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DON'T PANIC, THIS IS ONLY A TEST!

Teaching Notes by Joyce Meyer

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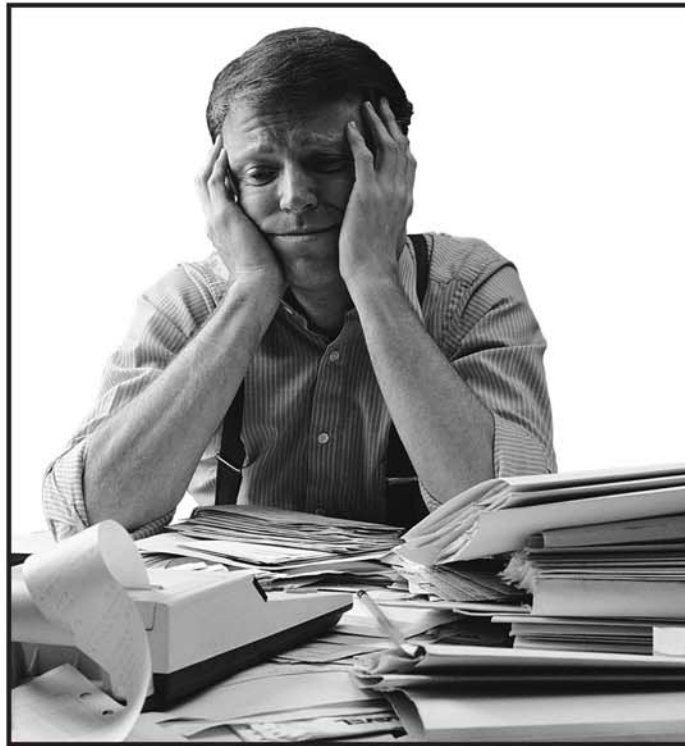
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The Trust Test

I. Introduction: Learning To Pass The Test

- A. **James 1:12-14** – We are promoted after we have stood the test.
1. Important point: God permits us to be tested, but He never tempts us. Satan is the tempter. We are tempted only when we have evil desires, lust, or passions that are not godly.
 2. Tests are good because they prove us; they show us what is needed in our lives.
 3. What we **think** we will do and what we **actually** do when we are tested can often be quite different.
- B. **James 1:2-4** – Consider them joyful. **How we think about them is important.**
1. Sometimes during trials I say, “This is good for me.”
 2. That does not mean I like it, but I am attempting to obey Scripture.
- C. David prayed for tests.
1. **Psalms 26:2** – *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; test my heart and my mind.*

- a. We usually hate the testing times.
- b. **NO TESTIMONY without the TEST** – after testing, most people only have the “moanies.”

II. The Pattern And The Purpose

- A. **Deuteronomy 8:2-4, 7-9, 16** – God proved them by testing them so He could bless them.
- B. **We are not ready for promotion until we pass the test.**
- C. **No one fails; we just keep RETAKING the test until we pass!!**
 1. **I Peter 1:7; 4:12-13** – To prove our faith and test our quality
 2. **I Timothy 3:10** – Let leaders be tried and proved.

III. Worry Is Not Trust.

- A. **Exodus 16:4** – The Israelites had to learn to trust God one day at a time.
 1. God tested their obedience and trust by making it possible for them to gather more.
 2. They were to gather one day’s supply and not to worry.

WORRY IS NOT TRUST!

- B. **Luke 21:34** – Be on your guard against the “cares of this world.”
 1. Examples: Financial needs, future financial needs (money for college, retirement, etc.), children, the past, what people are saying and doing, mistakes we make, the condition of the world today, etc.

2. **I Peter 5:7** – *Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.*
- C. Real trust does not worry, reason, fret, panic, or become anxious.
1. The words “I trust You, Lord” are useless unless our actions back them up.

