

Are You Going Through a Time of Testing?

Do you feel like you're going through a time of testing in your life? Are you struggling with a situation that you're tempted to just avoid, ignore or run away from because it's too hard to face head-on and overcome?

We all go through hard times and have to choose to trust God to help us deal with them and get through them or give up and give in to them. But if we give up, we won't move forward in life and experience God's best for us. We won't get promoted in any area of life.

God only knows what it took to get me from where I started to where I am today. It was hard, to say the least, to come out of the mess I came out of, being abused for so many years, and let God change my attitudes and teach me all the things I try to teach people from God's Word. Trust me, everything took a whole lot longer than I thought it would...and it was a lot harder than I thought it would ever be.

But I can tell you right now that I am grateful for every single thing I went through because in the process, I learned so many things that developed my character and prepared me to be a leader in ministry today.

I clearly recall the day when God spoke to my heart and said, "Joyce, I always want you to remember this: however many people I let you help, that's as many people as you can hurt." I had zero business being in a position of leadership until I passed my tests, became rooted in my relationship with Christ and developed the character to keep me there.

Whenever I see a young person quickly promoted to a key position of leadership, it concerns me, because if you don't have the character to go with the kind of attention that comes

with leadership...all you're going to do is create a huge mess. See, God promotes us *after* we pass our tests—not when we run away from them, ignore them or avoid them.

Thank God, He's faithful to help us do what we need to do to pass our tests when we keep our eyes on Him and trust Him. And just as He's faithful to us, He expects us to be faithful too.

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To be faithful means to be trusted, reliable, sure and worthy of confidence; firmly and devotedly supportive, loyal, worthy of trust, consistent, steady, constant and steadfast. In 1 Timothy 3, the apostle Paul tells Timothy how to determine who is fit to be a leader. Verse 10 says, "These men must first be tested; then if they are found to be blameless and beyond reproach [in their Christian lives], let them serve..." (AMP). You build trust in someone when you see how they respond to different situations over time and are "tested."

Faithful men and women of God humble themselves under the mighty hand of God and trust Him to promote them when He knows they are ready for it (see 1 Peter 5:6). Now, that sounds really spiritual, so I want to make it practical: You're going to be under some human authority that you probably don't like and that you probably don't always agree with. You may even feel they don't always treat you right. And God is going to ask you to serve faithfully in that position with a good attitude.

The truth is, the only way you're really going to know what you're doing is to go through some things and be faithful—stick with things, don't give up and run away and don't blame everyone else for your problems.

Proverbs 28:20 says, "A faithful (right-minded) man will abound with blessings..." (AMP). Faithful people are in it for

the long haul. Being faithful literally means you find out what is right and you do it over and over and over... Have you been faithful with your health? Do you take care of yourself or have you just abused yourself? Have you been faithful to take care of your possessions or does your car look like a trash can? Have you been faithful with your finances—to save some, spend some and give some—or have you just spent it all?

It's important for us to be excellent and do the best we can in every area of our lives so we can "abound with blessings" from God.

Be faithful during your tests, right where you are, and God will promote you in due time. If you will do what He's telling you to do, faithfully, then there's no person on earth and no devil in hell that can keep you from what God wants you to have and the destiny He has planned for your life.

If you will be faithful and diligent to do what is right—what you are supposed to do—then no one can keep you from the reward God has for you. God will promote you when you pass your test!

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