

**ETHAN TEMPLE MINISTRIES TOOLS FOR
LIFE
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Humbled by God

Scripture: Proverbs 3:11-12

My child, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves the one he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.

SUMMARY

In life there are many challenges that arise. Even when you are making your best effort to remain faithful and upright, there is always something that seems to come out of thin air and throw you for a whirl. In the midst of our frustrations, we might turn to God and wonder why he allows what he allows and ultimately why we face challenges even when we feel like we are remaining faithful.

The spiritual journey can feel like a complicated relationship especially when life is overwhelming, but our experiences are not without precedent. Scripture tells us of a story in which he maintained a complicated relationship with an entire nation of people, the Israelites. As they come to the end of their journey through the desert, Moses gives them both a reflection and exhortation on their past and what they should have learned through the desert.

Deuteronomy 8:1 "This entire commandment that I command you today you must diligently observe, so that you may live and increase, and go in and occupy the land that the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. ²Remember the long way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments.

Why did God humble the Israelites?

Moses urges the Israelites to keep their covenant with God and thus he appeals to their memory of their wandering in the desert. He states explicitly that their long arduous journey worked to humble and test them so that God might reveal their character. Through their challenges God came to show to them the true nature of their hearts. This remains true that our true faithfulness is only ever really revealed when we are put under pressure.

Did the Israelites Keep the Commandments Faithfully?

For anyone who has read the story of the Exodus, it becomes rather clear that the Israelites were habitually deficient at keeping the commandments of God. So then, we know God humbles to reveal our true character but if our true character is deficient what lesson do we really learn?

What Was the Deeper Reason God Humbled the Israelites?

³He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

It cannot be overstated just how significant the truth of this passage is. Scripture says that God humbled them not just by allowing them to face hardship, but he humbled them both with hardships and blessings. He humbled them by allowing them to face hunger but then by also providing them with food. We often only consider challenges as the process by which God shapes us, but often he also shapes our character by the blessings that accompany challenges. He did this ultimately to demonstrate their dependence on Him.

⁴The clothes on your back did not wear out and your feet did not swell these forty years. ⁵Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the LORD your God disciplines you. ⁶Therefore keep the commandments of the LORD your God, by walking in his ways and by fearing him.

God took care of them in the desert and wanted them to recognize that if he took care of their needs even in hardship, and it was not by their own effort did they make their way more bearable. For, while they complained about food and water and comfort, they failed to realize that at no point were they unequipped for the journey. God made sure they had shoes for walking and legs well enough to keep going even when the journey was hard. And ultimately the Lord intends to bless them more richly than they could imagine.

⁷For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, ⁸a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. ¹⁰You shall eat your fill and bless the LORD your God for the good land that he has given you.

It is why rather than always waiting for God to humble us through hardships, we might take a little initiative and humble ourselves when we find ourselves in the midst of life's challenges.

1 Peter 5: 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you....10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

God is so good that even when he humbles us, he intends to bless us. No matter what the circumstances may be, we can always turn to God, for He has all the power and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.