

**Lovest
Thou
Me?**

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This study is taken from a sermon preached from the text of John 21:14-17. The purpose is to learn the lessons of the restoration of Peter for failing the Lord Jesus Christ as well as to renew our love for the Lord. The Lord is interested in knowing our love for Him. The Lord requires commitment from Christians to demonstrate our love for Him. Indeed loving someone requires commitment. How much more for our gracious Lord's unflinching love for us wretched sinners saved by grace? For the Scriptures tell us:

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8)

How can Christians who received so much grace, mercy and love not return a measure of our love to our Lord Jesus Christ who has done everything for us so that we might not only escape hell fire but have a glorious home and future with Him for all eternity? So it behooves Christians to learn from Scriptures what we have to do in order to love our blessed Saviour. May this study lead Christians to love the Lord Jesus Christ more and more each day!

This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (John 21:14-17)

For centuries, countless preachers have preached the passage where the Lord Jesus Christ asked Peter whether he loved Him three times. The question as to why the Lord having to ask Peter three times whether Peter loved Him is a subject of much speculation and controversy. Some might think that the Lord was not sure whether Peter really loved Him so that was why Peter was asked three times. This impinges on the omniscience of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some might feel that this was the way the Lord proved Peter's love for Him by asking him three times. This might be a more tenable explanation but it does not address the reason why the Lord has to ask Peter three times. Why not ask Peter just two times or to be more certain ask him seven times which is a number of perfection? Some would even believe that in order to find out the reason why Peter was asked three times whether he loved the Lord, one has to find out the exact meaning of the word "love" in Greek given in the passage. They contend that the intensity of the word "love" cannot be correctly and fully expressed and understood in English without going back to the original language. Indeed the word "love" in the passage are translated from two different Greek words. But is it true that without going back to Greek no one can understand the Holy Scriptures in English? Are we to surrender the study of God's Holy Bible to some linguistic experts to do the study for us?

If we are to interpret this passage on its own, of course we can come out with as many fanciful theories and fairy tales we want. However, we are dealing with the Holy Scriptures. They are not subject to private interpretation. We are to compare Scriptures with Scriptures. The Holy Spirit is our best Teacher and Guide. It is in God's light shall we see light. All scholars and linguistic experts are of no consequence and relevance as far as learning from the Holy Scriptures is concerned. Unfortunately, many

have mistaken scholars or linguistic experts as the Holy Spirit! They are going after the wrong source for spiritual truths. They are climbing up the tree of knowledge of good and evil of fallen men to seek wisdom and truth and they miss the real meat in spiritual truths found in the tree of life in the Lord Jesus Christ – the fountain of life.

In order to understand this passage as to why the Lord asked Peter three times whether Peter loved Him, we have to study events leading to this meeting. This was a meeting after the resurrection of Christ. Events prior to the crucifixion of Christ have to be analyzed and studied carefully. Why was it that Peter was the only disciple asked by the Lord three times whether he loved the Lord and not the other disciples? Were the rest of the disciples already loving the Lord perfectly? Were they not as important compared to Peter? Was the Lord practicing favouritism? Why was Peter singled out? Was it something that Peter had done in the past that caused these questions to be asked? What was the purpose? What was the desired outcome? What was the subject matter? What can we learn from this passage?

A child of God cannot be lazy if he wants to learn what the Lord would like to teach him. He has to search the Scriptures horizontally from cover to cover. He must not search the Scriptures vertically going back to the tomb of some dead languages where the Holy Ghost had already saw fit to give His inspired words to us in the Authorised King James Bible. The Lord is no longer in the tomb for He is risen! Spiritual truths are not kept in catacombs of dead languages. The words of the living God are alive and we have moved on to higher ground and greater spiritual knowledge and truth. We trust God has preserved His inspired words for us and that is why we are searching the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Only then are we ready to learn from the most important Book on this earth. May the Lord bless the reading and study of His words!

