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"Hearts Up" is the official e-publication of keystounderstandinglife.com ("Keys" website). When we want to alert one another to something important or perhaps even to a potential danger, we usually say, "Heads Up!!" To assist us in being alert to spiritual dynamics behind our real-life experiences, we offer "Hearts Up"! This monthly e-publication works to inform, but mainly to help lift our hearts up during trials! The articles are intended to be substantial, giving you much to reflect on and work to experience with God; as such, the articles are "meaty." The articles often build on the Scriptural concepts discussed in the [spiritual warfare materials](#) we offer, as well as in other "Hearts Up" editions and on the *Keys* website. "Hearts Up" articles are intended to support readers who seek the spiritual growth in Christ which comes from interacting well with the Lord during trials and real-life difficulties. Our materials often talk about interacting with the Holy Spirit with the heart; this interaction is not about speaking in tongues, but about hearing, understanding and embracing the counsel of the Lord with our hearts. We trust the material will challenge you to desire more in your relationship with Jesus Christ in terms of interacting with Him in real-life decision-making and problem-solving. "Hearts Up" works to facilitate an on-going dialogue between readers of the *Keys Series* materials and the authors; so if there is a particular discipleship topic, issue, or sentiment you would like us to consider speaking to, [Contact Us](#). If you received this edition of "Hearts Up" from a friend and wish to learn more about other features which sometimes appear in this e-publication, click the link below while connected to the internet or visit this menu button on the *Keys* website.



[Statement of Faith](#)

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KEY WORDS

Testing Versus Tempting: Two Sides of Each Spiritual Battle and Trial

There are many times when we face problems or decisions in life. Of those, there are some that are particularly challenging and perhaps even quite undesirable. When we face those trials, sometimes we blame God for them. We may even become angry at God, or at least confused as to why He is allowing something so undesirable to happen to us. Satan wants us to fail to transform those heart disturbances. The goal of this article is to try to put some of that into perspective so you might have a greater sense that God is always on your side during your trials.

Sometimes we may feel anger, confusion or blame toward God because Satan uses the fact that we know God has the power to change or end our trial if He chooses to do so! At other times we may feel frustrated or worried because we can't see why God would allow a particular trial, or we can't seem to discover His guidance to us in terms of what He wants us to do in response to the trial. Fundamentally any of those disturbances in our hearts must be transformed to peace in order to know with certainty what He wants us to do, and to know we aren't leaning on our own understanding. It sometimes helps in the transformation process if we can see how it is that God's testing involves no ill will toward us; in fact it involves love. On the other hand, Satan's tempting involves manipulation and ill will.

Like those we read about in Scripture, we are both tested and tempted at the same time; this is a spiritually normal part of experiencing trials...!

Like those we read about in Scripture, we are both tested and tempted at the same time; this is a spiritually normal part of experiencing trials, which are spiritual battles! Testing and temptation are two sides of the same coin, so to speak. I was reminded of a few of the especially unwanted trials I've experienced in my own life when our small group was studying some of Jacob's trials last week. I recalled that during my own trials, I wasn't always as prepared for the part I had to fulfill in allowing God to transform

my heart. I really hadn't spent time reflecting on the fact how testing and temptation are the two sides of any spiritual battle we experience.

Temptation and testing are in relationship to one another by nature of the spiritual war between God and Satan. It has been this way since before the creation of the world. God created mankind in the midst of that war (which is why Satan was present in the Garden of Eden). Because God is a relational God, He wove the relational aspect of Himself in to all things when He created the world. We can see relationships everywhere for that reason. But, by virtue of that same relational attribute, we all are born in sin, we all experience trials, and we all die, as we are descended from those who “fell:” Adam and Eve. The good news is that by virtue of that same relational attribute, we can also get God's help in trials, and we can follow His lead to change (for more about God's relational attribute, see Chapter 5, *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace*).

Once I took the time to really digest those concepts, then later I could more easily recall them in some of my trials. It was then that that knowledge became useful. It functioned as an encouragement to me to do my part within the greater “spiritual picture” knowing that Satan is always the bad guy, the deceiver, and God is the One offering love and peace.

As I mentioned, Jacob had a couple tough, real-life trials back to back. The ones I was studying can be found in Genesis 31 and 32. Essentially, God instructed Jacob to stop working for his father-in-law, Laban, and to return to his native land. That was difficult for Jacob because Laban had a history of being a manipulator. Laban often tricked or pressured Jacob in to doing things he didn’t want to do. Laban often took advantage of Jacob. While in the end God always looked out for Jacob, and even helped him to prosper, God also allowed Jacob to have to experience mistreatment from Laban for many years.

