

## WILL A MAN SERVE GOD FOR NOTHING ?

This week we answer the question, “Will a man serve God for nothing? If serving God doesn’t give you an edge, if it doesn’t mean special treatment—why do it? That question is asked and answered in the book of Job. Read Job 1:1-22. In verse 8 God said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him, a man who fears God and turns away from evil.” Satan responded, “Does Job fear God for nothing? Haven’t You protected him and blessed him? But take all he has away and he will curse you to your face”. God said, “everything he has is in your hands” You know the rest of the story, messengers came to Job one after the other with bad news. He lost all of his children, servants, property, livestock, and everything he had, then in chapter 2 he lost his health as well and lived in terrible pain.

We now wrestle with an eternal question that affected Job and us as well. If it does not pay to fear God, worship God, and serve God, why do it? Will a man serve God for nothing? Years ago I heard a minister named Ron Dunn preach on this. He said one day he got a call from a long time church member of his and he said, “Take my name off the church roll, I’m through with God. A crisis was developing in my family that we were all praying about. I assured them God would not allow it, but God let it happen”. Three years ago a guy in one of my Bible studies called me and said he wouldn’t be coming back. He couldn’t believe in a God who would let him go broke, and allow his wife and kids to leave him.

Job’s problems started with God bragging on Job—makes you want to keep a low profile doesn’t it? Don’t bring my name up, please. Why is Job the perfect laboratory rat for this experiment? “There is no one on earth like him, he is blameless and upright”. The amazing thing here is that we the students are let in on this, but Job is not. Job thought he was being crushed by God, but actually he was being exalted. When Job thought he was being abandoned, God was actually giving him the closest scrutiny. During Job’s trials, God had never been more present. What Job didn’t know was that God cares more about our faith than our comfort, and this contest with Satan is a contest over Job’s faith.

What was Satan’s argument? The reason he is good is that it is profitable, that’s why, not because he loves you or because you deserve it. Because Satan has a deceitful reason for everything he does, he thinks everyone does. Everyone has an ulterior motive. Why do we serve God? If serving God doesn’t give you an edge, if it doesn’t mean special treatment, answered prayers, health and wealth, and an exemption from tragedies—then what’s the use?

Ron Dunn told the story of a minister he knew who was under pressure to raise a lot of money for a building campaign. The committees met and devised a strategy. He would preach a series of messages on the blessings of giving, letters would be sent out, lists divided up for personal calls—a full court press. The climax would be the recruitment of a high powered speaker that everyone would want to come hear. At the end of which at the perfect moment when everyone was emotional they would pass out the pledge cards and reel them in. It was a good plan but the speaker got up and said, “Ladies and gentlemen, if you tithe, the only thing I can promise you is you will have 10% less than you had before. We ought to give because it is right, not because we expect more in return. We give because God deserves it and we love God period.” I must confess I love that story. I do believe God will bless you if you give—either spiritually and/or materially or by rewards in heaven, but what if He didn’t? Will you serve God for nothing?

Admit it, come clean—deep down because we are Christians, because we go to church or Bible studies, give money, pray to God, help other people, and serve God—we think we deserve special consideration, blessing, good health, and preferential treatment. What if we don’t get it? The Judeo-Christian ethic is built around good people prospering and evil people failing. This is the argument of Job’s friends in chapters 3-37. They believed that Job was hiding some heinous sin, and all his problems were a direct result of his sin. The sheer length of this debate between Job and his friends not only makes the book of Job hard to study, but emphasizes how far off the mark mankind is in evaluating reality. In assessing his condition, to Job its all about suffering undeservedly, to his friends its all about blame, to us its all about spiritual warfare, and to God it was all about faith.

Consider Job. He received one bad report after another. He lost everything—family, wealth, and health, and to make it worse, God left him with a contentious wife. After he suffered terribly, complained a lot, and demanded to know why, the bottom line was—YES, a man will serve God for nothing because God deserves it. Job loves God and he is faithful to God no matter what. Rich or poor, healthy or sick, we believe in God as our Creator and Sustainer. He is our sovereign Lord who has promised us justice, righteousness, and eternal glory. Remember what Job said: “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord”. Through all this Job did not blame God—Job 1:21, “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him”—Job 13:15

As for me I relate to what Peter said in John 6:68. When most of Jesus’ followers were offended by Him and were turning away, Jesus asked Peter, “You do not want to leave too, do you? Peter answered and said, Lord to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy one of God”.

**THIS IS WHY WE SERVE GOD**, the other blessings that come with it are all according to God’s grace.

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