

Solicitor Calling

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Don't you just hate it when the phone rings right at suppertime and it's one of those people who are trying to get you to buy something? You can tell immediately that it is someone you don't know because they hesitate as they say your name. Of course, this doesn't happen if your name is say, Smith, but I always get, "Hello, Mr. ... uh ... Low-er-y?" I want to hang up right at that instant. But, because I have a few manners left, I listen to them for a while. I used to always get suckered in and accept their offer, but now I wait until I have a chance to speak and then I tell them that I don't want any. Usually, they proceed with another burst of the sales pitch, but eventually I get it across to them that they are wasting their time (and mine!).

Some of them, even though they can't pronounce my name right, act like we are old buddies. Familiarity breeds sales, they must think. But it is so obvious that we do not have a relationship, and the only purpose of their friendliness is to make some money off of me. This, as I'm sure you know, is extremely annoying.

God also has a similar problem. He gets calls all of the time from people who do not really know him. They act like they do, but there is that little bit of mispronunciation or hesitation that shows that the relationship is not there. I imagine that he is frustrated, too, when He is interrupted by this.

I am reminded of the story of the little boy who had climbed up on top of the roof of his house in direct defiance of his parents' command. He was having quite a time looking out over the neighborhood when he suddenly slipped and began to slide down the roof toward the edge. He began to pray very fervently, "Lord, please save me!" And then a second or two later he cried out, "Never mind, Lord, this nail caught me!" The boy did not have a relationship with God; he didn't realize that God had saved him. In other words, calling on the Lord was only an emergency strategy. When everything was okay again, he reverted back to his old ways.

We cannot hope to assume that by knowing His name we are a part of His people. In Luke 6:46, Jesus said, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" This is a perfect example of those who try to use the Lord's name only to get what they want without putting in the effort to please Him. God is not fooled by this, and He cannot be manipulated by us like telephone solicitors.

Jesus also said in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." This is sort of a restatement of the last verse, except here it is clear that we cannot receive an eternal home with God by serving in words only. As we read in 1 John 3:18, "let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

If we continue the passage in Luke 6 to verses 22 and 23, we read, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" Here we find the outright rejection of those who have no relationship. God will act as if he never knew us. This is a scary thought. It is time to heed the lesson here and make sure our actions in following and loving God echo our words.

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