

Testing

Ponder: Do you want to test positive or negative?

Scripture: "Test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21, NKJV).

Ever since the pandemic struck we have dreaded the words "tested positive." We feel relieved when a biopsy comes back "negative" for cancer. Yes, negative can be good and positive can be bad!

Sometimes, though, a positive test result is good! I asked my doctor to test my blood for covid antibodies. If the result is positive, that will mean I'm less likely to catch the disease again.

What about testing in the spiritual realm? Before we can determine whether a positive or negative result is good or bad, we must know for what we are testing! For instance, "Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac" (Hebrews 11:17). For what was God testing Abraham? The Hebrews writer says Abraham did this "by faith," and God Himself stopped Abraham from completing the deed, saying, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, nor do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me" (Gen.22:12). Abraham tested positive for faith and the fear of God. That's definitely good!

Just before Jesus fed the 5000, He asked Philip "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5). The inspired writer explains in v. 6, "But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do." Philip and the others had witnessed numerous miracles Jesus had performed. Would Philip make the connection that Jesus could feed this great multitude? Unfortunately, Philip tested negative; and in this case a negative test wasn't good.

Jesus commended the church at Ephesus because they "tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars" (Rev. 2:2). Those charlatans tested negative for being apostles. That was bad for them, but good that the Ephesians had rejected them.

When you are tested for faith, the fear of God, sincerity, hypocrisy, love, malice, obedience, pride, or other qualities, will the results be positive or negative? Remember, neither negative nor positive will always be good, nor will it always be bad. It depends on the object of the test.

Hymn: "Have Thine Own Way, Lord"

Prayer: Father, we want to test positive for good qualities and negative for sinful ones. Help us to that end we pray, in Jesus' name, Amen.