1. THE TESTINGS OF GOD

**2) LIFE IS A CONTINUING PROGRESSION OF GROWTH**- step by step, year by year, school by school, job by job, ministry by ministry…

-Our growth in life will be repeatedly tested & evaluated

EX: Nurses test children for their height & weight: are they growing correctly?

Ex: All thru school our children had tests! – to measure their learning

EX: If you want to join an athletic team, or join the military- there will be physical tests!

**3) OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE SHOULD ALSO BE A PROGRESSION OF GROWTH:**

-We are to be changed from glory to glory, to become more like Christ, 2 Cor. 3:18.

-We are to go from strength to strength, until we all appear before God in Zion, Ps. 84:7

In 1 Samuel 2:8 we have a testimony of how God wants to transform us from sinners to

saints: “He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the beggar from the ash heap, To set

them among princes, and make them inherit the throne of glory.”

OUR PICTURE ON THE OVERHEAD TRIES TO SHOW THIS TRANFORMATION

**4) THE LORD WANTS US TO GO ON TO FULL SPIRITUAL MATURITY**

1 Jn.2:12-14 tells us about levels of spiritual growth: little children (new Christians), growing into young men (Overcomers strong, and have overcome the Evil One) & finally maturing into Spiritual Fathers & Mothers in Christ (mature Leaders who know their God!

**5) GOD GIVES US SPIRITUAL TESTINGS:**

ABRAHAM: “Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham…” -Gen.22:1

THE ISRAELITES: “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you…. that I may test them’” -Ex.16:4

GIDEON’S SOLDIERS: “But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there” – Jdg.7:4

**6) MORE TESTINGS GOD GAVE:**

KING HEZEKIAH: “God withdrew from him, in order to test him” -2 Chron.32:31

PETER’S WARNING: “Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered at the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality,” -1 Pet.4:12 AMPLIFIED BIBLE

**7) GOD TESTS ARE DIFFERENT THAN MAN’S TESTS, IS.55:8-9**

\* MAN TESTS OUR OUTWARD ABILITIES- OUR STRENGTH, OUR EDUCATION, ETC.

-GOD LOOKS AT OUR HEART- HE TESTS OUR CHARACTER!

EX: The Prophet Samuel saw the oldest son of Jesse, tall and strong: “Surely this one will become the king!” God spoke to Samuel and said, …“the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." -1 Sam.16:7 SEVEN SONS PASSED BY-

\* MAN’S TESTS ARE ANNOUNCED IN ADVANCE- WE ARE TOLD HOW TO PREPARE

GOD’S TESTS OFTEN COME SILENTLY- GOD SEES IF WE HAVE ALREADY BECOME PREPARED!

Rebekah in Gen 23- tested by how she watered the 10 camels of a stranger

Joseph- tested by how he overcame temptation w/ Potiphar’s wife

Gideon’s soldiers- tested by how they drank water!

Job- tested by the misfortunes that came into his life

 - These situations in life were silent testings from God, unannounced!

**8) THE PURPOSE OF TESTS:**

1. TO SEE IF WE ARE READY TO BE PROMOTED, Heb.6:1-3

**EX:** An international preacher came to our Bible school, who had been a student there 30 yrs before- EVERY NATION HE WEPT OVER IN SCHOOL, GOD TOOK HIM THERE 2 PREACH!

**EX:** In Bible school, 1974: We were called to intercede for a Bible school in the Philippines- Muslim rebels were causing trouble near the school- I stayed behind to pray until victory! 10 years later I WAS AT THE SCHOOL w/ the Muslim rebels ruling the area!

**9) GOD DESIRES TO BRING US UP TO HIGHER LEVELS- AND TESTS US TO SEE IF WE ARE READY!**

**10) 2) TO SHOW IF THERE ARE DEFICIENT AREAS THAT WE NEED TO CORRECT, Deut.8:2**

**EX:** when you reviewed an exam you took in school, you found out what you don’t understand- the lessons you did not properly learn- so that you can study them again & learn! A TEACHER WANTS THEIR STUDENTS TO PASS & MOVE UP- BUT SOMETIMES WE NEED TO TAKE A SUBJECT ALL OVER AGAIN- TO PASS THE FINAL EXAM!

**11) EX:** THE ISRAELITES HAD 10 TRIALS- 10 TESTS- IN THE WILDERNESS- TO TEST THEM & GIVE THEM OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW IN FAITH & OBEDIENCE.

-God could have quickly led them along the coastal highway from Egypt to Canaan- only 12 days! But in Ex.13:17-18 the Lord said He would not lead them by the cast route, because they were not ready for war- they were fearful slaves for 400 years! So God tested them & tried to help prepare them – THE ISRAELITES FAILED ALL 10 TESTS! They had to wait 38 years until the older “Moses generation” all died- the Moses gen. was set in their ways, unteachable! –The Joshua generation became trained & ready to conquer!

“…the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart.… as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you. –Deut. 8:2 & 5

“For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives….that we may be partakers of His holiness.”-Heb.12:6 & 10

-The Moses Generation were all fearful slaves, who ran from the enemy when God parted the waters for them at the Red Sea. But after 40 years of wilderness training, the Joshua Generation had matured in faith & obedience: when the Lord parted the waters for them at the Jorden River, they did not run away as fearful slaves, they ran TOWARDS their enemies, as fearless soldiers!