Jacob’s trials involved God’s testing and Satan’s temptations! God did not eliminate Jacob’s trials, difficulties and unwanted situations with Laban because they were necessary for proving Jacob’s true nature spiritually. It was part of the spiritual war. His trials, as are ours, were opportunities for Jacob to see himself and what God needed him to change. God did, however, see Jacob through them, just as He does for us (1 Corinthians 10:13). Jacob had to deal with many painful heart disturbances, and he was frequently challenged to trust God in times when the outcome of his trial was not looking certain or even favorable. In his life, sometimes Jacob failed to recognize Satan’s temptation, change his heart and trust God. At other times Jacob did manage to accept the real-life risks that accompanied trusting God, and in those times Jacob avoided temptation. We too have these same opportunities in our trials.

But that isn’t all. After getting away from Laban, Jacob had to face his brother, Esau. If you recall, Jacob had done some manipulating of his own. He managed to swipe both Esau’s birthright and his blessing, and Esau, at the time, was infuriated and bent on killing Jacob. So in Genesis 32, while God’s will was for Jacob to return to the land of his fathers, that plan was going to put Jacob square in Esau’s sights. There was little chance Jacob could avoid running into Esau at some point.

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If you can use your God-given imagination and put yourself in Jacob’s shoes, you might see that it had to have been hard to believe that God would want you to do something that could be very uncomfortable and might lead to future trials! When we look at our own decisions in life, we tend to think that God’s will is always for us to do things which will minimize painful experiences and real-life risks to us and our families. As a result of that thinking, we also tend to shun any thoughts that God would want us to willingly face danger, loss, heartache or lack of security for Him,

especially when we have the power to take any number of other viable courses of action. It is practically impossible to face such things willingly and peacefully without transformation or without a clear certainty of God’s will for us in the trial.

If we jump to the end of Jacob’s story, we see that everything worked out not just fine, but pretty great! But when we study Scripture and jump ahead too quickly, we may miss out on being able to relate to the fact that the person we read about couldn’t jump ahead in their own story. In other words, Jacob had to live the trial moment by moment. To really get the most from studying a Scriptural trial, it is important to remember that.

God’s testing involves some big spiritual tasks. At some point, in the future of our lives, we may be able to look back and see that things worked out. But in the meantime, in the moments and days of spiritual battles, our spiritual tasks include:

1. Recognizing Satan’s temptation and how it is influencing our desires, thinking and the way our hearts feel.
2. Transforming our fears, anxieties, worries, concerns, thinking or whatever to peace in the Lord.
3. Discovering, with certainty, what God wants us to do in response to a trial.
4. Taking that action without procrastinating.

So, as our small group was studying and considering Jacob’s trials in Genesis, the following verses came to my mind, and I was reminded again of the relationship between testing and tempting.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is *tempted*, “I am being *tempted* by God”; for God cannot be *tempted* by evil, and He Himself does not *tempt* anyone.

Genesis 22:1-2 Now it came about after these things, that God *tested* Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am. He said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”

(Italics and bold added by author)

There have been times when I have heard the word *tempt*, in James 1:13, translated as *test*. The Greek word is *πειράζω*, and it means “to try, to prove in either a good or bad sense, to tempt, to test by soliciting to sin.” The word *tempt* in James 1:13 can in fact be translated as *test*, but, it can be easily misunderstood if *test* is not recognized to mean “to test by soliciting to sin.” This particular use of the Greek word in James 1:13 does not represent the kind of testing that God does to us in a trial; rather, it is the tempting that Satan does to us during a trial.

Alternatively, the Hebrew word for *test* is *נִסָּה*, and it means “to try, i.e., to cause or allow hardship or trouble in a circumstance, often with choices within the situation, implying a different outcome is possible.” This particular Hebrew word also means “to try, i.e., attempt to learn the true nature of something.” This testing is an action that God does do in trials, as seen in Genesis 22:1-2, and every other trial we read about. Satan, on the other hand, does not try us with intent to grow us in our new nature. Satan’s intent is to drive, shape and keep us stuck in our old nature.

Satan’s manipulations and attacks are not always spelled out in the records of trials in Scripture. They are, however, directly implied in that Satan is the father of sin, and sin is what seeks to master

us in a trial (read God’s instruction to Cain in Genesis 4:6-7). Below is another Old Testament trial in which the Hebrew word *test* is used in conjunction with God, and where Satan’s tempting aspect is implied.

Exodus 20:20 Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin.”

A big mental hurdle that we must overcome to be successful in a trial is to have the willingness to be tested by God! That doesn’t mean we go looking for trials or try to make them happen for ourselves. It means that we must readily embrace the spiritual reality that trials *will* come. And when they do, we must be spiritually skilled enough to be resolved to do our spiritual work with God’s Counselor in our hearts – the Spirit of God. That attitude is vital due to three risks associated with every trial.

