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Go and make disciples!

E-votional 113

Do Not Test

Deuteronomy 6:16 (ESV),

“You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.

Exodus 17:2;7 (ESV),

(2)Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?”(7) And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

What does it mean to test or tempt the Lord? Whether or not the word is tempted or tested depends on what translation of the Bible you are reading. However, the meaning in this context and in these passages of Scriptures is the same either way.

The Strongs concordance, taken from <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/5254.htm>, says this,

to test, try

Well, at first glance this would seem very vague of a definition than many of us are be used to. However, it is rather simple and clear. Looking for greater meaning and use of this word will need for us to rely on other Scriptures with this same word used in it. I will name a couple of uses right here, Genesis 22:1 (where God tests Abraham), 1 Samuel 17:39 (of David not having tested Sauls armor to ensure a proper fit when fighting Goliath), Exodus 20:20 (when God meets the people of Israel and the people saw thunder and lightning from the mountain after the giving of the law and were afraid and Moses’s response to them)

Now, for a little more context of our chosen passage. We have to realize first

that the children of Israel were just delivered from Egypt through many and I mean many signs and wonders that God did in their midst to prove that He was indeed among them and working all of this out for them. Then we come to the wilderness from the deliverance from Egypt, where the people thirsted and cried out against Moses and against God. Moses responds by saying, “*Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?*,” and later it was said of them with this, “*because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”*”

Brothers and sisters, at the very heart of this understanding, we see that the people of Israel selectively forgot all that the Lord had just done for them through Moses and with His own outstretched hand. From this forgetting, we see people grumble against Moses and therefore test or tempt the Lord.

It is also important to note that the majority of the times in Scripture it speaks of the Lord testing His people as being a good thing and not the other way around. For this reason, we can confidently say that testing the Lord is not a good thing for a believer to do. We have been given here a clear example of what not to do through the example of the Israelites in the wilderness. In short, when God says something and/or shows something, it is important for us to not repeatedly question His nature and character. Effectively what the Israelites were doing, were showing a complete lack of faith in the God who saved them. Don't get me wrong it is not a bad thing to ask God and question Him as to where things are going in your life. It is, however, a bad thing when we accuse God of not being with us when things don't go as we have planned.

I know I have certainly fallen short of this at times in my life in my pursuit of God and maturity in Him. Also, there are other times when I simply didn't like the circumstances I was in and wallowed in self-pity. Rather than trust in the Lord with all of my heart in those circumstances, I grumbled and complained and thereby tested the Lord. And for this, there is no excuse.

You see, I am reminded of what the Lord told Joshua in Joshua 1:7-9 (ESV),

Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.

For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Praise God!

This passage of Scripture is so amazing because in it we see a God who genuinely has concern for not only Joshua but for His entire people. I say this because God knew that it would not be easy for Joshua to begin his mission from God to bring the Israelites to the promised land from the wilderness. You see the Lord knew that if Joshua's focus was not steadfast on the Word of God that he would easily give up on the mission and become like the people he was leading. In saying that, the people he was leading are the very ones who grumbled against Moses and thereby tested the Lord. Joshua's success lies in his ability to recollect all that God had done through the history of His people and creation by recounting His Word. Not only does Joshua's success lie in this, but also ours as well and anyone who desires to follow Christ.

Brothers and sisters, we must not at all cost become slothful in our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Doing so would cause us to become weak in the faith and begin to question whether or not God was even among us as did the Israelites. We must at all cost remember all that God has done for us and through us and recount His Word at every step if we would make it to the promised land.

It is amazing to think that this Scripture was so relevant even in the early church that the writer of Hebrews reiterated it in Hebrews 3:7-13 (ESV),

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'" Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Remember, it is ok for God to test us, it is not ok for us to test Him.

Lord Jesus, You alone are holy and righteous and good. Thank You for every good gift and perfect gift that comes down from the Father of lights. We are absolutely nothing without You. We need Your every breath upon and within our life. Fill us with wonder and awe in who You are. We need a right perception of who You are and what You have planned so we can confidently rely on and trust You with all that we are and so never grumble against You. Help us to remain true, in Jesus name. Amen.

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In Christ's Love,
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