

The Leadership Test

(Life's Tests That Reveal a Leader's Potential and Maturity)

“Examine me, O Lord, and try me; test my mind and heart.” (Psalm 26:2)

Nearly every moment of life is a test. However, there are “seasons of testing” that can be identified, understood and passed if we are alert. Leaders experience greater scrutiny, testing and judgment than followers do according to James 3:1.

BIBLICAL
BASIS

Think about it. Tests are common to all of us. Tests are given constantly in schools. Many products and appliances are tested before they are sold. Nearly every part of a new car is taken through intensive tests for safety and performance. When God tests leaders, He takes them through a crucial screening which reveals what they are made of. Passing the test is the pathway to progress and promotion.

A Definition for Testing:

Tests Reveal Three Truths:

1. _____ – The test reveals you have increasingly responded poorly and have failed to act obediently.
2. _____ – The test reveals you have not matured, but have become stagnant in your growth.
3. _____ – The test reveals you have grown and have responded better than ever.

CHECK YOUR
HEART

Question: Think of a test you have experienced recently. How did you respond?

Question: What have your recent tests revealed: Poverty? Plateau? Progress?



Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13

In this passage, Abraham is ushered into a “test of faith” to reveal the content of his heart. It is clear from the passage, as well as from the New Testament commentary on the same event in the book of Hebrews, that God did not intend to have Isaac executed. It was merely a test for his father, a test that he passed successfully, proving he had settled the issues of obedience and Lordship.

David, one of Israel’s greatest leaders, welcomed these tests in his leadership. Listen to his insight and note how aware he was of the need for testing:

Psalm 7:9

“... For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds.”

Psalm 17:3

“Thou hast tried my heart; Thou hast visited me by night; Thou hast tested me and dost find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.”

Psalm 26:2

“Examine me, O Lord, and try me; test my mind and heart.”

Psalm 139:23-24

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”

Clearly, tests are our friends. Leaders should welcome them. They tell us the truth, when other friends cannot or will not be so blunt. Paul the Apostle closes his final letter to the Corinthians with some sobering words:

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!” (II Corinthians 13:5)

Observe the positive result of tests from the book of James:

“Consider it joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect, or mature, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2-4)

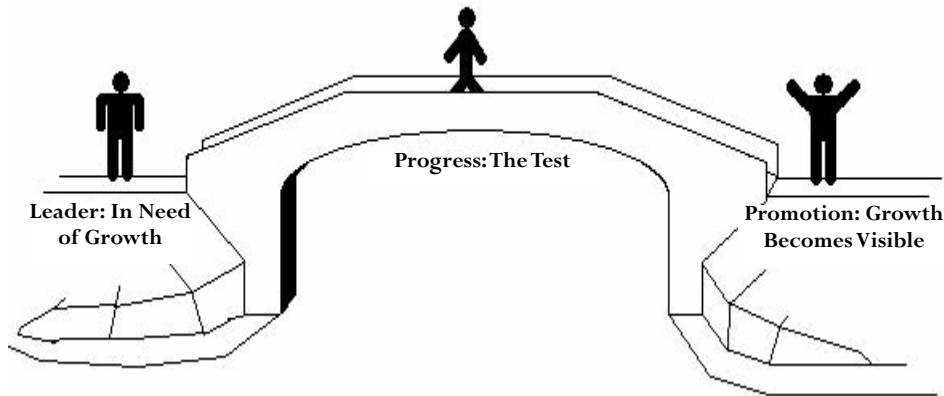
The Truth about Testing

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____

DIAGRAM

PROMOTION: Growth Becomes Visible



TRUTH IN A PICTURE

Ten Tests That Prove Leadership Potential and Maturity

1. _____ (Ephesians 5:16a / Luke 16:10)

This test comes to prove our faithfulness and potential for greater opportunities.

"... making the most of your opportunities, because the days are evil."(Ephesians 5:16)

"He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much."(Luke 16:10)

2. _____ (Job 1:9-11 / Matthew 6:5-6)

This test comes to the one who is doing right, to examine why they are doing it.

"Then Satan answered the Lord, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Hast Thou not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Thy hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse Thee to Thy face.'" (Job 1:9-11)

3. _____ (Luke 12:16-21 / Matthew 25:21)

This test proves how strategically and generously we handle the resources we presently control.

"And then He told them this parable: 'The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.' And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink and be merry!' But God said to him: 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'" (Luke 12:16-21)

KEY POINTS

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things...’”(Matthew 25:21)

4. _____ (Deuteronomy 8:15-16 / Psalm 42:1-4)

This test comes when you're spiritually dry to reveal your potential for change and growth.

“He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water... In the wilderness, He fed you manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you, in the end.”(Deuteronomy 8:15-16)

5. _____ (I Samuel 16:7 / Galatians 2:11-14)

This test displays our ability and integrity – to see if we compromise under pressure.

“But when Cephas (Peter) came to Antioch, I opposed (tested) him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they (the Jews) came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.”(Galatians 2:11-13)

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as a man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”(I Samuel 16:7)

6. _____ (I Samuel 24:2-20 / Galatians 2:1-9)

This test comes to expose your attitude and willing submission toward God-given authority.

“Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks and of the Wild Goats... And the men of David said to him, ‘Behold, this is the day the Lord said to you that He would give your enemy into your hand’... So David said to his men, ‘Far be it from me because of the Lord that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord’s anointed to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the Lord’s anointed.’ And David persuaded his men... and did not allow them to rise up against Saul.”(I Samuel 24:2,4,6-7)

7. _____ (Hebrews 12:14-15 / Mark 11:25-26)

This test comes to show you're not easily offended and are ready to forgive others.

“Pursue peace with all men... see to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled...”(Hebrews 12:14-15)

“And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.” (Mark 11:25-26)

8. _____ (Exodus 13:17 / Jeremiah 12:5)

This test exposes your ability to stand when you're in God's will and experience adversity.

"If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." (Exodus 13:17)

"If you have run with the footmen and they have tired you out, then how can you compete with the horses? If you fall down in the land of peace, how will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?" (Jeremiah 12:5)

9. _____ (Esther 4:14 / Galatians 6:9)

This test reveals the quality of your work, based on both opportunity and longevity.

"For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)

"And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary." (Galatians 6:9)

10. _____ (Luke 5:4-7 / Joshua 1:8)

This test usually occurs in one of your areas of strength. You find it difficult to trust God. It reveals your heart response to whom or what has the final authority in your life.

"And when Jesus had finished speaking, He said to Simon, 'Let down your nets for a catch.' And Simon answered and said, 'Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at Your bidding I will let down the nets.' And when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish; and their nets began to break; and they signaled to their partners in the other boat, for them to come and help them..." (Luke 5:4-7)

ASSESSMENT: Which of the tests have you experienced this year? Have you passed them?

ACTION PLAN

APPLICATION: Whatever test you are facing now, write down what you can do to exhibit your trust in God and your credibility to lead effectively.