



Testing Categories

Testing in the spiritual life was designed by God to provide the environment for application of Bible doctrine and in so doing to use God's grace resources to handle the test while remaining in fellowship. Accomplishing this means using only God's resources, not your own abilities. It's all about application of God's promises (Bible doctrine) while filled and empowered by God the Holy Spirit. No believer reaches spiritual maturity apart from testing.

Spiritual growth results from perception of Bible doctrine, but spiritual growth is accelerated from the application of Bible doctrine while under testing. Some of the testing in the spiritual life results in undeserved suffering, but all categories of testing in the spiritual life are designed by God for blessing whether the conditions are adversity or prosperity.

You must apply different doctrines to different situations. You also must discern from that *epignosis* Bible doctrine when is the right time and situation to apply some doctrines. The believer's volition determines the outcome of the testing - passing the test or failing the test. The believer must make the right decision based on their application of Bible doctrine.

Thought Testing

Thought testing occurs at all stages of spiritual growth, but as with all testing, the level of testing is always commensurate with the level of spiritual growth. 2 Cor. 12:10.

"Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10, NASB)

For the believer to pass thought testing, they must be filled with the Holy Spirit, have the discernment to apply the correct Bible doctrine from the right lobe of their soul to the situation and not to be distracted or misled by false issues or wrong priorities. Through spiritual growth, the believer's thinking is renewed from the inside out. You can never know the will of God for your life is without renewed thinking. Rom. 12:2.

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2, NASB)

The believer's mental attitude is important in handling thought testing. Everyone has questions about a great many things and our thinking is constantly changing. This can make you unstable if you don't have Bible doctrine in your soul to stabilize your thinking and provide the basis for sound judgment. Rom. 12:3.

"For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith." (Romans 12:3, NASB)

The Word of God says that you really are what you think, not what you do and not necessarily what you say. The real you is what you think in your soul. People are not always what they appear to be on the surface because they have become adept at hiding their thoughts. They put up an outward façade that projects an entirely different person and thought pattern when compared to what they are really thinking. Prov. 23:7.



“For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, “Eat and drink!” But his heart is not with you.” (Proverbs 23:7, NASB)

Your mental attitude and thinking process in your own soul must be your own. You can’t borrow the thoughts of others. You must do your own thinking. You must make your own decisions and handle your own problems.

The believer’s ability to gain the capacity to cope with and appreciate life and to gain an inner happiness in life is based on what they think. We are to live every day of our life as unto the Lord. This can only be done based on our thinking each and every day. Rom. 14:6.

“He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.” (Romans 14:6, NASB)

Passing thought testing depends on the believer’s application of the Bible doctrine in their soul. This includes recalling some of God’s promises and applying them to the situation. This can only be done while filled with the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 55:6-9.

“Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:6-9, NASB)

Failure in thought testing usually involves some type of human viewpoint thinking that focuses on false solutions to the problems or decisions at hand. Human beings have a fantastic ability to rationalize. Rationalization is a false system for problem solving that includes self-justification of your thoughts, words, and actions or refusing to take the responsibility for your own bad decisions. You blame others for your failures and reasons for your suffering.

Rationalization also includes becoming angry at a solution to the problem or situation and even refusing to accept that the problem exists. This can be a defense mechanism to protect the mind against pressures too great to bear. Rationalization includes ignoring the problem in hopes that it will go away on its own. This is pure human viewpoint thinking and has never solved any problem. Rationalization includes avoiding the problem by focusing your attention on something new such as a new hobby, new type of entertainment, traveling to new places, etc. This is the believer with no capacity for life, love, or happiness.

Bible doctrine is the only true solution to problems and making good decisions because they are based on God’s solutions with His thinking and empowered by God the Holy Spirit. 2 Cor. 10:4-6.

“for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.” (2 Corinthians 10:4-6, NASB)

System Testing

System testing comes from an organization that collectively operates to accomplish certain specific objectives determined by their leadership. Testing for the believer can come from the system or



organization's authority, their policies, or their objectives.

System testing can come from all types of organizations such as businesses, professional organizations such as medical groups and law offices, local churches and missionary organizations, government organizations, athletic organizations in school or in professional sports, military service organizations, and from the divine institutions of marriage, family, and nationalism.

