

Learning To Trust God

Philippians 4:19

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Throughout the Scripture God has promised to meet your needs – emotional needs, financial needs, physical needs, spiritual needs, relational needs, every need of your life. In fact, one of the Hebrew names of God is Jehovah Jirah, which means, “I am the God who provides for you.” Over and over God says, “I will meet all your needs.”

One of the promises He gives is in Philippians 4:19, “My God will supply all that you need (notice the word “all”) from His glorious resources in Christ Jesus.” That is a pretty blanket statement. He says, “I will meet all your needs.”

What does this include? Everything.

The problem is this. You look around and obviously not everybody’s need is met. In reality many times our needs seem to go unmet. **What is the problem?** Is God *lying*? Is God *exaggerating* the point? **Is He just saying something that sounds real nice but is not true?** Why is it that sometimes my needs seem to go unmet?

The Bible tells us that with every promise there is a condition. There is a *premise* with every *promise*. **One of the conditions for this promise is you have to trust Him.** **The more you trust God, the more God is able to meet needs in your life.** The less you trust God the fewer needs He is able to meet in your life. The Bible says there is a faith factor involved. In Matthew 9:29, Jesus made this bold statement, “According to your faith it will be done unto you.” God says, “You get to choose how much I bless your life. It is according to your faith. You get to choose how many needs I meet in your life. It is according to

your faith. The more you trust Me, the more needs I can meet. The less you trust Me, the fewer needs I can meet.”

The obvious question then is how can I learn to trust God more so He can meet all of my needs? How can I learn to have greater faith?

Faith is an interesting substance. You don't get it by setting in a Bible study group. You don't get it by just talking about it. You don't get it by just thinking and hoping and wishing. **Faith is like a muscle.** That means it develops by being used. The more you use a muscle the stronger it gets. **The more you use the little faith that you have, the more it gets stretched.** And the more it gets stretched, the more God is able to bless your life.

We call the circumstances that come our way and causes us to stretch our faith, “trials.” And the Bible says in 1 Peter 1:7, “These trials are only to test your faith to show that it is strong and pure.” And the Bible tells us that just as fire purifies gold and silver that it is during the storms of life that God is able to develop our faith.

In this segment, I want to look at four of the most common trials. Chances are some of you are in one of these tests right now. Whether you are or not, I guarantee you, over your life you will go through these four tests over and over again. When you go through them you can know, “This is an opportunity for me to develop my faith so I can trust God more so He can bless my life more.”

1. **The pressure test.** The pressure test asks the question, “How will I handle stress?” Will I depend on *myself* or will I depend on *God*? Will I turn to other things or will I turn to God? Psalm 50:15 says, “I want you to trust Me in your times of trouble so I can rescue you and you can give Me glory.” God says, “I want you to turn to Me when you are in trouble, not to other things.” **Do we do that?** No. We usually have God about number nine or ten on the list. We turn to everything else first to relieve stress before we turn to God.

Some people say, “When I get under stress I know what I need. I need one of those little pills. I go to my medicine cabinet and get that little pill and then I won’t be stressed.” **That might be your answer, but it doesn’t last.**

Some people say, “I know what I will do. I am all tense and nervous and stressed out by my problems. I will call a friend and complain about my problems.” **You call a friend and talk on the phone and complain about all the stress in your life, hang up, and you are still under stress.**

Some people say, “I know what I will do! I will make some nachos!” **So you make some nachos and nuke them in the microwave and you eat them all and when you are through your belly is full but you still have the same problems and you are still stressed.**

Some people say, “I know what I will do. I will go shopping. When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping.” **Or if you are a man you say, “I know what I will do. I will set down and watch a game on TV. Or I will work out or something.”**

We all have our own little stress relievers. And along about ninth or tenth place comes God. God says, “I want you to turn to Me.” When you are under stress, it is a great time to develop your faith.

We all have legitimate needs in our life that need to be met. The problem is you get in a hurry. If God does not instantly meet that need, we make up our own plan. And we try to meet our own needs ourselves. We do this all the time. We short-circuit God’s will, God’s blessing in our lives by going for the quick fix, the cheap thrill, the instant hit, the quick relief that is temporary – a little temporarily fix. And we are all guilty of this at one time or another. We simply do not wait for God’s will in our lives.

God says this in Jeremiah 2:13, “My people have done two evils. They have turned away from me the spring of living water and they’ve dug their own wells which are broken wells and cannot hold water.” **Imagine this: You are walking through the Sahara Desert for two days with no water and no shade.** Your throat is parched. You are dying of thirst. **Your tongue has grown thick.** You think you are going to die if you do not get some water. As you come up over a sand dune you see this roadside stand with a big neon sign and arrows pointing down that says, “God’s free unlimited, everlasting, fulfilling, living water.” **But do you walk up and ask for a drink?** No! You walk right on past it and say to a guy standing there, “Can I borrow a shovel?” and you start digging your own well. You are determined to get your own water, your way.

