

Why God Tests Our Faith

by Don Currin

God tests our faith to free us from things that bind us, to reveal Jesus in our fire, and to bring us into a wealthy place.

Duration: 44:00

Scripture: Psalm 66:10, Matthew 6:33, Romans 5:3

Topics: "Testing"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the reasons why God tests our faith. The first reason is to free us from the things that bind us. The speaker uses the example of the three Hebrew children who were thrown into the fire but were not harmed because the only thing they lost was what bound them. The second reason is to reveal Jesus in our lives, as others can see Him in us when we go through difficult times. The speaker emphasizes the importance of reflecting and demonstrating the character of Christ when faced with pressure or challenges.

Transcript

Good morning. Open your Bibles, please, to the book of the Psalms in chapter 66. Psalms in chapter 66.

I believe this morning a message, on more of a practical level, would be appropriate, because in the days ahead you're going to notice that God is going to allow your faith to be tested. And the reason that He is such a good steward of your faith being tested is because it is not your faith, it is the faith of the Son of God. And so He is a very good steward of His faith.

This morning I want to answer the question, in the next few moments, on why God tests our faith. Why God tests our faith. And I would direct your attention, please, to Psalm 66 and verse number 10.

For thou, O God, hast proved us, thou hast tried us as Silber is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net, thou laidest affliction upon our loins, thou hast caused men to ride over our heads. We went through fire and through water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

Now there are three things that we learn from this portion of Scripture that I just read. First of all, you'll see who it is that initiates all testing. Who it is that is the instigator of all testing.

It is God. It is not Satan. It is God.

Satan cannot do anything to the believer unless God permits it. And many times he may be directly responsible for some things that come into our life, but God is either directly or indirectly responsible for everything that we experience. Notice the psalmist once again says in verse 10, For thou, O God, hast tried us.

He is the one that all testing comes from. Then secondly, you'll notice the general means through which God tests our faith. Notice he says in verse number 11, Thou broughtest us into the net.

You know, there are many, many different bondages today that believers experience that are not coming as a result of sin. God will allow you to go through various bondages just for the purpose of showing Himself strong on your behalf. For instance, I know people today that are really seeking to please the Lord in the area of finances.

They meet their financial obligations. They pay their bills. They tithe their sense of the Holy Spirit in giving to needs.

But in spite of that, they can't seem to gain enough financial sustenance to accommodate other areas. And so constantly they're living on a shoestring. Well, someone says, well apparently they're not living and walking with the Lord.

Because obviously anyone that does that is going to have plenty. They're going to be prosperous in this life. My friend, nothing could be further from the truth.

Well, you say, well preacher, what about what David said? I've never known the righteous forsaken or a seed-begging bread. Well, David never had. But David did not know Lazarus.

For he sat at the gate of the rich man's residence wishing for the crumbs that fell from his table. Many times God will allow us to go through financial bondage just once again to prove Himself strong on our behalf. And the psalmist says, Thou broughtest us into the net.

Thou broughtest into these bondages. Thou laidest affliction upon our loins. I find there are many believers, especially some very close friends of mine that are going through some very difficult times these days in regard to affliction.

I heard the other day of a pastor in Kansas who we have prayed for. And back a couple of years ago, his wife was carrying twins. And because of the difficulty of the pregnancy, it necessitated a blood transfusion.

She not only took one, but two. And when she gave birth to those twins, they found out six months up the road that the woman had contracted AIDS. That the twins have AIDS.

And now this dear pastor also has AIDS. You say, Preacher, how could God be in something like that? My friend, I do not know. But who am I to question the Lord? God allows these things to happen many times as a means of testing our faith.

And then you'll notice something else here. The Scripture tells us in verse number 12, and my, how we can relate to this one. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.

Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads. Let me ask you a question. Have you ever made the statement or maybe expressed it in other words? Well, I really believe that I could live victorious in Christ.

I really believe that I could make a go of it in regard to this matter of the abundant life if it just wasn't for this person. If it just wasn't for this individual that I have to work with. My friend, I'm discovering these days that those people are ordained of God as our heavenly sandpaper.

Just for the express purpose of irritating us, putting pressure on us. Just so at that moment that we can submit to the Holy Spirit that He might produce under those circumstances the character and the likeness of the Lord Jesus. God many times will raise people up around us to trample us beneath their feet with their tongue, with their actions, with their temperaments.