There are good and bad organizations, systems, leadership, policies, and objectives. Your system testing may be from either category, good or bad. Everyone has an old sin nature, so system testing will always occur.

System testing can involve unfair and unjust treatment from many different sources such as the management of the company you work for, your supervisor or boss, your coach, your teachers in school, government bureaucrats whether local, state or national, your spouse, and your parents. System testing can involve unfair or unreasonable policies from organizations that conflict with what you consider normal living or with your norms and standards. System testing can involve organizational objectives that seem unreasonable or even impossible to achieve. Prov. 24:10; Col. 3:17; Col. 3:18-21; Col. 4:1.

"If you are slack in the day of distress, Your strength is limited." (Proverbs 24:10, NASB)

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." (Colossians 3:17, NASB)

"Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart." (Colossians 3:18-21, NASB)

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men," (Colossians 3:23, NASB)

"Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven." (Colossians 4:1, NASB)

People Testing

People testing can come from those you love or admire and it can come from those that you dislike or even hate. When you fall in love, that person may gain control of your life in such a way that you become unhappy. Some try to please the object of their love and find themselves becoming a different person and not necessarily in a good way. As for people you dislike, they too may gain control of your life, unless you have advanced in the spiritual life.

For those you like or dislike, if you have Bible doctrine in your soul and have grown spiritually, it will be much more difficult for them to make you unhappy and get you out of fellowship due to your mental attitude of unconditional *agapao* love.

God's plan was designed so that your happiness will always reside within you in the spiritual life and that you need not depend on other people or things to gain true inner peace or happiness. In your spiritual life, the believer gains personal control over their life based on the renewing of their thinking from *epignosis* Bible doctrine resident in the right lobe of the soul. From that divine viewpoint thinking, you bring your happiness and confidence in God's plan to others. You no longer lean on people or circumstances to make you happy. Rom. 12:2.



“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2, NASB)

People are easily persuaded by others to stray from the plan of God and Bible doctrine. These may be your friends, members of your family, colleagues at work, or those in organizations you may belong to. Unless you have grown spiritually and have some Bible doctrine in your soul, you may inadvertently allow those you fall in love with or new friends to gain control your life and your inner happiness.

When you make a new friend or fall in love and some event causes you to become jealous, possessive, or to hate someone who has gained power over you, you have become a slave to them. You now have a big problem and the problem is you, not them. You have allowed them to cause you to sin and therefore be out of fellowship. Your spiritual life is in neutral and may even be going in reverse. You are in a state of self-induced misery along with God's administration of divine discipline.

The solution to people testing is always first to name your known sins to God the Father and regain the filling of the Holy Spirit per 1 John 1:9. After that, you should recall some of God's promises and apply them to the situation. Then, from the Bible doctrine in your soul and motivated by your love for God the Father, you can exercise unconditional love toward those who make you unhappy or antagonize you. This can only be accomplished by the filling of the Holy Spirit.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, NASB)

Disaster Testing

Every believer will endure disasters of one kind or another during their lives. God allows disasters to enter your life for testing. How the believer handles these disasters determines whether their spiritual growth will accelerate, slow down, or even reverse.

Disaster testing is designed as suffering for blessing for accelerated spiritual growth for the believer positive to Bible doctrine and who relies on God's grace resources and the Bible doctrine in their souls to carry them through the disaster. In contrast, disaster testing for the negative believer serves as divine discipline meant to wake them up to their need to return to fellowship with God and to then learn God's plan for their lives.

The characteristics of personal disaster testing include physical pain or mental pain and anguish, being the victim of crime, being persecuted, enduring harsh conditions such as hunger, thirst, exposure, and fatigue, the loss of those you love, loss of your property, losing a successful position or accomplishment, losing monetary wealth and money, and enduring illness and physical and mental handicaps.

National disaster testing involves the consequences of bad decisions made by leadership in the region, the state, and the nation. For example, a great deal of undeserved suffering can occur when the leadership of a country decides to go to war with another nation.

