

Memory Verse

1 Peter 1:6-7

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith - more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

GRACELIFE



CHURCH

GOD'S PURPOSES IN PAIN - PART 2

TO PROVE US

I asked: **How Big is Your God?** While the *Bible declares who God is*, we looked at *Psalm 66* and learned principles about the character of God. It is the principles of *His character*, bringing us *to and through trials and work in our lives* that bring hope in the midst of the difficulties we face. Today we will explore the **first in a series of purposes** God has for the problems we face.

A. Problems

There are 3 areas where problems come from.

1. From outside circumstances.
2. From other people.
3. From our own decisions.

A. Problems

*First, **outside circumstances**.* These are completely out of our control. Loss of a job, illness, loss of a family member, financial difficulty, someone hits or steals your car, your house burns down, there's a flood, fire or other weather disaster, etc.

A. Problems

Second, are problems related to **other people**. This is where someone does or says something to you that is hurtful, violent, or problematic. It could be a *disobedient child, teen, a family member or co-worker* with whom you don't get along.

A. Problems

*Third, are **our attitudes and decisions**. We choose to do and say what we choose to do and say. Sometimes *we bring problems on ourselves*. If we make bad decisions that lead to problems, it's **our fault**. While *God can and does intervene to help us*, if we do not look to Him and if we are not following Him, things won't get better.*

B. To Prove Us

"*Prove*" is an old English word that means "*to test*." The KJV uses "*prove*," though *newer translations* use ***test*** or something else. In other words, **God tests us!** It's **not** so **He will learn** something about us. No. *He knows all things* and *knows how we will respond*. He proves or tests us, **so we see what is in our hearts.**

1 Peter 1:6-9 - In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7so that the tested genuineness of your faith - more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him,

**you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is
inexpressible and filled with glory, 9obtaining
the outcome of your faith, the salvation of
your souls.**

B. To Prove Us

God *directly* and *indirectly* tests His people. Peter wrote to Jewish followers of Christ. He said *if needed, for a little while or short time in this life, they were grieved by various trials*. The *reason or purpose* for the problems was that they were tested to *prove or show the genuineness of their faith*. That is, was there *real faith in the Messiah*, or *fake faith*?

B. To Prove Us

He uses the example of **gold**, a precious metal, and says genuine faith is more precious than genuine gold! He said this in a *time when gold was rarer than today*. He also uses the example of **fire**. The way *gold and other precious metals were purified in the ancient world* was by fire.

B. To Prove Us

Being in the fire it is not pleasant, but painful. The **result** is what God is looking for. We should *look forward to the result of the problem*. In order to look forward to the result, we must **keep our eyes on Jesus** and remember His return, who will deliver us.

B. To Prove Us

While **God allows tests** to take place, **He also initiates tests**, like with Abraham.

Genesis 22:1a - After these things God **tested** Abraham... This was **God's direct testing** of Abraham, telling him to offer Isaac, the *promised son as a sacrifice* on a mountain. Abraham obeyed, and **God stopped him** before he could sacrifice Isaac.

Exodus 16:4 - Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may **test** them, whether they will walk in my law or not.

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 - “If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ 3you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is **testing** you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Judges 2:20-22 - So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he said, “Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, 21 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, 22 in order to **test** Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not.”

2 Chronicles 32:31 - referring to Hezekiah -
And so in the matter of the envoys of the
princes of Babylon, who had been sent to
him to inquire about the sign that had been
done in the land, God left him to himself, in
order to **test** him and to know all that was in
his heart.

Job 23:10 - But he knows the way that I take; when he has **tried** me, I shall come out as gold.

Psalms 66:10 - For you, O God, have **tested** us; you have **tried** us as silver is tried.

Proverbs 17:3 - The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the LORD **tests** hearts.

Jeremiah 9:7 - Therefore thus says
the LORD of hosts: “Behold, I will refine them
and **test** them, for what else can I do,
because of my people?”

John 6:3-6 - Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples.

4Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. 5Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?”

6He said this to **test** him, for he himself knew what he would do.

Hebrews 3:7-9 - Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, 8do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of **testing** in the wilderness, 9where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. - Quoted from *Psalm 95:7-11*.

James 1:12 - Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under **trial**, for when he has stood the **test** he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

B. Why Does God Prove Us

Exodus 16:4 - ...I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.

Deuteronomy 13:3 - ...God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

B. Why Does God Prove Us

Judges 2:22 - ...to **test** Israel by them [*the pagan nations*], **whether they will** take care to **walk in the way of the LORD** as their fathers did, **or not.**”

2 Chronicles 32:31 - referring to Hezekiah - ...to **test** him and to **know all that was in his heart.**

B. Why Does God Prove Us

James 1:12 - Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the **test** he will **receive the crown of life**, which God has promised to those who love him.

B. Why Does God Prove Us

1. To See if We Will Obey Him

God tested Israel to see if they would obey Him or not. **He tests us to see *if we will obey Him or not.*** We don't do it out of *fear*, but grace, in *faith*. It's not that He doesn't know how we will respond, but for *us to know how we will respond!*

B. Why Does God Prove Us

2. To Test Our Hearts and Love

God tested Israel to ***know what was in their hearts and if they loved Him***. The same principles apply today. Do we *love Him* more than our sin? Do we *know what is truly in our hearts*, or have we deceived ourselves? Where is our faith?

B. Why Does God Prove Us

3. God Humbles Us to Trust Him

Deuteronomy 8:2-5 - And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might **humble** you, **testing** you **to know what was in your heart**, whether you would **keep his commandments or not**. 3And he **humbled** you and **let you hunger** and fed

you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. 4Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. 5Know then in your heart that, **as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.**

B. Why Does God Prove Us

3. God Humbles Us to Trust Him

1. God *proved or tested them* to humble them. In their pride, and ours, ***we think we can do all things through myself who strengthens me!*** We must depend on God's strength and the only way we will do that is to be *humble and admit we cannot do it.* **2.** Based in humility, we *learn that we depend on God, His word and His work.*

B. Why Does God Prove Us

4. God Gives Rewards

James said those who persevere through trials, by God's strength, He gives them the *crown of life*. This may be eternal **life or salvation**, but it could refer to the **rewards He gives faithful Christians**.

B. Why Does God Prove Us

5. God Proves Us to “Save” Us

In God's crucible, **God shows us where our faith is** - *in Him or something or someone else*. If it is genuine, we learn our salvation is true and genuine and we will not experience His wrath, either *during the Day of the Lord* or for *eternity in the Lake of Fire*. Peter tells us that **love, faith** and **joy** can be part of the trials we face, as we look forward to the return of Christ, knowing He **WILL** deliver us!

B. Why Does God Prove Us

6. Sometimes God Allows Us to Fail

While God does not test us to make us fail, He **allows us to fail**. *Jesus warned Peter about his denials, though Peter said he would never do that!* But, like Peter, *sometimes God allows us to fail!* We don't often consider this. If we are determined to do something foolish, *God may allow us to do it, and fail, to teach us a lesson.*