

Pastor's Pen

What's the Difference?

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. James 1:13

We know God does not tempt us, but he tests believers. What is the difference? James makes it clear that God cannot be tempted by evil, and because of that, he does not tempt anyone. However, earlier in the chapter, James tells us that testing our faith develops perseverance, which leads to maturity in our walk with God (James 1:3-4). James goes on to say that testing is a blessing because when the testing is over, and we have "stood the test," we will "receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him" (James 1:12). Testing comes from God, who works all things together for good for those who love Him and who are called to be the children of God (Romans 8:28).

God tested Adam in the Garden of Eden, but Satan tempted him to disobey. God tested Abraham by telling him to go and sacrifice his son Isaac, but Abraham would have been tempted to put his son above God by his sinful desires. God also tested Israel in the wilderness to know what was in their heart and whether they would keep his commandments or not (Deut. 8). Israel was certainly tested when they had no water and food. But God was not tempting them to complain and disobey. Instead, they were tempted to sin against God by their sinful hearts.

Back in the book of James, he writes, "*But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully matured, it brings forth death.*" (James 1:14-15). If you have ever fished, you know what bait or lure to use to catch what you are after. The same is true for men and women. There are particular sins that each of us is more susceptible to being "lured" into committing. If we are honest with ourselves, sin can be pleasurable. The ultimate results are not, but in the present, it can be very satisfying. If it weren't, it would be easy to avoid. However, every true believer feels remorse and seeks forgiveness when they sin.

We must understand that God tests us to increase our faith in Him. It teaches us to rely on Him more and more. Some trees like the white oak and walnut grow deep roots to find water. Other trees grow vast root systems to withstand strong winds and storms. When God tests you, your spiritual roots grow deeper and wider. To help fertilize the roots and be ready for the testing, we must do our part. Read and study your Bible. Serve your brothers and sisters in the local church. Be involved in discipleship. Memorize scripture and remember to pray without ceasing.

Be comforted in knowing that the testing we go through comes from God, and remember His grace is sufficient for us, and His power is made perfect in our weakness. Paul declared, *And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."* Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. He went on to write, *Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions and hardships, for the sake of Christ, for when I am weak, then I am strong.* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Your shepherd,
Pastor Mark

Quote of the Week

"The difference between true and false repentance lies in this: the man who truly repents cries out against his heart; but the other, as Eve, against the serpent, or something else.

-John Bunyan

Grace Gems

My Times Are in Your Hand

But I trust in you, O Lord; I say 'You are my God.' My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors! Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love! Psalm 31:14-16

Most of us are a mixture of emotions and experiences. The good, the bad, and the ugly wash over us regularly. The key issue is what we do with these feelings and experiences. How does being a believer shape the way in which we view our world? "My times are in your hand" is a six-word affirmation to remind Christians that despite disasters and difficulties, we are under the care of Almighty God.

In the opening verses of Psalm 31, it is apparent that David is in anguish. As we read on, we seem to find him in a position of assurance just a few verses later, only for him to return immediately to a state of distress. This cycle of pain and joy is not an unusual experience for the Christian pilgrim. In fact, the recurrence of disappointment and discomfort is fairly common along the path of faith.

In her book *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom tells the story of looking forward to her first railway journey. Although her trip was not for many weeks, she would regularly go to her father and ask him if he had the tickets. He would tell her over and over that he did. She realized that her problem was a lack of trust in her dad; she did not believe he would take care of everything. She was worrying that he would lose her ticket and that somehow she would be without it on the day she was to travel. In that lesson, she learned that God gives us the ticket on the day we make the journey and not before.[1] He, of course, is much better at keeping it safe than we are.

In our own pilgrimages through heartache, disappointment, the loss of loved ones, and personal failures, we can learn that this is indeed true. Therefore, we must trust Him. On the day we make the journey from time to eternity, if we know Christ, we know He will give us the ticket. If that day is today, then the ticket is on the way. If not, then what is the use in lying awake and letting our emotions control us and our worries crowd in on us?

We are not at the mercy of arbitrary, impersonal forces; we are in the hand of our loving God. He says to us, Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden. Come to Me with all your burdens, fears, panics, anxieties, and heartaches. Take My yoke upon you. Live underneath My loving rule, because My yoke is easy and My burden is light, and you will find rest for your souls, forever (see Matthew 11:28-30).

This is your security. Your times—short or long, rich or poor, sad or happy—are in His hand. He will give you good works to do each day, and then on your last day, He will bring you safely through to the place where your days are infinitely long, unimaginably rich, and unutterably happy.

- Alistair Begg



Weekly Gatherings



Bible Classes

Old Testament
New Testament
Young Parents
Young Adults
Sunday Morning @ 9AM



Weekday Meetings

Mondays | 7PM
Men's Bible Study
Every other Saturday:
Women of Grace | 9am



Family Groups

Thursdays @ 7PM
every other week @ Chambers, Cox's,
Patrick's and beginning 6/23 @ the
Brown's



Build the Body Teams

If you would like to serve on a BtB Team
and forgot to sign up, please contact the
team leader at the appropriate email
address.



Youth Study

Wednesdays @6:30PM
Youth Study



Service Times

Sunday Service 10:30AM
Children's Church @10:30AM

Giving from service on 6/12/2022

General Offering	6,948.80
Building Fund	1,164.60
Uganda	100.00
Total.....	8,213.40

Attendance	241
Sunday School	146
Online.....	22

Build the Body Ministries

Women's Ministry-women@ghbcva.org
AWANA-awana@ghbcva.org
Outreach Ministry-outreach@ghbcva.org
Worship Ministry-worship@ghbcva.org
Men's Ministry-men@ghbcva.org
Children's Ministry-children@ghbcva.org
Youth Ministry-youth@ghbcva.org
Prayer Team-prayer@ghbcva.org
Maintenance-maintenance @ghbcva.org
Fellowship-fellowship@ghbcva.org
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Grace Harvest Baptist Church

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