

## HOW WE ARE TO LOVE GOD

The love of God is essential if we expect to receive the promises of salvation and a home in heaven, so it is very important that we know how to love him. We must love him in a way that is acceptable to him. To understand that there are different ways to love God, let's consider the different ways we can love each other.

One way is to love in word only. Some people say "I love you" often, but their actions indicate they love themselves more than anyone else. Jesus teaches that true love is shown by actions pleasing to the one loved. This is how Jesus wants to be loved - John 14:15, *"If you love me, keep my commandments."* Jesus illustrated this with his parable of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-31, *"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."*

Both sons were asked by their father to work in his vineyard. One said he would not, but later repented and did go to work, while the other said he would, but then never did. Jesus' question is painfully obvious - *"Whether of them twain did the will of his father?"* The answer, of course, was the one who did the work. But notice what happened in the mind of this obedient son. Jesus said he repented. This means he thought about his father's request, realized his first answer was not pleasing to his father, then determined to go against his own desires and fulfill the desires of his father. In short, he loved another person (his father) the way the other person wanted to be loved (by obedience and work) instead of the way he (the son) wanted to love.

Jesus also taught about the way to love in the passage often called the golden rule. In Matthew 7:12 Jesus said, *"Do unto*

*others as you would have them do unto you.*" On the surface this means to give others the treatment we would want them to give us. However, a deeper examination will reveal much more. This passage also teaches us to give others the treatment they want, not necessarily what we want to give them. Notice Jesus' words, "as you would have," so the treatment you would give others should be "as they would have." Sometimes we don't do this, yet we still feel we are obeying the golden rule. We give others the kind of treatment we want to give, not necessarily the treatment they want to receive.

This happens often in close relationships, especially between spouses. For example, a husband may feel that once a month is enough to take his wife out to eat, and in so doing he feels he is showing his love to her just fine. But she wants to eat out every weekend and has told him so. She feels like she deserves this, and if he loved her as she deserves, he would gladly show it by taking her out more often. So he is loving her as he wants, but it is not as she wants. He is doing unto her as he wants to do, not as she would have him do, and that is not exactly the golden rule, is it? Seeds of discontent are sown in situations like this, and they are cultivated and fertilized by other selfish and insensitive acts until the final fruits of withdrawal, emotional detachment, separation, and divorce are reaped.

If this principle is understood, you can answer the question of how we are to love God. God has told us how we are to love him. We are to keep his commandments. We are to do the actions that show we want to do his will. We go work in his vineyard. But he wants it his way, not ours. Many people are religious, even zealous, but they are worshiping God the way they want to do it, both for the public worship and in the activities they call private worship. For instance, some church members spend much time, effort, and money on church league softball teams. Yet some church league softball tournaments have some of the more prideful, contentious arguments. These are zealous, determined, dedicated athletes who are sweating and arguing, in their own way, in the Lord's service in the way they think is right. That's not showing God's love his way. When people serve God their way, it becomes second order idolatry. First order idolatry is when man makes his own god and the rules of

worship. Second order idolatry is when man at least worships the God of the Bible, but still makes his own rules of worship.

So, how are we loving God? The general claim of the Church of Christ is that we do God's things in God's ways. Are we? In public and in private? Do we study enough to know, and do we love enough to do what we know to do? I pray it is so, for it is the only way we can love God as he truly deserves and requires.

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## LITTLE THINGS

Our society is geared such that, "bigger is better." This is especially evident in our sports world. In basketball, the taller player has the better chances for making the team. In football it seems that the 6'4", 250 lb. player gets more attention than the 5'8", 160 lb. player.

In the Bible we find a different outlook. *"There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise:"*(Prov. 30:24). Although these four things are small in our sight, they are very big in God's sight because of their wisdom.

*"The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;"*(v.25). The wisdom of the ant lies in its industrious nature. It is always busy doing the work necessary to help its colony. Likewise, a Christian should be industrious in good deeds and not lazy: *"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulations; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."* (Rom. 12:11-13)

*"The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;"*(v.26). The coney is another name for the rockbadger (rabbit). Its habit is to live in caves and clefts of the rocks, where it finds great safety. Similarly, Christians will build upon the foundations of the Rock and not upon shifting sand (Matt. 7:24-27) They will hear God's Word and do what it says!

*"The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;"*(v.27). In this verse the significance of the locusts is

that they always stay together as a group. One small locust by itself does not alarm a farmer but a band of locusts can be of great concern. The Christian also must realize that much more can be accomplished in the cause of Christ when all Christians are unified. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* (1 Cor. 1:10)

*"The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in king's palaces."*(v.28). The spider is a humble creature which will retreat when approached. But once it is cornered, it will attack in self-defense. Likewise, a Christian should never be "too pushy" in his religion but when necessary, he should be *"set for the defense of the gospel."* (Phil. 1:17)

In God's world, it does not matter what your size is. God would rather have us to be wise. *"For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."* (Prov. 8:11)

Adapted from a sermon  
by B.E. RIGGINS  
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## WHO WILL BE LOST?

- ▶ Many (Matt. 7:13)
- ▶ Those who know not God and obey not the Gospel (2 Thes. 1:7-8)
- ▶ Those who will not hear the teaching of Christ (Acts 3:22-23)
- ▶ All who reject Christ and His Word (John 12:48)
- ▶ Sinners (Gal. 5:19-21)
- ▶ Workers of iniquity (Matt. 7:23)
- ▶ The evil (John 5:29)
- ▶ The defiled (1 Cor. 3:17; Rev. 21:27)

- ▶ The wicked (Rev. 21:8)
- ▶ The ungodly (Jude 14:15)
- ▶ Unbelievers (Mark 16:16; John 3:18)
- ▶ Those whose names are not written in the book of life (Rev. 20:15)
- ▶ The ones who transgress and abide not in the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 9)
- ▶ Christians who return to a life of sin (2 Pet. 2:20-22)
- ▶ Many religious people (Matt. 7:21-23)
- ▶ Those who do not worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24)

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DON'T GIVE UP!

MOSES WAS ONCE A BASKET CASE.

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SATAN SUBTRACTS AND DIVIDES.

GOD ADDS AND MULTIPLIES.

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It's so depressing when people today will hear the Truth,  
 know the whole Truth, yet do anything but the Truth.

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# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
Oct. 31 - - Nov. 2	Second Ave. Church Opelika, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
Nov. 28 - 30	Willow Oaks Church Russell Springs, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who was the priest to whom Abram paid the first recorded tithes?
2. According to Numbers, how did a person purify himself if he had become unclean by touching a corpse?
3. If you do not forgive, what will God not do for you?
4. If one does not enter the sheep fold by the door, what is he?
5. What was Mephibosheth's infirmity?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Timothy's mother was a Jewess. What nationality was his father? GREEK (Acts 16:1)
2. Zedekiah released Jeremiah from prison but restricted him to what area? THE COURTYARD OF THE GUARD (Jer. 37:21)
3. According to Judges chapter 2, after God gave the people judges, did they turn and worship God? NO (Judg. 2:17)
4. According to Revelation, the church of Smyrna was told to be faithful unto death, and Christ would give them what crown? CROWN OF LIFE (Rev. 2:10)
5. What was King Uzziah's great love? HUSBANDRY (2 Chr. 26:10)