

## Week Eight – God tests his people - Overview

Passage	Big Idea
SS) Genesis 22	God tests his people
FBT1) Proverbs 3:11-12	God’s testing shows his love
FBT2) 2 Corinthians 12:7-10	God’s testing shows his power
FBT3) James 1:2-4	God’s testing produces perseverance and maturity
FBT4) Romans 5:3-5	God’s testing leads to hope
FBT5) 1 Peter 1:6-7	Perseverance through testing brings glory to God

### Family Bible Time (Day 1) – Proverbs 3:11-12

<b>BIG IDEA</b>	God’s testing shows his love
<b>Bible Passage</b>	Proverbs 3:11-12
<b>Getting Started</b>	Make up a track/course to get from one side of the room to the other. One child must complete the course by being guided with verbal instruction either from other children or yourself (you could blindfold the child if you like). Talk about the fact that the job of the person giving the instructions was to keep the child on the right path / track. Without the instructions, they would have gone off track.
<b>Finding Out</b> 1. Parents discipline	<p>Parents have lots of jobs! One of the jobs that God has given parents to do, is to discipline and correct their children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: What kind of things do parents do to discipline and train their children?</i></li> </ul> <p>The job of disciplining and training involves all sorts of things, including showing you how to behave, helping you to remember the right way to behave, and training you by disciplining you when you disobey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: Why is it important for parents to discipline their children? What would happen if they didn’t bother?</i></li> </ul> <p>God has given parents the job of disciplining their children because it is good for us to be disciplined. If no one ever tells us when we get things wrong, or trains us in how to live well, then we would all end up as not very nice people! Your parents discipline you because they love you, and want you to grow up to be people that follow Jesus and live in a way that shows love for God as well as for others around you.</p>
2. God discipline’s his children (v.11)	<p>In the same way that your parents discipline you, God also disciplines his children</p> <p><b>Read Proverbs 3:11</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: How do you think God disciplines us?</i></li> </ul> <p>God doesn’t give us “time out” or take away our privileges, but he does still discipline us. Sometimes he does this by allowing us to suffer consequences when we act foolishly. For example, if we are unwise in choosing our friends, then we might have a hard time with relationships at school. Sometimes he uses things that happen to us in life to help us see that we need to change.</p>

2. God's discipline shows his love (v.12)	<p>We are told why God disciplines us in the next verse</p> <p><b>Read Proverbs 3:12</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: Who does God discipline?</i></li> </ul> <p>God disciplines those whom he loves. It is never very fun to be disciplined by our parents, but we know that they do this because they love us. In just the same way, when God disciplines his children, he does it because he loves us. He wants us to learn to live well, so he shows us where we are getting things wrong, and helps us to choose the right path. (<i>Relate this back to the Getting Started activity</i>)</p>
<b>So What?</b>	Is God trying to teach you something through the things that you are finding hard at the moment? Thank God that he loves you enough to discipline you.
<b>Memory Verse</b>	<b>Psalm 145:3</b> <i>Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom</i>

## Family Bible Time (Day 2) – 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

<b>BIG IDEA</b>	God's testing shows his power and our weakness
<b>Bible Passage</b>	2 Corinthians 12:7-10
<b>Getting Started</b>	Have you ever had a splinter? ( <i>Talk about how they got it</i> ) Did someone have to get it out for you? That can be painful! But even though it can be painful to get the splinter out, it is much better once it has been removed. It is worth going through the pain, so that you can get the splinter removed. It is painful at the time, but it achieves something good.
<p><b>Finding Out</b></p> <p>1. Suffering is painful (v.7-8)</p> <p>2. But suffering helps us to remember that we need God (v.9-10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: Can you remember who Paul was?</i></li> </ul> <p>Paul was one of the very first missionaries. He travelled all over telling people about Jesus. Although he loved telling people about Jesus, it meant that he had lots of things happen to him that were not very nice. He was beaten up, and shipwrecked, and sometimes he didn't have enough food to eat. But there was one thing in particular that he found very hard. We don't know exactly what it was, but it caused him pain. He described it as being like a "thorn" that he couldn't get rid of. Paul prayed to God to ask him to take it away.</p> <p><b>Read 2 Corinthians 12:8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: How many times did Paul ask God to take away his suffering?</i></li> </ul> <p>God answered Paul's prayer – he told Paul "no, I'm not going to take away your pain".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: Why do you think God didn't take away Paul's suffering? Was it because God didn't love Paul?</i></li> </ul> <p>We know that God loved Paul, so that can't be the reason he said no to him. But God did have a good reason for letting Paul suffer.</p> <p><b>Read 2 Corinthians 12:9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: What does God say is "made perfect" in Paul's weakness?</i></li> </ul> <p>The reason God did not take away Paul's suffering is because God wanted to show Paul his power. Every time that Paul suffered, he remembered that he needed God's help every day. He remembered that he couldn't live without God, and he remembered that God's power is so great that he is able to give him everything that he needed. So even</p>