1. We will lose our sense of peace, at least for a short while (often longer until we transform our hearts), and it is accompanied with the temptation not to change or transform. This loss of peace can be temporary, as it is only to alert us to the presence of a trial. Unfortunately, when we stop feeling peaceful, our first reaction is usually to immediately try to do something to feel better. That something does not always include introspecting in ourselves to seek God’s changes in us. Satan is always behind that reaction, and it delays or prevents the transformation of disturbances back to peace.
2. Because of Satan’s bait and deception, we will first be tempted to believe we, ourselves, are not wrong in some way. Usually Satan’s deceptions include getting us focused on the faults of others.
3. We may experience spiritual failure.

Again, a resolved attitude is vital to overcoming those three risks in the Lord. To do our part well, in concert with God’s Spirit, we will have to identify and deal with Satan’s temptation in us. When Satan tempts us it involves being lured or baited (James 1:13-15; see also pgs. 174-176 and following, *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace*). Being “set up” is part of Satan’s deceptive and manipulative effort to drive us to sin. Satan really wants to drive our actions without us even being aware how *we* are actually being tempted! This allows Satan to fool us more easily in the future.

Below are a couple more Scriptures that refer to the testing and tempting dynamics in trials:

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Hebrews 2:18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Hebrews 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten *son*;
(Italics are part of translation)



The bottom line is that it is super important to recognize there is a relationship between God’s testing of us in trials, and His training us to grow in who we are and can be in Christ. This relationship is sometimes called, “the Lord’s discipline” (Hebrews 12:4-13). It takes discipline to be a disciple of Christ. So, the next time you experience strong feelings in association with a trial, try to discipline yourself to remember that temptation is accompanied by opportunities to pass God’s test and to grow in your new self. If you hate tests, at least try to discipline yourself to embrace your *spiritual* tests with a glad heart as part of reflecting your love, and willingness to change for the Lord Who loves you. To learn more about God’s testing, His Spirit’s guidance in real-life trials, Satan’s temptations, and how to experience more peace during trials, check out the *Keys* course in personal discipleship beyond the basics at [www.Feelings101.com](http://www Feelings101.com).

HEARING THE HYMNS

I Am Resolved¹

This uplifting, testimonial hymn, with meaningful words and lilting tempo, was written by Palmer Hartsough. He lived from 1844 to 1932. The words were set to music by James H. Fillmore (1849-1936). Appropriately titled, this hymn’s sentiments paint the picture of the strong inner commitment that typically comes from actively living with the heart of a disciple.

Verse 1 – I am resolved no longer to linger, Charmed by the world’s delight;
Things that are higher, things that are nobler, These have allured my sight.

Verse 2 – I am resolved to go to the Savior, Leaving my sin and strife;
He is the true one, He is the just one, He hath the words of life.

Verse 3 – I am resolved to follow the Savior, Faithful and true each day;
Heed what He sayeth, do what He willeth, He is the living way.

Verse 4 – I am resolved to enter the kingdom, Leaving the paths of sin;
Friends may oppose me, foes may beset me, Still will I enter in.

Verse 5 – I am resolved, and who will go with me? Come, friends, without delay;
Taught by the Bible, led by the Spirit, We’ll walk the heav’nly way.

Chorus – I will hasten to Him, Hasten so glad and free,
Jesus, greatest, highest, I will come to Thee.¹

The word *resolve* (resolved), according to the Dictionary, comes from Latin where “*re*” means “again”² and “*solve*” means “to loosen, release or free.”² Together, they mean, “to make a firm decision.”² Sometimes we use the word *resolve* in the sense of breaking something down to its basic, most important essence. Hence, Mr. Hartsough describes breaking down the priorities of his life to

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embrace the essence of what God would have him to change or transform in order to live as a disciple of Christ!

What are some of the changes Mr. Hartsough is resolved to make?

Verse 1 – He intends to seek the things of God which are higher and nobler than what the world continually offers us. He opens his spiritual eyes to respond to the Spirit of God Who gives him a renewed vision.

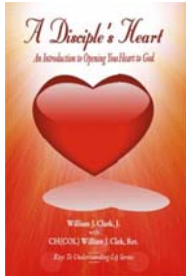
Verse 2 –Mr. Hartsough recognizes that actions in the old nature do not result in lasting fulfillment and consistent transformation of various pains to peace. He recognizes that actions in sin frequently come when we have strife within. In other words, when we are striving to fulfill our desires, however good they may seem at the time, we tend to seek certain things in life while God may be trying to lead us toward other things *He* considers good. To replace that strife, Mr. Hartsough has determined to turn to the Savior Whose words of life teach us how to find His purpose and how to deal with hurts, disappointments, trials, and temptations along the way. God's words of life are not just for the future (eternity), they also apply to today.

