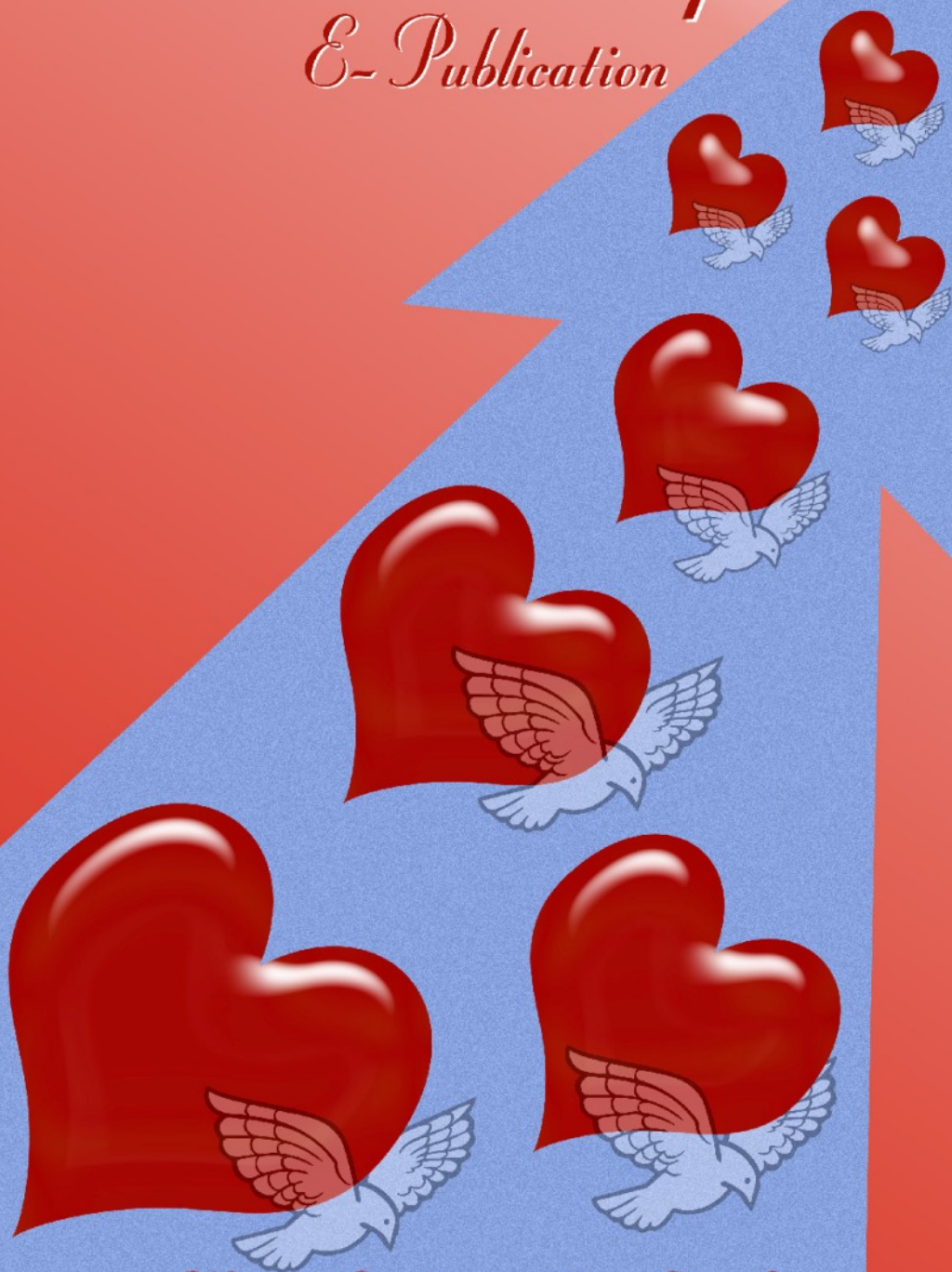


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[Statement of Faith](#)

## CONTENTS

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Spiritual Warfare Combat Tips .....	4
Key In-Sights .....	13
Hearing the Hymns .....	14
Keys Website Alerts .....	15
Status of the <i>Series</i> .....	16
Heart to Heart .....	17
Endnotes .....	19

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## **SPIRITUAL WARFARE COMBAT TIPS**

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### **Holy Spirit’s Leadership: Testing Yourself Requires Attention to Trials**

2 Corinthians 13:5 **Test** yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; **examine** yourselves. Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you – unless indeed you fail the **test**?