The characteristics of national disaster include enduring uncontrolled violence and crime, acts of terrorism within the nation, uncontrolled use of drugs, breakdown of the objectivity of the judicial system, breakdown of enforcement of laws, warfare within the nation, weather disasters, breakdown of the adherence to the Laws of Divine Establishment, and the five cycles of national divine discipline administered by God.



Prosperity Testing

Prosperity is the easily most subtle distraction to continued spiritual growth. Prosperity testing challenges the top priority of the daily intake and application of Bible doctrine. Will you keep Bible doctrine your number one priority or not? Every believer must pass the prosperity test before they can reach spiritual maturity.

Passing this test confirms the believer's scale of values and proves that they are in line with God's plan for their life as revealed in the Word of God. Passing this test results in a more stabilized spiritual life and a greater capacity for love and for life. Passing this test means that the believer receives God's greatest prosperity - His blessings conveyed in time and in eternity.

The world offers opportunity for many types of prosperity such as success, wealth, fame, promotion, social and professional prosperity. But without maintaining Bible doctrine and function in the spiritual life as your priority, such prosperity will bring only self-induced misery and divine discipline.

When you have the same inner happiness in adversity as well as prosperity, it means you have passed the test. If you are unhappy in the midst of prosperity, it means that you have failed the test.

There are many aspects of prosperity and with each comes testing in the spiritual life. Material, social, physical, and family prosperity are all based on your mental attitude. The relaxed mental attitude determines the believer's spiritual condition as they grow spiritually from being a spiritual babe to a spiritual adult.

Material Prosperity

In Matthew 6:25-33 and Proverbs 3:9-10 are God's blessings of material prosperity for the spiritually growing believer.

"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" (Matthew 6:25, NASB)

"For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:32-33, NASB)

"Honor the LORD from your wealth And from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty And your vats will overflow with new wine." (Proverbs 3:9-10, NASB)

In Proverbs 1:19, some pursue material prosperity by violent means. Material prosperity accelerates the need for a relaxed mental attitude.

"So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence; It takes away the life of its possessors." (Proverbs 1:19, NASB)

Social Prosperity

Social prosperity is another aspect of God's blessings in life. An example of handling well His social prosperity was in our Lord's early years of growing up in Luke 2:40 and Luke 2:52. Another example was David who even had his enemies at peace with him.

"The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." (Luke 2:40, NASB)



“And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Luke 2:52, NASB)

Gedaliah really enjoyed his social prosperity, but he couldn't stand the high office. He enjoyed having the “beautiful people” in. When you enjoy your many new “friends” in academic circles, athletic circles, etc. make sure you do not get fatheaded. Jer. 40:12.

“Then all the Jews returned from all the places to which they had been driven away and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered in wine and summer fruit in great abundance.” (Jeremiah 40:12, NASB)

You may have many “friends” because you have some money. You may have friends because you are smart, popular, and desirable to be around. You may get a scholarship or two or an award for something you have accomplished. People tell you that you are really something and you become stupid enough to believe it all. Prov. 19:4.

“Wealth adds many friends, But a poor man is separated from his friend.” (Proverbs 19:4, NASB)

Physical Prosperity

In 3 John 1:2, we are to pray for physical prosperity or good health as we grow spiritually.

“Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.” (3 John 1:2, NASB)

Proverbs 3:7-8 tells us to keep our focus on the Lord and our spiritual life and it will benefit our health.

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.” (Proverbs 3:7-8, NASB)

1 Timothy 4:8 tells us that keeping our bodies in good shape is a benefit, but keeping our soul in good shape is far better with eternal implications.

“for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” (1 Timothy 4:8, NASB)

Family Prosperity

Family prosperity resulting from childhood respect for their parents provides a longer life. Exodus 20:12.

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.” (Exodus 20:12, NASB)

Watch out for prosperity of the wicked. It will not last. Psalms 73:3-7, Psalms 73:17-18.

“For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pains in their death, And their body is fat. They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like mankind. Therefore pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them. Their eye bulges from fatness; The imaginations of their heart run riot.” (Psalms 73:3-7, NASB)

“Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.” (Psalms 73:17-18, NASB)

Doctrinal Prosperity

Doctrinal prosperity or spiritual growth is a prelude to other aspects of prosperity and requires a strong doctrinal mental attitude. See the illustration of Gedaliah below. Matt 6:33; Mark 8:34-38; 2 Cor 4:16.