**SAYING, “I TRUST YOU” FOLLOWED BY WORRY
MAKES THEM EMPTY, VAIN, AND USELESS WORDS.**

2. Worry will attack, but **Luke 21:34** tells us “to be on our guard.”

IV. Trusting When You Don’t See The Way

- A. **Deuteronomy 8:3** – God fed them by ways they did not understand.
1. It is more difficult to trust what we cannot figure out.
- B. **Deuteronomy 8:4** – Their shoes and clothes did not wear out for forty years.
1. If there are no doors, God can make a new one.
 2. He does not always work in conventional ways.

Jesus did NOT say, “I will SHOW you the way.”

He SAID, “I AM the way!”

- C. **Isaiah 43:16, 19** – Our Pioneer, Jesus Christ, goes before us and makes a way.
- D. **II Chronicles 20:12** – We can either panic or get our eyes on Him.
1. **Psalms 13:3** – Our eyes can behold Him even in pitch-like darkness.

V. Trusting When You Do Not Understand

- A. **Proverbs 20:24** – Our steps are ordered by the Lord. How then can we understand our way?
 - 1. God sees the whole picture, and we only see what is right in front of us.
- B. Perhaps we trust ourselves too much, and He has to teach us how flimsy the flesh really is.
 - 1. **II Corinthians 1:8-9**
 - 2. **Luke 18:9-14** – Trusting in “our works” for justification (self-righteous Pharisee)
- C. **Proverbs 16:9** – Man’s mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.
- D. **Job 13:15** – Even though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.
- E. Real trust does not have to know why, when, how, or who.
 - 1. The mind seeks to understand.
 - 2. The heart can grasp what the mind cannot understand.
- F. **Revelation 4:8** – Worshipers have eyes all over and within. They see things in their heart. They have spiritual discernment.
- G. **I Corinthians 2:10-16** – Powerful exhortation to grow in discernment
 - 1. The head cannot understand spiritual things.
- H. **Philippians 4:6-7** – DO NOT PANIC! PRAY!!

VI. Trusting When Heaven Is Silent

- A. **Revelation 8:1** – Heaven was silent for about half an hour.

1. That could represent a lot longer period of time on earth.
- B. **Psalm 28:1** – Silence can be discouraging.
- C. **Psalm 35:22 (19-24)** – Hurry up, Lord, and deliver me!
- D. Silence – When we don't see anything, hear anything, feel anything, or know anything
 1. **Don't Panic! This Is Only A Test!!**
- E. Trust requires unanswered questions.
 1. God is teaching us to discern, to know inwardly, to trust, and to be led by the Spirit!

VII. The Waiting Test

- A. **Psalm 145:15-17** – Every living thing waits on God for its provision.
 1. Trees, plants, birds, and animals, as well as people
- B. Trust permits us to wait expectantly and hopefully.
 1. **Micah 7:7** – *But as for me, I will look to the Lord and confident in Him I will keep watch; I will wait with hope and expectancy for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.*
 2. “As for me” shows Micah made a decision.
 3. **Without trust, we wait miserably and wretchedly.**
With trust, we wait EXPECTANTLY and HOPEFULLY.
- C. **We can have TRUST or TORMENT!!**
 1. **Habakkuk 2:3** – *For the vision is yet for an appointed time and it hastens to the end [fulfillment]; it will not deceive or disappoint.*

Though it tarry, wait [earnestly] for it, because it will surely come; it will not be behindhand on its appointed day.

- D. **Waiting is not an option – It is a fact of life!**
- E. **How we wait often determines how long we have to wait!**

**DON'T PANIC! THIS IS ONLY A TEST!
PASS IT OR RETAKE IT!!**

The Security Test

I. Foundation Scriptures:

- A. **Deuteronomy 8:2-4, 7-9, 16** – God proved them by testing, so He could bless them.
- B. **James 1:12-14** – We are promoted only after we have stood the test.
- C. **Luke: Chapter 4** – Jesus passed every test. There was nothing in Him that Satan could tempt. He had died to self-will and reputation. He had no selfish motive in serving God and no selfish ambition. He was completely secure in His Father’s love. He knew Who He was and was not trying to impress anyone. He was not in competition. He walked in peace, love, and joy.

