

SPONGE



sponge



# Introduction

A purple rubber glove is shown from the wrist up, holding a piece of yellow sponge. The glove has a textured pattern on the fingers and palm. The background is a solid gold color.

In our walk with God, we often face seasons of testing, pressure, and refinement.

These moments can be overwhelming and discouraging, leaving us questioning our faith and wondering if God has abandoned us.

However, it is crucial to remember that these challenges are not meant to break us but to shape us into vessels of honor for God's glory.

Today, let us delve into the Word of God and discover the transformative power of testing, pressure, and refinement in our Christian journey.



# The Purpose of Testing

## **Read and meditate on James 1:2-4:**

*'Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.'*

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. How does testing strengthen our faith and character as Christians?
2. How can we maintain hope and trust in God's plan when going through a season of testing?
3. What are the potential dangers of avoiding or trying to escape from testing?



# The Pressure that Shapes Us

## Read and discuss Psalm 64:8:

*'And yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the potter. We all are formed by your hand..'*

## Discussion Questions:

1. What does the imagery of the potter and the clay teach us about our relationship with God?
2. What does it mean to surrender ourselves completely to the hands of the divine Potter?
3. What are some of the challenges or obstacles we may face in fully surrendering to God's will, as depicted in the potter and the clay analogy?



# Refinement

A purple rubber glove is shown against a solid yellow background. The glove is holding a piece of yellow sponge between its thumb and index finger. The word 'Refinement' is written in a large, white, cursive font with a red shadow effect, positioned at the top of the image.

## **Read and reflect on Romans 5:3-4:**

*'Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.'*

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. How does God use refinement to shape and transform us into His likeness?
2. How does the refining process strengthen our faith and deepen our trust in God?
3. What role does surrender play in the process of refinement, and why is it important?



# The Promise of God's Presence

## Read and reflect on Isaiah 43:2:

*'When you pass through the waters,  
I will be with you;  
and when you go through the rivers,  
they will not overwhelm you.  
When you walk through the fire,  
you will not be scorched;  
the flames will not set you ablaze.'*

## Discussion Questions:

1. How does the presence of God in your life bring you comfort and assurance?
2. Reflect on a time when you felt God's presence in a powerful way. How did it impact your faith and perspective?
3. Have you ever experienced a season in your life when you felt distant from God's presence? How did you navigate through that period?



# Conclusion

A purple oven mitt is shown holding a piece of golden-brown toast. The mitt is positioned vertically, with the toast held between the thumb and index finger. The background is a solid olive green color.

Dear friends, let us embrace the seasons of testing, pressure, and refinement in our lives.

Though they may seem unbearable at times, they are opportunities for our faith to grow, our character to be shaped, and our spirits to be refined.

As we surrender to God's refining process, we can trust in His faithfulness and rest in the knowledge that He is transforming us into vessels of honor.

Let us persevere with joy, knowing that the testing of our faith leads to an abundant life in Christ. May we emerge from these seasons stronger, more resilient, and fully equipped to fulfill God's purpose for our lives.



# prayer

A purple glove is shown holding a piece of bread. The glove is positioned as if it is offering the bread. The background is a solid olive green color.

**Feel free to pray your own prayers as a group or pray the prayer below together:**

Father God,

Thank you for the promise of your presence when we go through deep waters. Though you don't promise us that we won't see valley times in our lives, you do promise that you will walk with us through them.

Help us to keep our eyes fixed on you and on the lane you have called us to run in.

Remove enemy agenda and distraction from our paths so that all we are left with are the guiding hands of our Father.

in Jesus' name,  
Amen.