Testing the Genuineness of Our Faith
1 Peter 1:3-9

Introduction:
A. Christians walk by faith rather than sight (cf. 2 Cor. 5:7).
   2. Faith in an unseen inheritance (vv. 3, 4)
B. Christians need a genuine and enduring faith (v. 7).
   1. Not none that is half-hearted or self-serving — but deeply committed.
   2. Not one that will abandon or compromise for immediate advantage.
C. The Lord has ways of testing the genuineness of our faith.
   1. Indirectly through Satan (cf. Job).
   2. Directly through His word (cf. Abraham).
D. We will discuss four avenues by which God tests the genuineness of our faith:

Discussion:
I. The Suffering Inflicted by Satan.
A. Peter views Satan as a “roaring lion” rather than cunning deceiver. (5:8,9)
   1. Inflicting suffering by oppressive authorities — civil and domestic.
   2. Inflicting suffering by ungodly world in general.
   3. Inflicting both physical and psychological suffering (2:20; 4:4,14)
B. Peter views the suffering (mistreatment) as a test of their faith (1:6; 4:12)
   1. Would they abandon or compromise our faith?
   2. Would they react as Christians should? (2:19-24; 4:14-16)
   3. Will they use it as excuse to rebel against authority? (2:13-17).

II. The Seduction Offered by Satan.
A. Satan is also pictured as a cunning deceiver (Gen. 3:1; 2 Cor. 11:14, 15; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10)
   1. Can make sin seem right and harmless.
   2. Can make sin so inviting.
B. Satan’s seductions are a test of our faith.
   1. Have to choose between immediate pleasure of sin and future reward of faith.
   2. Have to choose between taking God at his word or rationalizing our way around it.
C. Satan’s seductive power defeated by a genuine love for the truth. (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9-12).

III. The Strife Inspired by Satan. (cf. 1 Cor. 11:19).
A. Can serve to separate the “men from the boys” spiritually.
B. Can test our loyalty — to a faction or to the Lord.
C. Can test our patience — to throw in the towel or get busy seeking a scriptural solution.
D. Can test our willingness to study — decide all wrong or else all right without trying to discern.

IV. The Statutes Commanded by God.
A. Abraham’s faith tested by God’s command. (Heb. 11:17).
B. Naaman’s faith tested by God’s command. (2 Kings 5)
C. Corinthians faith tested by God’s commands
   1. Discipline. (2 Cor. 2:6-9)
   2. Giving. (2 Cor. 8:8).
D. Ours may be tested by various commands—baptism, assemble, etc.

Conclusion:
A. We need our faith tested to make us stronger.
B. We need our faith tested to separate genuine from mere profession.