II. The Silent Years

- A. Jesus learned and grew just like we do. He never sinned, but He grew. From birth to age twelve were silent years. From age twelve to thirty were also silent years. All the Word says about Him during those years is, “He grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.”

III. We Will Be Tested Until We Are Secure In Christ.

- A. **Philippians 3:3** – Put no confidence (trust) in the flesh.
 - 1. None of our security can come from what we are in the flesh, or from anyone else’s flesh.
 - 2. This is a painful process that is hard on our emotions.
- B. **Hebrews 12:27** – He shakes us until we are no longer shaky.
 - 1. Generals (leaders, front-line soldiers) must be stable.

2. Stable – Unshakeable, solid, firm, immovable, able to hold their peace in the storm, not moved by the demands or manipulations of people.
- C. Satan is a liar, and the majority of his lies are about us personally:
1. God is not pleased with you.
 2. God is angry with you.
 3. No matter what you do – it is not good enough.
 4. You are a failure.
 5. You are unloved and unlovely.
 6. You can't hear from God.
 7. You will never succeed at anything.
 8. You are ugly, stupid, not gifted, or talented.
- D. Satan compares us with other people.
1. Look at them. Why can't you be like that?
- E. Why doesn't God just make the devil leave us alone?
1. He wants us to pass every test, so there is nothing in us Satan can take advantage of.
 2. As long as God sovereignly delivers us from every rough place, we have won no personal victory.
 3. Remember **James 1:12-14** – We are tempted when we are enticed by our own evil desires. After we have been tested and stood the test, we receive a victory prize.

IV. Insecure People Want To Do Something Important So They Will Feel Important.

A. **Luke 22:24-27** – The truly great person is the one who serves.

1. **John 13:3-5** – Jesus, knowing Who He was, began to display servanthood.
2. **Philippians 2:5-7** – He knew Who He was; therefore, He did not need to prove anything to anyone.

HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF!!

3. **Luke 4:1-4, 9** – “IF You are the Son of God!”
4. **Jesus passed the test because He was secure!!**

B. Ambition

1. (Defined/Webster’s) – An eager or strong desire to achieve something.

Motive is the issue – Holy ambition driven by godly desire is good. Fleshly ambition driven by the need to feel good about oneself or to look successful to others is not good and always ends in disaster.

2. **Matthew 18:1-4** – Who is the greatest? They were competing.
3. **Matthew 20:20-26** – The woman wanted her sons to be great. (She was probably seeking personal importance through her children.)

C. The ambitious can’t wait on God. They push themselves on people and into situations. Remember, the ambitious are usually insecure people. Mostly, they are considered obnoxious; but in reality, they are wounded and insecure individuals.

1. **Matthew 19:30** – The first will be last and the last first.

If we exalt ourselves, God will bring us down; and if we humble ourselves and wait on Him, He will exalt us.

2. **Daniel 4:17, 25, 37** – God rules over the kingdom of men, and He sets over it the humblest and lowliest of men. He gives it to whomever He wills.
3. **Luke 14:7-11** – Take a back seat and let God move you up.

D. The ambitious are in danger of compromising in order to be important.

1. **Luke 4:5-7** – Satan offered Jesus all the habitable kingdoms of the world if He would bow down (just once) and worship him.
2. **Insecure people are often desperate to “feel good” about themselves.**

WHAT WE DO IS NOT NEARLY AS IMPORTANT AS OUR MOTIVE FOR DOING IT AND OUR ATTITUDE ABOUT DOING IT.