(Italics is part of the translation; bold has been added for emphasis in “Hearts Up” and is not part of the translation)

**T**he passage was written to believers in Corinth. Paul said many of their actions and behaviors were sinful, though according to the world’s culture (particularly in Corinth), they were acceptable and normal. Not all the believers viewed themselves as being as bad off as Paul was saying they were. Some were even openly disagreeing with Paul. Some believers were questioning Paul’s authority as well as some of his assessments and approaches toward the Corinthians.

Such differences in points of view are not uncommon, even among believers today. The Corinthians faced a spiritual challenge common to all believers; namely, Satan’s deceptive influences. When those influences are effective in our own lives, they can diminish our desires to actively seek out and make the changes God wants to make in ourselves during our trials. When those influences are untransformed in trials, even from time to time, they can cause us to get stuck in resisting changes that would otherwise develop our new-self identities in Christ. Said differently, when we come to believe we can be in the new-self during a trial without changing something within ourselves, we may begin to assume (even unwittingly) that listening to the Spirit’s counsel has little to do with transformation, correction, being disciplined by God, or testing ourselves before the Lord. When this happens, Satan’s influences can have unnoticed, short- and long-term effects on the kinds of actions we take or do not take in response to trials.

There are trials during which it may be completely inappropriate, ungodly, and even sinful to hold off on taking a particular course of action. Conversely, there are trials during which it may be inappropriate, ungodly, and even sinful to act in word or deed. The key is to know which is which. The Spirit of God is The Guide, provided by our Lord and Savior, to Whom we must be skilled in responding during trials, and we must do so at the very time when Satan is working to influence our desires, motives, attitudes, etc. Hearing the Spirit’s specific guidance clearly and with certainty is sometimes more difficult than at other times, so Paul’s recommendation to the Corinthians, and indeed to all believers, is simple: test yourselves.

In the passage above, the Greek word for **test** is *πειράζω* and it involves or comes “from experience, trial.”<sup>1</sup> Testing yourself involves a trial, a real-life experience. Mental exercises can be useful, classroom training is helpful, but testing yourself happens with regard to real-life situations. In the course of testing yourself, you are embarking on a process of discovery. You are seeking to learn

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some truth about yourself from God’s perspective. The Greek word **test** means “...to know what a person’s weakness or strength is and to make it manifest to the one being tempted....”<sup>1</sup> When you are testing yourself, you are attempting to make the strength or weakness manifest to yourself, at least at first! Talk about tough! This involves a serious amount of self-honesty and objectivity, which is NOT possible when Satan is attacking you without cooperating with the Spirit and doing a bit of transforming first! Let’s take this step by step.

In a trial (during an experience when Satan is attacking you), the contents of your heart may be different from the truth behind the knowledge in your head! Or, the contents of your heart may be correct, but the knowledge (facts) in your thinking may be off. Testing yourself is supposed to help you recognize these kinds of internal situations so you can work to make the appropriate changes. Of course, having either the contents of your heart, your thinking or both being off during a trial is a normal result of Satan’s attack and is why it is so important to recognize Satan’s attack and to pause before acting. (Remember, this is usually pretty challenging when we are already wrapped up in the external situation and aren’t even paying attention to the spiritual dynamics of a trial!) The purpose of the pause is to permit self-examination in conjunction with the Spirit of God.

Paul further says to examine ourselves. The Greek word for examine is δοκιμάζω and means to “...try, prove, discern, distinguish, approve.”<sup>2</sup> Paul could have just said, “Test yourselves,” and the examination part would have been implied, but he didn’t. Paul emphasizes that the process of trying one’s self spiritually is critical. This skill of discernment, of which Paul speaks, is not possible for us to exercise independent of God’s Spirit. We cannot exercise the ability to distinguish between the old and new contents of our hearts unless we are actively connecting with our new-self identity – who we are in Christ. When we realize we are in a trial, it is useful to approach “self-testing” with intention, with deliberate intent to connect with God seeking out His corrective feedback. Pausing to look within is not to be likened to a mere reflective, thinking process. It is a heartfelt process that takes effort and goes against the old, which Satan does stir up. Therefore, during the initial stages of testing yourself, you can expect to have some sense of inner conflict. This is spiritually normal.

Now that we have an idea of what this testing is about, let’s look at the following:

1. Each believer is responsible for the quality of his/her self-testing, or lack thereof.
2. The permanently indwelling Teacher seeks to help us test ourselves in Jesus’ physical absence.
3. Seeking God’s will (His plan for us in a situation) involves identity issues, a trial, and requires that we test ourselves.
4. Testing ourselves involves recognizing spiritual patterns in our lives.
5. Testing ourselves involves time, attention, and structure.
6. Testing ourselves involves spiritual direction.
7. If you lack a solid foundation for, or training in, testing yourself – seek it out.

