



Refined Through Fire

Jeremy Peters ~ February 19, 2017

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT

James 1:2-5,12 NLT

²Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

⁴So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

⁵If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking....

¹²God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

REJOICE

PURPOSE OF TESTING

Rick Warren: “We don’t know all the tests God will give, but we can predict some of them based on the Bible. We will be tested by major changes, delayed promises, impossible problems, unanswered prayers, undeserved criticism, and even senseless tragedies. God tests our faith through problems, our hope by how we handle possessions, and our love through people.”

ROLE OF WISDOM

1 Peter 4:1-2 MSG

Since Jesus went through everything you’re going through and more, learn to think like Him. Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old, sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. Then you be able to live out your days, free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want.

Small Group/Reflection Questions

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's message?
2. How often do you think about the character implications of how you respond to mundane aspects of your day to day life, to the daily 'tests' that you face? (Daily? Weekly? Monthly?) Have you found this perspective to be helpful? If so, in what way?

3. John Eldredge writes: *"All of the other things we long for in life—love and friendship, freedom and wholeness, clarity of purpose, all the joy we long for—it all depends on our restoration."*

You can't find or keep good friends while you're still an irritating person to be around. And there is no way love can flourish while you are still controlling. You can't find your real purpose in life while you're still slavishly serving other people's expectations of you. You can't find peace while you're ruled by fear. You can't enjoy what you have while you're envying what the other guy has. On and on it goes."

What about this quote strikes you? Are you currently experiencing one of these tensions (or something like this)? Take time to pray for one another.

4. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 8:29 (The Msg) *God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him.*

How often do you consider your circumstances within the framework of being shaped to be more like Jesus? How does this impact how you view both the tests and the mundane aspects of your life? Why is this significant?

5. Rick Warren writes: *"We don't know all the tests God will give, but we can predict some of them based on the Bible. We will be tested by major changes, delayed promises, impossible problems, unanswered prayers, undeserved criticism, and even senseless tragedies. God tests our faith through problems, our hope by how we handle possessions, and our love through people (perhaps most through difficult people)."*

What is the most recent test you have experienced (or are currently experiencing)?

As you interact with Warren's quote, share with the group a time you recognized that you were being tested by one of the things he lists (ie. a major change, delayed promise, etc.)

6. On Sunday Pastor Jeremy suggested that *"Every situation, every circumstance contains the seed of transformation within it."* What did he mean by that? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
7. James 1:2 *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.*

Can you think of a time when you realized a difficult situation was an opportunity for great joy? (ie. that God can and will accomplish something redemptive though it).
8. Pastor Jeremy said on Sunday, *"Whenever we pass a difficult test, there is a new release of the Spirit in our lives."* Have you ever experienced this? What were the circumstances and what did you notice changed in your life after you 'passed the test'?