
A Plan For Your Trials (The Path To Promotion)

God's Plan For Your Trouble

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Sermon: God's Plan For Your Trouble: A Plan For Your Trials (The Path To Promotion)

Lesson Text

James 1:2–4 (AV)² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³ Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴ But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

1 Peter 1:6–7 (AV)⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: ⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Introduction

Today, as we continue our series on God's Plan for Your Trouble, we want to look at the process and purpose of Trials.

A Trial is the process of trying or putting to proof; to Test! Spiritually, it is a test of one's faith to prove that he or she is ready for the next level or promotion.

Many people miss the connection of their Trial to their Promotion. But it's God's Plan!

- Psalm 75:⁶ For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. ⁷ But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.
- Promotion is not about who you know or who you are. It's not about getting the hookup or being the right race or gender.

Promotion is about being judged to be worthy. And that happens when you pass the test or trial.

The two passages of our lesson text are what I call synoptic passages, in that they are similar scriptures that show us the way to promotion through trials.

First, we must have an attitude of joy to prepare ourselves for our trials. Then we must have no fear of the trials. And finally, we must allow the trials to perfect us for our next promotion.

Series and Sermon: God's Plan For Your Trouble: A Plan For Your Trials (The Path To Promotion)

“Prepare for the Test, Take the Test, Pass the Test”

I. Prepare for the Test (Increasing Your Faith)

James 1:² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

1 Peter 1:⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

The success or failure of a trial or test is not determined when you take the test; it's determined weeks and months earlier. It's all about your preparation.

Preparation is about increasing your faith before you need it!

Romans 10:¹⁷ So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

When I was in school, the teacher taught me that the key to passing her class was doing all the homework and showing up for all the classes.

But there was always someone who didn't show up for class and asked for a copy of your notes. Always someone who didn't do any of the homework, study, or assignments. They would procrastinate all semester long and try to cram for the final exam the night before.

What they failed to understand was that the key to passing the final exam was not what you do the night before, but what you did all semester long.

We have too many Christians that I call "Spiritual Crammers!" They wait until the exam, until the crisis, until the trouble, until the pain and suffering; then want to go Cram for Jesus!

"Spiritual Crammers" want to study after the exam has started. This isn't an open book test.

- 2 Timothy 2:¹⁵ Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

"Spiritual Crammers" want to call on Holy Ghost to help them pass the exam. He will bring all things back to your memory, but you don't have anything up there for Him to work with.

- John 14:²⁶ **But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**

"Spiritual Crammers" want to ask their friends to help them during the exam. That's cheating! And they don't know you like that. You need your friends in a study group before the exam.

- Matthew 18:¹⁹ **Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**

"Spiritual Crammers" want to pray to God after they are in trouble with the exam.

- Luke 18:¹ And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

But we don't wait for the exam to show up; we study, pray, and rejoice preparing for the exam.

Psalms 1:² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. ³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

When the exam, the test, or the trial shows up, **"Count it All Joy," "Greatly Rejoice!"** Why? Because we have increased our faith, and we are Prepared for the Test!

II. Take the Test (Using Your Faith)

James 1:³ Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

1 Peter 1:⁷ **That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire,** might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

The next thing we must do concerning a trial or test is to actually take the test. And taking the test is about using your faith now that you got it!

When you were a child, did you ever tell your momma that you were too sick to go to school? Knowing the real reason you didn't want to go to school was because you had a test and was afraid to take it.

The fear of taking a test is a phobia known as performance anxiety. It is characterized by **fear**, worry, tension, and even feelings of physical illness in the face of **taking an exam**. Many people experience stress or **anxiety** before an **exam**.

Matthew 8:²³ And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. ²⁵ And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. ²⁶ And he saith unto them, **Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?** Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

In other words, if you have been doing your homework, doing your assignments, writing your papers, getting with your study group; then stop being afraid of the test.

“It’s Only a Test!” “Stop Being Afraid And Use Your Faith!”

James 2:¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Simply put, anybody can have faith, even the devils have it. But it does you no good if you don't use it.

James 2:²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

2 Timothy 1:⁶ Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. ⁷ For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Romans 1:¹⁷ For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

2 Corinthians 5:⁷ (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

III. Pass the Test (Perfecting Your Faith)

James 1:⁴ But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

1 Peter 1: ⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, **might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:**

- We Prepare for the Test by Increasing Our Faith
- We Take the Test by Using Our Faith
- Finally, we Pass the Test by Perfecting Our Faith

The ultimate purpose of the test of the trial is to get us to the point where we are ready for promotion.

If you are not prepared to take the test, no biggie, go get prepared

If you are afraid to take the test, no biggie, stir up your gift

And when you are prepared and take the test, rejoice because God is perfecting you for your promotion.

For Promotion, we don't need the acceptance of people:

- Psalm 75: ⁶ For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. ⁷ But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

For Promotion, all we need is the Perfecting of our Faith through God

- Psalm 138:⁸ The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

Don't run from the test and trial, rejoice because it's perfecting you.

Don't be afraid of the test and trial, rejoice because it's perfecting you.

James 1: ² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³ Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴ But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

1 Peter 1: ⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: ⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Now Rejoice because it's Passing Day, Graduation Day, Promotion Day!

2 Timothy 4: ⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: A Plan For Your Trials (The Path To Promotion))

Lesson Text

- James 1:2–4, 1 Peter 1:6–7

Sermon Outline (Notes)

I. Prepare for the Test (Increasing Your Faith)

II. Take the Test (Using Your Faith)

III. Pass the Test (Perfecting Your Faith)

Questions (What was your main takeaway from Sunday’s Sermon?)

I. Getting to Know “Me”

1. Which candy bar slogan best describes you: **Snickers**: You’re not you when you’re hungry / **Kit Kat**: Give me a break / **Twix**: Which side are you... Left or Right / **M & M’s**: Melts in your mouth, not in your hand / **Skittles**: Taste the rainbow / **Almond Joy or Mounds**: Sometimes you feel like a nut, and sometimes you don’t / **Butterfinger**: Nobody better not lay a finger on my Butterfinger?
2. What is the one thing that you do to help you feel that you are “on top of the world”?

II. Into the Bible

1. Read Matthew 26:31-35 and 26:69-75. Explain your answers to the following using this week’s sermon and your knowledge of scripture:
 - a. Was this a test or trial of Peter’s faith?
 - b. If it were a test of his faith, did Peter pass?
 - c. What experiences do you think helped him to pass, or alternatively, what experiences would have prepared him to pass the test?
2. According to Romans 5:3-5, what are the benefits that we experience as a result of enduring our troubles?

III. Life Application

1. What was your view of trials before Sunday’s sermon? Did you think God was punishing you, Satan was out to get you or this is part of the process? Has it changed? If so, how has it changed?
2. What advice would you give a new Christian whose faith is being tested? What scriptures would you refer to?