Verse 3 –He is convinced that God's way will lead to "real living." Christ, the Savior, demonstrates this. When Jesus ascended to Heaven, He said He would leave His Spirit to permanently indwell believers (John 14:15-17). His Spirit is the One Who guides, teaches, enlightens, empowers, and comforts the believer along life's path. The Spirit works to take what is of Christ and communicate it to us (John 16:12-15). Our part is to improve in active, spiritual listening to God! Since God created us, He understands us better than we understand ourselves. Since God is omniscient, He knows our future and He desires to lead us in the path best suited for us.

Verse 4 – Here the writer touches on a challenging topic. Mr. Hartsough is aware that God's written Word tells us that there are sacrifices involved in being a disciple of Christ. Of course we have our enemies in life. But, even friends can turn against us when we resolve to fighting spiritual battles as God would have us to fight them. Being a resolved disciple is not always popular, yet Mr. Hartsough declares his commitment to be faithful to God's will in his life, regardless of the cost. By improving in our part of drawing on the power of God's Holy Spirit within, each of us can peacefully endure the hardships and rejection that may come from following Christ.

Verse 5 – Mr. Hartsough has resolved himself to read God's written Word and heed what it says, and to seek God's will in daily living. The wonderful thing is that God does not expect us to accomplish His will on our own, but by interacting with His Spirit's lead in our hearts. Mr. Hartsough has found this inner connection and wants others to share in it. He invites others to be his brothers and sisters as disciples of Christ. Should others resolve themselves to the nobler things (Verse 1), and should they resolve themselves to living as disciples (Verse 2-4), then Mr. Hartsough is excited that together they can follow the "heav'nly way."

Chorus – Having resolved to commit himself to learning about Jesus and being led by His Spirit, Mr. Hartsough repeats his intention. He wants to hasten to the Lord in everything he does.



It is important to go beyond the casual, momentary consideration of whether we think we have such resolve to follow our Master. Regular godly introspection and honest evaluation of our hearts and our lives is vital to helping us hear the Spirit's guidance concerning areas of living where we aren't truly resolved! These things are essential to cultivating a disciple's heart.

Because having a disciple's heart isn't easy, the task of being resolved to let the Lord actively guide our steps requires we be open to spiritually intimate connections with other like-minded disciples (spiritual family). Those connections go beyond mere friendship and conversation with others at church. They come when those who are resolved join together in introspection and prayer followed by action! Sometimes those kinds of connections aren't readily available, but still we must be on the lookout for them. Spiritual family is to function as our “human” support system, but that can only happen when we are truly resolved like Mr. Hartsough.

Some questions we might ask ourselves:

1. Am I attuned to the voice of God's Spirit within?
2. Am I able to consistently partner with the Spirit and become aware how Satan attacks me?
3. Am I going my own way (walking in the flesh) or seeking to live according to the principles laid down in Scripture so as to walk in the Spirit?
4. Am I believing and applying the concept that “... greater is He who is in you (the Holy Spirit) than he (Satan) who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).
5. Am I consistently introspecting, looking for changes God's counsel requires me to change in me?

To learn more from *Keys To Understanding Life* about three basic ways the Scriptures indicate we can cultivate our own disciple's heart and increase the peace we can experience during trials, you may want to check out www.ADisciplesHeart.com or read [50 Questions A Disciple's Heart Answers](#).

HEART TO HEART

If you write poems, psalms, lyrics or prose of faith, and would like to share one of them with others in a “Hearts Up” edition, you may submit it for consideration for the *Heart To Heart* feature. You may also submit a personal story or testimony of your own to share how one of the articles or the *Keys* materials helped you draw closer to God during a trial. You can email your submission through the [Contact Us](#) page or send it to the snail mail address provided on that webpage. Be sure to read the **Contribution Guidelines** before sending us your submission. You can view those guidelines by clicking the link provided on the Contact Us page itself.

ENDNOTES

¹ “I Am Resolved,” Palmer Hartsough, (1844-1932) as quoted in *The Baptist Hymnal*, Convention Press, Nashville, TN, 1991, 301

² *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Houghton Mifflin Company, © 1969, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, page 1107

We decided to include the following information on gifts and donations in response to questions some of our readers have asked. We have not been in the habit of pressing for, or even asking for, financial support. While “Hearts Up” is offered to readers at no cost, our ministry is indeed a faith ministry.

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