

How Do I Know I Really Love God

Text : **I John 4: 7-21**

INTRODUCTION :

A. What is the very most important thing in your life ?

1. I'm not asking what is the ONLY important thing; what is the very most important thing?
2. There are many things that are important to us in life.
 - a. family (esp. Grand children)
 - b. Health
 - c. financial security
3. There is one thing that is of far more importance than anything of this earth.
 - a. It is our relationship with God.
 - b. Nothing on this earth lasts forever.
 - c. One's relationship with God is eternal and has eternal consequences.

B. When asked about how to go to Heaven, Jesus responded :

1. **Luke 10: 25-28** And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" ²⁷ And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."
2. In all of His teaching Jesus made it clear that one must set priorities in life.
 - a. **Luke 11:42-** "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others."
 - b. In Matt. 23: 23 Jesus referred to these as "the weightier matters of the law."

C. One's attitude toward God affects his attitude toward everything else, esp. His word.

1. There are many religious people who love the word of God, but do not love God.
 - a. They develop a relationship with the word apart from a relationship with God.
 - b. They enjoy studying the word and often become devoted to it.
 - c. Consequently, their religion is reduced to an academic pursuit. (doctrine centered)

John 5: 39-42 "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. ⁴¹ "I do not receive glory from men; ⁴² but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves."

*** The main point of the scriptures is having a loving relationship with God.**

2. One who truly loves God approaches His word seeking His will.
 - a. They sincerely desire to please God. (**Eph. 5: 8,10**)
 - b. They learn doctrine, but seek a relationship with God, not just adherence to doctrine.
 - c. Their study results in a loving relationship with God.

D. Some people start off loving God, but unknowingly drift off into academic religion.

1. Years of going through the motions become habitual and foster apathy.
2. This is why Bro. Jude warns us : **“keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.”** **Jude 20**
3. All relationships require maintenance.
 - a. Relationships are dynamic; they will not remain as they are for years.

Matt. 24: 12-13 Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.
 - d. **Heb. 2: 1** For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.

TRANSITION :

- A. Obviously, none of us want to drift away from God.

(keep yourselves in the love of God)
- B. How does one know he is in love with God ?
 1. Love is an intangible.
 2. Like the wind, it can be seen only by the effect it has.

Therefore : let us look at our relationship with God and the effect it has on our lives.

I. Any positive relationship one has with God must be maintained on a spiritual level and based on love. (Everyone has some relationship with God, friend or foe.)

- A. All God’s relationships are directly relevant to His essence, to what God is.
 1. **“God is spirit”** **John 4: 24**
 2. **“God is love.”** **I John 4: 9**
 3. **THEREFORE,** any relationship with God is a spiritual relationship with Love.
- B. Only spiritually minded people can have a relationship with a Spirit Being.
 1. The teachings of Jesus went right over the heads of some people. (context = sower)

Matt. 13: 13- Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.
 2. Earthbound thinking prevents spiritual understanding.

Likewise, Spiritual people don’t understand many earthly things, e.g., green jokes.

3. One thinks in terms of that which is relevant to his life.
 - a. **ill.** - **C.O.D.** : To a delivery person it means “*Collect On Delivery.*”
To one in the justice system it means “*Cause Of Death.*”
 - b. This principle is often reference in Scripture; notice **I Corinthians** :
Read ... I Cor. 2: 12-14 , 3: 1
 - c. This is why Paul prayed for the brethren to be increased in spiritual understanding.
Col. 1: 9-10
4. In most every audience there are those who think the message is foolish.
Those hearers might be religious, but they are not spiritual.

C. One can only have a positive relationship with love, if it is based upon love.

1. **Read ... I John 4: 7-9** In His very essence, God is love.
2. Trying to maintain a relationship with God in the absence of love is like trying to maintain a relationship with a fish in the absence of water.
 - a. Outside the water, the fish is dead.
Stuff it, mount it and talk about the relationship that was. I John 4: 16
 - b. Metaphorically, many try to stuff God on their church wall exactly like they want Him.
 - c. People want to make Him THEIR God instead of becoming HIS people.
3. God cannot exist apart from what he is ... **Love.** (**Rule keeping won't cut it. .. Ibid**)

II. What will be the result of having a loving relationship with God on a spiritual plain?

A. People who love God are guaranteed their love will be requited.

1. Unrequited love is so sad it's made into movies.
2. **Read ... I John 4: 10-11** God loves us and is waiting for us to require His love.
3. He knows those who love Him and responds to their love.
I Cor. 8: 2-3 **If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; ³ but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.**
*** Thus, loving God results in a relationship with God.**

