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Read 2 Corinthians 8:8 ...

Today it seems like everything, at least those things considered a consumer product, is tested. Many of the manufacturers in the world make the rigors of their testing part of the selling point. There are even publications that take it as their primary job to put items “to the test” so that people might make informed decisions about their purchases. Individuals are also put to the test – in academic settings, sports settings, and career settings. Moreover, there is pride in the tests that are passed; a person can point to a completed test and say, “See that? I passed! You can count on me.”

God appears to put people to the test. Abraham was severely tested when asked to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22). When speaking of being tested one’s mind often goes to the story of Job. One finds Job tried not only by the loss of his earthly wealth and family, but also by the loss of his health (Job 1). In the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 4; Mark 1; Luke 4), the Temptation of Jesus plays a primary role in establishing the worth of Jesus as the Christ. Proverbs 17:3 compares the refiner’s pot, used to purify metals, with the work of God in which the heart is tested. James also reminds Christians that when the testing of faith comes, it produces endurance and although not pleasant at the time, this testing should be a joyous trial (Jam. 1:2-3).

V. P. Black expresses what certainly will be an unpopular view:
“Giving is the Acid Test” (51).

Giving is a test of our faith. When God put Abraham to the test he demanded something be given: Isaac. When Paul speaks about all the trials that Abraham went thru, he reminds us that those trials in no way lessened Abraham’s faith (Rom. 4:16-22). Even in the face of

sacrificing Isaac, Abraham’s faith carried him thru because he believed in the power and promise of God (Heb. 11:9). It is only when one believes in the promises of God that giving will be liberal giving.

Giving is a test of our love. How often, when considering the love of God, does one turn to John 3:16? Not only has God given to us the things that make **this** life special, but he has also given us what we need to be godly in this sphere (2 Pet. 1:2-4). But beyond this sphere, God – with the gift of his son – has proved his love for us! God loved us enough to give his son so that a broken and sinful humanity might find a home in heaven. When a man has no love for God there’s no reason to give. When a woman doesn’t have a love for the Church there’s no reason to give. When a Christian does not have a love for the lost or the needy there’s no reason to give.

Bro. Black goes on to speak about giving being *a test of our vision* and *a test of our loyalty*. The Philippians appreciated the vision of Paul and his work, that is why they sent money to support him, not only once, but “time and again” (Phil. 4:15-16). Barnabas sold his land and brought it to the Apostles to help support the early church in Jerusalem, that is loyalty (Acts 4:36-37).

All these things work together when considering one’s liberality: our faith, love, vision, and loyalty. The what, why, and how of giving is a test **I apply to myself**. It’s a test we should be determined to pass.

Walking Thru Ephesians

** We are created in _____ to walk in
_____ works.

When we become a _____, we become an instrument of
God created to do _____.

** As spiritual _____ we are instructed to walk
_____ of our _____.

Four characteristics of the worthy walk: _____ and
_____; _____; bearing in _____;
and keeping the _____ of the Spirit in _____.

** As _____ of God it is only
_____ that we should walk in _____.

Eph. 5:2 – "... an offering and a _____ aroma."

** Since we have been saved from the _____
of sin, we walk as children of _____.

The fruit of the Spirit is produced "in all _____,
_____, and _____" (Eph. 5:9).

** Finally, we are told to pay _____ and walk
_____.

We are to walk _____.

** We don't have to walk _____.