Do You Really Love God?

1 John 5:1-3
8-11-2019

Introduction:

* How do I know I love God?

Answer:

I. *You know you love God when you…* LOVE HIS CHILDREN (v.1)

II. *You know you love God when you…* OBEY HIS COMMANDS (v.2-3)

A. Your love for God gives you the incentive to obey Him <u>CONSCIENTIOUSLY</u>

B. Your love for God gives you the drive to obey Him <u>CONTINUALLY</u>

C. Your love for God gives you the attitude to obey Him <u>CHEERFULLY</u>

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v. 1

"Jesus is the Christ" - This is a loaded statement; it's not as simple as it appears.

To believe Jesus is the Christ is to believe He is the Messiah.

The definite article indicates Him to be "the" One and only Christ (He is exclusively the Messiah).

To believe that Jesus is the Messiah is to believe that Jesus is:

1) The Eternal One - because the Messiah is prophesied as being eternal (Micah 5:2 – But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.)

2) The Sacrifice for sin - because the Messiah is prophesied as being "cut off" from the land of the living on behalf of others (Daniel 9:26a - And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: Is. 53:8 - He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.)

3) The future world Ruler - because the Messiah is prophesied as ruling the entire earth (Isaiah 11:9-10 - They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.
Isa 40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong [hand], and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward [is] with him, and his work before him.)

4) The One to be worshipped
(Psalm 2:12a - Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.)

5) The One to be trusted - (Ps. 2:12b - Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.)

"Is born of God" - (*gegennetai)*

1. The New Birth is God's work (not man's) (note: the passive verb) (Jn. 1:12-13 - But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:
13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.)

2) The New Birth occurs at a point in time and has abiding continual results (note: the perfect tense)

Here, the New Birth is connected to faith in Christ. There is no regeneration apart from faith in Christ. Regeneration does not precede faith in Christ (as Calvinism teaches). The New Birth begins the moment one believes and apart from such belief, no birth exists!

"Belief" - means more than a head knowledge of Jesus as the Christ, but a personal trust or reliance upon Him as the Christ.

"Believeth. . . loveth Him" - love for God is always the result of faith in God. Faith is the foundation for the Christian life. All other Christian virtues flow out of faith (II Pet. 1:5).

Faith is the victory over the world (I Jn. 5:4).

How do I know I love God?

Answer:

I. *You know you love God when you…* LOVE HIS CHILDREN (v.1)

Our response to God's giving us the New Birth into His family is gratitude. We now love Him, because He has first loved us (4:19).

"Loveth him that is begotten" - "Saint Augustine held that this phrase referred to Christ, 'the only begotten of the Father'." (Guy H. King, p. 100).

It is true that if you love the Father you will love His Son (Jn. 8:42 - Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.)

However, as Westcott saw, the whole context and book of I John would support the view that He is speaking of loving not only His Son, but His sons - "the children of God" (v. 2).

"Loveth him" (singular) - John's use of the singular throughout this verse indicates that this God-prompted love operates on an individual basis.

It's not merely that we love Christians (as a whole) (though we do). It's that we love the one sitting next to us.

"This love does not spring from something loveable in the person himself, but from his paternity" (Hodge, cited by Hiebert, p. 225).

"Everyone that loveth" - No exceptions; all who love God love His kids.

If you find that you have no common bond with Christians, that you'd rather avoid them, that their company is undesirable – then you had better doubt your relationship to God.

If you love the "Begetter," you will love the "begotten."

If you love the "Adopter," you will love His adopted.

If you love the Regenerator, you will love the regenerated.

If you love the Father, you will love the son.

You can't truly love someone and hate his kids (they are his family, his offspring, the object of is affection).

If you love God, you will love that which he loves/treasures.

The world may have a philanthropic, humanistic "love." A love for man motivated by a love for man (or by a love for self-recognition, etc.).

However, we have a greater motivation; we have a love for man because man is "created in the image and likeness of God." Hence, we love man because his life has a dignity that originated in the Almighty.

How can the Holy Spirit who lives in you do anything other than love others through you who share that same Spirit?

If Jesus live in you and if He lives in your fellow believer, don't you think that there will be a common bond between you? (regardless of skin color or race)

If you are in the family of God, won't there be a desire to be with your family members?

--Ladies should want to come to the ladies fellowships;

--Men should want to be at the men's breakfasts;

--Christians should love to get together with other Christians.

To defect is to give indication that something is wrong (I Jn. 2:19 - They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.)

To love other believers should be as natural as loving your own family, because we are family, real family.

We know the same God.
We are partakers of the same Spirit.
We are joint heirs with the same Son (Jesus Christ).
We share the same faith.
We eat the same food (God's Word).
We have the same name ("Christian").
We will inherit the same future (eternal life).
We face the same battles.