### You are Responsible for How You Test Yourself

The *Keys To Understanding Life Series* tool that encompasses “new-self testing” is *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace*. The goal in this article is not to get into the specifics of how to test ourselves, but rather to talk about some of the results you should receive from whatever form of “self-testing” you use. (If you want more information about any particular part of these discussions, including how to do it for yourself, feel free to contact us or check out *Feelings 101*. This article is intended to give you more than a mere overview. Realize that the whole book of *Feelings 101* encompasses this subject, as well as related spiritual issues associated with discipleship beyond the elementary teachings.)

To be fair, some believers don’t care for tests. Some believers think of being a Christian as meaning the test has already been passed. Some prefer the simpler, multiple choice tests, and believe it is only important to consider options or underlying spiritual dynamics that are readily apparent to them in trials – little additional seeking out is required in this view of testing. Some prefer tests with no pass or fail standard. Some believe that testing ourselves is about testing one’s Scriptural knowledge – if you know the answers then the idea is that you will apply the knowledge automatically. Still others believe that the true measure of passing the test is measured in terms of the number of years of service one has given to the Lord while leading a good life; the more years the person has, the more the person relies on the godliness of their judgment during trials. Each of these views corresponds to a spiritual view of testing one’s self.

God’s written Word provides some specifics in terms of do’s and don’ts, but it does not provide all of the specific action plans we need for the unique trials we face. It does provide the principles by which we may interact with The Teacher so that we may test ourselves and accurately discern what God would have us to do in our trials. But we are individually responsible to test ourselves in ways that reveal the old and help us hold ourselves accountable to change as God would have us to change. Again, the challenge of spiritual testing is that you cannot do it accurately without evaluating the spiritual dynamics of your own heart and mind during real-life trials, and you cannot do it independently of the Spirit of God in your heart; still, you influence the testing in terms of the extent to which you actually submit to the Lord.

In considering how you fulfill your responsibility to test yourself, the key is to take stock of your love for the Lord and your relationship with Him during some quiet time, while considering what the task of testing yourself is to do for you and your relationship with the Lord. There are some important questions to ask yourself (*A Disciple’s Heart* asks these kinds of questions). Am I willing to work with His Spirit to test myself on a regular basis? What is my motive for doing so? How important is this to me... really? What am I willing to change in my life to make room for evaluating my walk with God and improving in doing my part in the relationship? Am I going to make a decision based on what might be involved in testing myself (potential costs) or will I make a decision strictly because I want to see some differences in my walk with the Lord?

The means by which you test yourself is to help you discover what God wants of you in a given trial,

and indeed in your life. It is to reveal Satan’s attacks, influence within you, and your old-self deception. How much you put into that is up to you. Your trials are yours, and the last thing you want is someone else interpreting what God is trying to tell you through your own heart. As a disciple of Christ, you are capable of improving how well you hear Him, and testing yourself is part of checking that.

Believers must determine for themselves what they will or won’t do to test themselves. This is the spiritual equivalent of “grading your own paper” so to speak. You have the ability to distort the results of any testing of yourself, and Satan is more than glad to help you do that without making you feel guilty. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 reminds us that receiving the Spirit’s correction, counsel and influence is not automatic – we can block Him out without knowing it if we aren’t paying attention to the spiritual dynamics within.

### The Teacher Seeks to Help Us Test Ourselves

Imagine for a moment that the Lord were here in physical form to provide His disciples (including you) with guidance, instruction, and correction. Imagine He was available to you, in person, every day! For simplicity sake in this mental exercise, imagine that all the big stuff in your life is the way He wants it right now, i.e., you are with the right spouse (or if you don’t have a spouse then imagine that for right now He doesn’t want you with one). Imagine you have the right job, the right house, etc. What else would the Lord have you looking at *in your life*? He’s going to have you look at how you represent Him in your spiritual battles, your trials – right? He’s going to talk to you about applying His written Word to your real-life trials. He’s going to talk to you about your service to Him, not just externally, but in terms of what is in your heart and mind during this conflict and during that frustration, etc. You can use your God-given imagination and think of walking with the Lord considering what it would be like for it to be your turn for the one-on-one time with Him. What matters of the heart do you believe the Lord will want to evaluate from your trials? Now imagine getting that feedback daily! How wonderful would that be?! Could you handle it? Could you handle the loving discipline of your Lord challenging you to step up to the fullest potential of who you can be in Him?

