

“The Gospel of John: If You Love Me”

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Scripture

John 14:15

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

Last Week

Jesus instructs the remaining eleven about an important truth

In case they missed it prior in all His teaching about His divinity

They need to know -> they have a relationship with God the Father

Jesus is the same as the Father

Belief Brings Greatness

John 14:12

“Truly, truly, I say to you, **he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.**”

Belief Enables Prayer

John 14:13-14

“**Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**” If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”

We discussed what praying “in Jesus’s name” was about

This Week

Just a single verse

How do we understand love?

How do you know that your spouse or significant other loves you?

How do you know that you love someone?

Is it a guess?

Is it a gut feeling?

Is it a strong emotional attachment?

Some Valentine’s Day questions

A man, a woman, and a microphone

“Tell me how you know your husband loves you!”

Historical answers -> “We’ve been together for x number of years; he continues to take care of me, etc.”

Pragmatic answers -> “Well, he’s still around. He hasn’t left me yet! I guess he must love me.”

Idealistic answers -> “Oh, I just know!”

How about knowing that God loves you?

Anyone with a Bible would be able to read John 3:16 and know that God loves them

How about knowing whether you love God?

Perhaps your answer would be historical -> “I gave my life to Him at age x and I’ve been going to church for x years”

Perhaps your answer would be pragmatic -> “Well, I go to church every Sunday. I’m here, aren’t I?”

Perhaps your answer would be idealistic -> “Oh, I just DO!”

Do you really love God?

Deuteronomy 6:5

“Thou shalt **love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.**”

Is that how you love God?

Matthew 22:37-40

“He said to him, '**YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.**' This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, '**YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.**' 'On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'”

Is that how you love Jesus and others?

Anyone fall short of those verses?

Would you like a better way of proving to yourself that you love Him?

The Words of Love

Eros – a sexual or passionate love

Storge – a family love

Philos – a friendship love

Agape – a sacrificial love

What kind of love do you think God wants from you?

Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love Me?” in John 21:16 -> **Did Jesus ask for a friendship love or a sacrificial love?**

Have you ever said to someone, “If you love me, you will...”?

“If you love me Jim, you’ll take out the trash!”

“If you love me Susan, you’ll make me that special meal.”

Those are statements that lead us to a conditional love

Do you ever hear these statements?

How do you feel if you hear these?

Like someone is trying to put a guilt trip on you?

“If I don’t do it, they’re questioning if I love them!”

The Scene of Love

Let’s recall where we are in the Gospel of John

Jesus has told the remaining Eleven disciples that He is going away

They are troubled by His statements, and He then tells them that they cannot go where He is going

He reassures them that He will come back for them, that He is the Way to Heaven, but they have a relationship with the Father whom they cannot see...

Where is their confidence level at this moment?

Do you think they are jazzed up and excited about the ministry opportunities in front of them?

Probably not-> they’re most likely a little shaken by these events

Then Jesus says:

If You Love Me

John 14:15

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

How do you think the disciples would take Jesus’s statement?

Is Jesus trying to lay a guilt trip on them?

Is He trying to manipulate them into performing up to His expectations?

What Does it Mean?

It is interesting to me that different versions of the Bible align this verse in different paragraphs:

- The KJV treats the chapter as a single stream of verses
- The ESV aligns the passage with the verses that follow, verses 16 and 17
- The NIV aligns the passage with more verses that follow, verses 16 through 21
- The NKJV aligns the passage with the verses that follow, verses 16 through 18
- The NASB leaves the verse alone by itself

Clearly, there is some difficulty understanding the intent of Jesus’s statement to align it with others

Rather than laying a guilt trip on His remaining eleven young men

Could it be that Jesus is trying to give them encouragement, instead?

We need to look at the passages right after and determine what Jesus's thoughts are

John 14:16-18

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”

These verses are teaching about the Holy Spirit

What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit?

To aid us in living the Christian life, right? -> “He will be in you”

Jesus is encouraging His disciples saying that He will ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit

So that, they may be able to live as believers in a difficult world

Jesus is not saying His love is conditional to the disciples' performance

Jesus is not laying a guilt trip to compel the disciples to perform

I believe Jesus is teaching them that **IF the disciples see themselves keeping His commandments, they can be assured that they love Jesus**

They are in the kingdom!

On the other hand, IF they do not see themselves, they should be concerned about their kingdom status

This becomes a great test of our salvation

So, why does Jesus note the Holy Spirit?

He **ENABLES** us to follow Jesus's commandments

We'll talk about the role of the Holy Spirit next week

But for today, how should we understand this test that Jesus gives the disciples?

What else does John record about this topic?

John 14:21

“**He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me**; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

What do we learn?

If we find ourselves keeping His commandments, we are assured:

- 1) That we love Jesus
- 2) That the Father will love us
- 3) That Jesus will love us
- 4) That Jesus will disclose Himself to us

Let's look a verse further down in John 14:

John 14:23

“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”

If we love Him, then:

- 1) We will hold His word in high esteem and heed its teaching
- 2) The Father will love us
- 3) The Father and Son will come to us
- 4) They will live with us

Let's look at another passage from John:

1 John 5:2-3

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

What do we learn?

We love God when we observe His commandments -> they have weight with us -> **we don't ignore them**

This is the love of God -> “His commandments are not burdensome” to us

If following what the Bible says is a chore for you, John would question your love for Jesus

On the other hand, if you read His word and have joy following it, John would say you love God

How can we test ourselves in this?

I wrote a book about this, and there's a copy at the back if you want to take one for free and read it

What is the Application? (I'll share 5 characteristics of those who love God)

1) If you love God, you will study and love His Word -> the Bible

Ezra 7:9-10

“On the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God was upon him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.”

Ezra determined (fixed his mind) to study the Word, to follow the Word, and to teach the Word

If you love God, here's what you say:

Psalms 19:7-11

“The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.”

Our motivation is found in Psalm 119:

Psalm 119:47-48

"I shall delight in Your commandments, Which I love, and I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, Which I love; and I will meditate on Your statutes."

Psalm 119:97

"Oh, how I love Thy law!"

If you love God, you love His Word – The Bible – and you delight in following it

2) If you love God, you support His Church

You support His church with your body:

Romans 12:1

"Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

You support His church with your offerings:

2 Corinthians 9:5-7

"So, I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness. Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. **Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."**

You support His church with cheer and joy -> **not grudgingly or because you're forced to do it**

3) If you love God, you talk to Him -> two-way conversations

This may seem pretty obvious, right?

Let's say I don't talk to Kath only once a week for an hour, would she call that a loving relationship?

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Rejoice always; **pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for **this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**"**

4) If you love God, you talk about Him to others

Acts 1:8

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."**

How many of us love to talk about our kids and grandkids when they do well in life?

Do we have the same passion and joy for talking about our Lord and Savior?

5) If you love God, you will sacrifice your life for Him and each other

John 15:12-13

“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. **Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.**”

Sacrificial love embodies a love for God

So, how did you do?

Do you really love God?

Revelation 2:4-5

“But I have this against you, **that you have left your first love**. Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent.”

Prayer

Benediction