

HOW DO YOU BARGAIN WITH GOD?

By Jim Hughes

In 1962 I offered God a deal. I would give him my soul, which he obviously wanted very much, in exchange for something I wanted very much. Isn't that the way the world works? In 1957 I had graduated from college with a bachelor of science degree in Animal Husbandry. After 4 years of hard work, parties, football games, wilder parties, scholastic probation twice, and more hard work I had finally made it. Now I wanted to use it. I tried to find a job in agriculture, but the Ohio State Dept. of Ag. wanted me to be a chemist instead. After 1 year in Ohio, with its bitter cold winters, I took my new bride, Sue, and we hightailed it back to California. I first landed a chemist job with the federal government, but then transferred to a chemist job with San Bernardino County. After 4 years my desires to work with animals overwhelmed me. We were raising dogs in our back yard, but we wanted a farm. The price of land in California made this dream impossible. Hence, my deal with God! If God would provide me with a farm, I would join the church, give my heart to him and try my best to obey his commandments. I started looking for something I could afford. While I knew God could provide me with a farm if he so chose, he might be more apt to help if I planned on trying to pay for it myself. California was out, so was most of the rest of the west. Between myself, the United Farm Agency and the Western Livestock Journal, we narrowed down our search to the Midwest, where land was considerably cheaper. I spent two summer vacations searching in Kansas, Missouri, and Tennessee. We liked the four state area around Joplin, Missouri best. I finally found a farm that seemed like it would work. The down payment was right, the owner was willing to carry the note and the place came with 32 dairy cows. I would have income the day I arrived. Everything seemed to fall into place. I was really proud of myself. Now I don't fault those of you who might say you have talked to God, personally, one on one. But that form of communication has always eluded me. God talks to me through my conscience. I am at peace when I feel I am doing God's will, but I am very troubled if I think I am doing my will in spite of what I know God expects of me. If I want to do something and I get this strong feeling that God would not be happy with me, I usually do not do it. And later I come to realize that me and God have made the right decision. Occasionally I want to do something so bad that I turn off my heaven receiver. It always turns out bad. After I signed the papers on the Missouri farm, I neglected to thank God for his help and I just did not have the time to hold up my end of the bargain. I returned to California, put my house up for lease and moved in with my parents. We had 14 dogs at the time, which we planned to bring with us to start our kennel. In 1964 Pekingese puppies were bringing \$35 dollars. We sold three of them to buy a Yorkshire Terrier. After about 3 weeks of being too busy to think about God, I went out to the yard one morning to find the Yorkie dead. The first thing that came to mind was my unfinished business with God. Guilty conscience, I thought. God would not do that.

We settled into daily routine on the dairy farm. Life was good, life was busy, too busy for church. We had a constant flow of insurance salesmen and preachers coming to our door. We had hay to cut, cows to milk, fence to build, bills to pay, two little boys to raise. We always seem to run out of money before we ran out of bills. Besides, we had tried most of

the churches in the area at one time or another and just had not found one to fit our desires. I had bought a registered Holstein yearling bull to raise up to breed my cows to. He was really looking good. I showed him to anybody that would take time to look. It seemed like those salesmen and preachers were the only ones that had the time to look, but to the man, they agreed with me that it was a fine looking young bull. Then the idiot jumped the fence into the Sargo field. He ate his fill and came into the barn lot bloated like the Goodyear Blimp. Not to worry, I think. I have a gallon of bloat medicine and a sharp pocket knife. Well, he sucks in just as I poured the medicine down his throat and it all goes into his lungs. He is dead before he hits the ground. The pocket knife is useless on a dead bull. I am terribly upset. I can't afford another bull. Why did this happen to me? What? Yes, God, I know we made a deal but I have been so busy. Its only been 6 months. Cut me some slack! A man had come to our door a couple of months before the bull episode to talk about church. I had told him we would get around to it but we had just not found a church that met our desires. He told me that maybe I should try a church that met God's desires. We went to the Wheaton, Missouri Church of Christ with him and his family several times before God presented the clincher.

One dreary cold winter night we were playing cards with a neighbor family when we heard a loud thump. I got up to investigate and found my boy, Bob, laying on the floor, unconscious, with a big red welt raising on his forehead. He was not breathing. Panic set in. I started mouth to mouth resuscitation while Sue called the doctor. My mind was screaming, NO GOD, I AM SORRY, NO, NO, NO. He started to breath. That horrible sick grey color started to leave his face. He stiffened and started to cry. Momentarily, I felt a rush of relief. God was giving me another chance. But then he went limp again and quit breathing. I panicked!!! He had just died in my arms. What a waste! The realization flooded over me. YOU DO NOT TRIFEL WITH A PROMISE TO GOD. It was my fault. Then my neighbor grabbed my boy away from me and started doing chest compressions over his shoulder. In a few seconds Bobby started to breath again. The doctor told us to bring him to the emergency room. On the way to the hospital I started to analyze what had happened. Bobby had been running through the living room and had ran into the door facing. Lots of little boys run into walls and fall down. Was God talking to me again? I don't know but I was not going to try to find out this time. This happened late Saturday night, Sunday morning we were on the front row at church. When the invitation was sang we went forward. The preacher asked us if we wanted to be baptized. I told him I wanted to do whatever would make God happy. I was there to fulfill my part of the bargain. Since that night in January, 1965 I have tried to live and act and think and do everything that would make God proud that he took me up on this pact we agreed to. God has not spoke to me in so many words, but as I continue to recognize the many gifts he has given me, I feel safe in his arms. He has enabled me to expand my farm from 140 acres to 420 acres. He has enabled me to increase my cow herd from 32 cows to 140 cows. He has enabled me to become the biggest kennel of the 60's in Missouri with 320 breeding dogs. He has enabled me to raise 3 fine children. All my family has accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savoir. We have all enjoyed good health. He has given me the love of a good woman for 48 years. He has made me healthy, wealthy and wise. Well, some might question wise. He has now enabled me to retire comfortably with enough money and health to travel extensively. Thank You, Father!

I entered into this pact with God out of selfish greed. I was finally driven to surrender to his will by sheer fear, but over the years, as I have studied the word and came to realize what he did by sacrificing his only begotten son on the cross to die for my sins, I have come to love god by loving my fellow man. God will judge us by our actions toward mankind. WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE!!!