While the Lord may not be present in physical form, He doesn’t need to be in order for us to grow in Him. Jesus sent us The Teacher! The Teacher, the Holy Spirit of God seeks to address these various “spiritual training issues” with each of God’s children. The omnipresent Spirit can conduct one-on-one counseling with all believers, even at the same time! To reiterate, we must become better at not quenching Him (i.e., not tuning out His voice) when He is speaking to our own hearts during a trial (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Behind every conflict, issue, tiff, and concern lies the spiritual world... the real world! As followers of Christ, living for Him involves doing our part to cooperate with His Holy Spirit. By working with Him, He can open our eyes to see the spiritual dynamics within our hearts and minds. These dynamics change as Satan uses the “normalcy” of events in the physical world to attack us spiritually. As disciples of Christ, are we striving to represent our Lord by allowing God’s Spirit to guide us in interacting with this physical world using actions based in love, peace, and harmony with

God? This isn't always easy because when we act in love and harmony as God would have us to, others who are caught up in the world may not feel loved, and they may not feel the harmony with God in their own hearts.

### Seeking God's Will Involves Identity Issues, a Trial and Testing Ourselves

If you have areas of your life that are “big” and unresolved (kind of job, potential spouse, where to live, when to have kids, etc.), the Spirit of God will speak to you about the external parts of those issues and provide the guidance you need, when you need it. In order to test yourself to ensure you are in the faith concerning some such decision, it is important to remember that the guidance of God's Spirit will involve dealing with the external side of issues in terms of the *spiritual implications* that they carry for you! In other words, when you seek the Holy Spirit's guidance as part of trying to resolve external problems, it is important to recognize that a spiritual trial is at hand. Often we pray for God's guidance, but do we recognize the situation is actually a trial in that following through with God's will may actually challenge us to change or act against our old-selves? God's will always goes against some old-self desire. It often raises within us a concern, fear, worry, etc. This is why the Scriptures indicate faith is required and is normally a requirement in response to trials. This faith isn't to be blind, but in order for it not to be, we must be certain exactly what the Lord wants from us concerning the trial, and we must change in order to be who we are in Christ in the process of acting on it.

Why is it that simply seeking God's plan for you in say, picking the right job, involves a spiritual trial? Satan has his own self-appointed interest in making sure you do not hear the Spirit's guidance correctly. Making wrong decisions, that constitute sin in God's eyes, are the result of failing to work with the Lord to transform inner conflict during a trial. It is not uncommon that we may even make the right decisions with the wrong heart condition; meaning we have motives, desires, attitudes, preferences, and such that are NOT arising based on who we are or can be in Christ. We experience inner conflicts as a result of Satan's attacks on us. God designed us to experience inner conflicts emotionally and mentally, in order that we might be able to recognize when spiritual battles are at hand. Inner conflict is part of spiritual battles and is described by Paul in Romans 7:15-21. Making external choices during trials based on your identity in Christ is NOT what Satan wants. Satan will seek to use anything he can to get you to make external choices that correspond to spiritual choices for you, by reinforcing some UNtrue lie about your self identity in Christ. When you experience inner conflicts, as opposed to inner peace, you can be certain Satan is attacking you and trying to influence you.

It should come as no surprise that people make decisions to reinforce their concepts of self-identity. Self-identity thoughts and rationale are not always conscious; in fact they are mostly unconscious. However, self-identity thoughts (especially unconscious ones) are very real; they are in fact related to how God designed our minds. Entire commercial markets and businesses are based on taking advantage of those thought processes. It is not by happenstance that celebrities are often paid to appear in commercials for selling some product. This is one very real (and obvious) way of appealing to many people's desires (including believers' desires) to associate their self-identity with that of the celebrity. Other people have different (less obvious) and more complex ways in which they make decisions that are related to self-identity images. As believers, part of testing ourselves

involves recognizing when our self-identity is being catered to by anything other than who we are in Christ. This doesn't mean it is inherently sinful to buy a pair of shoes just because you saw your favorite celebrity wearing a similar pair. That thinking is not what spiritual discernment is all about. It does mean it may be sinful if you can't manage to fellowship as meaningfully with a particular believer because that believer is a garbage man or is of a different race.

When you seek God's counsel on making a choice of some sort, more often than not it will involve being in a trial. Part of testing yourself involves being able to work with the Holy Spirit to identify how Satan is seeking to influence your motives, attitudes, desires, wants, perspectives, needs, etc. Without doing that, you will not actually be taking your whole being before the Lord as you request His assistance. You must not only be consciously willing to seek out old-self interests if you intend to ask the Lord for guidance, but you must also hear and respond to that guidance. To test yourself, and really check yourself for honesty, it helps to be able to take into consideration the spiritual dynamics of other past recent trials, and not approach the trial at hand as if it is unrelated to any other trial you've had – we'll come back to this in a moment.