	though Paul continued to suffer, he realised that his suffering was actually a good thing, because it helped him to remember how much he needed God.
<b>So What?</b>	Is there something that you are finding painful or hard at the moment? Does it help you to see that you can't deal with everything on your own, and that you need God? Then you can thank God that sometimes he doesn't take away our suffering!
<b>Memory Verse</b>	<b>Psalm 145:3</b> <i>Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.</i>

### Family Bible Time (Day 3) – James 1:2-4

<b>BIG IDEA</b>	God's testing produces perseverance and maturity
<b>Bible Passage</b>	James 1:2-4
<b>Getting Started</b>	What do you like learning about at school? (Writing stories? Doing maths? Art?) What things do you find really hard? (Writing stories? Doing maths? Art?) Sometimes when we find things hard, we just want to give up! But what if you were finding something hard at school ( <i>use the examples they gave earlier</i> ) and your teacher came up to you and helped you with it. Would knowing that your teacher is willing to help you when you find things hard make it easier to keep going with it? What about if you knew that God would help you when things are hard – would that help you to keep going? That is exactly what God does...
<b>Finding Out</b> 1. Be joyful in trials (v.2)  2. Because good things can come from it (v.3-4)	<p>Sometimes, there are things that happen to us that are hard, and that make us sad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: What kind of things happen to you that you find hard to deal with?</i></li> </ul> <p>A long time ago, a man called James wrote a letter to the church. He knew that the people he was writing to were finding life hard, and this is what he said to them.</p> <p><b>Read James 1:2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: What does James mean by "trials"?</i></li> <li>• <i>Q: What attitude does James say we should have when we go through trials?</i></li> </ul> <p>Does that seem like a strange thing to say to people who are suffering? Do you feel like being happy when you have bad things happen to you? (<i>Relate this back specifically to the examples given earlier.</i>)</p> <p>James gives us the reason why we can be joyful even when life is hard.</p> <p><b>Read James 1:3</b></p> <p>James tells us that when things happen that make us sad, God can use this to test our faith in him. And when we see that God can still be trusted, even when things are difficult, then that helps us to persevere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: What does persevere mean?</i></li> </ul> <p>To persevere means to keep on going, even when life is hard. When we learn to trust God in hard times, we find out that he is a good person to trust. We learn that we can rely on him, and this helps us to keep on trusting him throughout our whole life. There is also something else good that can come from trusting God in hard times.</p> <p><b>Read James 1:4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Q: What does James say will happen to us when we keep on persevering?</i></li> </ul>

	We are told that we will become mature and complete. This means that we will become more like Jesus and be able to make wise decisions in life. We will also find out more about what God is like and get to know him better.
<b>So What?</b>	Do you want to be someone who keeps trusting in God, even in hard times? Do you want to be someone who is like Jesus, and is wise? The way to become like this is to trust that God is doing you good, even when life is hard. If you learn to trust God in everything, then you will have joy, even when life is hard.
<b>Memory Verse</b>	<b>Psalm 145:3</b> <i>Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom</i>

