

FROM **DREAM** TO **DESTINY**
FULFILLING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE

The Prison Test

Focus God has a dream and a destiny for every person, but we must pass some character tests before we can fulfill our destiny. Great character supports great destiny.

Open As a child, what did you look forward to the most: Christmas or your birthday?

Read The Prison Test is the test of perseverance. God develops His character within us through the things we go through. Romans 5:3–5 gives us a “formula” for developing perseverance and shows us that we can progress from “tribulation” to “hope.” It instructs us to “glory” (to rejoice) in our difficulties because of what they produce in our hearts. Tribulation produces perseverance, which produces character, which produces hope.

Patience is waiting with a right heart. Perseverance involves warring or battling during a tribulation with a right heart. A trial is short, but tribulation is long and difficult. The Bible says that tribulations are the only thing that produces character within us (Romans 5:3–5). God never rewards manipulation; He rewards a right heart *during* tribulation.

Character is not only how we act, it's how we react. Joseph did the right thing and suffered wrong results (imprisonment), yet He responded with a right heart before God and towards people. When we suffer, our hope should not be that God will deliver us from our circumstances, but that God will walk with us through them. Hope is what prepares us for divine appointments because we believe that even when people do not keep their word, God always will.

Talk

1. In your own words, what does it mean to persevere with a right spirit? Does this mean that we should never feel discouraged?
2. How do you tend to respond when you are falsely accused or treated unfairly? Why do you think that is?
3. Read James 1:2–3 and John 16:33. How can we “rejoice” or “count it all joy” when we go through tribulations? Where must our focus be in order to do that?
4. Read Genesis 40:14–15. In what way was Joseph being manipulative? Why doesn’t God reward manipulation or positioning ourselves?
5. Disappointment means to believe that we have “missed” an appointment or something that was supposed to be. How can we deal with disappointment during tribulations in a godly way?
6. What is the difference between *hoping* that God will deliver us from our circumstances and *believing* that God will walk through them with us?
7. How does walking in hope open the door for divine appointments?

Live

1. What scriptures or truths about God’s character can help you face tribulations with hope?
2. What trial or tribulation are you dealing with right now in which you need to develop perseverance (to battle with a right spirit)?

Pray

Thank God that His grace is more than enough for anything we go through in life. Ask Him to open your eyes to see His hand at work within your difficult circumstances. If you have responded with fear, bitterness, impatience or manipulation, confess it and ask Him to forgive you. Ask Him to complete the work He is doing in your heart.