If, on the other hand, all the “big stuff” is taken care of in your life, God's Spirit still has plenty of guidance to offer. Hopefully from the example above you can begin to see that seeking the Lord's counsel and testing yourself with honesty doesn't just involve the major life decisions. Satan's attacks in the “little things” in life are often his attempts to blind us spiritually over time (see “Hearts Up” Spiritual Warfare Combat Tips from March 2010, Satan's Tactic: Cultivate Spiritual Blindness by Causing Us to Overlook “Lesser Trials”). Regardless how big or little the external aspects of a trial may seem, “testing ourselves” is an important part of allowing the Spirit to reveal old-self deception and resistance to changes God would make in us.

### Testing Ourselves Involves Recognizing Spiritual Patterns

*Feelings 101: Pain to Peace* examines the fact that many of our trials are related. They aren't always related in physical terms (same place, or same people), though sometimes that might be true. The clearest relationships between trials can be seen in terms of the spiritual dynamics of a person's heart and mind, which arise as a result of Satan's attacks and the Spirit speaking (see F101, Chapter 5, *Most of What is Important is NOT Visible*). Part of testing ourselves involves recognizing spiritual patterns in our lives. There can be a variety of patterns in Satan's attacks against one's new-self identity. Some of those patterns are more easily recognized than others. Similarly, there are patterns in the Holy Spirit's guidance to us, which can be seen by examining multiple trials. Those patterns, of course, correspond to the patterns we can discover behind Satan's attacks upon us across multiple trials.

Identifying spiritual patterns in our lives helps us:

1. To do a better job of identifying each of our trials, and not to overlook any of them, dismissing them as “just normal life stuff.”
2. To sort through old-self rationale and resistance during trials when hearing the Spirit's guidance is more difficult than usual.
3. To seek out, embrace, and follow through with the specific changes the Holy Spirit speaks to during a particular trial, with faith and perseverance.

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4. To draw upon our relationship with God and His Spirit within, and to be better prepared for many of our trials in advance.

Embracing the Spirit’s correction (change) in a given trial enables us to walk with the Lord during that particular trial, but it doesn’t always prevent Satan from attacking us according to the same pattern again. Sometimes we must walk consistently with the Lord during many trials while Satan attacks us in certain repetitive ways, before Satan gives up or the Lord causes him to stop attacking. Hebrews 12:11 describes this as being trained by the Lord’s discipline. Recognizing the patterns in Satan’s attacks and the Spirit’s guidance raises your new-self awareness, gives you further proof from your own life of God’s specific guidance, and cultivates faith – provided you retain and embrace the lessons in which His Spirit trains you.

### Testing Ourselves Involves Time, Attention, Structure

The inner conflict Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane serves as an example of the importance which He placed on prayer. His example demonstrated that time and attention are required to look within, to discover, and to transform the desires that sometimes arise as a result of Satan using external situations to try to influence us. Jesus told His disciples to do the same. Psalms 4:4 says, “Tremble, and do not sin; meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still.” Testing ourselves involves time to be quiet, to meditate, to listen, to evaluate the contents of our hearts and the spiritual dynamics we are experiencing. It involves double-checking ourselves for old-self deception, which we have though Jesus did not! Testing ourselves is a chore when we don’t know how to do our part in the transformation process in response to the results of the test. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul indicates that part of you will want the testing for what it can do to bring you closer to the Lord you love! But it won’t do anything for you if whichever process you use for testing yourself lacks checks and balances necessary to bring out the new and help you work with the Lord to recognize and die to the old!

There are a number of important tasks in the course of testing one’s self *during* your trial: working through the heart disturbances related to your trial; centering yourself in who you are in Christ; seeking out relevant spiritual patterns from past trials as they relate to the trial; considering God’s previous guidance to you; recognizing your old self/Satan’s goals; seeking out the changes God would make in you; considering your relevant Scriptural roles and responsibilities; having faith and persevering to follow through with God’s specific will for you. We can try to deal with these things off the top of our heads for nearly all of our trials. We can test ourselves by using a “gut check” or by trying to “sense” our way through it. Do you want a mechanic sensing his way along as he fixes your car? Is a “gut check” how you actually balance your checkbook? Though spiritual dynamics are not always seen with the eyes or heard with the ears, why would our approaches to examining trials and seeking to work with the unseen Spirit be less tangible or understood? Can a corporate executive be successful by handling each challenging situation as if it is unrelated to any other situation at work? Can a corporate executive be successful on the job by making decisions on the fly all the time? In spiritual trials, you are the “corporate executive” of your life and are subordinate and accountable to God, the CEO, right? The diligence and attention to detail we must apply to spiritual trials is no less casual.

When it comes to testing yourself, it helps to have some sort of structured approach to dealing with trials. The Lord’s Prayer offers a model for prayer. The Scriptures also present the processes for reconciliation. Similarly, God’s written Word also offers us the principles involved in approaching our heart disturbances, in testing ourselves, and in transforming our hearts. Testing ourselves according to those principles in a repetitive, or “structured,” way provides a critical foundation we can rely on each time especially difficult trials arise.

