

THE TEACHING
LEGACY
 OF DEREK PRINCE

Responding to Your Test

The blessings, promises, and privileges God provides for us as part of our inheritance in Christ are given to equip us to establish His Kingdom on earth. Jesus gave us the model prayer: “*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*” (Matthew 6:10, KJV). This is God’s first priority—and all through history it has never changed.

The blessings God gives, however, (as wonderful as they are and as much as they help us to accomplish in life), are not our end goal. God’s primary purpose is for us to reign with Him. As Jesus has promised in Revelation 3:21 (NAS):

He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Our ultimate destination is to be seated on the throne with Jesus Christ Himself, ruling and reigning with Him in eternity! The purpose of this Teaching Legacy series, *Preparing to Reign with Christ*, is to help us know how to step into this place of incredible responsibility.

Tests Are Unavoidable

We noted previously in this series that a higher level of maturity is required for us to reign with Christ—and that will inevitably include testing. The Apostle Peter confirms this fact: “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you” (1 Peter 4:12, NIV).

As Christians, you and I will undergo tests. They may come in many different forms: a crisis in our health or finances; a breakdown in a personal relationship; rejection or persecution because of our faith. In any time of testing, it is important to bear in mind that God is more concerned with our character than our achievements.

How then shall we respond to testing?

First, we must recognize that the test may be God’s chastening. If we fail to see this, we may mistakenly adopt a posture of resisting the devil instead of submitting to God. The root character problem this erroneous response exposes is **pride**.



Presumptuous Pride

In regard to this problem with pride, there is a helpful prayer at the end of Psalm 19:

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. (verse 12,13)

What are *secret faults*? I have come to see that they are not secrets we keep from other people, much less from God. They are secret to ourselves—unrecognized faults in our own character. David describes them as *presumptuous sins*—sins we commit when we *presume* that our conduct is acceptable to God, when in fact it offends Him.

Very often, God will not reveal such sins to us until we deliberately choose to humble ourselves, sincerely inviting Him to lay bare our inmost motives.

Four Benchmarks

How do we make that invitation? Here, briefly, are four measures to ensure we are making the proper response to the Lord.

Benchmark #1: Repentance

Repentance is perhaps the least emphasized Christian doctrine among contemporary preachers. “Only believe” may be a sweet-sounding message—but it is not scriptural. From the beginning to the end of the New Testament, the message is this: *First repent, then believe.*

A simple illustration of true repentance is making a U-turn in a vehicle. You recognize you are heading the wrong way, so you stop and make a U-turn. After that, you proceed in the opposite direction. If you do not end up traveling in the opposite direction, you have not truly repented.

Benchmark #2: Commitment

According to Romans 10:9, there are two essential conditions for salvation: to believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and to confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord.

When you confess Jesus as Lord, you give Him unrestricted control over your whole life: your time, your money, your talents, your priorities, your relationships. You cannot hold anything back. As the saying goes, “If Jesus is not Lord of all, then He is not Lord at all.”

Benchmark #3: Attitude toward Scripture

Satan brought about the downfall of our first parents when he enticed them into questioning the truth of God’s word: “*Has God indeed said?*” (Genesis 3:1). Jesus Himself set the seal of His divine authority upon the Scripture when He called it *the word of God* and added, “*the Scripture cannot be broken*” (John 10:35). Paul stated categorically, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*” (2 Timothy 3:16).

To question the authority of Scripture is a mistake none of us can afford. It is the path to disaster—today, just as surely as it was in the garden of Eden.

Benchmark #4: Right Relationships

Right doctrine is the basis of the Christian faith. But right doctrine rightly applied will produce right relationships. Our personal relationships should reflect the doctrine we profess.

Jesus Himself placed great emphasis on maintaining right relationships. He gave clear guidelines for dealing with a brother who sins against you (see Matthew 18:15-17). In the Sermon on the Mount, He warned, “*Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him*” (Matthew 5:25). And He closed His model prayer with a solemn warning: “*But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*” (Matthew 6:15).

In any time of testing, we should be careful to check our attitudes and our relationships. We must make sure we are not harboring any bitterness, resentment, or unforgiveness in our hearts.

Our Supreme Example

As we consider a proper response to testing, let’s look at the supreme example: Jesus Himself. The Savior “*was in all points tempted [tested] as we are, yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15). To follow His example requires that we “*lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and...run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher [perfecter] of our faith*” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

It is not sufficient only to deal with areas of our lives that are actually sinful. We must also eliminate *weights*—behaviors that may not be sinful in themselves, but yet hinder us from concentrating every effort on our service for Christ.

A runner in a race strips down to the bare minimum. He does not carry one ounce of unnecessary weight. We must do the same. Here are some of the pursuits we may need to eliminate: social obligations that have no spiritual significance; sentimental attachments to people,

places or pets; excessive concern with the stock market, sports, or fashion; worries about money, health, family, or politics.

Concerning each pursuit to which we devote time and attention, we need to ask two questions: *Does it glorify Jesus? Does it build me up spiritually?*

Endurance Is Essential

Throughout the Scriptures, we see one essential character requirement: endurance. With many Christians, however, this is not a popular subject. In my times of preaching, whenever I would announce that my theme was to be *endurance*, I would hear very few “Hallelujahs” in response. If I went on to say, “Let me tell you how to cultivate endurance,” people listened eagerly, anxious to learn the secret. Here is what I would tell them: “There is only one way to cultivate endurance, and that is by enduring.” This was almost always greeted by an audible, collective groan. Expressed in words, that groan said: “You mean there isn’t any other easier way?”

No, there is no easier way! Endurance is an essential element of victorious Christian living—and it can only be cultivated by enduring. Once we accept this fact, we can respond rightly to each test that comes our way. We can “*count it all joy, knowing that the testing of [our] faith produces patience [endurance]*” (James 1:2-3).

But we must “*let patience [endurance] have its perfect work*” (James 1:4). In other words, we must continue to endure until God’s purpose has been accomplished, and He brings the test to an end.

The Steps We Take

Regarding endurance, Peter lists in 2 Peter 1:5–7 seven successive “steps” which lead upward from the foundation of *faith* to the supreme completion of Christian character: *agape love*. These are the seven steps: ***virtue (moral excellence); knowledge; self-control; perseverance (endurance); godliness; brotherly kindness; love.***

This list makes it clear that self-control is an essential prerequisite for endurance. Every test of endurance is also a test of self-control. Any weakness in our personality will be exposed when we are confronted with the challenge to endure. It is a tragic fact that many Christians never succeed in these two stages: self-control and endurance. Consequently, they never progress to the higher Christian virtues in the remaining three steps: *godliness, brotherly kindness, love.*

As we close, let’s remember a Scripture from a previous teaching letter: “*Blessed is the man who endures temptation [testing]; for when he has been proved [approved], he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him*” (James 1:12).

Is it your desire to receive that crown of life? If so, let’s join in the following prayer together:

Lord, with all my heart, I yield my life entirely to You. In Your great wisdom, You have planned the exact tests I need. Please help me to embrace each test. Teach me how to endure. I want to pass the tests, Lord Jesus, so I may reign with You in this life and the next. Amen.



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This message is taken from the Derek Prince teaching series entitled *Preparing to Reign With Christ*. For further study, we recommend the CD “4053 Endurance.”

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