"D-Day Tests That Come While Serving"
Leading like Jesus

1 Chronicles 29:17 (NLT) — 17 I know, my God, that **you examine our hearts** and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.

1 Samuel 16:7 (NLT) — 7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, **but the LORD looks at the heart."**

I. Today I would like to talk about servant leadership

A. It's the leadership style Jesus taught His disciples

Mark 10:42–45 (NLT) — 42 So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. **43** But among you it will be different. **Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant**, **44** and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. **45** For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

B. Our desire is to be positioned so that we can serve God's people effectively

1. This message is part of a four part series I've taught on Servant Leadership

2. In the first of the series We looked at the kind of people that God uses

a) Everyday people

(1) People who are available to the Lord

b) People who are elastic

(1) Willing to be stretched

c) People with an eternal perspective

(1) People who can see beyond the temporary pleasures of this life and see the value of giving yourself to things which matter for eternity.

3. IN the second of the series We studied the "Master Principle" in Philippians 2 to understand the motives of a true servant of the Lord

a) To have the same mind set of Jesus

b) The same love of Jesus

c) Unity of spirit

d) Esteeming others

e) Passion to serve

4. Part three We studied the qualities of the Spirit of servant hood from Isaiah 42

a) Dependence

b) Approval

c) Humility

d) Compassion/ Empathy

e) Optimism

f) Anointing

C. Today I want to touch on one more very important subject to prepare us and position us for effective servant leadership

D. You should know that whenever you step out of your comfort zone and make yourself available to the Lord to be used you will be tested.

E. Testing comes in many forms

1. Testing comes from the Lord

2. Temptations come from the devil, and temptations will put you to the test

3. There is the pull of this world's system that will have it's effect on you and your ministry before the Lord, and it will test you!

F. Our text says that God examines/tests the heart

1. He will allow pressure to come our way in the form of trials and tribulations to bring out hidden attitudes that hinder our ability to be used

2. He will design certain tests that will allow you to see the true motivations of your heart

Luke 6:45 (NLT) — 45 A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.

G. God uses tests to develop your character

Romans 5:3–4 (NLT) — 3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. **4** And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.

H. God is more interested in who you are than in what you do

1. That's why we are called human "beings" and not human "doings"

2. I have got good news and bad news…

a) The bad news… you're not perfect

b) The good news… God is not done with you yet

c) The best news… He will get the job done

Philippians 1:6 (NLT) — 6 And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

I. I have entitled this study D-day tests that come while serving

J. These are certain tests that you WILL encounter while you serve the Lord

1. There is no escaping them

2. You will go through each one of them in one form or fashion

K. I call them D-Day tests because they do come into our lives like an invasion

1. And when the invasion comes, you have to make decisions which effect your destiny

2. You will also notice that all the tests begin with the letter "D"

I. The test of "Disappointment"

Numbers 16:8–10 (NLT) — 8 Then Moses spoke again to Korah: "Now listen, you Levites! **9** Does it seem insignificant to you that the God of Israel has chosen you from among all the community of Israel to be near him so you can serve in the LORD's Tabernacle and stand before the people to minister to them? **10** Korah, he has already given this special ministry to you and your fellow Levites. **Are you now demanding the priesthood as well?**

A. First a little background

1. Korah was the son of Izhar and a first cousin of Moses and Aaron.

2. He was equal in rank with Aaron within the tribe of Levi.

3. Korah and his sons, along with three other clans, descendants of Kohath, Son of Levi, were given responsibilities to assist in the transporting of all the items in the tent of meeting.

Numbers 3:31 (NLT) — 31 These four clans were responsible for the care of the Ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the various articles used in the sanctuary, the inner curtain, and all the equipment related to their use.

B. In contemporary terms basically they were the roadies of the wilderness band

1. They were the forerunners of "Eight Brothers and a truck"

C. Korah and his brethren were disappointed with their place of service

1. They wanted more than what they were given to do

2. Apparently they felt just as qualified as Aaron and his sons to do the work of the priesthood.

3. Instead of serving the Lord faithfully with the opportunity given them, they became jealous of Aaron and his sons and coveted the position of the priesthood.

