

Sunday, March 22, 2015 - Giving it a Try

From big things to some not so big, life will daily present us with the need to make commitments and keep them. Most in the world call for you to “try something” before you commit. But we should understand that if you are going to do something right, “giving it a try” will not get the job done. We must actually be willing to give it our best.

Why is it when we obey the gospel — and God asks whether we intend to remain faithful to Him — we are able to say no more than, “Well, I’ll give it a try”?

1 Tim. 6:12-14 - Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing

Why is it when we desire to live as Christians — and God desires for us to do something — we are able to say no more than, “Well, I’ll give it a try”?

2 Tim. 1:6, 7 - Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

When we talk about living for Jesus, what is the difference between being committed versus just giving it a try?

“GIVING IT A TRY” LEAVES THE BACK DOOR OPEN TO EXCEPTIONS AND EXCUSES!

In spiritual matters, as in temporal, it is usually the commitment (rather than the method) that is the main ingredient in success. We often defeat ourselves before we ever really get started by cutting the heart out of our commitment. Despite the Lord’s warning in Lk. 9:62, the “contract” we offer Him is often an open-ended arrangement that leaves us an “out” if doing the Lord’s will turns out to be unexpectedly difficult or requires sacrifice. We place numerous conditions, qualifications, and reservations in the “fine print” of our “commitment.” We are preoccupied with “exceptions” and “extenuating circumstances.” We are unwilling to put all our eggs in one basket or make a serious promise of faithfulness and service to the Lord. We seem to want to keep everything tentative, to put the Lord on probation, to “try” Christianity and “see if it will work out” before we make up our minds about it. We treat our relationship with the Lord as if it were some kind of experiment, a “trial run.” We are endlessly inventive with our if’s, and’s, but’s, our maybe’s, and our “yes, but...” Like Moses, we have a number of what if’s (Exodus 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13).

Can we do no better than “take a crack at” Christianity? Do we intend to do no better than “try our hand” at the Lord’s will? Our thinking seems to be: “We may as well have a go at it — the worst it can do is not work out.” Others will give it a try as long as the price isn’t too high (Luke 18:18-23). Others will give it a try as long as they won’t experience rejection. In John 6:32-66, Christ identifies himself as the son of God, the bread of life and that in order to be saved you must of his “flesh” and drink of his “blood.” Those that were committed to him accepted and obeyed those things which he taught. But, “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”

What about us?

Giving it our BEST simply means “THIS IS THE WAY IT’S GOING TO BE”

The Bible actually does not even use the words “try” and “attempt” in the sense of “giving it a try”! It does use the words like “endeavor” and “strive” to describe the efforts of those who made a serious commitment.

Luke 13:24 - Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

Phil. 1:27 - Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel

Consider how the story of David and Goliath (1 Sam. 17:32-37) would have been different if David had thought like most people! Suppose the best he could say was, “Well, I’ll give it a try.”

Our Lord will deliver us to do his will if we STRIVE to do it! We need to be more “proactive” and not so “reactive” — we need to see ourselves more as “acting” and not so much as being “acted upon.” Now and then, a little “defiance” would not hurt: “Who’s in charge here, anyway — my circumstances or the Lord?” Until we begin taking responsibility for ourselves and make definite commitments to the Lord, we will make little progress. Results are usually in proportion to our commitment.

In our personal evangelism, for example, we fail more for lack of commitment than lack of method.

In our marriages, we often fail to keep our commitments because what we made was not really a commitment, but only a “we’ll give it a try” contract that virtually insured failure.

In our efforts at personal improvement, we do not get any better results than we do because we make such watered-down commitments.

Sometimes we need to burn some bridges behind us to make the commitment the Lord intends for us to make.

Matthew 10:32-39 – Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

What it comes down to is whether we trust the Lord enough to obey Him. I’m not advocating a perfectionism that makes no allowance for mistakes. What I am encouraging is a commitment to the Lord and His will which is deep, unconditional, and not qualified by the possibility of so many exceptions that it is defeated before it gets started. We need to “purpose” what we are going to do in the Lord’s work and then give it our best!

Were these committed to God or just giving it a try

Stephen – And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Paul – I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith

Peter on the day of Pentecost – Condemning those who only weeks before had crucified Christ

Christ – O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

We need to examine our lives – Are we committed to the Lord or giving it a try?

In our attendance at worship...

In our prayer life...

In our study of God's word...

In being an example for others...

I know whether my life is one of commitment to God or one of simply giving it a try by comparing my actions to the actions of Christ!

Ultimately, we must "commit" ourselves to the Lord:

1 Peter 4:19 – Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back.