

Testing Your Faith

- I. Introduction:
 - a. How God Tempts:
 - i. (**James 1:13**) “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man”
 - ii. (**Gen 22:1**) “And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham”
 - iii. Tempt does not mean the same in both passages
 - 1. James means the solicitation of evil
 - 2. Moses means a testing
 - b. In all dealings with humans, God has had certain tests of faith to determine the loyalty of people to Him and to His word
- II. Two classes of Commands
 - a. Moral Commands
 - i. Commands that are moral in nature – they are given because they are right
 - ii. Examples:
 - 1. Thou shalt not kill
 - 2. Thou shalt not covet
 - 3. Thou shalt not steal
 - 4. Thou shalt not commit adultery
 - iii. Without these laws it would be impossible for life and society to continue – Therefore, they are right by their very nature
 - 1. Wouldn't be able to possess any property
 - 2. Life would have no value
 - iv. These commands did not become right when they were given on Mt. Sinai – already right
 - 1. (**Rom 7:13**) “...that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”
 - 2. Imagine going to another country that has different traffic laws. You are aware of certain basic concepts, but do not know the specifics. While you're driving in that country you may without knowledge break some of the traffic laws. You would be a violator and not even know it! Now imagine if you received a copy of their traffic laws. If you decided to break the traffic law you would be aware of your crimes.
 - 3. It was already a sin to break a moral command even before the command came – It was just as wrong to kill, steal, commit adultery before Sinai as it was after
 - v. There is no necessary test of one's loyalty to God in the mere fact that he keeps the moral law.
 - 1. One may keep all the moral commands and have no intention in honoring God

- vi. There's many reasons why one would keep the moral laws
 - 1. Because they want to maintain respectability
 - a. Must live in accordance to the standards and norms of society
 - 2. Because they don't want to suffer physically
 - a. They don't want to be imprisoned or punished
 - 3. Because they are just law-abiding
 - a. That's their temperament – they want to keep the law and be moral
 - vii. Not one of these classes does so because it wants to honor God
 - 1. God does not distinguish loyalty by the keeping of moral commands
- b. Positive Commands
- i. This class of commands do reflect honor to God – There is no other reason why one would obey these commands except to give God honor
 - ii. These commands are right ONLY because it was given – expression of the will of God
 - iii. Several types of laws would fall under this classification of commands
 - 1. There is a type of law where there is no visible connection between the thing commanded and the blessing promised
 - a. Illustration:
 - i. If someone asked me to work eight hours a day for 80 dollars, there would be a logical and reasonable connection between the 80 dollars and the 8 hours
 - ii. If someone asked me to stand on one foot for 20 minutes for 80 dollars, there would be no logical or necessary connection there.
 - b. This is how God's positive commands are.
 - Example of the Passover
 - i. **(Ex 12:7)** "...they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses..."
 - ii. **(Heb 11:28)** "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them."
 - iii. There is no logical connection with painting blood on the posts of the door and the salvation of your firstborn from the death angel. The reason why blessings came from doing this act is because God commanded it – Test of their faith
 - c. Example of Jericho

- i. **(Heb 11:30)** “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.”
 - ii. There is no logical connection with marching around a wall and it falling down – The reason why the blessing of the wall falling came is from doing the command of God – Test of their faith
- 2. There is a type of law where there is no visible connection between the thing commanded and the blessing promised, and the thing commanded is distasteful and obnoxious to some.
 - a. Example of Naaman (**2 Kings 5**)
 - i. **(2 Kings 5:9-10)** “So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.”
 - ii. **(2 Kings 5:12)** “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?”
 - b. Where’s the logical connection of the cure of leprosy and the dipping in the water of Jordan?
 - i. No record this has happened before nor after
 - ii. Power of God was in this arbitrary command! – Not in the river of Jordan
- 3. There is also a type of law where there is no visible connection between the thing commanded and the blessing promised and distasteful and obnoxious, and would, under any other circumstance be wrong!
 - a. Example of Abraham offering Isaac (**Gen 22:1-19**)
 - i. Ordinarily it is a sin to take human life
 - ii. Abraham was ready to be obedient to God
 - 1. **(James 2:20-21)** “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?”
 - 2. **(James 2:23)** “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

III. The Difference Between the Two Classes

- a. Moral Commands
 - i. Commends itself to the intelligence of the doer – can see the benefits of the command, approves it and deems it worthy to accomplish
- b. Positive Commands
 - i. Only reason why a person obeys them is because he wants to obey Him who commanded them.
 - ii. This is the only type of Command that truly tests your faith
- c. Difference Conclusion
 - i. If I do something because it commends itself to my judgment, I would be doing it not because God commanded it, but because it meets my approval. I would probably do it no matter who commanded!
 - ii. If I do something that I can't see any logical connection in the thing commanded and the thing promised, I'm doing it only because of the will of God – proof of loyalty – True testing of your faith
- d. Illustration:
 - i. A man, years ago, who lived over on the eastern seaboard when Kentucky was a wilderness, decided to move his family to Kentucky. He had several children and a grown son or so and he sent his oldest son ahead to prepare the way for the family, to build a crude log cabin, build a barn and dig a well so there would be some place for the family when it came. Before the son left, the father drew a crude diagram of how he wanted the thing arranged and showed the son where to build the log cabin and where to erect the barn and where to dig the well. The son took this diagram and when he reached the spot designated, he looked at the diagram and examined it and said, "Yes, my father is exactly right with reference to the house, that is where it ought to be built," so he built the cabin on the spot designated. He examined his diagram and he said, "Yes, he was right with reference to where the barn ought to be built," and so he built the barn at the spot his father had said. But when came to the well, he said, "This spot just doesn't make any sense to me. The well should be here at this spot." So he dug the well at the place that he thought it ought to be.
 - ii. Was the son obedient to his father?
 1. No – not in any sense! Two times he conformed to what his father said, but this was only because his judgment agreed with his father – He didn't do it because his father commanded it!
 2. When his will was not in agreement with his father's, he didn't hesitate to do his before his father's
 - a. (Matt 7:21) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;

but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

IV. Application for Us Today

- a. How does God test us today?
 - i. Through the Gospel of Christ
- b. Many do this same thing when looking at the gospel of Christ
 - i. Faith
 1. **(John 3:16)** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 2. **(John 3:18)** “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”
 - a. This command is logical – For one to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you ought to believe that he is Christ and came to save mankind!
 - b. This command commends itself to the intelligence of the doer
 - ii. Repentance
 1. **(Luke 13:3)** “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
 - a. This command is logical – For one to follow Christ they need to turn around their life and walk by the example of Jesus Christ
 - b. This command commends itself to the intelligence of the doer
 - iii. Confess
 1. **(Matt 10:32-33)** “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”
 - a. This command is also logical – For one to try to hold to Christ, but is ashamed to confess would be living in hypocrisy!
 - b. This command commends itself to the intelligence of the doer
 - iv. Baptism
 1. **(Mark 16:16)** “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - a. This command is not logical – Why would baptism bring salvation?
 2. **(Acts 2:38)** “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

- a. This command is not logical – Why would baptism bring to us remission (forgiveness) of sins?
- 3. People say, “I can see why we must have faith and why we must repent, but I just can’t see why baptism would have anything to do with salvation!” – That’s the POINT! - God is testing your faith!
 - a. Just as he did the Israelites in Egypt, Abraham, and Naaman
 - b. He commanded it; will you do it? And do it because he commanded, not because you deemed it worthy, or some denomination deemed it worthy.