D. The test of disappointment comes in many different forms.

1. As with Korah it can come to you when you are not placed in the position of service you desire or believe you deserve.

a) **You see this in the church context all the time.**

b) **Someone wants teacher with the adults, they are asked to serve as a helper in the nursery**

c) **You believe you have the gift to sing and solo, you are asked to be a greeter at the door**

d) **As a leader it shows up as well; when you are submitted to a Senior Pastor and he/she tasks you with a responsibility you have no passion for; or worse yet, you have a real passion for something and they give it to a less senior associate.**

2. **The test of disappointment comes when you are not given the recognition you believe you deserve, or someone else is promoted into the position you have been coveting.**

a) **The pastor mentions how much he appreciates all the hard work Joe Doe has given the church… and yet in your heart you know that you put in more time and effort than ole Joe and the Pastor never even mentions your name… he may not even know your name.)**

b) **Your heart begins to covet the recognition others receive**

3. **It's the test of disappointment**

E. The fruit of disappointment

1. **When someone is disappointed, it is an offense, the person is offended by the disappointment**

2. **The offense, if not dealt with righteously, turns to anger**

3. **Anger if not dealt with righteously turns to bitterness**

4. **Bitterness poisons the well and everything begins to taste bitter**

5. **Bitterness in the heart will begin to spoil relationships**

F. One of two reactions is typical

G. one reaction to the test of disappointment is to simply quit

1. "I'll find somebody who appreciates my gifts and talents" So you move on, and on, and on….

H. Rebellion is another typical reaction to the test of disappointment

Numbers 16:3 (NLT) — 3 They united against Moses and Aaron and said, "You have gone too far! The whole community of Israel has been set apart by the LORD, and he is with all of us. **What right do you have to act as though you are greater than the rest of the LORD's people?"**

1. Typically what happens is a person begins to share their disappointment with others, trying to justify why they feel the way they do.. this is called "sharing my burdens with others so they can pray… the bible has another name for it…gossip.

2. When some of the others begin to sympathize with the offended one, they band together and complain to each other,

3. Their complaint is almost always directed toward the leadership.

I. This is the test of disappointment

1. Disappointment with the place you are given to serve

2. Disappointed with the lack of recognition for your service

II. The test of Disillusionment

Acts 13:13 (NLT) — 13 Paul and his companions then left Paphos by ship for Pamphylia, landing at the port town of Perga. There John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem.

A. Paul and Barnabas set out on the very first mission trip to take the gospel message to the gentiles

1. They were sent out by the church in Antioch and sailed to Cyprus

2. Along with Paul and Barnabas was John Mark

3. He was Barnabas cousin and probably along as a helper

4. After the team completed their circuit on the Island of Cyprus, they sailed to their next destination

5. When they arrived in Pamphylia John Mark left them

6. It's not spelled out exactly why he left, but one thing we know, Paul did not like it and felt it was not a good reason to leave.

Acts 15:38 (NLT) — 38 But Paul disagreed strongly, since **John Mark had deserted them** in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work.

B. Some people say that John Mark left the team because he could not handle the rigors of traveling

1. Others say that it was because he did not like the idea of Paul assuming leadership of the mission team.

2. Some say it was because he did not like the menial work that he was given to do.

C. Disillusionment it based on your expectations which go unfulfilled.

1. Your expectations may be founded on promises made to you…

2. Or on your own perceptions of what you think should happen

D. Disillusionment often comes after you have been serving a while and it's just not what you thought it would be.

1. Someone promised you something and they did not come through

2. people were not as organized and well prepared as you thought they should be

3. You thought this place of ministry would be more fulfilling

4. you expected certain benefits that were not forthcoming

5. you wanted to work with a particular person and the day you arrive, they leave.

6. All of a sudden you notice that the ministry is not perfect, the church is not perfect, the mission leadership is not perfect.

E. The fruit of disillusionment

1. People go AWAL (Absent Without a Leave)

a) People just stop coming to their times of serving

b) At first they call and make excuses, after a while they just don't show up at all

F. The test of disillusionment

1. **Things aren't what you expected them to be**

III. The test of DEPENDABILITY

2 Timothy 4:9–16 (NLT) — 9 Timothy, please come as soon as you can. **10** **Demas has deserted me** because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus has gone to Dalmatia. **11** Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you when you come, for he will be helpful to me in my ministry. **12** I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. **13** When you come, be sure to bring the coat I left with Carpus at Troas. Also bring my books, and especially my papers. **14** Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm, but the Lord will judge him for what he has done. **15** Be careful of him, for he fought against everything we said. **16** The first time I was brought before the judge, no one came with me. Everyone abandoned me. May it not be counted against them.

