

Testing the Genuineness of Our Faith

1 Peter 1:3-9

Introduction:

- A. Christians walk by faith rather than sight (cf. 2 Cor. 5:7).
 - 1. Faith in an unseen Savior (v. 8; cf. John 20:29).
 - 2. Faith in an unseen inheritance (vv. 3, 4)
- B. Christians need a genuine and enduring faith (v. 7).
 - 1. Not one that is half-hearted or self-serving — but deeply committed.
 - 2. Not one that will abandon or compromise for immediate advantage.
- C. The Lord has ways of testing the genuineness of our faith.
 - 1. Indirectly through Satan (cf. Job).
 - 2. Directly through His word (cf. Abraham).
- D. We will discuss four avenues by which God tests the genuineness of our faith:

Discussion:

I. **The *Suffering* Inflicted by Satan.**

- A. Peter views Satan as a “roaring lion” rather than cunning deceiver. (5:8,9)
 - 1. Inflicting suffering by oppressive authorities — civil and domestic.
 - 2. Inflicting suffering by ungodly world in general.
 - 3. Inflicting both physical and psychological suffering (2:20; 4:4,14)
- B. Peter views the suffering (mistreatment) as a test of their faith (1:6; 4:12)
 - 1. Would they abandon or compromise our faith?
 - 2. Would they react as Christians should? (2:19-24; 4:14-16)
 - 3. Will they use it as excuse to rebel against authority? (2:13-17).

II. **The *Seduction* Offered by Satan.**

- A. Satan is also pictured as a cunning deceiver (Gen. 3:1; 2 Cor. 11:14, 15; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10)
 - 1. Can make sin seem right and harmless.
 - 2. Can make sin so inviting.
- B. Satan's seductions are a test of our faith.
 - 1. Have to choose between immediate pleasure of sin and future reward of faith.
 - 2. Have to choose between taking God at his word or rationalizing our way around it.
- C. Satan's seductive power defeated by a genuine love for the truth. (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9-12).

III. **The *Strife* Inspired by Satan. (cf. 1 Cor. 11:19).**

- A. Can serve to separate the “men from the boys” spiritually.
- B. Can test our loyalty — to a faction or to the Lord.
- C. Can test our patience — to throw in the towel or get busy seeking a scriptural solution.
- D. Can test our willingness to study — decide all wrong or else all right without trying to discern.

IV. **The *Statutes* Commanded by God.**

- A. Abraham's faith tested by God's command. (Heb. 11:17).
- B. Naaman's faith tested by God's command. (2 Kings 5)
- C. Corinthians faith tested by God's commands
 - 1. Discipline. (2 Cor. 2:6-9)
 - 2. Giving. (2 Cor. 8:8).
- D. Ours may be tested by various commands—baptism, assemble, etc.

Conclusion:

- A. We need our faith tested to make us stronger.
- B. We need our faith tested to separate genuine from mere profession.