Because trials are times when we are emotionally and/or emotively charged; these are NOT times when our thinking is top-notch. Transforming our hearts to is critical – it is no secret that God designed us to think most clearly when we are at peace inside. This is the significance of transforming *painful heart disturbances to peace*. While time is sometimes short in trials, testing ourselves can often be done after-the-fact, often to great spiritual benefit and growth (although we may have to take responsibility for action in sin if we failed the test during the actual trial). Taking time to be discipled by the Spirit by testing ourselves with Him, even after-the-fact, prepares us for handling trials more effectively in the future, while they are actually happening. Regardless, testing ourselves is a key part of being able to be discipled by The Teacher within. Testing ourselves is part of the lifestyle of a disciple of Christ, and it is vital to finding direction in life, not merely externally, but spiritually.

### Testing Ourselves Involves Spiritual Direction

When we hear the Spirit’s counsel, instruction and correction in a trial, we identify the change(s) He seeks to make in us. When we follow through with that counsel, we are walking with the Lord in the trial. The discomfort we may have felt initially, the heart disturbance, is transformed to peace (just like the title of *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace* describes.) We experience peace and certainty because we are actively being who we are in Christ in that trial. We can remain centered in Christ regardless of the outcome of the trial, just like the early believers did in the face of great adversity. Connection, transformation and centeredness are described in Romans 5:3-5. The instruction the Holy Spirit offers to us during a trial is as specific and clear as it was to the men and women we read about in the written Word of God. When you hear the Holy Spirit *that* clearly, the trial (and the changes God speaks to you about) become like a well-defined, spiritual reference point in your walk with God. This becomes a critical part of testing yourself later too.

You may be able to recall such a time in your own life when you heard God’s counsel clearly. Your conversion experience may come to mind as being one of your own well-defined, spiritual reference points. It marks a time of clarity and awareness of the need for change. You may recall some other such defining moments associated with significant trials or times of difficulty. During those times you would have experienced a very strong sense of peace when perhaps “normally” you might have been in turmoil, fear, doubt, etc. You would have had a clear recognition of God’s will for you. Regardless of the outcome of the situation, or what anyone else might have thought, you knew what God wanted and you were determined to follow through with God’s will for you. You recognized potential temptations, but in Christ, you overcame them, perhaps even with great ease.

It is possible, due to Jesus’ death, resurrection and the gift of the permanently indwelling Spirit of

God, for you to experience that same sense of peace and clarity *in each trial*. It is actually essential that you do. Even a “normal,” everyday trial can result in a well-defined, spiritual reference point, provided you do your part in responding to the Spirit’s counsel within your heart, and change accordingly! When you hear the Spirit’s guidance correctly in your next trial, that change will also become a clearly defined reference point associated with very specific guidance of the Spirit, and so on. In very little time at all, these reference points together create a “line,” or direction of the Spirit. Actually, because they will deal with multiple areas of your life, they will indicate God’s direction in each of those corresponding areas of your life. They are the result of being disciplined by The Teacher within and provide clear, specific guidance.

### If You Lack A Solid Foundation For, or Training in, Testing Yourself – Seek It Out

Testing ourselves is part and parcel of being disciplined by the Spirit of God within. We may think we know what God wants of us, but if we aren’t listening to Him Satan can really create confusion for us and lead us in directions other than the one’s God would have for us. This doesn’t mean we would be unsuccessful according to the world. Our old-selves can create lives that are successful according to the world. Going in the “wrong” direction doesn’t mean you are necessarily doing something illegal or immoral, although that may be true. From God’s perspective, going in the wrong direction means going in any direction that is other than the one He wants for you.

If you aren’t comfortable with the means by which you test yourself, take it to the Lord in prayer. Identify what your old-self wants and, when you are centered in who you are as a disciple of Christ, consider what your new-self in Christ wants. Make your decision from a place of peace while seeking out one of those well-defined, spiritual reference points in your life – it could be a wonderful, new step that draws you closer to the Lord Whom you love.

## KEY IN-SIGHTS

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“Many times we get stuck trying to figure out what the Lord wants us to do in a particular situation when our hearts are disturbed. Sometimes we interpret that to mean “wait.” Being able to skillfully interact with the Spirit helps us to identify why we get stuck and how to get unstuck. Many times the “wait” answer may not actually be God’s instruction to wait. Sometimes His answers appear that way because we aren’t that skilled in the two-way relationship with the Spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

### A Prayer for Courage to Act on Insight

In the places of my life,  
Whether hidden or in plain sight,

Where a shadow falls or uncertainty finds rest,  
May I hear Your Spirit calling and stand unto the test.

Rekindle within my heart and soul  
Your beautiful love, Your eternal goal.