*"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
(Matthew 6:33, NASB)*

"And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 'For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 'For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? 'For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 'For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.'" (Mark 8:34-38, NASB)

"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16, NASB)

Doctrinal prosperity may require a crash program of learning Bible doctrine to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ as soon as possible. Spiritual growth results in the accumulation of *epignosis* Bible doctrine in the right lobe of the soul whereby your edification complex of the soul is constructed. Eph. 4:11-12; Eph. 4:14-15.

"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;" (Ephesians 4:11-12, NASB)

"As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ," (Ephesians 4:14-15, NASB)

Every advance in Bible doctrine brings an increased number of spiritual blind spots. A spiritual blind spot is assuming mistakenly (not enough Bible doctrine yet) that sweetness is spirituality and bluntness is carnality and thus we get naive, lazy, and let our guard down.

The challenge for the believer is how to handle tough situations. What about that obnoxious person who crosses you? What about that trying circumstance or that something that bugs you? What about all that pressure and frustration that upsets your plans? God will test you, prove you, and develop you. Isn't God's plan greater than an obnoxious person? Isn't God's plan greater than a trying circumstance?

Gedaliah's Failed Prosperity Test

In Jeremiah 40-41, Gedaliah had a happiness interlude of 60 days with no trials or troubles. Having everyone behaving nice can wipe you out! Gedaliah was a man in whom there was no guile (like Nathaniel). His honesty and forthrightness in responding to Jeremiah's ministry revealed something of his character.

Gedaliah made the mistake of assuming that everyone was like him and was open and aboveboard. People often make this mistake. People are different in disposition, in energy, in tactfulness, in fairness, in soul kinks, in hang-ups, and in temperament.

Those who have no guile find it very difficult to assume guile in others. It never occurred to Gedaliah that Jews would return to the Land for any reason other than the highest motive of patriotism. The only protection that Gedaliah had was to understand that everyone has an old sin nature.

Furthermore, the happiness interlude deceived Gedaliah into a position of watering down Bible doctrine.



He thought that Bible doctrine was not needed anymore because there was no pressure! When you get away from Bible doctrine and rely on emotions only, you may feel that you can love everyone and trust everyone. Gedaliah fell into that trap.

Gedaliah had forgotten that those who had returned from Ammon, Moab and Edom were not Word of God types. They were not the Bible class crowd. Some were believers and some were unbelievers. Some were apostates.

Leadership demands discernment. No one can stay in leadership without it. The way to start is to assume that everyone is a jackass. This isn't always true, but this is just where you should start. Leadership demands that you assume the worst about everyone!

This is not only protection for the leader, but the ones they lead. Everyone has an old sin nature, believers and unbelievers. This applies to nice people, nasty people, fat people, slim people, red heads, blue heads, knot heads, what have you.

Gedaliah lost his sharpness. Leadership must depend upon doctrine. Gedaliah's naivete resulted in his own tragic death and a civil war. He had a mild emotional revolt as contrasted with a strong emotional revolt. Mild emotional revolt is loving the brethren, being altruistic, being sentimental, and responding to everyone. His arms were open wide. He welcomed Ishmael who would kill him!

On the other hand, David passed his prosperity test. In 2 Samuel 23:13-17, David poured the water on the ground because he saw that his soldiers loved him so much that they would risk their lives to get him a drink of water. He knew that if he drank that water he would not be able to order his men into dangerous field assignments. He would be unfair and unfit as a field commander!

"Then three of the thirty chief men went down and came to David in the harvest time to the cave of Adullam, while the troop of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim. David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. David had a craving and said, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!" So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD; and he said, "Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did." (2 Samuel 23:13-17, NASB)

In his fantastic maturity, he poured the water on the ground (rejected it) so he could objectively rotate his men into the tough assignments. He would have to send some of these men to their deaths at one time or another. If he drank that water, he would have been weakened and would feel that he couldn't assign them to battle where they could die. In future days, he would cater to the one who brought him the water and he would become unfair and preferential.