Even worse than that, you have the audacity that as you are digging the well to ask God to bless your well. Have you ever done that? Yes, you have!

You go out and get into some relationship you know is wrong and then you pray, “God, please bless this relationship.”

Or you go out and buy things you do not need with money you do not have to impress people you do not like and you get over extended in credit and deeply in debt and then come back and say, “God, bless my finances. I have this financial need.”

We do this all the time, but it is nothing new. Abraham was promised a baby, a son, who would be the father of a great nation. As Abraham got older, nothing happened. **He had no kids.** His wife Sarah was past her childbearing years so he thinks, “I am going to dig my own well. I will make my own plan. I will take matters into my own hands.” **He took Sarah’s handmaiden, her servant girl and had a child through her.** Hagar got pregnant and had a baby. They named him Ishmael and he holds him up and says, “God! Here is the

miracle boy!” God says, “No! That is your plan. That is the well you dug. I have a baby over here named Isaac and he is coming next year.”

How many times do we do this? We get in a hurry. We figure out our own plan to meet our needs and ask God to bless that plan. **God is not going to do it.** God is not going to bless that relationship that you have tried to force on God. God is not going to bless all those other plans you have tried to force on Him.

Some of you right now are struggling with financial pressure in your life and the temptation is to cut corners, to be unscrupulous, stop tithing, cheat on your taxes, do an unethical business deal. Anything to get out of debt. You are digging a well that is not going to hold water.

Some of you are under enormous emotional pressure. You do not turn to God. You reach for that bottle! **Or you go to the medicine cabinet for those prescription medicines.** And you are digging a well that is not going to hold any water. It is a quick fix. It does not solve the problem.

What is the antidote? Isaiah 50:15b says, “If you are walking in darkness without a ray of light, trust in the Lord, and rely on your God.”

This is a test! God is waiting to see if, when you are under stress, are you going to turn to Him or are you going to turn to other things? It is an opportunity to develop your faith. Will you trust Him?

2. The people test. God often uses people in your life to test and stretch and develop your faith. This test is “How will I handle disappointment?” **Life is often disappointing.** Things do not always turn out the way we planned them. Careers do not turn out the way you plan them. **Marriages do not turn out the way you plan them.** Plans do not turn out the way you plan them! The fact is, life is disappointing a lot of the time.

But the most disappointing thing in life is people. Why do we get so disappointed by people in life? **The answer is simple: we get disappointed by people when we expect them to meet a need in our life that only God Himself can meet.** **When you turn to a boyfriend or a girlfriend or a father or a mother or a husband or a wife or a friend and you expect them to meet all your needs, you are setting yourself up for massive, massive disappointment.** God never intended that for anybody! Nobody could possibly meet all your needs. **And when they let you down, you think, “What is wrong with you?”** **The problem is not with them, the problem is with you.** You put an expectation on them that they could not possibly fulfill.

This is a test! Some of you have thought in the past, “If only I could get married, then I would be fulfilled and satisfied.... If only my wife/my husband would change, then all my problems would be solved.... If only my children were different – like their children next door – then I would be so contented.... If I had just had different parents, life would have been a whole lot grander.”

Your problem is not the people in your life. Your problem is your response to the people in your life. People are not the problem and they are not the answer to the problem either. **The answer to your insecurity is not another person.** The answer to your inferiority is not another person. **The answer to your worries and your fears is not another person.** **The answer to your depression and despair and discouragement is not another person.** The answer to your sense of failure is not another person. **And the answer to your meaninglessness in life, your lack of purpose and your boredom with life, your deep dissatisfaction is not another person.**

The answer is God. When you expect other people to be your savior, you are setting yourself up for disappointment.

Isaiah 2:22 reads like this in the Hebrew, “You should stop trusting in people to save you because people are only human.” **Don’t expect a person to be the answer to all your problems.** It is not going to happen. If you do that you are going to set yourself up. **There is only one Savior, and that is Jesus Christ.** Stop expecting anyone or anything else to come along and be your savior.

Jeremiah 17:7 says, “Blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made Him (not other people) their hope and confidence.” **What happens if you do this?** Look at God’s promise in Isaiah 49:23, “Anyone who trusts in Me will not be disappointed.”

