

The Test of Pressure

Wade E. Taylor

Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.—Job 5:7

Salvation does not exempt us from the everyday problems of life. Those who are fully committed to the Lord often find themselves entangled in ongoing difficulties. Finally, a release comes, only to find that another pressure has taken the place of the one that was resolved. There is a reason for these difficulties. Therefore, we should view them as servants, placed in our circumstances to accomplish a higher purpose.

Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, **with difficulties**, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.—II Corinthians 12:10
Only as we refuse to allow these *seemingly* unending pressures and difficulties to hinder us, and instead rise above or overcome them, will we be able to successfully "press toward the mark" for the prize that our Lord has made available for us – our becoming His Bride.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus... **I press toward the mark** for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Philippians 3:12-14

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His Bride has made herself ready.**" And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.—Revelation 19:7-8

How We Can Make Ourselves Ready

We may ask, "How can we make ourselves ready?" This is accomplished as we respond appropriately to the circumstances, testings, and disciplines of obedience that we face, and **recognize them as the means to prepare us.** As we "press toward the mark for the prize," we are "making ourselves ready." Therefore, it is important that we respond in heart obedience, looking to the Lord for a way through these difficult times.

Those who have submitted the totality of their being to the Lord, and are seeking His highest, are "potentially" His Bride (that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended). Not one of us can say, "I am the Bride," as the Bridegroom chooses who will sit with Him on His

throne, as His Bride. Our part is to make ourselves so desirable that we will be chosen in that day, having made ourselves ready for the "marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:7-8).

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind **(the ongoing pressures we face in our daily life experience)**, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus.—Philippians 3:13-14 (comment added)

Just as a young woman anticipates her wedding day and prepares herself, so also the Bride of our Lord Jesus Christ is to prepare for this day. She is to "clothe herself" in fine linen, clean and white. This speaks of the "righteous acts of the saints" in which she **actively faces and overcomes** the problems and pressures of life.

It is the "overcomer" who will sit with Jesus in His Throne, as His Bride.

To him who overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.—Revelation 3:21

This process will be effective only when we accept the fact that these pressures have been placed in our daily life experience to "press" us into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. A permanent press in our slacks requires both heat and pressure.

All the commandments which I command you this day you shall be watchful to do, that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers. And you shall [earnestly] remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and to prove you, to know what was in your [mind and] heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.—Deuteronomy 8:1-2

In foreknowledge, the Lord knows whether we will persevere to receive this prize of sitting with Him in His Throne, but this is not enough. We must respond and do our part. Therefore, He will take us through diverse experiences so we ourselves can make the necessary decisions to rise above and overcome these pressures.

We Must Recognize Our Dependence is to Be On the Lord Himself

The Lord may permit us to remain without satisfaction for a time, while our problems linger without an apparent solution. If we were quickly or easily released from these and given an uncluttered pathway, we would relax and feel that we had arrived. There would be little inner change or spiritual progress, as we would be resting in the blessings and provision that we received, rather than "pressing toward the mark for the prize" (our becoming His Bride).

Sometimes the Lord places us under a ministry that is less than we would wish. He may even cause a spiritually mature and capable minister to appear to be "dumb" concerning our problems. Thus, we will be forced to seek the Lord.

For example, I approached Walter Beuttler concerning a very troublesome problem. I became confused, because although he had an outstanding walk with the Lord, he was unable to help me. Later, as I sought the Lord under extreme pressure, the Word began to expose my true need, rather than giving me what I wanted – a pat on the back and a rebuke for the other person involved.

And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know...—Deuteronomy 8:3

Only then could I truly recognize my dependence was to be on the Lord Himself.

"For Whom the Lord Loves He Chastens, and Scourges Every Son Whom He Receives"

And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."—Hebrews 12:5-6

We are chastened when we do something that we should not be doing, and as a concerned Father, the Lord deals with us. Whenever I am spiritually spanked and corrected, I rejoice, as the Word says, "Whom the Lord **loves**, He corrects."

The Lord is hindered in chastening us when we have not surrendered to Him the right to all that we are and have. In the Garden of Eden, Adam gave up his dependence on the Lord and chose to become independent by eating from the tree of (self) knowledge. Later, an animal was slain and Adam was covered with its skin. He was forgiven, but he had eaten, and now the "right to choose for himself" was within him.

Although we are forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, we also still have within us the right to our own lives, as we also "ate" of the tree of self-knowledge.

When I saw this, I carefully gave back to the Lord the right to do as I please. Jesus is my Savior, but now He is more than this – He has become my Lord. Therefore, I can place myself under His headship and ask Him to chasten me, that I might enter into and possess all that He has for me.

As we rightly respond to the process of being tested and corrected, we grow spiritually and enter into our spiritual identity as a mature son. Now we are ready to be scourged, which is beyond our being chastened, as the Word tells us that "every son whom the Lord receives, He scourges" (Hebrews 12:6).

I am chastened when I do something wrong. Our being scourged has nothing to do with any wrongdoing. Rather, it has to do with the reduction of our independence and is an indication that we are doing everything right (every son He receives). Scourging reaches into the very depth of our being and crucifies our self-life (our right to our own ways), and removes our propensity toward all self-sufficiency.

A spirited horse has to be broken before it can be ridden. This is done, not because the horse has done something wrong, but so it can become productive. **Likewise, scourging has to do with our becoming a yielded vessel in the hand of the Lord.**

John W. Follette once said that there are few who minister out of a broken spirit. This is because there are few who are willing to go through the process of being reduced, through scourging. We may feel that we do not deserve the problems that we find in our pathway, and this is true. **But they are there because the Lord is seeking to make us far more capable and useful to Him in the outworking of His purposes.**

Only then can the Lord trust us with receiving an impartation of His glory and the end-time authority, which is about to be released.

And to him who overcomes and obeys My commands to the very end, I will give authority over the nations of the earth. And he shall be their shepherd, ruling them with a rod of iron, just as earthenware jars are broken to pieces; and his power over them shall be like that which I Myself have received from My Father.—Revelation 2:26-27 WEY

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