

TESTED FAITH

1 Peter 1:6-7 ... "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The apostle Peter was certainly a great guy and servant of Christ, but his letter to the churches, from which today's scripture passage comes, is not quite a literary masterpiece in the way that it inserts conditions and exceptions in one long sentence. If I had been his personal friend, I might have offered to help him write his letters to make them a little easier to read. So, allow me to paraphrase this passage in my own words:

"Although your faith has recently been tested, you can still praise and honor Jesus, and give him the glory. That proves your faith, which will always help you, is genuine and more valuable than gold, which eventually perishes."

One of the most common experiences you will have in your life as a Christian, is the testing of your faith. Teachers know that merely standing in front of a classroom full of children, does not guarantee they will learn, so students are periodically tested to see what they have learned. A good cook does not prepare an elaborate meal and serve it to special guests, without tasting it first. An automotive mechanic will normally test drive your car if he replaces the brakes to be certain it is safe. A farmer peels back the husks from a few ears of corn before he harvests, to be sure the crop is ready.

God has provided us with several ways to mature in our relationship with him: The study of his Word (the Bible), prayer, worship, training, service, and fellowship with other believers. However, if your faith is never tested, you will not know if it is strong enough to hold back the enemy, withstand personal trauma, stand up to fear, or be a reliable witness to others. So, periodically, God allows little trials and challenges to come your way to test your faith. These could be anything from a bad cold to a migraine, from a failed crop to a stolen motorbike, from an empty wallet to an argument. These are annoyances that reveal the strength of your faith. If you find that your faith was strong enough to pass the test without failing, you move on to more lessons and tests. If the circumstance reveals that your faith was not up to the challenge, you know you must spend more time studying God's Word, praying and learning.

Students do not like tests. Employees do not like tests. You and I do not like tests. But without tests, we cannot know that what we have learned, will help us through the bigger challenges of life. So, be of good courage and welcome tests of your faith to make sure that when the big troubles come, you are prepared.

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