his father Jacob. He was given a vision from God of what his future would look like. In the dream his father, mother and brothers were all bowing to him. Being jealous of their father's love for Joseph, his older brothers plotted to get rid of him and kill his dream of greatness. He was sold into slavery at the age of seventeen. Although he was enslaved, God was with Joseph and gave him favor. At one point he endured the wrath of a scorned woman, his master Potiphar's wife who falsely accused him of rape. He was thrown into prison, but at the appointed time God remembered him. At the age of thirty, God fulfilled his promise to make Joseph great among his brothers. Joseph rose to the second highest position in Egypt and one day the brothers who had sold him into slavery had to bow down at his feet. (Genesis 37-42)
3. **Job** - Job was tested beyond measure. He lost everything he had including his children, material wealth and his health. He was placed on public display for everyone to see. Though his wife and friends doubted him, Job remained faithful and did not charge God foolishly. God rewarded Job with double for his faithfulness.

A. W. Tozer is quoted as saying, "God cannot bless a man greatly, until he has hurt him deeply." All of the above endured severe testing, yet remained faithful, and God blessed them greatly. Sisters and brothers, the next time you are faced with trials just remind yourself "*This Is Only A Test*".

