

THE TRUE TEST OF LOVE

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In popular culture, the “test of love” is often distorted to mean demonstrating love through actions that are not always healthy or biblical. This emotional manipulation has often led people into situations of temptation that steer them away from God's purpose for their lives. However, as we examine what a true test of love means in the biblical context, we find a contrast to this worldly view.

And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else.

James 1:13 NLT

Scripture makes it clear that God does not tempt anyone. Temptation is a tool of the enemy, used to divert us from the path and separate us from the love of our Heavenly Father. It is a tool to lead us away from the good, pleasing, and perfect will of the Father. The enemy will use the difficult circumstances we face to tempt us, offering a way out that goes against the Word of God. Temptation comes from the enemy, and its purpose is to sow doubt and distrust toward God.

Temptation is ingenious. It uses the circumstances of our lives to question God's character and His love for us. It is designed to make us doubt and lead us to not believe that His ways are good, ultimately preventing us from giving God full control over our lives. In temptation, the enemy whispers in our minds, encouraging us to take an easy path that consciously distances us from the divine plan. It invites us to solve our problems by means that are not from God.

Example of Jesus in the Desert

But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the Lord your God.’”

“Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’”

Matthew 4:4,7,10 NLT

The story of Jesus in the desert is a clear reminder of how to face temptations. After 40 days of fasting, when He seemed the most vulnerable, Satan tempted him with promises of immediate satisfaction, power, and glory. However, Jesus responded with Scripture, confirming His confidence in the truth and goodness of God.

Jesus' strategy teaches us that the key to resisting temptation lies in knowing and trusting God's Word. Our response should be similar: “The Scriptures say.” We must turn our attention toward God, reaffirming our faith in His goodness and His absolute control over our lives.

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Romans 8:28 NLT

God promises to transform even the most difficult circumstances for our good. This is a truth we can affirm during trials. By resisting temptation and trusting in God's character, we not only strengthen our faith but also live lives that are closer to the fullness He desires for us. Remaining firm and constant in our faith is the true test of love toward God, which will lead us to experience the abundant life that He has promised.

Application

Recognize the voice of the enemy: learn to discern the thoughts and desires that distance you from God's will. When those thoughts arise, remember what God says in His Word and trust in His truth.

Recognize and anticipate possible temptations: Identify areas in your life where you are most vulnerable. By recognizing your weak areas, you can proactively avoid or better manage situations that have historically led you to temptation.

Reflection

In what areas of my life do I feel like the enemy is working to make me doubt God's goodness and control? What steps can I take to reaffirm my trust and strengthen my resistance to temptation? Where do I feel tempted to take shortcuts instead of waiting on God's promise and direction?