

The Bible speaks clearly to the risks of loving.

**THE RISK OF LOSS** Jesus warned of the risks in following him. To those who promised to follow, he said, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (Luke 9:58). "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it" (Luke 9:24).

Paul the apostle talked frankly of the risks he took in his spiritual journey: "Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ," he wrote, "for whose sake I have lost all things" (Philippians 3:7,8).

"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away," Job exclaimed, "may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21).

**THE RISK OF INDEPENDENCE** Jesus encouraged independent thinking when he asked, "Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?" (Luke 12:57).

And Paul said, "Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself . . . for each one should carry his own load" (Galatians 6:4,5).

**THE RISK OF COMMITMENT** Joshua challenged the Israelites as they were about to enter the Promised Land, to make up their minds what their commitment would be, whether to the Lord or to other gods, concluding, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15).

Jesus insisted, "No one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24), and urged his hearers to "enter by the narrow gate . . . for the gate is narrow, and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:13,14).

Underlying all this, however, is the assurance of God's commitment to those who trust him, in references almost too numerous to mention. But here is a sampling:

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

"If God is for us, who is against us? . . . For I am sure that [nothing] in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:31-39).

"God has said, 'I will never fail you nor forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5).

"I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him" (II Timothy 1:12).