E. **Romans 9:20-21** – God uses us for His purpose; what the world often thinks is of no consequence.

F. **Romans 12:4-8** – Gifts vary; find yours and flow!

1. Obedience wins the prize – not what the world calls important.

V. Insecure People Fear Failure.

A. Their value is connected to their success; therefore, they are desperately afraid of failure.

B. **Luke 5:4** – Come out into the deep and get ready for a haul.

1. Fear stays in the safety zone.

2. Safe is often boring.

C. **Matthew 14:28-32** – Peter got out of the boat.

1. Sometimes insecure people get out of the boat, and they are still tormented inside by the thoughts of failure.
2. Peter had a mixture of success and failure. Jesus was there for him when he failed, and He will also be there for you.
3. Jesus corrected Peter about doubt, but He did not reject him.

VI. **Insecure People Have To Pass The Rejection Test – The Test Of Being Misunderstood, Judged, Criticized, Talked About, And Even Ridiculed.**

A. **Isaiah 53:2-3** – There was nothing in His natural man that was striking.

1. Nothing that made Him look like royalty
2. Therefore, He was rejected, ridiculed, and despised.

B. When we don't fit into the world's mold, they reject us! They say:

1. "All preachers must be like this."
2. "All pastors' wives must be like this."
3. "Everyone who prays must come to this prayer meeting and pray this way."
4. "All worship leaders must fit into this mold."

C. God uses what the world would throw away.

1. David – **I Samuel 16:1-13**
2. God anointed David in the midst of his brothers while they watched. Those who judge and reject you will have to watch God anoint and bless you if you pass the test.

3. **I Samuel 17:26-29** – The brothers may have been the reason the father never called for David in the beginning.

**DAVID HAD BEEN PICKED OUT TO BE PICKED ON,
BUT GOD PICKED HIM UP AND PICKED HIM OUT!!!**

D. **I Corinthians 4:1-3** – Paul was secure.

1. **Galatians 6:17** – Paul knew he was in God's will; he had paid the price. Those who judge you are jealous of what God has done in your life. They have had opportunity but have not been willing to pay the price.
2. **Luke 10:16** – When Jesus sent out the seventy, He told them not to be moved by rejection.

The Faithfulness Test

I. Foundation Scriptures:

- A. **I Timothy 3:10** – Let leaders be tried and proved before being promoted.
- B. **Acts 6:3** – Men of attested character and wisdom, who were full of the Holy Ghost, were chosen to assist the Apostles.

II. God Works Through And Blesses Faithful Men And Women.

- A. Faithful men and women stay UNDER God’s mighty hand with a good attitude until God exalts them.
 - 1. **Numbers 12:1-15** – Moses was faithful and could be trusted. Aaron and Miriam were rebellious and could not be trusted.
 - 2. **I Peter 5:6** – UNDER God’s mighty hand is usually UNDER some human authority.
- B. **Hebrews 3:2, 5-6** – Moses was faithful; Jesus was faithful.
- C. Definitions:
 - 1. **Faithful** – To be trusted, to be reliable, sure, and worthy of confidence.
 - 2. (Webster’s) – Firmly and devotedly supportive; loyal. Worthy of trust or belief; reliable. Consistent, constant, steady, and steadfast.
- D. **I Samuel 22:13-15** – David was faithful to Saul, even when Saul severely mistreated David by seeking to take his life.

1. **I Samuel 24:9-10** – David had two opportunities to kill Saul, but he respected God’s authority and His anointing on Saul as king.

DAVID PASSED THE SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY TEST.

E. **Nehemiah 7:1-2** – The faithful are promoted.

1. **James 1:12** – After we have stood the test, we get promoted.
2. **Nehemiah 9:7-8** – Abram was faithful.
3. **Nehemiah 13:13** – Important jobs are given to faithful men.

III. A Faithful Man Is In For The Long Haul.

A. **Proverbs 28:20** – The faithful are blessed.

1. The hasty want everything easy.

B. **Proverbs 13:11** – Being willing to gather little by little increases riches.

C. The person who cannot be faithful in the “foundation and rooting” years never sees victory.

1. **Deuteronomy 7:22** – He delivers us from our enemies little by little.