Just once again to prove Himself strong toward us. And you know, I don't know about you, but these days I'm finding every time I pray, God, would you please remove me from this environment? Would you please move this person on? Do you know it's just like God to send me somebody ten times worse? You'll notice if you would in verse number 12. He said, We went through fire and through water.

But then notice thirdly the purpose of all testing. But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. The word wealthy here means a place of growth, a place of prosperity, not in regard to monetary gain, but rather in growing up into the fullness of God.

Let me tell you what I believe this place to be. I believe it's nothing more than entering into the reality of fellowship with Christ. That wealthy place is nothing more than the Lord Jesus.

And why does God allow affliction to come? And why does God permit this bondage? And why does the Lord raise these people up as ordained of God to be a source of irritation to us, to bring us into a wealthy place, to bring us into an abiding relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? Now, with that in mind this morning, I want us to look at a very familiar portion of Scripture in the Word of God. Take your Bibles and turn to the prophecy of Daniel in chapter number three. Daniel in chapter three.

And I want to use this text and draw out of it five reasons why God tests our faith. Because you see, friend, the inevitable will be that in the days ahead, you're going to have your faith tested. You're on a honeymoon right now and it's liable to last a week or two weeks, but all of a sudden you're going to have to face reality once again.

And God is going to test every truth that you have received and had engrafted to your spirit during the course of this conference. And so, I just want to prepare you. Five reasons why God tests our faith.

You recall the events here in Daniel chapter three, how Nebuchadnezzar had an ego problem. I believe that the golden image that he had set up was nothing more than an image of his own self. And he gave the command that when they heard the sound of the music, they were to bow down and everyone in his regime were to bow down and worship the image that he had set up.

We pick up on the story. Look with me, if you would, in verse 16, because there's these three Hebrew children that choose not to obey the king's word. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, the setting here is they're called into the carpet.

Why won't you bow down? I'm going to give you a second chance. And now they respond to the king's word. They say, oh, Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

In other words, we've already got our minds made up. We're not going to reconsider. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and he will deliver us out of thine hand,

O king.

But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image. Nine times the Holy Ghost puts this little phrase here in this passage, which thou hast set up. I believe that denotes that this man was given over to extreme pride.

Well, notice Nebuchadnezzar doesn't like to be rejected any more than you and I do. In verse 19, his reaction, Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Therefore he spake and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Verse 22, Therefore, because the king's commandment was urgent and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

These three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar, the king, was astonished, shocked. He rose up in haste and spake and said to his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? And they answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

And he answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire. Once again, I give you five reasons why God tests our faith. Number one, the first reason I find many times that God will test our faith is to free us from those things that are binding us.

To free us from those things that are binding us. Dear people, there is only one thing that those three Hebrew children lost when they went through the fire and that was the thing that bound them. Now, you think back over your life at certain times when things did not go your way.

You think of the adversity. You think of the criticism that you were subjected to. You think of how people spurned your words, disregarded your opinion.

You think when you did not think anybody cared, or maybe the moment caused you to respond in a very anxious sort, to say the least. Has it ever occurred to you that maybe God had a purpose in mind for that? Has it ever dawned on you that maybe God was trying to free you from something that was binding you? Back four years ago at Christmas time, on Christmas morning, we got up and gathered around our tree. And we thanked the Lord for His provision.

And then we exchanged gifts as a family. Under the tree was a gift to me from my wife. She looked at me and she said, Honey, I want you to know I love you.

Merry Christmas. I said, thank you. And so I tore into this gift and as I opened the box up, it was a plaid pair of pants.

Now, I'm a fairly conservative dresser. This week you've noticed I wear these wild looking ties, but it's only because most of them have been given to me as gifts. And I hate for them to go to waste.

Amen. But I'm a very conservative dresser. Most of the time it's gray or blue or black.

My wife gives me these plaid britches for Christmas. And so she knows my taste. And why she did it, I don't know.

But she liked them. And she says, I hope you like the pants. And I said, well, honey, I think they're very nice.

Well, she said, now, Don said, if you don't like them, I've got the receipt and you can take them back. I said, oh no, I like them. I said, I think they're pretty.

Well, I was lying through my teeth. I just didn't want to disappoint her. So after we finished, you know, with all the unwrapping of gifts, my wife went into the kitchen to prepare breakfast.

And finally, I got up enough nerve to go and repent. And I did repent. And then I went in to make restitution with my wife.

