

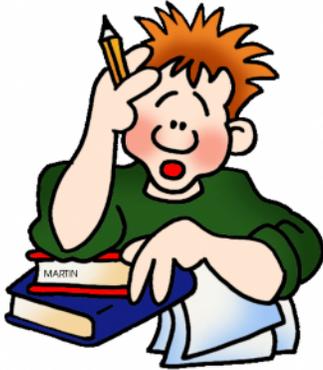
I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY

A series by Andrea Kidd

#1: Test or Taste

"Do not put the Lord your God to the test!" (Matthew 4:7) Jesus answered the devil.

A test is to prove something. Is my tumour malignant or not? Did my teenager pass his driver's test? Will this recipe work if I don't use egg?



Tests are not a bad thing; they help us to distinguish truth from error. Copernicus busted the myth that the Earth is the centre of the universe. He looked at the evidence, tested his theory and discovered truth. I wonder why Jesus said that we are not to test the Lord our God?

David encourages us to taste God. "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). Surely this is the same idea; test and find out, taste and see. Why are we told not to test God and yet to taste His goodness?

The difference lies in attitude. God's anger burned against the Israelites. They were cross and grumpy, thirsty and tired; they "tested the Lord saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'" (Exodus 17:7b) It was not that the Israelites did not believe in God, but that they were in rebellion against Him. Released by God from slavery,

suffering, hard labour, beatings and harsh cruelty every day, they now forgot to be grateful for their freedom, Moses' leadership and God's provisions of safety, food and water. They hardened their hearts against Him and rebelled. Instead of tasting God's goodness, they put Him to the test.

When I make soup I call the family to the stove before serving the meal.

"Taste the soup!" I say, "Does it need more salt, more flavour?" It is an invitation to enjoy, savour, take time for taste buds to wake up. Few, even the children, say "No, thank you," when it is time to serve. Most are ready to receive the goodness and be satisfied.



Testing is to look for fault; tasting is to look for good. All things on earth may have fault; God alone is good, pure, true and perfect.

"Do not test the Lord your God" is an admonition to put aside rebellion and a hard heart, and to taste the goodness of God.