A. Paul is in prison in Rome

1. **From his prison cell he writes his 2nd letter to Timothy and basically says, no one showed up at his first trial,**

2. **Demas backslid all together**

3. **Everyone else had something better to do**

4. **It's the test of dependability**

B. Jesus said…

Matthew 5:37 (NLT) — 37 Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

1. **Will you do what you said you would do?**

2. **Will you honor the commitments you make?**

3. **What happens when something better comes up that you would rather do?**

   a) **When I first stated out serving in the church I made a commitment to stay back after Saturday PM prayer meetings to straighten out the chairs and take out the trash to get the church ready for Sunday mornings.**

   b) **One Saturday Christian artist, Nancy Honeytree, was in town and said she would meet with all the singles to and do a mini Christmas concert and sip apple cider around the fire place**

   c) **I just so happen to also make a commitment to go to Channel 22 to answer the prayer line in place of someone that particular Saturday night**

d) I hurried to get the chairs done.; raced down in my car and turned on the engine; and prepared to race to the special mini concert; then it dawned on me, I made a commitment to go to Channel 22 to pray on the prayer line.

e) 1st call a suicidal person

f) I hung up the phone; I heard the Lord say… "Sometimes your faithfulness is a matter of life and death"

C. Can you be counted on to be where you said you would be?

1. This is the question the Lord already knows the answer to but wants you to know about yourself.

D. Our word is our bond

1. Scriptures teach that God honor's His word above His own name

Psalm 138:2 (NKJV) — 2 I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For **You have magnified Your word above all Your name**.

2. As you desire to serve the Lord and lead God's people you will be delegated certain responsibilities

3. You make a commitment to fill a gap and minister to a need

4. How will your actions reflect on the integrity of your word?

5. When people think of your name, what reputation will you have in their minds…

6. I am sure you can even think of people who make a promise to you and even as they are saying it you think to yourself, I can't count on them to follow through.

7. And there are others and you know, if they promise you can take it to the bank.

E. I am reminded of a story many years ago of a Sunday School helper

1. Many years ago when I taught in the training center back at CCC the students who were on the mission track were required to serve somewhere in the church on a weekly basis

2. This particular person was asked to be a helper in the K-2 grade class my wife taught

3. The first Sunday he came and introduced himself and my wife asked him if he could arrive 15 minutes early to sit in front of the class and take role and give the children name tags

4. She emphasized with him how important it was for him to be early – he agreed

5. The next Sunday he never showed up

6. The following two Sunday's he came but came late

7. The 4th Sunday he never showed.

8. My wife asked me what kind of Students I was turning out in the Mission program

F. The fruit of unfaithfulness

1. There are ripple effects that go far beyond what you can see

2. IN this situation there were needs in the class that went unmet

3. other people who had other assignments had to be taken off of what they were doing in order to fill in – the quality of what was given to the children was less because there was a hole that had to be filled.

4. When the person who commits to teach the children doesn't show up, someone has to be pulled in – their family is disturbed because they expected to worship together

5. The children don't get the best because the teacher doesn't have adequate time to prepare

6. The greater your leadership responsibilities are the greater impact unfaithfulness has on your ministries effectiveness.

G. Unfaithfulness impacts your testimony

1. When you give your word to someone and make a commitment, if you don't follow through you break a trust

2. You get a reputation for not being trustworthy

3. The person in our little story lost his responsibility and the respect of others

H. The test of Dependability – will you do what you say you will do?

IV. The test of DISLOYALTY

Numbers 14:1–9 (NLT) — 1 Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night. **2** Their voices rose in **a great chorus of protest against Moses and Aaron**. "If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!" they complained. **3** "Why is the LORD taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?" **4** Then they plotted among themselves, "**Let's choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!"** **5** Then Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground before the whole community of Israel. **6** Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing. **7** They said to all the people of Israel, "The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! **8** And if the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey. **9 Do not rebel against the LORD**, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the LORD is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"

A. Joshua and Caleb were two of 12 spies sent into the Promised Land

1. 10 of the spies came back and gave a bad report to the people

2. Joshua and Caleb gave a good report

3. Joshua and Caleb attempted to persuade the people to walk in obedience.

4. The crowd did not like what they were saying, they feared the challenges of obedience.

B. The test of disloyalty

1. The more you serve, the closer look you get at the leadership of God's church

2. all of a sudden, you discover the humanness of your leader

3. You discover their faults and weaknesses

4. What will you do when you finally discover that your leader is not the exact incarnation of Jesus?

5. Will you point out his/her shortcomings?

6. Will you remain loyal to their leadership even when they make decisions that are not popular or that you do not agree with?

Numbers 14:4 (NLT) — 4 Then they plotted among themselves, “Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”

C. Understand that rebellion directed against God’s appointed leadership is directed toward God Himself

Numbers 14:9 (NLT) — 9 Do not rebel against the LORD, and don’t be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the LORD is with us! Don’t be afraid of them!”