And I came over to her and I said, honey, I said, if you don't mind, I believe I'd like to take those pants back. She said, no problem. She said, I've got the receipt.

Well, when the Christmas rush died down and our schedule permitted us to do so, my wife and I went back to take those pants back to try to find something else just to get the money back. Well, I walked into this place of business and the girl said, may I help you, sir? And I said, yes, ma'am. I said, my wife gave me these pants for Christmas.

I said, they just don't suit my taste. If you don't mind, I'd really like to just get my money back. She said, well, sir, let me make a suggestion to you.

It says, do you see our department back there in the corner? She said, that's our men's department. And why don't you go back there and see if you can find some pants that are the same price and say, we'll just make an even exchange. I said, all right, no problem.

I needed some pants at the time. So, I scrolled back to the back and I looked on the rack. Well, there were three pairs of pants in my size on the rack.

One was a bright red. Another was a bright yellow. I mean, a real bright yellow.

And the other was a large green plaid. And I said, obviously, you know, I can't get into those. So, you know, I just casually, you know, I was really under control.

And I walked back up to the front and I said, ma'am, I said, I said, I'm sorry, I can't find anything. I said, apparently, you haven't gotten any additional inventory since Christmas. And she said, well, that's correct.

I said, well, if you don't mind, just let me get my money back. And she said, well, sir, let me make another suggestion to you. Well, I knew something was up here.

So, she says, why don't you go back and see if you can find some merchandise that will balance out as far as the price is concerned. And we'll just make an even exchange. She said, we've got sweaters and ties.

I said, all right, you know. So, I went back and I looked at the sweaters and they were all picked over. And they had just a few, really, in their selection and in my size.

And I really didn't need a sweater. And I certainly didn't need a tie. So, I just casually went back up to the front again.

And I said, ma'am, I can't find anything. I said, if you don't mind, just let me get my money back. And she looked at me.

She said, well, sir, I'm sorry, but we don't refund your money here. I said, well, wait a minute, what do you mean? She said, well, this is an outlet store and our prices are slashed already. And we just can't make refunds.

Now, we can give you a rain check. And I said, no, ma'am. I said, you see, you don't understand.

I said, I'm getting ready to go out of town and I'll be out of town for weeks now. And I need some pants to wear. I said, could you please give me my money back? Can't you make an exception? She said, well, sir, let me call the manager.

Well, she calls the manager up there and he looks over the situation. And he says, sir, I'm sorry, there's nothing that we can do. Well, friend, I want to tell you something.

I got hot. And I began to pace back and forth in front of the counter. Impatience, anger, disgust emanated out of every pore of my being.

And I was breathing out slaughterings and threatenings underneath my breath. And this manager, he stood there and looked at me for a few moments. And finally, he went on back to the back.

And the girl behind the counter, she got preoccupied with something else. And I tell you, I was so hot. And now I began to express it a little bit louder where other people are hearing it.

And my wife, she is embarrassed to no end. And finally, she tries to lend some assistance. And she looks over at the pants and she said, well, honey, you know, I don't think those pants look that bad.

I said, just shut up, woman, shut up. And I continued to pace back and forth. Well, when I saw they weren't going to do anything, I reached over to the counter and I grabbed those pants up like that in a fit of rage.

And I said, come on, Cindy, let's go. And as we started out the door, I said it just loud enough for the girl to hear it behind the counter. I said, I'll never be back in this place again.

As soon as I got on the outside of the door, the Holy Spirit said, oh, yes, you will. Yes, you will. You're going to be back here a lot quicker than you think, brother.

What's really occurring? Well, I peeled out of the parking lot and went home that day and got ready for my next meeting and friend for the next two, three weeks. I'm telling you, couldn't preach, felt oppressed. And every time I'd go full on, oh, God, search my heart.

Oh, God, please, Lord, what is it, Lord? He'd say, it's those pants. Oh, Lord, you know, I confess it, Lord. I know I blew it the other day and I was proud and I got arrogant.

And Lord, you know how impatient I was and I confessed that, Lord. Oh, God, cleanse me. Oh, I cleanse you, I forgive you, but you need to go back and put that right.

Well, sure enough, it wasn't weeks down the road. It was about three months down the road. I walked back in that place of business and I walked up to the counter and I asked for the manager and I asked for the other staff.

And I said, I was in here back just after Christmas to exchange some pants. I said, I don't know if you remember, remember me or not. Of course, they didn't.

