

Greetings! In Psalm 34:8, the psalmist says:
*“Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.”*

Sometimes I like to check out the one-star reviews on Amazon when I’m buying a book or product. Recently, I purchased *Your Designed Body* by Steve Laufmann and Howard Glicksman. Out of curiosity, I clicked on the one-star reviews. As expected, they were negative, but something more telling quickly became apparent: none of the one-star reviewers had actually purchased the book. None mentioned having read it.

How could you possibly review something you have not experienced?

All of the four- and five-star reviews, by contrast, carried the red “verified purchaser” label. They were longer, more thoughtful, and clearly rooted in experience, something entirely absent from the one-star reviews.

Two things came to mind. First, how often am I a one-star, unverified critic myself? Second, the Psalmist’s invitation to “taste and see that the Lord is good.”

Being an unverified critic comes easily to us. Making assumptions about others, projecting motives, presuming capabilities, may even have offered survival benefits in our evolutionary past. But it comes at a relational and communal cost. When Jesus encountered the rich young man who asked an honest question, he gave him the benefit of the doubt and allowed him to define himself. How much room is there for unverified critics in the Kingdom of God?

“Taste and see” is an invitation to a relationship, to experience God from the inside. It is the movement from observer to participant, from speculation to encounter. It is what gives a person that spiritual “verified purchaser” label, not because they have everything figured out, but because they have come openly, even expectantly.

First Peter is bold about what follows:

“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” (1 Peter 2:1–3) Through that experience, the creature grows into the image of Christ.

Use this season of Lent to draw closer to God, to taste and see, so that you might draw closer to what God is most deeply invested in: you and me.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.