2. **Exodus 17:1** – Delivered from the **Wilderness of Sin** by stages

Sin produces “wilderness living.” We move step by step toward the Promised Land.

3. **II Corinthians 3:18** – As we faithfully CONTINUE in the Word, we are changed from glory to glory.

- D. We have many who were faithful (loyal) in the early not-so-glorious years.
 - 1. **Luke 16:10** – He who is faithful over little will be faithful over much.
- E. **Psalm 12:1** – Faithful people are harder to find in today’s society, including the church.
 - 1. Our instant, impatient world is taking its toll.

IV. Satan Brings Temptation To Give Up.

- A. **The lie** – “This is getting you no place fast. Give it up and do something else.”
 - 1. Roadrunner believers *versus* turtle believers
 - 2. “Fleshly Freddie” or “Steady Eddie”
- B. Be faithful in the years when nobody knows who you are.
- C. **The silent years**
 - 1. Jesus was dedicated at birth and not written of again until age twelve when He was in the temple with His parents. No mention was made of Him again until age thirty when He began His public ministry.

He grew.
 - 2. **Luke 1:76-80** – John the Baptist
 - 3. Moses spent forty years in the desert.
 - 4. **Galatians 1:17-2:1** – Paul lived three years in Arabia and another fourteen years somewhere.
 - 5. Joseph spent thirteen years in prison in Egypt as an innocent man.

6. David, as a young shepherd boy, spent many lonely nights learning to defeat lions and bears. He was preparing to defeat Goliath and did not even know it.

Many of you are in preparation to be giant killers.

V. **Be Committed – Be Faithful.**

- A. Prayer – **Acts 1:14; 3:1; 6:4; 16:13-16**
- B. In the Word – **Acts 6:4**
- C. Christian service
- D. Keep your commitments.
 1. Even ones you make in your heart just between you and the Lord
- E. Be committed to a standard of values in your heart and refuse to go below them.
 1. God requires things out of me that I don't see Him require of some other highly anointed people that I know.
 2. IT IS A TEST! Will I obey His Spirit in me even when I do not understand?
- F. Be faithful in relationships.
 1. In marriage or in friendships

Do not talk unkindly about your spouse or friends, and do not expose their weaknesses to others. Be available when they need you. Try to understand them even though they may be very different from you. Be loyal. Stick with them during their “ugly” times.
 2. Be faithful to the Lord.

Revelation 2:10 (KJV) - . . . *be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

VI. Faint Not.

A. **Galatians 6:9** – Never give up!

1. **I Corinthians 16:9** – A wide door of opportunity opens unto us and with it comes many adversaries.
2. People experience opposition sometimes when they come to work for the ministry.
3. We experience opposition when we step out into new areas of ministry.

**NEW LEVEL – NEW DEVIL!!!
DON'T PANIC! THIS IS ONLY A TEST!**

4. Keep doing right.

B. **Hebrews 12:5** – Don't faint when God is correcting you.

C. **Hebrews 12:3** – Don't faint in your minds.

D. **I Peter 1:13** – Gird up the loins of your mind.

1. Put a girdle around your mind to keep it in place.
2. Be especially careful when you are tired or not feeling well.

E. **Isaiah 40:28-31** – Everyone feels faint at times. Run to Him immediately because He strengthens the faint and weary.

**GOD IS FAITHFUL, and it is required of stewards
that they be found faithful also!!**

**PASS THE FAITHFULNESS TEST,
SO GOD CAN PROMOTE YOU IN HIS TIMING.**

The Forgiveness Test

I. Great Men And Women Of God Have Passed The Forgiveness Test.

A. Genesis 50:16-21 – Joseph

1. When people can bless their enemies, they are walking in power.
2. The world has the opposite view. It says, “Get revenge; and if you don’t, you are weak.” Jesus was meek, and meekness is “strength under control.”