But I said, I lost my temper. I said, I got really upset and I said some things that I shouldn't have said. I said, would you please forgive me? And they forgave me.

And immediately I was restored back into fellowship with the Lord. Now, I said all that to say this. I never knew how proud and how angry I could become until I went through that fire, until I went through that test.

In other words, my friend, God's design in testing is to make us aware of areas of contrariness in our life to Himself, to bring those to our attention that we might repent of. And He's going to do the same thing to you. Right now, you think you're pretty spirit filled and maybe you are.

You're walking in the light that God's given you. But there are other pockets of resistance in your life that are concealed to you because the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. But God's going to start testing your faith and bringing the impurities to the top.

The second reason why God tests our faith. Notice, if you would, in verse 25, He answering said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. The second reason why God tests our faith is to reveal Jesus in our fire.

Dear friend, most of the time, that's the only time that the lost or others around us see Jesus in our life is when we go through the fire. Can I ask you a question? What do people around you see when you go through the fire? When you don't have any worries, there's no demands on you. You're at a conference like this where you're well away from your family.

When you're far away from other people that really don't know you, it's real easy to be Christ-like. But when the pressure is exerted, when the heat is turned up, will you reflect and demonstrate the character of Christ? You see, this lost king and all of his emissaries, they never saw Jesus until these three Hebrew children went through the fire. I'm amazed these days.

Sometimes I'll sit down and I'll watch a sporting event, and there are many athletes in America as well as Canada who have professed faith in Jesus Christ. But there are others who seem to just implement it in their repertoire after the game is over during the post-game show to say, well, I just want to thank God for the strength. You know, it's easy to thank God for hitting the winning home run or making the winning catch.

It's easy to praise God when things are going your way, friend. But I want to tell you something. When things are not going your way, when the bottom falls out, when you go through bondages, then can you still rejoice in God and thank God and allow the Holy Spirit to produce the character of Christ in your life? This lost king and all the people underneath his rule, they never saw Christ until Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego went through the fire.

What do others around you see when you go through the fire? Well, then you'll notice in verse number 26, the third reason why God tests our faith. The scripture says, Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the

mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spake and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the Most High God, come forth and come hither. And then the scripture tells us that they came forth out of the midst of the fire.

Imagine this morning that in this auditorium that we have the throne room of Nebuchadnezzar. I suppose it would probably be about the same size. And here on a platform much like this is a chair.

It's been designated as the throne of the king. He's seated there. And just to the right of his throne, there is a window, an opening where he can see this golden image that he has erected.

And he's told everyone under his control to bow down to that image. But these three Hebrew children choose not to do it. And toward the back of the throne chamber, there is a place of judgment, a place to satisfy the wrath of the king for those that choose not to obey his word.

Here's what I want you to see. When these three men were cast into that furnace of fire, the scripture says in verse 26 that we just read, then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace. Do you know what that means, friend? The furnace is a good ways from it, but not so far that he can't see what's going on.

He sees Jesus in the fire. And the scripture says that he comes near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace. Do you know what that means? He had to come down off his throne.

Do you know when people start seeing Jesus in our fire consistently, all of a sudden they're going to start coming down off their throne. As long as they're on their throne, they're virtually unreachable. But when they start seeing something that resembles Jesus enough in mine and your life, it's going to create an interest in them to come down off their throne.

I'm convinced today that that's the reason why we're not seeing more people converted is because they're not seeing anything in mine and your life consistently enough that resembles Jesus that will provoke an interest in them to come down off their throne. That's revival, by the way. Jesus being manifested and magnified in the life of the believer, even in the adverse times, even in the affliction that causes men and women to come down off their throne.

And then they begin to express the interest toward the gospel. And then they're eager to hear what we have to say, because all of a sudden they've seen truth incarnate in the flesh. They've seen Christianity demonstrated in the lifestyle.

And now they want to know about it. The third reason why God tests our faith is to draw lost people down off their throne, to make them pliable, vulnerable to the gospel. Of our Lord.

By the way, in passing this morning, I believe there's a message in this even for us as believers. I found out back some months ago how to get along with God. Would you like to know how to get along with God? Would you? A simple definition of revival.

This is how you get along with God. Stay off his throne. Revival is nothing more than just staying off the throne of God.

And when we stay off the throne of God, then Christ is enthroned. He is manifested in our flesh. And people see that manifestation.

And are provoked by it to ask questions and seek the answer as to what makes the difference in our life. Well, then you'll notice something else in verse number 27. And the princesses and governors and captains and the king's councils being gathered together.

