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DO YOU LOVE JESUS?

The apostle Paul lent significance to the question above as he wrote: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema...” (1 Cor. 16:22). *Anathema* means “accursed,” thus under the condemnation of God.

Paul earlier explained that love for others is defined by action, rather than merely by words (13:4–7; cf. 1 John 3:18). This principle is no less true regarding one’s love for the Christ. The New Testament provides some benchmarks by which we may gauge our love (or lack thereof) for God and His Son.

1. We must not love the world: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). *The World* here is not the earth or its inhabitants, but the **behavior** of a world separated

from God by sin. Most people live for themselves rather than to honor Jesus. There is no love of Him in such lives.

2. We must love one another: “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar...” (1 John 4:20a; 2:9). While *brother* here refers to fellow-Christians, every other human being is a “brother” in the human family. If God so loved all men that He gave His Son (John 3:16), then so should we. The love we must have for others is not necessarily one of affection or close association, but one that seeks the best interests—even of one’s enemies (Mat. 5:44).
3. We must love the things He loved. Those who claim to love Jesus and to be in fellowship with Him “ought...to walk even as he walked” (1 John 2:6). If one does not love Truth, righteousness, or the souls of others he is a hypocrite to claim to love the Lord, for He loved all of these. One who says, “Give me Jesus, but not the church” thereby confesses his lack of love for Jesus: He “loved the church, and gave himself up for it” (Eph. 5:25).
4. We must keep His commandments: “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments” (John 14:15; cf. 21). This simple test is the all-embracing one, separating the sincere/serious disciple from the pretending hypocrite. Although theologians have sought to strip almost every vestige of law or authority from the Gospel, these words of Jesus remain unchanged. He further emphasized the necessity of obedience in the same context: “He that loveth me not keepeth not my words...” (v. 24a). As Jesus drew His Sermon on the Mount to a close, He said: It is not those who merely call Him “Lord,” but those who obey the Divine will, who will be in Heaven (Mat. 7:23). Jesus offers eternal salvation “unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).

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5101 East University Drive, Greenbelt Business Park
(HWY 380/377, 3 mi. E of Loop 288), Denton, Texas 76208
For free Bible study by mail, call 940.387.1429 or 940.323.2120
or e-mail northpointcoc@hotmail.com
Visit our web site at northpointcoc.com.