### Family Bible Time (Day 4) – Romans 5:3-5

<b>BIG IDEA</b>	God’s testing leads to hope
<b>Bible Passage</b>	Romans 5:3-5
<b>Getting Started</b>	Have you ever had something happen to you that was painful, but in the end it turned out to be something good? ( <i>E.g. getting injections to prevent disease, training for a sporting event, tidying up your room!</i> ). Sometimes that is what God does in our lives. He allows painful things to happen to us, so that something good can come out of it.
<b>Finding Out</b> 1. Suffering achieves a purpose for God’s followers	<p><b>Read Romans 5:3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q: <i>How does Paul feel about his suffering?</i> Paul “glories” in his suffering. That means he knows that although some things can be difficult and painful to go through, he can see that God can do something good as a result. He can use even bad things to bring about something good.</li> <li>Q: <i>What does Paul say that suffering can produce?</i> Just like James, Paul also knows that suffering can produce perseverance. Perseverance means keeping on going in following God and doing the right thing, even when it is hard. But Paul also says that suffering can produce other good things as well.</li> </ul> <p><b>Read Romans 5:4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q: <i>What else does suffering produce?</i> Paul says that as you persevere and keep going when it is hard, this will build your character. You will learn to become someone who is more like Jesus, and live in a way that he is pleased with. As well as this, suffering can also produce hope. Do you sometimes find it hard to remember that one day this world will come to an end? Every day we get up in the morning, have some breakfast, brush our teeth, go off to school (unless it’s the weekend!) do our homework, play with friends, have dinner, brush our teeth again and then go to bed. Because the same thing happens every day, it can be easy to forget that one day it will be the last day ever. One day, there will not be a tomorrow. God can use suffering and hard things in life to remind us that this life will not go on forever. When this life ends, there is another life, one that will go on forever. That is what people who trust in Jesus have hope in. We look forward to getting to see Jesus and living with him forever. And when we face hard times, it helps us to remember these things.</li> </ul>
<b>So What?</b>	If you are following Jesus, then you can be sure that even when bad things happen, God will bring something good out of it for you. However, this is only true for those who are

	trusting in Jesus. When you are trusting Jesus, you can be sure that he will use even bad things in life for your good.
<b>Memory Verse</b>	<b>Psalm 145:3</b> <i>Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom</i>

## Family Bible Time (Day 5) – 1 Peter 1:6-7

<b>BIG IDEA</b>	Perseverance through testing brings glory to God
<b>Bible Passage</b>	1 Peter 1:6-7
<b>Getting Started</b>	If possible, get hold of a picture showing how gold is refined in fire. Ask the children if they know where gold comes from and what it looks like at first. How is it made shiny? Explain the process of refining in fire to remove all the dirt and burn away everything that isn't gold. All that is left at the end is pure gold. The bible tells us that this is what God does with us also – so that we end up like shiny gold.
<b>Finding Out</b> 1. Now there is suffering (v.6)  2. Trials prove faith to be genuine (v.7)  3. Genuine faith brings praise to God (v.7)	<p>Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends. He wrote a letter to God's people to help them understand why God sometimes let them suffer.</p> <p><b>Read 1 Peter 1:6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q: <i>What does Peter tell us that we may have "for a little while"?</i> Peter tells us that life involves suffering and trials. Because the world is no longer perfect, we will all sometimes have to go through things that are hard.</li> </ul> <p>• Q: <i>What attitude does Peter say we should have when we go through trials?</i> Just like James, Peter tells us that when bad things happen to us, we can rejoice! The reason we can rejoice is because God has a plan that means even the bad things that happen to us can bring about good things.</p> <p><b>Read 1 Peter 1:7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q: <i>What does Peter say will prove to be genuine when we suffer trials?</i> Peter says that when we suffer, this can prove that our faith in God is genuine. Just saying that we love God and want to follow him isn't enough. We need God to change our hearts. We cannot see inside people's hearts, so it is sometimes hard to know if they are really following Jesus. But there is one way to know for sure. If we keep following Jesus and trusting in him even when it is hard and bad things happen, then we can know that our faith in God is real. Just like when gold is put in fire - everything that isn't real gold will melt away (even if it looks like gold to start with) and only the real gold will be left. When we go through hard times, everything that is just words will melt away, and only real faith in Jesus is left. Then we become like shiny gold!</li> </ul> <p>God says that real faith in him is worth even more than gold.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q: <i>Why is real faith in Jesus more precious than gold?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Read 1 Peter 1:7b</b> When we keep trusting in Jesus, even through hard times, this brings praise and glory to God! Something that brings praise to God is very precious.</p>
<b>So What?</b>	When we keep on trusting in God, even in bad times, then this helps us to know that we are true followers of Jesus. If we never had to go through anything that was hard,

	then we would not be able to have the same confidence that our faith is real. That is why we can be joyful even in hard times – but only if you are following Jesus.
<b>Memory Verse</b>	<b>Psalm 145:3</b> <i>Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom</i>

### Recap Week 8

If we belong to Jesus, then he can bring good things even out of the bad things in life. Can you remember some of the good things that God can give us through suffering and hard times? God shows his love to us, even through hard times. He also shows us his power. When we go through suffering, God can help us to persevere and make us more like Jesus. Suffering also reminds us that we have something more than this life to look forward to. But only people who are trusting in Jesus have all these good things come out of suffering.