Saw these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed. Now watch this. Nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

Nor the smell of fire had passed on them. You know what I find? And I don't know if you can relate to this or not, but many times I don't mind going through the fire because, of course, I don't have any alternative. I've got to go through it one way or the other.

But one source of consolation for me in going through the fire is to know that once I get through it, I'm going to have somebody on the other side to smell the smoke. Many of us don't mind going through the fire as long as we've got somebody to smell the smoke. You say, what do you mean, Brother Kerr? I like to be home on Wednesday nights because Wednesday night is not only prayer meeting night, but it's also testimony night.

And so our pastor gives 15-20 minutes of time to share testimonies of what God's done in our hearts. And if I've just gone through a fire, a crisis in my life where God's brought me through it, I like to share that. But I can't say that I've always shared with the objective in mind of giving God the glory.

I can remember one time in particular, I shared how Jesus and I made it through the fire. And as I was sharing, while I tried to sound humble and while I tried to convey to the people that, listen, I want God to get all the glory of this, there was a stream through my testimony that revealed that I wanted glory. I wanted a pat on the back because I made it sound so spectacular.

What was I trying to get my hearers to do? Smell the smoke. Emerson said that when you bury pride, don't put a headstone over the grave. Some of us have gone so far as to put neon lights on that thing, right? We want the glory.

We want the pat on the back. We want people to smell the smoke. Praying Hyde said it like this, Self must not only be dead, but buried out of sight, for the stench of the unburied self-life will frighten souls away from Jesus.

And when people around us, whether saved or lost, most of the time, they know who's really getting the glory. They know if God's getting it or not. The Scripture tells us in verse 28, the fourth reason why God tests our faith.

And Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants that trusted in him. And have changed the king's word and yielded their bodies that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own. Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Do you know, your response in the fire will determine the reaction of lost people around you. If they don't see Jesus in your fire, if you murmur and complain and are impatient and intolerant of others when the pressure is put on you, friend, it causes them to either verbally express it or in their gestures demonstrate a spirit of blasphemy. Either they will bless God or they will blaspheme God depending on whether they see Jesus in your fire or not.

And Nebuchadnezzar blesses the Most High God. Imagine this morning, what if we had the liberty, if God gave us that liberty, of having Nebuchadnezzar come before this congregation and share his testimony of how Jehovah redeemed him. Do you know what he would say in that testimony? He would say, men and women, I want you to know that all the conviction that led to eternal life in Jehovah God began when I saw Jesus in the fire.

I believe the man was converted. God certainly chastened him in the next chapter because of his unwillingness to submit to God. I believe it was a Christian.

I believe it was a converted man. But you see, it all began, his conversion began when he saw Jesus in the fire. The fourth reason why God tests our faith is to bring conviction to the heart of those that see Christ in our fire so as to bring them into a relationship with himself.

In other words, my friend, is to produce conversion in others. When Christ is seen in our fire, that Christ life is beget in the lives of others, or at least an interest in that life. You know, not only those who are lost around to seeing Jesus in our fire affects them, but it also affects those that are not walking with the Lord who are legitimately believers.

Like some years ago, and of course, I've had such a growing appreciation for the Puritans. And I've loved to read their books and Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield, Richard Baxter, John Gillies, and a host of others. And Whitfield, one thing I was so impressed with is he had such a sensitivity to the needs of poor people.

And people would give him much money. They said that Wesleyan Whitfield could have been multi-million, yet millionaires in their day, if only they would have kept the money, but they constantly distributed it. They never held on to the money.

And people would give them great sums of money to minister to the needs of poor people. And on one occasion, someone gave George Whitfield five guineas to give to a poor family in an adjacent community. Whitfield and a friend of his mounted their horses to take the money to this poor family.

And on their way, they were halted by a robber in a territory that had quite a reputation for his thievery. He demanded they empty their pockets of everything that they had. And of course, these men gladly gave the robber everything that he requested.

But the only thing on their possession were these five guineas. The robber took the money and he placed it in his pocket and he rode off. Whitfield never complained, never expressed one sign of disgust, wondering where the money would come from.

But he continued on his journey. And his friend was quite taken by this. Why should we continue on when we don't even have the financial means to help these people? Well, they rode about a mile.

And suddenly they heard the strong gallop of a horse behind them. They stopped and looked back and there's the robber once again. He'd been so impressed by Whitfield's beautifully tapestried cloak that someone had given him.