D. The fruit of disloyalty

1. It is clearly seen in strife in the body

Amos 3:3 (NKJV) — 3 Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

Proverbs 6:16–19 (NLT) — 16 There are six things the LORD hates— no, seven things he detests: **17** haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, **18** a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, **19** a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family.

Matthew 12:25 (NLT) — 25 Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, “Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart.
The test of loyalty – will you be loyal to those God places in authority in your life?

V. The test of DISTRACTION

Luke 10:40 (NKJV) — 40 But **Martha was distracted with much serving**, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.”

A. One of the most difficult tests to pass when serving is the test of distraction

1. There are so many needs

2. So many opportunities

3. And what can happen is you spend so much time serving the Lord, you have not time to spend with the Lord

4. The only way to effectively serve the Lord is to spend time with Him

a) To get wisdom to know when to serve and when to say no

b) To get filled with power to do the work of the ministry

c) To stir up the gifts of the Holy Spirit within you and to seek the gifts you need to do His work

d) God wants you to spend time with Him so you can better serve Him

B. One test of distraction is being distracted by too much serving

C. There is another test of distraction,

2 Timothy 4:10 (NLT) — 10 Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus has gone to Dalmatia.

1. Demas got distracted by the pull of this world

2. Many people who are over committed fall into the second trap

3. They pull so far back they get lured into the gravitational pull of this world

4. They lay back on one commitment, and then it becomes easy to not be in church

5. Then the devil knows just how to put the right temptations in your path

6. I think of the elder who stepped down for a while because his work got too busy

a) He said he needed more time with his family

b) Soon they were not in church any more

c) It wasn't long after that he fell back into alcoholism, the very thing God delivered him from when he got saved.

D. The test of distraction

VI. How do we pass these D-day tests?

A. Maintain a Right FOCUS

Colossians 3:22–23 (NLT) — 22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord. **23** Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

1. **You have to ask yourself the question, "who am I serving?"**

2. **If you do all you do for the Lord and not for men, you will pass these tests**

3. **Serve Him with all your heart**

4. **Do it with excellence because He deserves excellence**

5. **Serve Him with passion because of His love for you**

6. **Keep your focus right… I am not serving men, I am serving the Lord**

B. Maintain a right **HEART**

1 Chronicles 28:9 (NLT) — 9 "And Solomon, my son, learn to know the God of your ancestors intimately. **Worship and serve him with your whole heart and a willing mind. For the LORD sees every hear**t and knows every plan and thought. If you seek him, you will find him. But if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.

1. **The NKJV says "serve him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind"**

2. **Motivated by a desire to give to others what you have so freely received from the Lord**

3. **Out of gratitude for what Jesus has done for you gratefully serve His people**

4. **motivated out of a desire to reveal Jesus to others…**

5. **I serve Him with a loyal heart**

6. **If my heart is loyal to Jesus, I will be loyal to the leadership appointed over me**

7. **I will be faithful to all the commitments I make**

8. **When my loyalty is placed rightly, I will pass these D-day tests**

C. Maintain right **RELATIONSHIP**

Matthew 7:21–26 (NLT) — 21 “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. **Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter**. **22** On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ **23** But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’ **24** **“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. 25** Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. **26** But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand.

Luke 10:39–42 (NLT) — 39 Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord’s feet, listening to what he taught. **40** But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, “Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.” **41** But the Lord said to her, “My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! **42** There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.”

1. The key to effectively leading God’s people is having a servants heart.

2. The key to effectively serving has everything to do with maintaining a right relationship with the Lord.

3. There are a lot of people doing a lot of good things; even powerful things but according to Jesus they have no relationship with Him

4. Martha was serving Jesus, or so she thought but in reality she was cooking a meal Jesus never ordered when she should have been sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to Him

5. Look, I love Martha’s; most pastors do because they get things done.

6. But in reality Martha’s will typically burn out; get mad at those who are not serving up to their standards and will definitely fail one or more of the D-day tests.

7. The only way to avoid this is to sit at the feet of Jesus.

8. Spend time with Him in His word so you have his mind

9. Listen to Him so you have His heart

10. Get filled by Him so you have His life to give to others

11. Maintain right relationship

D. You will receive the Right REWARD

Colossians 3:24 (NLT) — 24 Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

Matthew 25:23 (NLT) — 23 "The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'

Psalm 62:5 (NKJV) — 5 My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him.

1. **God keeps good books**
2. **What is done unto Him He will never forget.**