



Way of the Eagle

by Rhoda Collins

ARE YOU PASSING THE TEST?

Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered at the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange (unusual and alien to you and your position) were befalling you. But insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings (persecutions), rejoice, so that when His glory [full of radiance and splendor] is revealed, you may also rejoice with triumph [exultantly]." 1 Peter 4:12-13

God sometimes allow us to be in unpleasant circumstances to test us to see if we are ready for promotion. Are you passing the test in your life by refusing to murmur and complain; blame others; have a negative outlook about your circumstances?

Acting Right When Things Are Wrong

Many of us think we suffer because of our circumstances. We believe that if our circumstances would change, we'd be able to act right. But God wants us to become so mature and stable that we act right even when none of our circumstances are good. There are different levels of faith, and most of the time we want to use our faith to get rid of a problem. But sometimes God's plan is for us to exercise a higher level of faith that will carry us through life's challenges. This requires even greater faith than being delivered from a situation.

Although there are many reasons why Christians suffer, let's address eight of the most common reasons why there is suffering in our lives.

#1: A Lack of Word Knowledge

Many Christians suffer because they're too busy seeking carnal knowledge instead of the Word of God. The Lord Himself said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge... Hosea 4:6. Christians remain in bondage with sin, generational curses and demons because they don't have the knowledge on how to deal with and get rid of those things. Spiritually dead churches don't teach the power of God.

#2: Disobedience

Once we know the Word of God, we have a responsibility to be obedient to it. Too many of us intend to be obedient, but put it off. Also many Christians compromise in their walk with God, in their relationships and going to "churches" that compromise.

James 4:7 gives us good advice, "Submit yourselves therefore to God" and "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19).

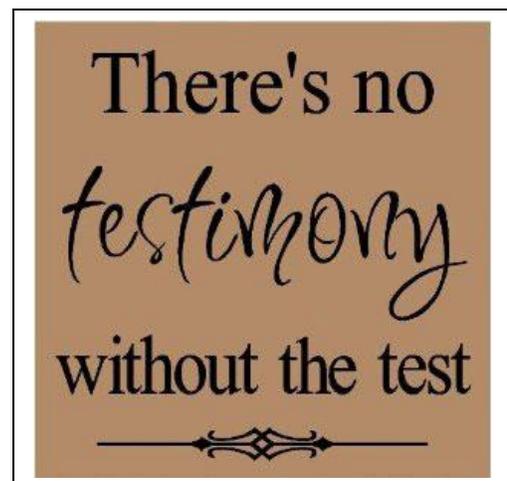
#3: To Purify and Test Your Faith

Sometimes trials come simply to test and purify our faith. "[You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, though now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations, so that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) is revealed" 1 Peter 1:6-7.

#4: A Need for Brokenness

The word brokenness is necessary for spiritual growth and for passing the test. God doesn't desire to break our spirits, but He wants to break that outer shell, the flesh that prevents Him from being all He wants to be in and through us. He wants to break off things like pride, rebellion, selfishness and independence. God wants us to be totally dependent on Him, and suffering seems to bring us to that point.

Sometimes we suffer because we are alone with God. However, having to depend on God shouldn't cause us to feel sorry for ourselves. God wants to purify us and separate us from the people that will be a hindrance in our spiritual growth with God.



#5: To Build Compassion

The Bible says, "...we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a shared feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning" (Hebrews 4:15). Going through trials and experiencing God's deliverance better equips us to minister to others. Our pain is never wasted; it brings about compassion that reaches out to other hurting people and we understand what they are going through because we went through the same situation.

#6: To Encourage Others

The apostle Paul said there were many things that God allowed him to go through for other people to learn from him. "...I want you to know and continue to rest assured, brethren, that what [has happened] to me [this imprisonment] has actually only served to advance and give a renewed impetus to the [spreading of the] good news (the Gospel)... most of the brethren have derived fresh confidence in the Lord because of my chains and are much more bold to speak and publish fearlessly the Word of God..." (Philippians 1:12-14). If we're to minister to others, we too must face some adverse circumstances. But if we stand in faith and confidence, God will bring us through to victory, and we'll be a great encouragement to others in the process.

#7: Because of the Word

Sometimes we suffer attacks from the enemy simply because of our involvement with the Word of God. Mark 4:17 speaks of those who hear the Word and endure it for a while... "Then when trouble or persecution arises on account of the Word, they immediately are offended (become displeased, indignant, and resentful) and they stumble and fall away". When someone receives the Word of God, Satan delights in coming immediately to try to steal what's been sown in their heart. He knows the Word will strengthen us and help us live a victorious Christian life, and he wants to stop it if he can. So it's imperative to guard the Word in your heart and resist the devil from stealing it away from you.

#8: Because of Living in the World

Christians may also face trials and suffer simply because we live in a world full of sin. But Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you]" (John 16:33).

What a promise! Understanding the reason for our suffering and having the assurance of the final glory we'll share should make it a little easier to enjoy our lives...even during the times of sharing in suffering.

"And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory" Romans 8:17

One of the major tests that God will require us to pass is the Forgiveness test. Here are some of the ways you can detect unforgiveness in your heart:

1. **Unforgiveness always keeps score.**
2. **Unforgiveness always boasts of its own record.**
3. **Unforgiveness always complains.**
4. **Unforgiveness has a martyr syndrome.** Workaholics are particularly susceptible to this one. Sometimes people who work all the time and don't know how to enjoy their life get jealous when other people are enjoying life. Is there someone who aggravates you when you see them having a good time? If yes, you could have unforgiveness toward them.
5. **Unforgiveness always alienates, divides and separates.**
6. **Unforgiveness is always envious, jealous or angry at someone who gets blessed.**

A forgiving lifestyle helps you become more like Christ. As you learn the importance of forgiveness and begin to practice forgiving others, your heart will heal from bitterness, and your personal growth will lead you to the promotions God has planned for you.

So pass your test and God will promote you!