Do you know why you are disappointed? Because you are trusting in other things besides God. You thought, “This experience will make me happy,” and it didn’t so you are disappointed. Then you thought, “This person in my life will meet my needs,” so now you are disappointed. Or you thought, “If I could just achieve this level of success and achievement, then I will be happy and satisfied,” and it didn’t make you happy and satisfied and you are disappointed. **This person, this event, this thing... if I can just buy this car...and then it disappointed you.** Any time you are disappointed, it is a warning light that you have trusted in something else for your happiness besides God. It is a big red light that says you’ve got your values misplaced.

I love what Emily Kingsley says about disappointment and handling disappointment. She is talking about the disappointment when your kids do not turn out the way you thought they ought to turn out – particularly a handicapped child. But this has far more implication than just for parents. She says, “I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability. To try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it and to imagine how it would feel. It is like this: When you are going to have a baby, it is like planning a fabulous vacation to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans. You are going to see the

coliseum, the Cistine chapel, the gondolas. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian and it is all very exciting. After several months of preparation and anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go to Italy. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland." "Holland?" you say. "I signed up for Italy. I am supposed to be in Italy. All my life I have dreamed of going to Italy." But there has been a change in the flight plans and they have landed in Holland and there you must stay. The important thing to remember is they have not taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place filled with pestilence, famine and disease. It is just a different place. So you must go out and buy new guidebooks and you must learn a whole new language and you must meet a whole new group of people that you would never have met before. It is just a different place. It is slower paced than Italy and it is less flashy than Italy. But after you have been there for a while and you catch your breath, you begin to look around and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills. And Holland has tulips. And Holland even has Rembrandts. But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy and bragging about what a wonderful time they have had there. And for the rest of your life you will say, 'Yes, that is where I was supposed to go. At least that is what I had planned.' And the pain of that experience will never, ever, ever go away. The loss of that dream is a very significant loss. But, if you spend your life mourning the fact that you did not get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy that very special, very lovely thing about Holland."

That principle applies to a lot more than just being disappointed in a child. Some of you on your wedding day stood at the altar and you thought you were going to Italy. Am I right? **And you thought,** "I am going to Italy!" **And today you think you went to Bangladesh!** And if the truth were known there has some massive disappointment. **You hide it. You put on the smiley face.** But things have not turned out the way you intended them to be, the picture book story, fairy tale ending, happily ever after.

This is a test! It is the people test. Are you going to handle disappointment by complaining and griping and crying and grieving and worrying. **Or are you going to accept that God knows what is best; that God has a loving plan for your life; that God loves you and knows what you need more than you do; that He's in control.** And that even the disappointments in your life have a positive purpose whether you understand it or not. It's a test. Are you going to trust God with the things that disappoint your life?

The Bible says in Isaiah 49:23b, "Anyone who trusts in Me will not be disappointed."

3. The persistence test. Will I keep my commitments? Life is about making commitments. **Your life is shaped by your commitments.** Your character is developed by your commitments. Your success is influenced by your commitments. **Your eternal destiny is determined by your commitments so you had better choose what you are committed to very carefully: heaven and hell are in the balance.** You become whatever you are committed to. The problem we have today is that most people are half committed to two dozen things instead of being totally committed to the one or two things in life that really matter for now and eternity. **That is a waste!**

If you are going to develop any skill or any maturity, for that matter, you have got to learn to make and keep commitments. Let's say you want to learn a musical instrument – to play the piano. That is not automatic. You do not just sit down and it is instantaneous. **To learn to play any instrument or develop any skill it takes practice and more practice and more practice, which takes persistence, which takes discipline, which requires commitment.** The hallmark of emotional and spiritual maturity is you make and you keep wise commitments.

There is a word for the uncommitted person: selfish, immature. Immaturity shows itself in the inability to make and keep commitments.

Some of you need to understand that any commitment that really matters is not always easy. They are all hard if they are important. So you can expect your commitment will be tested.

Some of you may be in the commitment test right now. Your marriage vows are being tested. Is it really going to be “Til death do us part.”? I made a vow in front of people and before God, “Til death do us part.” Am I going to keep that commitment or am I going to walk out and get involved in another relationship?

Some of you may be having your personal integrity tested right now. You know the right thing to do but are you going to do the easy thing and the convenient thing, the popular thing, the thing that everybody else wants to do? It is a test. It is a test of your character.

Ecclesiastes 5:4 says, “If you make a promise to God don’t be slow to keep it. God is not happy with fools, so give God what you promised.” **What commitments have you made to God that you have failed to follow through on?** Read your Bible every day? Tithe? Join a church? Get involved in small group? Find a ministry? Share with your neighbors about Christ? **What commitments have you made to God that you have not followed through with?** This is a test of your character and your faith.