He rode up into their presence. He demanded that Whitfield disrobe himself of it. And Whitfield gladly took off the cloak and gave it to this robber.

The robber stripped himself of his old, sole, tattered cloak and threw it over on Whitfield. And Whitfield took it as the robber rode off once again and thanked God for it and draped himself with it. Just as he got to the brink of town where this poor family resided in, once again he heard the strong gallop of a horse behind him, except this time what accompanied that was these loud screams, Stop! Stop! Stop! They saw at a distance it was the robber.

They did not heed his beckoning. But they rode on into town. The robber was not able to pursue because he knew that the authorities would surely pick him up.

As they got just to the residence of this poor family's home, Whitfield, as he dismounted his horse there, he reached into his pocket. And when he reached into his pocket, he pulled out a roll of over 100 guineas. When the robber had exchanged cloaks, he forgot to remove his bounty.

This guy that was with Whitfield was never the same. Why? Because he'd seen Jesus in George Whitfield's fire. The fifth reason why God tests our faith you'll find in verse 29.

Therefore I make a decree that every people, nation, and language which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut in pieces and their houses shall be made a dunghill because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. The fifth reason why the Lord tests our faith is to instill the fear of God in us so as to beget that fear, reproduce that fear in the lives of others around us. You see, my friend, if I would have been living under Nebuchadnezzar's rule and heard him make such a decree that anyone that speaks anything against these people or their God shall be cut in pieces, you better believe I would have been very careful what I said.

But what was behind it all, I believe, was the very fear of Jehovah. I recall the story of Jacob. Jacob had a daughter.

I believe she was a very beautiful girl to look upon. Her name was Dinah. One day she wandered out into the fields.

And there, unattended, she was overtaken by a young prince from the Hivite nation. His name was Shechem. Shechem raped the girl.

But after the rape, his soul felt delight in her. To the point, he sought her to be his wife. And he went before his father Hamor.

And he says, I want her to be my wife. So, Hamor and Shechem made an appointment with Jacob to request Jacob's daughter's hand in marriage. And Jacob, I believe, in the back of his mind, he would say, well, I'll give them something that they would never consent to.

To discourage this marriage. So, he said, the only way I could put my approval upon it is for you men, as well as all the men of your tribe, to be circumcised. Well, I believe Hamor was looking at Shechem.

And when he looked over at Shechem, Shechem was smiling from ear to ear, no problem, because I love that girl. I'm willing to make that sacrifice. So, Hamor says, we'll do it.

And Hamor and Shechem left the presence of Jacob, went back into their city. And the Bible says that all the men of the Hivite nation were circumcised. Now, Jacob's two sons, Simeon and Levi, had a lot more spiritual guts than what Jacob did.

And to revenge the rape of their sister, the Scripture says that on the third day when the men of the city waxed sore, that they went in with their swords and they slew all the men of the Hivite tribe. When Jacob got drifted of that news, he panicked. Feared for his life, for he knew that the Canaanites and the Perizzites would certainly come and revenge the slaughter at the hands of his sons.

They would take his life, Jacob's life, as well as the lives of all the people of God. But then you move into Genesis chapter 35. The Bible says that Jacob sought the Lord.

And when he sought the Lord, God says, Jacob, I want you to do two things. I want you to get My people together and I want you to go up to Bethel and there offer to Me a sacrifice. Jacob took it a step further and got all the people to give him their ornaments, their earrings, their pieces of gold and silver because he knew that their heart was prone to idolatry.

And he buried them beneath a tree, but the Bible says that when he obeyed the Lord, when they began to start toward Bethel... Listen to this now. The King James Version says in verse 5, that the terror of the Lord fell upon the enemies of Jacob. You can't explain that except that God honored Jacob's obedience in the midst of this fire.

And so it will be in mine and your life. When we obey God, when we allow Christ to be demonstrated, even in our fire, God will provoke conviction and will produce the fear of God upon others around us. Which, my friend, you say, well, what's God's purpose in that? They that fear the Lord shall ultimately trust in the Lord.

Trust in the Lord. The reason we're not having more people converted is because nobody fears God. And the reason the lost don't fear God is because we don't fear God.

But when you start properly responding to the testings and trials in your life, then not only will you experience the fear of God, but you're going to find God is going to instill that fear in the lives of lost people around you. Five reasons why God tests our faith. Let's bow our heads together in prayer.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23133.mp3>

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