B. I Samuel 26:1-11 – David and Saul

1. David knew that eventually God would vindicate him.
2. Hebrews 10:30-31 – The Lord repays our enemies **IF** we wait on Him and refuse to move in the flesh.
3. Romans 12:14, 17, 19-21 – Let God vindicate you.

C. Passing the “loving the unlovely test”

II. Betrayed

A. II Samuel 15:1-6 – Absalom betrays David, and David passes the test.

B. Betrayal – When someone you love and trust turns against you or uses you to get something they want. A traitor. One who breaches confidence. To lead astray or deceive.

1. II Samuel 15:7-13 – Absalom steals the kingdom.
2. David left the city and let him have it.

3. David's counselor Ahithophel turned to Absalom and counseled him against David.
 - a. **II Samuel 15:12**
 - b. **II Samuel 15:31-32**
 - c. **II Samuel 16:21-23**
 - d. **II Samuel 17:1**
 4. Finally, David knew from God that he had to do something.
 - a. **II Samuel 18:1-5**
 - b. **II Samuel 18:6-15** – Absalom dies.
 - c. **II Samuel 18:24, 29, 33** – David grieves.
- C. Betrayal did not leave him bitter.
- D. **Matthew 24:10** – An increase of betrayal is a sign of the end times.
1. People betray friends to get a position – even in the church.
 2. Many pastors have experienced their associate pastors betraying them and leaving with part of the congregation.
 3. Wives betray husbands; husbands betray wives.
- E. Satan does not want us to be able to trust people.
1. **Matthew 24:12** – He seeks to build a stronghold of cold love.
- F. Jesus was betrayed by Judas.
1. **Luke 22:1-4** – Satan entered into Judas.
 2. **John 12:1-6** – Judas had a weakness. Judas was greedy and ambitious. Jesus gave him opportunity, and he failed his test.

3. **Matthew 26:21-25** – Judas acts innocent.
 4. **Matthew 26:47-50** – The betrayal scene
- G. **Ephesians 6:12** – We war not against flesh and blood.
- H. **Matthew 16:21-23** – Get thee behind Me, Satan.
1. Satan uses people’s weaknesses to try and prevent them from fulfilling God’s will for their lives.
 2. Satan uses people’s weaknesses to bring “emotional devastation.”

III. Jesus Prayed For His Crucifiers.

- A. **Luke 23:34** – *And Jesus prayed, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do . . .*
1. He cared more about what they were doing to themselves than He did about what they were doing to Him.
 2. Remember that Jesus had a resurrection. We will never experience true resurrection power unless we learn to forgive those who hurt us.
- B. **Job 42:7-10** – Job prayed for his friends who judged him, who did not stand with him in his pain, and who criticized him.
1. He received a double blessing.
 2. **Isaiah 61:7** – We receive a twofold recompense (reward) for former shame when we do things God’s way.
- C. Authority and willingness to forgive sins are closely linked.
1. To walk in new realms of power, we will need to **continually** pass the forgiveness test.

2. Many are without power due to unwillingness to forgive.
- D. Jesus had to forgive **continually**.
1. The Pharisees, disciples, the mockers, his critics, his brothers who thought He was demented, etc.
- E. **Proverbs 14:30** – Some are sick due to unwillingness to forgive.

IV. God Commands Forgiveness.

- A. He always leads by example as well as words.
1. He forgives us continually; His mercy endures forever. He is long suffering and slow to anger.
- B. **Deuteronomy 28:1-14** – Blessed if we listen diligently to the commandments and are watchful to do them
- C. **I Peter 4:8** – Love fervently; love covers and disregards offenses.
1. **Colossians 3:13**
 2. **Matthew 5:44-46**
 3. **Matthew 6:12, 14-15**
- D. **Mark 11:22-26** – Faith will not work unless we forgive.
- E. **Galatians 5:6** – Faith worketh (is energized) by love.