**12** 3)To release the achievers- the overcomers- from being hindered or slowed down by the unprepared

**13) Gideon’s Army- 32,000 soldiers: most were unprepared!**

 **-22,000 fearful soldiers who would retreat FEARFUL! WOULD EASILY RETREAT!**

 **= 10,000 soldiers left**

 **- 9,700 who drank with their heads down**

 **= 300 soldiers left, ready to overcome!**

- Most of the soldiers who had joined Gideon’s army lacked the needed preparations to

be victorious- so God separated out the ones that would actually have been a hinderance

in the battle! (Fearful soldiers are dangerous in a battle, if a group retreats, it opens a gap

in your armies defenses! It invites destruction!

…. The Lord showed me one important time of testing, where the Lord accomplished all 3 of these things in one test that He brought to a group of churches…

14) A TRUE STORY ABOUT TESTING– FROM ½ A LIFETIME AGO! MY FAMILY & I LIVED ON PALA

 -One of the directors of a fellowship of 50 churches

 - a time of conflict- disagreement- for a few of the pastors! DRINK & SMOKE, ROCK & ROL

 - God showed me an angel that He had sent down to Palawan!

15) THE ANGEL WAS looking into the hearts of the pastors & leaders of the churches- WRITING DOWN THE NAMES of most of them into his book (but a few did not have their names written)

**16) THE NAME OF THE BOOK:** THOSE WHO GOD WILL PERMIT TO GO ON TO MATURITY

-From Hebrews 6:1-3 - Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. Heb 6:3 And this we will do IF GOD PERMITS.

THE PASTORS & LEADERS WHO WERE READY WERE PROMOTED- HIGHER LEVEL!

THE CARNAL & DISOBEDIENT LEADERS WERE REMOVED, OR “WEEDED OUT”

 (Then the pastors & leaders who remained were not distracted or confused by mixture remaining among the pastors- we became more united! We learned how to more fully walk in the fear of the Lord! We became a stronger team to press on!)

**17) WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MANY TESTS** THAT GOD CAN GIVE US?

18) #1 – THE TEST OF TURNING ASIDE, Ex.3:2-4 EX: 2 BIBLE SCHOOLS GIVEN REVIVAL, same night

19) #2 – BEING FAITHFUL WITH LITTLE, Lk.16:10. Faithfully use what God has given you! The boy in the gospels had fish & loaves…Dorcas has a sewing needle…Moses had a rod

20) EX: 150 years ago a preacher was taken to heaven- saw largest mansion… “Who lives there?”

21) D angel replied: d widow woman in d Gospels that Jesus commended 4 giving 2 coins 2 God

**22) Heaven: in a “Hall of Remembrance” a display of God’s Mighty Weapons:**

a) Samson’s jawbone of a D b) Jael’s tentpeg c) Moses’ shepherd’s rod d) The Sword of Goliath

**23) #3 - THE TEST OF VIGILANCE**

“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith -1 Pet.5:8 PETER FAILED IN GARDEN of G

“Watch & pray, that you do not enter temptation- d spirit is willing but d flesh is weak” Mt.26:40

(WE NEED TO BE VIGILANT SOLDIERS OF CHRIST- as when the Lord tested Gideon’s soldiers & gathered together only the brave & vigilant soldiers who were ready to trust & obey!)

24) There have even been recent sightings of vigilant soldiers drinking from Gideon’s pool! The same spring that Gideon’s army drank from is still abundantly flowing in Israel- and valiant soldiers are still drinking from it! A RECENT SIGHTING OF A VALIANT SOLDIER- WAS RECENTLY PHOTOGRAPHED LAST MAY 16… AND HE LOOKS LIKE A FILIPINO! WHO COULD IT BE?

… PASTOR DICK, CAN YOU SEE WHO THAT IS? ANYONE WE MIGHT KNOW?

**25) TEST # 4 - THE TEST OF FAITH** (when the 12 spies were sent into the Promised Land by Moses) TWO BROUGHT BACK A GOOD REPORT, A FAITH-FILLED REPORT: LETS GO & CONQUER!

TEN SPIES BROUGHT BACK A REPORT OF FEAR & UNBELIEF… TOO HARD! ENEMY TOO STRONG! CAN’T DO IT!

-GOD STILL GIVES PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE TODAY- SOMETIMES LITERALLY PROMISED LAND!

26) In 2008 the Lord spoke to both Sis. Linda & I: buy land and build! (no money! Legal hassles!)

 WE FOLLOWED WHAT GOD SAID… LEGAL PROBLEMS SOLVED! FINANCES START TO COME…

 27) When we were ready to build the 2nd floor- no money! 60 workers! GOD PROVIDED FROM A WIDOW WOMAN- WHO HAD DIED 2 YEARS BEFORE!...step by step God provided!

28) Building the Men’s Dorm- finances very low- 30 workers… AN OFFERING FROM MEXICO- 2X!

29) WHEN GOD SPEAKS & LEADS, WE ARE TO TRUST & OBEY! (HUDSON TAYLOR, FOUNDER OF A FAITH MISSION THAT STARTED THE FIRST CHURCHES THROUGHOUT CHINA, said, “GOD’S WILL, DONE GOD’s WAY, WILL HAVE GOD’S PROVISION”)

30) Let us go on to spiritual maturity! GOD HAS GREAT PLANS FOR YOUR LIFE- FOR YOUR MINISTRY! PASS YOUR TESTS SO YOU CAN STEP UP TO THE NEXT LEVELS!

31) We can all pass our tests and gain great eternal reward! WELL DONE, GOOD & FAITHFUL SERVANT! YOU WERE FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE YOU RULER OVER MANY THINGS. ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD!” -MATTHEW 25:21

LET US ALL SEEK TO UNDERSTAND- AND PASS- THE TESTINGS OF GOD!