

57: FAITH ON THE STEEPEST PART OF THE TRAIL

By John Leavy

In Week 12: Discipleship Under Pressure

3 Min read



“For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.” — Psalm 66:10

Every experienced hiker knows there comes a point on the trail when the climb becomes noticeably harder. The terrain grows steeper. Your legs begin to burn. Breathing requires more effort. The summit may still be hidden from view, and every step feels heavier than the last.

The summits along the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies are peppered with fields of granite boulders. As you near the end of your climb, the boulders make reaching the summit even more challenging.

Those moments reveal something important. The steepest section of the trail exposes what the easier sections never could.

Psalm 66:10 says, “For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.” Most believers understand that God tests faith. What is often left unsaid is that God frequently does His deepest work during the steepest parts of the journey.

We tend to assume that difficult seasons mean something is wrong. We wonder if we missed God’s direction, made a poor decision, or somehow stepped off the trail. Yet throughout Scripture, God repeatedly leads His people through hard places, not around them.

Silver is refined through heat, not comfort. Character is developed through pressure, not convenience. Faith grows strongest when it is forced to depend on God rather than circumstances.

The steep places of life are not evidence that God has abandoned the trail. Often they are evidence that He is accomplishing something in us that could never be produced on level ground.

APPLICATION

One of the things many men quietly believe is that strong faith should make the climb easier. If they trust God enough, work hard enough, or pray long enough, the trail should somehow smooth out. When hardship arrives, discouragement often follows because reality does not match expectation.

The truth is that mature faith is not measured by how quickly God removes the difficulty. It is measured by how steadily a man continues walking when the difficulty remains.

Psalm 66 does not present testing as punishment. It presents testing as refinement. God is not trying to destroy silver in the furnace. He is removing what does not belong there. In the same way, difficult seasons often expose pride, self-reliance, fear, impatience, or misplaced trust that would otherwise remain hidden.

The steepest part of the trail reveals what we are leaning on. When strength fades, comfort disappears, and answers seem delayed, faith is stripped down to its essentials. Do we trust God’s character when we cannot see His plan?

Many men spend their energy asking when the climb will end. A better question might be, “What is God producing in me while I am here?” That shift changes everything.

Faith is not proven when the trail is easy. Faith is proven when a man keeps moving forward one step at a time, trusting that God is working even when the summit remains out of sight.

LIVE IT OUT

Identify one steep section of your life right now. Instead of focusing on how quickly it ends, ask God what He is refining through it. Keep taking the next faithful step. The climb may be difficult, but God never wastes the hard sections of the trail.

PRAY THIS...

“Father, I find comfort in the fact that You are always beside me as I navigate the most challenging parts of the climb.”

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Practice builds the man.***

Contact: John Leavy
Email: johndleavy@gmail.com
Website: 1Man2Another.com