

DO YOU LOVE GOD?

Psa. 116:1-9

David declared, "I love the Lord." He then listed some reasons for that love, "because he hath heard my voice and my supplications;" "gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful;" "the LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me;" "the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee... thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling."

God created us to love Him. That is the very purpose of our lives. He is working in the lives of individual men and women to bring them to Himself. First of all He is working to bring about their salvation. This is His primary purpose. He then seeks a love relationship with those who believe Him. His desire is that we love Him with all our hearts, minds, bodies and souls.

God has taken the initiative to bring us into this kind of association with Him. He has proven His love to us. **John 3:16**, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Romans 5:8**, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." **1 John 4:9-10**, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins."

God makes things simple for us. The whole of the Christian life is summarized in simply loving Jesus Christ. Christianity is a simple love relationship between the believer and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He has also eliminated all middle ground. You either love Him, or you love yourself and the world. **Matthew 6:24**, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." **Matthew 12:30**, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

Today, there are many who profess to love God but in reality, are like the Pharisees. **Luke 11:42**, "But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." They love themselves and pleasure more than they love God. **2 Timothy 3:1-5**, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof..."

Can you openly and unashamedly say, "I love the Lord?" If you cannot describe your relationship with Jesus Christ by saying that you love Him with all your being, then please ask the Holy Spirit to bring you into that kind of a relationship.

I. WHY SHOULD WE LOVE GOD?

A. Because it is the first commandment

Matthew 22:37-38, "...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." Love is a choice. We make a personal choice whether or not to love God. There are other motivations that make it very personal and special.

B. Because He first loved us

1 John 4:10, 19, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins." "We love him, because he first loved us."

C. Because of the benefits

1. *Escape from condemnation*

1 Corinthians 16:22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."

Anathema means to bind under a great curse without hope of being redeemed; a person or thing doomed to destruction. Maranatha means our Lord cometh or will return.

2. A special relationship with God

1 Corinthians 8:2-3, "...if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him." **John 14:21**, "...he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

3. All things work together for good.

Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose."

4. Wonderful things to come

1 Corinthians 2:9, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." **James 2:5**, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

D. Because this is the motivation for our obedience

John 14:15, 21, 24, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me...." "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings...." If love for Jesus Christ is foremost, obedience will be easy. Service will be a natural by-product.

If love is not foremost then our obedience is for the wrong reasons. **Revelation 2:4-5**, "Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

II. WHAT KEEPS US FROM LOVING GOD?

A. Fathers that are hard to love

A father that is missing or is doting or too demanding and abusive

B. Hatred for a brother

Matthew 22:39, "And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." **1 John 2:9-11**, "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." **1 John 4:20-20**, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."

C. Love for this world and the things of this world (1 John 2:15-17).

- 1. "The lust of the flesh"- A burning desire for physical pleasure***
- 2. "The lust of the eye"- A consuming passion to acquire things***
- 3. "The pride of life"- A relentless drive to achievement and fame***

Solomon is our example of the futility of trying to satisfy these lusts. **Ecclesiastes 1:12-13**, "I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all *things* that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith." He came as near as any man will come to having all that is in the world. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines to feed his lust of the flesh. They turned his heart from God and cost him his kingdom. He had riches, literally beyond measure, to feed his lust of the eye. He had worldwide fame and a great deal of power to feed his pride of life. His conclusion concerning these things was, **Ecclesiastes 1:2**, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity." His conclusion of the whole matter of life was this. **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."

III. HOW CAN WE LOVE GOD?

Love is a choice rather than a particular feeling that we may have. Loving God is a matter of choice. If we choose to love God, we love God. Some other hard choices are involved.

A. Stop hating a father or a brother.

Romans 13:8-10, “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.”

1. *It does not matter what they have done.*

2. *It is commanded that you forgive them (Mark 11:25-26).*

B. Stop loving the world

1 John 2:15, “...If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

1. *By setting our affection on things above*

Colossians 3:1-3, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

2. *By laying up our treasures in Heaven*

Matthew 6:19-21, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

C. Stop loving yourself and others more than you love Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 3:1-5, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof....”

Luke 9:23, “And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

David declared, “I love the Lord.” He then listed some reasons for that love. Can you describe your relationship with God in that way? Can you openly and unashamedly say, “I love the Lord?” If you cannot describe your relationship with Jesus Christ by saying that you love Him with all your being, then please ask the Holy Spirit to bring you into that kind of a relationship.