

STRETCHING OUR FAITH

(Faith Tested Series Part 3)

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THE LORD'S FLOCK GROW DIGEST

Something soft and elastic can be stretched to make it longer or wider without tearing or breaking. This is the same with our spiritual journey. Stretching our faith makes it grow stronger and will lead us closer to the Lord. We must be prepared to run the spiritual race. Let us receive God's gift, grow higher, dream big. God will empower us.

1. What is the value of stretching physically and spiritually?

- 1.1. We can reach farther.
- 1.2. We can keep injuries to a minimum. With a little pain we can avoid a bigger pain.
- 1.3. We reach a level of endurance. "... the testing of faith produces perseverance" (Jas. 1:2-4).

2. THE CALL OF PETER: Jesus wanted Peter to stretch and grow spiritually. He was going to be the rock of the church (Isa. 54:2; Acts 1:8).

- 2.1. Peter saw miracles. He and his companions were astonished at the catch of fish. They followed Jesus to fish for people (Lk 5:4-11).
- 2.2. Peter showed little faith. He walked on water, but he got distracted by the waves/wind, and cried to Jesus to save him (Mt. 14:28-32).
- 2.3. Peter faced many testings before He became a great leader. "Whoever believes in me ... will do even greater things" (Jn. 14:12).
- 2.4. During the transfiguration, Peter's inappropriate response showed his shallow understanding of Jesus as the Son of God (Mt. 17:1-5).

3. The Biblical Pattern of Stretching:

- 3.1. Life is full of challenges. Joseph was rejected, sold, imprisoned, and accused. His faith was stretched for the nation to have grains.
- 3.2. God gives us promises and choices. Job was blessed after severe testing - he lost his children and all material things. He did not lose faith and he lived 140 years (Job 42).

3.4. We must choose to do God's will and serve Him. There will be many testings. Let us turn trials into victory and be alive in Christ.

4. SOME TRUTHS ABOUT STRETCHING:

- 4.1. God wants to stretch us into His image. It is not easy. People don't want to work at it.
 - ❖ Most people don't stretch until they are forced to do so. Some who have stretched in the past don't stretch daily. Others need to feel motivated before they stretch.
- 4.2. God wants to stretch our vision. Jesus wanted Peter to have a vision beyond the boat and the waves (2Pet.1:1-2).
- 4.3. In the middle of our journey, there will be hurdles (Mt. 14:22-23). But nobody can thwart God's plan. We should not give up (Mt. 14:24-27).
 - 1.2. Our heartaches will result in praise glory, as discovered by Peter (1Pet. 1:6-7).

2. God's spirit enables us to do more:

- 2.1. We should be the strength for those who are weakening (1Pet.4:7-11).
- 2.2. Let us respond to people lovingly and with wisdom.
- 2.3. Let us participate in the suffering of Christ. The spirit of glory will fall upon us.

CONCLUSION: God wants to stretch our faith. He gives us hope and solutions. He promises strength and vindication. After we overcome our sufferings and trials, God will restore, strengthen, and support us (1Pet. 5:10-11).

REFLECTION: Do you see trials as a test of your faith? Do you allow your heartaches to turn you into a failure?

PRAYER: Lord, help me to trust You and develop a faith that is willing to stretch for your sake and mine. Amen.

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