



## Living for God in an Ungodly Culture The Testing of Your Faith

**Ice Breaker:** April showers (or snowstorms in Colorado) bring May flowers! What flowers are you looking forward to planting when it gets warmer?

This week, we talk about the testing of our faith. Jason started with a bit of a cheat sheet for where he was heading by saying that “Compromise will always lead to more compromise!”

*Quick recap:*

*Daniel had been through the 3-year indoctrination school and still had devotion to God. Devotion comes from love, not a sense of duty. When faced with food offered to idols, rather than show devotion to the idol by eating the food, Daniel asked (kindly and respectfully) if he could abstain from eating the food. The chief steward and the guard put their lives on the line to let Daniel and his friends test a vegetable and water diet for 10 days. (The number 10 is often used in scripture to indicate a test.) This was not a trendy Daniel Fast, rather it was a step of FAITH! Daniel knew that vegetables were the only thing on the king’s menu that would be acceptable to God to eat. Daniel and his friends did not know the outcome of the decision to hold strong, but they had already decided that whether they lived or died, God’s way was worth it to them. Their trust was WORSHIP to God!*

**Ask yourself:** How far am I willing to trust God?

1. In every test, obeying the Word of God seems irrational.

Faith always requires risk! *“Unless there is the element of extreme risk in your exploits for God there is no need for faith.” - Hudson Taylor*

As humans, we tend to seek the path of least resistance. Daniel and his friends did not get caught up in the “what ifs” regarding what would happen if they didn’t eat the king’s food. They were more interested in the “what IS.” Negative attention from an ungodly culture is an indicator that you are not like them! We must be distinct (not weird), from the world.

**Discuss:**

What “what ifs” have you wrestled with in your life?

What areas have you compromised because you feared the “what ifs”?

It is difficult to show another way unless you are living another way. What is the “other way” that God is asking you to live?

What is the difference between being distinct from the world and being weird?

2. Every test of faith is a steppingstone to something greater.

**Read together:** Luke 16:10 and Romans 5:3-4

Refusing to eat the food offered to idols was their first test but there were more to come...the fiery furnace and lion’s den. God needed Daniel to walk through some difficult situations so that God could show Himself faithful, so that He could take Him to tougher and greater battles. He will use trials to make you stronger and greater!

God wants to use these tests of our faith in the little things to prepare us for the greater purposes that He has for us. **Character is not developed in seasons of comfort!**

**Discuss:**

In a sea of humanity, how can I be the one to stand up for truth?  
 In your unique circumstances, what does it look like to be the ONE who stands up?

3. Every test determines which part of your faith is real and which part is counterfeit.

*“A Christian faith that is not anchored and submitted to the full counsel of the Word of God, is not Christian faith at all. It is a counterfeit humanistic faith striving to appease one’s conscience in the Name of God while being void of Him.” – Pastor Jason*

**Discuss:**

What is your reaction to this quote from Pastor Jason?

**Read together:** Romans 2:29, 1 Peter 1:7, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, James 1:2-4, Daniel 1:15-19

The Culture that God has called us to reach, is also the culture that is trying to get us to compromise. In many churches, the bible is being explained away as a guidebook instead of our unmoving foundation for how to live. **The world might be WHERE we are, but it’s not WHO we are!**

What distinguishes counterfeit faith is the test. Stop following the culture. A label of “Christian” does not define the heart. Jeremiah challenged the Jewish people by saying that their hearts were far from God. Counterfeit faith redefines what the Bible says to fit culture. Counterfeit faith becomes a label as long as the label doesn’t cost too much! Counterfeit faith redefines what the Bible calls sin, it redefines righteousness and holiness, it redefines marriage and sexuality, truth and justice. Counterfeit faith, when it fails, gives up. Counterfeit faith adapts to the convictions of the mob. Counterfeit faith has the appearance of godliness but not the substance of it. It sounds like:

*“I am a follower of Jesus, but Jesus doesn’t care how I live my life.”*

*“I am a follower of Jesus, but I take my cues from culture how I am to live my life.”*

*“I stand up for what culture tells me to stand up for.”*

*“I go to church.”*

*“I wear a cross.”*

**Discuss:**

Is there any area of my faith that is counterfeit?

Does my faith LOVE while maintaining the truth?

Am I responding in the spirit of the world or the Spirit of God?

The testing of your faith is not for God’s benefit. He already knows what is real and not real. The testing is for your benefit, especially in our culture today. Jesus says, “If you love me, you obey me.” If we drink from Jesus, we will have an everlasting well. Where counterfeit faith gives up, people with genuine faith who fail will own it, get back up, repent, and keep moving toward God. True faith becomes stronger with pressure. God dares you to be a Daniel and He will meet you right where you are. 2 Chronicles 16:9a – “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.”

**Consider and Journal:**

Will you dare to be distinct? Will you dare to be a Daniel?

Do you trust that the Lord will meet you there?

You will never make a difference if you are not different. Decide. Right now, how are you going to be different and write it down. Declare it.

**Pray together:**

*God, help us to remain faithful. Help us to be like Daniel as we face this culture that cancels and accuses at every turn. Help us to be kind and respectful and to hold the line of truth. Help us to be distinct and to show You to those around us. Help us to stand strong when we are tempted to waiver! Give us what we need in each moment to honor You. Help us to stand true on Your Word and draw people to Your light in us. We live to glorify You and to increase Your Kingdom! Lead us and help us to make 10 times the difference that we think we can make. For Your glory! In Jesus’ name, Amen.*