B. Loving God causes one to change his attitude toward God.

1. Those who don't love God view their lives as their own.
2. Those who love God surrender their will to **His.** **Become obedient.**
 - a. **You know a guy really loves girl when he sets through a “chick flick” with her.**
 - b. **Read & apply ... I John 5: 1-3 ; 3: 23-24**
 - c. **Compare ... John 14: 15, 15: 14, 17**

3. God demand an exclusive relationship.

I John 2: 15- Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him

C. Loving God causes one to change his attitude toward other people.

1. **Read & apply ... I John 2: 10-11** (Relationship w/God depends on loving others.)

2. **Read & apply ... I John 3: 10-16**

3. **Read & apply ... I John 4: 10-12, 20-21**

***Thus, if our attitude toward others is significantly more loving toward others, it may be that we truly do love God.**

D. Love for God changes one's attitude toward the Holy Spirit of God.

1. **Read & apply ... I John 4: 12-15**

2. When one comes into covenant relationship with God he is given the Holy Spirit.

a. The Holy Spirit is given as a gift at Baptism.

Acts 2: 38- ...Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

b. The Holy Spirit dwelling within the Christian is a mark of God's ownership.

Eph. 1: 13b- "...you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,"

3. Christians are the temple in which God dwells on the earth.

a. **I Cor. 6: 19-** "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, ..."

b. As stewards, Christians must keep the temple of God pure and holy. **God abides in us.**

c. Therefore, **the Christian's attitude toward using his body for worldliness changes**

E. Love for God changes one's attitude toward his worldly possessions

1. **Read & apply ... I John 3: 13-18**

2. One must use all the resources at hand to meet the needs at hand.

a. **Titus 3: 14-** Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

b. **James 2: 14-17** What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

3. **Eph. 4: 28-** He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will

have something to share with one who has need.

Thus, the desire to share one's possessions is an indicator of love for God.

F. Love for God changes one's attitude toward judgment.

1. Read & apply ... I John 4: 17-18

- a. Every creature must respect his creator.
- b. The one in a loving relationship with God does not fear the wrath of God.

III.- Can you imagine a relationship where one feared the return of His spouse ?

2. Those who serve God out of fear have no peace.

- a. They can never be certain they have done enough.
- b. They can never be certain they have repented of every sin and been forgiven.
- c. NO ONE is without sin.

3. The one in a loving relationship with Christ is at peace with God. Lives secure in Love.

- a. feels loved and protected by God, not fearful of Him.

Rom. 8: 1- Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- b. One in love with God is confident that God will keep His promise.

II Tim. 1: 12- I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

CONCLUSION :

A. CAN YOU SAY WITH CERTAINTY ...

1. **If I were to die this very minute, I know I would go to be with God eternally.**
2. If you can't, you're probably not really in a loving relationship with God.

B. Do you view your possessions as tools in the hand of God or things for your use.?

1. Those without a loving bond between them and God think they give to God.
(**As long as the money is in their hands, it's theirs. It becomes God's in the plate.**)
2. Those joined to God by love know they are but stewards of God's blessings.

C. Do you treat your body as a holy temple inhabited by the Spirit of God Himself ?

1. If God dwells within you, it is because you are in Him and you really love Him.
2. Striving to keep your temple pure because God dwells in it is an act of love for God.
3. As you do so, God continually cleanses you from all unrighteousness. (**sin**) **I Jn. 1:9**

D. Do you care for others more than you care for yourself ?

1. The one who does this will be different from all his neighbors.
2. The one who does this will be different than he was before he learned to love.
3. The one who does this really loves God.

E. Is it the desire of your life to please God in everything you do ?

1. Most religious people pay lip service to this.
2. They want to please God as long as it does not interfere with their lifestyle.
3. If you consider God in your daily activities and major decisions, you really love God.

F. Do you really have a loving relationship with God ? (or just with His word ?)

1. God has loved you since before you were born.
2. He longs to have His love requited by you and everyone you know.
3. He reached out to you by dying on the cross FOR your sins.

INVITATION :

1. He waits for your response.
2. He could, but He will never force you.
3. Will you not confess your faith in Him and your love for Him,
turn from the world and commit yourself solely to Him,
and solemnize your relationship by being baptized into His name.

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