May I do my part to give You my life  
Find this servant pleasing to Your sight.

I ask forgiveness for my sinful thoughts,  
For my sinful words, and ungodly deeds,  
But let my lips not be the only doers  
As I seek to keep pace with Thee:

As I command the minions of my being,  
May I draw wholly upon You  
And make pleasing unto Your sight,  
Everything I do.

William J. Clark, Jr.

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## HEARING THE HYMNS

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### Onward, Christian Soldiers<sup>4</sup>

**I**n the month of May spring has arrived and we think of flowers and Mother’s Day. However, we also celebrate Memorial Day when we remember those men and women who have fought in wars to protect the freedoms of our country.

The words to this hymn were penned by Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924) and it was set to music by Arthur S. Sullivan (1842-1900). The words speak of Christians being in a war. God’s written Word speaks of battles and war from Genesis to Revelation. With whom are we at war? Consider the words of this hymn:

Verse 1 - Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus going on before! Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe; Forward into battle, see His banner go!

Verse 2 - At the sign of triumph Satan’s host doth flee; On, then, Christian soldiers, on to victory! Hell’s foundations quiver at the shout of praise; Brothers, lift your voices, loud your anthems raise!

Verse 3 - Like a mighty army moves the church of God; Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod; We are not divided; all one body we, One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

Verse 4 - Onward, then, ye people, join our happy throng, Blend with ours your voices in the triumph song; Glory, laud, and honor, unto Christ the King; This thro’ countless ages men and angels sing.

Chorus: Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus going on before.

With whom are we at war? It is Satan and his attacks seeking to get us to act in ungodly ways. Remember the attacks upon Jesus Himself by Satan: the temptation to make the stones into bread; the temptation to throw Himself down and command the angels to lift Him up; the temptation to bow down and worship Satan and He would receive the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:1-11). Jesus, our example, stood in the power of God and did not sin by giving in to Satan. He won the battle! Jesus demonstrated the importance of fighting spiritual battles. For this reason, spiritual warfare is represented by one of the Keys to understanding life.

The war with Satan and the old self still rages! The Apostle Paul tells believers to be armed as a soldier against the attacks of Satan by putting on the full armor of God: the belt of **truth**; the breastplate of **righteousness**; feet shod with the **gospel of peace**; the shield of **faith**; the helmet of

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**salvation**; and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **Word of God** (Ephesians 6:14-17). Remember, we have the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit within to help us fight these battles for us. Our part is to deny our old-self desires, to yield to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and to embrace new-self desires based on who we are in Christ; we must not quench the influence of the Spirit within (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Are you continually aware that as God’s child by faith in Jesus Christ you are a soldier in a war against Satan? Are you recognizing those heart disturbances – anger, envy, strife, jealousy, selfish desires and motives as Satan’s attacks? Are you, by God’s power of the Holy Spirit within, transforming those painful experiences to peace and experiencing victory in those battles (Romans 12:1-2)?

The war is universal and will continue until Jesus returns. However, God has provided for His children to experience peace and victory in each battle as we stand in His strength, clothed in His armor, and do our part to submit to the voice of the Holy Spirit and resist Satan. While we emphasize that believers must listen to the Spirit speaking to their own hearts, believers are not to stand by themselves all the time, but with the family of God. We are part of the body of believers. So as we improve in doing our parts individually in our walks with God, not only are we strengthened, but the Body of Christ is strengthened in turn. In this large group, the Body of Christ, we are to act as one marching together in this war. In following the leadership of the Holy Spirit within, we can live in harmony with God during our individual trials, and work in harmony other believers in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## KEYS WEBSITE ALERTS

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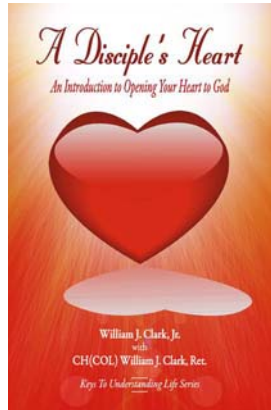
We have added the Google book preview feature for *A Disciple’s Heart*. The Google book preview can be accessed by clicking the Google Preview button the *A Disciple’s Heart* ad page or on the Synopsis page where it describes *A Disciple’s Heart*. This feature from Google also includes additional e-retailers that sell ADH at various prices with some pretty good deals.

When the book preview for *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace* has populated on Google books (should be in the next week or so), we will also add Google Preview buttons for F101 as we have done with *A Disciple’s Heart*.

## STATUS OF THE *SERIES*

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### [A Disciple's Heart](#) (ADH):



*A Disciple's Heart* is now also available in the new Apple iPad format! This format can be purchased directly through the iPad itself. The ad page for ADH shows the other formats in which this book is available.

