

Don't Try God

A sign in front of a denominational church building read, "Troubled? Try God." That message was not original with the one who posted it. Perhaps you remember the old television commercial in which a person recalled how he had been urged, "Try it, you'll like it," only to find out that the food he tried did not agree with him. "I tried it; I didn't like it." Getting back to the spiritual realm, we've heard the "try it" appeal made for Bible study, worship and prayer.

Giving something a try might be worthwhile if we wanted to buy an automobile. After all, we wouldn't want to make such a high dollar purchase without first having some knowledge of the vehicle's dependability and other features. In His day, Jesus spoke of the excuse maker who would not come to the great supper because he said he had bought some oxen and had to go and see if they were any good (Luke 14:19). The idea of someone doing business in such a backward manner was absurd and Jesus used that as an illustration of the absurdity of making excuses for not following Him. We understand the need to try something out if we are not familiar with it. When it comes to God, however, should we really be putting Him to the test?

Let's apply this "trying out" line of reasoning to all things spiritual for a moment. Suppose we were in dire straits. Perhaps we had a financial falling out or our marriage was on the rocks. We read the sign in front of the church building and say, "Okay, I'm going to give God a try. I'll pray and worship and read for 30 days and see if He'll straighten things out for me." Now, what happens if at the end of 30 days you were to find yourself in the same situation? Would you then conclude that God is not there or, if He is, that He really doesn't care about you? Just as you would return a product after it became defective, would you return your faith (such as it is) and blame God for not living up to His word?

In John 6 we find some people who "tried God." They had received a free meal from Jesus and, figuring there was more where that came from, they followed Him. When He explained to them that He wanted them for life rather than for a mere probationary period, He was met first with murmuring and then with desertion. Peter and the apostles understood the concept though. When asked by the Lord, "Will ye also go away?" Peter answered for the other apostles as well as himself in saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:67-68).

Being a Christian is not something that we try to see if we like it or if it suits us. There are many rocks along the road to heaven that can make the travel treacherous and uncertain (Matthew 7:13-14; II Timothy 3:12). In just "trying God out" we could find ourselves like the rocky soil and thorny soil of Luke 8. "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." (Luke 8:13-14).

Maintaining faithfulness as a Christian requires putting down roots into the Word of God. Paul wrote of the need to "continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." (Colossians 1:23). You don't get that by trying God out to see if you like Him or to see if He'll do what you want Him to do for you.

God has proven His trustworthiness over and over again. He does not lie (Titus 1:2). He inspired His written Word as the basis for faith (Romans 10:17). All we have to do is go there and we will readily see that He is 100% reliable. We just need to abide in His will (Revelation 2:10).

We don't need to try God. He has proven Himself. What we need to do is commit to Him. He doesn't want our intellect for a trial period. He wants our hearts for a lifetime. Only by giving heart, soul and mind to Him (Matthew 22:37) will we find that He is the answer to all of our questions, the provider of all of our needs and the solution to all of our troubles. Don't try God. Obey His Gospel and walk daily with Him in His Word. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7).