II. *You know you love God when you…*

OBEY HIS COMMANDS (v.2-3)

v. 2

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God" - John puts a unique slant on the point. We would expect him to say: "By this we know that we love God, when we love the children of God" (as he did in v. 1).

But John is making his point from two angles. To love God is to love His "kids," and to love His "kids" is to love God.

John further makes a peculiar point so as to get our attention back to loving God. He does this so that he can make a second point regarding one's love for God.

To love God's children is to love God, and to love God is to obey God.

A. Your love for God gives you the incentive to obey Him <u>CONSCIENTIOUSLY</u>

v. 3

"<u>This</u> is the love of God" - Love for God is very specifically defined – it is <u>not</u> ecstatic feelings for God; <u>not</u> mental acknowledgement of God; <u>not</u> a religious experience from God; but it is <u>practical</u>, thought out, conscientious obedience to God.

Love is action; love is effort; love sweats for God; love gives time and effort for God; love yields one's own wants, desires, and pleasures, in order to fulfill the wants, desires, pleasure and will of the one it loves.

Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

"Keep" - *tereo*. Two ideas:

1) to keep in the sense of <u>guard</u>; to watch over something so as to protect it (cp. protection in Rev. 3:10; Jn. 17:15)

2) To keep in the sense of to <u>observe</u>, to obey (Mt. 28:20).

Both ideas imply a conscientiousness toward God's commands.

"His commandments" - "The Christian life is a life of principled, conscientious obedience to God's will as <u>revealed in the Bible</u>." (A.N. Martin).

Obedience is not real obedience if we do not obey God . . .

*exactly
*completely
*without delay
*without excuse

- Husbands, you love God when you obey His command to love your wives and lead your family.

- Wives, you love God when you obey His command to submit to your husbands and serve your family's needs.

- Children, you love God when you obey His command to obey and honor your parents.

- Singles, you love God when you obey His command to "flee fornication" and "be content."

- Employees, you love God when you obey His command to work, not as men pleasers but as diligent servants of Christ.

- Christian, you love God when you obey His command to fulfill the Great Commission and make disciples of all nations.

- Christian, you love God when you obey His command to not forsake the assembly of the saints (Heb. 10:25).

We often say that hate is the opposite of love. In actuality, sin is the antithesis to love. Hence, Jesus said regarding the last days: "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Mt. 24:12).

Whenever we sin, we sin because at that moment, our love for God isn't what it should be. The degree to which you love God will determine the degree to which you keep from deliberately sinning against Him.

"Ye that love the Lord, hate evil."

Don't say you love God when you are downing a six-pack of Budweiser or reading pornography or pursuing a divorce of your spouse or committing fornication or adultery or snorting cocaine.

B. Your love for God gives you the drive to obey Him CONTINUALLY

"Keep" - the present tense of the verb implies a continual, habitual or repetitive activity – not a one-time deal, not a mere month-long, explosive, excited, storm of obedience to God, followed by a long, dry, desert-like duration of disobedience.

One who loves God is not a "fire cracker Christian" who burns hot then explodes, but whose flame dies out into cold uselessness.

Love for God is the plodder, who day by day, week by week, year by year, decade by decade, is still serving God faithfully, still in the Word, still in the class teaching, still to be found doing humble acts of service.

C. Your love for God gives you the attitude to obey Him <u>CHEERFULLY</u>

Illustration: The Son and the shoes.

"His commandments are not grievous" - when love for God is your motive for obedience, the obedience is not a heavy burden; it is not painful drudgery; it is not an oppressive weight.

When you love Him you are close to Him, and when you are close to Him, you find yourself yoked to Him, and since you are yoked to Him, He shares the heavy end of the load and you find that "his yoke is easy" and His "burden is light."

Nothing God expects from us is too heavy for us to bear.

He would not ask you to do something which He didn't equip you to do.

This does <u>not</u> mean that obedience to God is so easy that it will never require sweat, patience, and great effort. Indeed it will! But obedience will never be so heavy that it is impossible.

I Cor. 10:13 - There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to <u>bear *it*.</u>)

Love never gives up, but "beareth all things. . . endureth all things" (I Cor. 13:7).

Love is the power for obedience – Have you turned on the power switch?

Doing our Christian responsibility does not elicit the response:

"Oh, do I have to?!"
"I'm too tired!"
"I'll do it, but I don't like it!"

It is no drudgery to give of your money to the Lord, when you love Him, "for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7).

Conclusion:

So you say, "I love God."

Is there visible, tangible, concrete evidence to substantiate that statement?