Ecclesiastes 8:5 says, “The wise man will find a time and a way to do what he says.” **The wise person figures out a way to keep his or her commitments.** The weak person cops out. The weak person says, “I made that commitment but I am tired of the same old routine. I made that commitment back then but that was before I met someone else. I made that financial commitment, but they already have enough money for that project. I made that commitment, but after all, times and

circumstances have changed.” **Weak people give excuses.** Wise people find the time and way to do what they say they will do. Do you want to be a weak person or do you want to be a wise person? This is a test. It is a test of the kind of character you are going to develop.

This is one of the major faults in our society today. People give up in the test before hanging in there to make it through. They give up too soon. People have one little marriage problem: “I cannot handle this. I do not deserve this. I have got to get out of this relationship.” **And they walk away.** Just because they are having a tough time. “I cannot afford to tithe. I am in financial pressure.” So they walk out on that commitment. “I cannot afford to do the right thing in the business because if I do the right thing I will lose my job.” This is a test. It is a test of your character and a test of your faith.

The Bible says in Psalm 15 that, “God blesses the person who keeps his vows even when it hurts.” That is the kind of person God blesses and it is a test.

4. The priorities test. This is the most important test of all. You will have this one many, many times. **The priorities test in life is: Who will be first in my life? What will be first in my life?** One of the great promises of the Bible deals with this test. Matthew 6:33 reads like this in the Greek, “Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs and He will give you all you need from day to day if you live for Him and make the kingdom of God your primary concern.”

You have legitimate needs in your life. You have some financial needs. You have some emotional needs. **You have some relational needs.** You have some physical needs. You have some spiritual needs. **They are legitimate and they are real.** God has promised to meet every one of those needs if you put Him first in every area of your life.

You may say, “I have got Jesus Christ as first place in my life.” **Saying that means nothing.** You may say, “God is number one in my life.” **That means nothing.** How do you know if God is really first priority in your life?

I ask myself three questions:

1. **What do I think about the most?** When I have free time what does my mind naturally wander toward? Whatever you think about the most is what is the most important thing in your life.

2. **Where does my money go first?** The Bible says, “Where your treasure is, your heart will be also.” It determines your priorities. It reveals them.

3. **How do I spend my time?** That reveals the priorities in my life.

Show me your checkbook stubs and show me your calendar and I will tell you what is really first in your life. I don’t care what you say is number one, what you say you value, what you think is most important. The way you spend your time and the way you spend your money and what you think about most often is what’s really top in your life. That is why in Deuteronomy 14:23 (Living Bible) it says, “The purpose of tithing is to teach us to put God first in every area of our life.”

Let me bring this segment to a close by asking you to think about your greatest need. It maybe an emotional need, a relational, physical, whatever. Get that need in your mind and then let me as you this: Which of these four tests are you going through right now that will allow God to develop your faith and character?

Are you going through the *pressure test*? And is He seeing how am I going to handle stress? Turn to Him or turn to other things to relieve my stress?

How about the *people test*? How are you handing a disappointment? Are you complaining about it? **Are you griping about it?** Or are you realizing that God is a loving God and He knows best for you. Maybe you are trusting in the wrong thing because anyone who trusts in God will not be disappointed.

How about the *persistence test*? Are you keeping your commitments? Everybody starts off great at the beginning of the marathon but they start giving out about half way through. Are you keeping your commitments to other people and even to God?

And what about the *priorities test*? What is really first in your life? Not just what you say, but what is really first?

Some of you are saying, “I don’t think I am going to pass this test. Any of them. Because I am tired, worn out, weak, and fatigued. I don’t think I have the will power or energy to make this thing last.” **What do you do?**

Look at God’s promise in Isaiah 30:15, “This is what God says: ‘If you come back to Me and trust Me you will be saved and you will be strong.’” **Notice two things: salvation and strength.** You will be saved and you will be strong. God says, “You will have the strength you need to do the right thing if you come back to Me and trust Me.” That is a promise.

Not only that, but God has eternal rewards in store for you if you pass these tests, as seen in James 1:12, “God blesses those who patiently endures testing. Afterwards they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those that love Him.” **What is a crown of life?** A symbol. A crown of life is a symbol of all that God wants to do in your life, all the blessings He wants to bestow on you, all the needs He wants

to meet, all the rewards He wants to give you in heaven. **It is all that God has planned for you if you will just trust Him.** It is a symbol – the crown of life. God has eternal rewards when we pass the great tests of life. **When you depend on Christ when you are under stress, when you trust God's plan when you are disappointed, when you keep your commitments even when it hurts, when you put God first in your thoughts and in your money and in your time (your schedule and your budget) God says two things: *One, I will meet all your needs. Two, I will give you eternal rewards in heaven.*** **What a deal!**