### [Feelings 101: Pain to Peace](#) (F101):



We finally completed the prep work for F101 and the publisher has released the book into the retail system. It will still take a bit for the book's information, cover pictures, descriptions, etc., to populate through the e-retailer system. This is normal. We will activate the links to popular e-retailers on F101's ad page links once we have verified they have completed picking up the book.

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## HEART TO HEART

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### Overwhelmed

Recently I was going through a trial that was exceptionally difficult for me. There was a personal issue I needed to resolve and a decision I needed to make, but whatever decision I made would impact others significantly. How might they respond to what I might say and do? The Lord was challenging me to trust in Him and follow through with what He wanted me to do, even though it might not be acceptable to others. I was being challenged to change how my need for approval was being met. My heart was greatly troubled. Unsure of what to do, I decided to take some time, every day for about five days, just to be still, and listen to what the Spirit would say to me. In my first attempt to hear the Lord, I turned on some peaceful music and made myself comfortable. I was relaxing, although not at peace, as I listened for what God would share with me. I awoke about an hour later, not rested, with a new heart disturbance because I had fallen asleep on God and, as a consequence, had received no new insights into myself! I felt like a total failure.

The next day I was going to try again, but a “minor crisis” occurred and I “was prevented by events” from meeting with the Lord. So it went for each of my five days of waiting upon God. All this time I was feeling uneasy, uncertain, and fearful. I was overwhelmed and literally shut down. I finally concluded the problem obviously was with me, not God; that part was easy. Then God’s Spirit showed me that I was avoiding having to face the issue and that Satan was using my evasion to make his own attacks more effective; that was not so easy to see. I needed to find some way to get myself moving.

The page on our website, [A New Opportunity](#), presents an exercise that is derived from some of the 7 *Spiritual Principles* of listening to God, which are examined in *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace*. We’ve mentioned this exercise before; the thrust of the New Opportunity exercise is to test yourself. It is tailored to help you work with the Spirit of God during trials where you have a fairly good idea of what God wants you to change. I have used this many times and decided to take a similar approach with my current trial. I got a piece of blank paper and began to record my heart disturbances. I feel angry because “and filled in the blank.” I feel afraid because “and filled in the blank.” I feel rejected because “and filled in the blank.” I did this with every disturbance I could find in my heart. Then I asked myself, “Which of these heart disturbances is most significant to me?” Very quickly one came to the top of the pile. I found it interesting that most of the other disturbances became of no consequence by resolving this big one. I set aside all the others, for a time, and focused on that one heart disturbance. I spent some time trying to get past the external part of my situation and focus on how the disturbance made me feel about me, then it came. Looking at the list, I discovered Satan’s influence caused me to feel “less than” each time I sought my approval only from God alone! Satan was getting me to forget my new-self identity *in Christ*: in Christ I am not less than, but rather I am complete and whole!

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I realized that I was pronouncing an old self judgment (I am "less than") upon myself in a variety of ways and, in turn, each delay in connecting with my new-self identity during those five days began to consume my life. That was an eye-opener! I was looking at the external aspects of the trial from the perspective of solving it in my own way, from my own perspective, even as I "was trying" to involve God. I was seeking to involve Him on my terms; that was the "old self" at work.

I discovered a significant truth. If I think I can figure my problem out on my own; God will let me try. If I recognize, in my heart, I need God's help; He will lead me as long as I follow. A new thought occurred in my heart; my identity in Christ is the sufficiency which enables me to deal with whatever trial enters my life. Now I began to experience some peace. I didn't have the whole answer yet, but I was no longer neutralized by Satan's attack; I was moving again. Since I now realized that in Christ I am complete, I could move forward as I considered what God would have me to do as His child. It is remarkable how quickly the appropriate options for my trial came to me. I have had to change some of how I planned to approach the external situation, but I learned another truth; I often make things harder than they need to be.

As of this time, I don't know how the trial will turn out, but I do know my heart is aligned with God. My heart is where He wants it to be now, and if another trial arises as a result of doing what God wants of me, I will be better prepared to connect with Him again in that trial. The next time I will work more on delaying less.

William Clark, Sr.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, Spiros: *The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament*. electronic ed. Chattanooga, TN : AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993, S. G3985

<sup>2</sup> Zodhiates, Spiros: *The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament*. electronic ed. Chattanooga, TN : AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993, S. G1381

<sup>3</sup> William J. Clark, Jr. with CH (COL) William J. Clark, Ret., *A Disciple's Heart*, Innovo Publishing, 2009, page 49

<sup>4</sup> “Onward, Christian Soldiers”, Words by Sabine Baring-Gould, (1834-1924) as quoted in The Baptist Hymnal, Convention Press, Nashville, TN, 1991, page 493

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