This passage deals with the Lord Jesus Christ asking Peter whether he loved Him. Here is the third time the Lord revealed Himself to His disciples after His resurrection. This was the time when the Lord confronted Peter regarding his love for Him. The Lord did not confront Peter during the previous two occasions when they met. The Lord had His own reason for choosing this occasion to confront Peter. The purpose was not exactly to spoil his day during this wonderful meeting for a picnic on a beach but to achieve a very important purpose after which Peter should pick himself up and carry his cross to follow the Lord. The Lord had been patiently waiting till this third meeting to speak with Peter about his love for Him. The Lord could have asked Peter immediately when He met them the first time but He did not. The longsuffering of the Lord is something Christians have to learn if we want to accomplish God's perfect will.

It might have been an embarrassing meeting for Peter to meet the Lord during those two occasions. After all Peter was the first to brag about not forsaking the Lord and abandoning Him. But the Lord burst his bubble telling Peter that he would definitely deny Him three times. **Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. (Matthew 26:34&35)**

Peter was always the outspoken disciple among them. He would just speak his mind whenever the occasion arose. He was the one who even promised he would die with the Lord. He did not believe he would deny the Lord as warned by the Lord. He was so full of confidence when he boasted of his willingness to die with the Lord. Unfortunately, he did not keep to his promise. When he finally denied the Lord three times, he had a final look from the Lord to strike home the final blow on his empty confident boasting. Dr. Luke recorded for us what took place.

But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned,

and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. (Luke 22:56-61)

The Lord was being held and was beaten by the enemies. Peter was there to witness the humiliation and sufferings of Christ and he did nothing to stop them. He dared not identify himself as a disciple of Christ and he denied the Lord in the presence of the enemies. In the midst of His sufferings, the Lord still sought out Peter among the crowd to look at him for one last time when the cockcrow crew after Peter had denied Him. That piercing look from the Lord must have been a moment of awakening for Peter. However, it was not a look of anger or bitterness at Peter's denial. It was a look of compassion for Peter who failed in his promise to die with the Lord. Peter did not expect to betray the Lord by denying Him let alone denying Him three times. He was sincere and serious in wanting to be with Christ and to die with Him. But the flesh is weak. The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is always weak.

It must have been a terrifying moment when they met eye to eye after Peter denied Christ. It was a very sad moment of truth for Peter. This moment of eye contact with the Lord one last time must have etched into his inner most conscience for the rest of his life. He left dejected with his head hanging low and did not follow the Lord from then on. He was defeated and devastated with what happened. His hope for the kingdom vaporized into thin air. He was lost and confused and surely very depressed. He was bitter with grief and he wept inconsolably.

Peter did not keep to His words. He had not only denied Christ, but he had denied knowing Christ three times before the enemies. Denying the Lord one time would be bad enough but for three times would be simply outrageous. Whatever happened to his love for the Lord? What had he learnt these three over years following the Lord though thick and thin? It must be terribly embarrassing to boast so much about his love and loyalty to Christ. In the end, it was just empty boasting. He was the chief among the twelve but his conduct was found wanting. He turned out to be like a rebel and a coward. His cowardice must have brought him much misery and shame. How sad and how tragic to trust in the flesh! How foolish to underestimate the forces of darkness!

And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly. (Matthew 26:75) So the thoughts of having denied the Lord must have pierced into the innermost recess of his fragile heart throbbing in pain and anguish. He was terribly ashamed of himself. Hence, he went out and wept bitterly. These were tears of repentance. He wept because there was nothing he could do to reverse the situation. He had blown it completely. This blunder was just too big. The situation was hopeless. He repented and he resigned to the fate of having denied the Lord. He had abandoned the Lord during the most crucial moment of the test of his allegiance for Christ.

Unlike Judas Iscariot, Peter did not commit suicide to salvage his lost pride. He continued to be with the rest of the disciples. It was surprising that he was still mingling with them after this episode. He could have walked away and forget about everything, especially the kingdom he was looking forward to inherit. How the prince of the apostle had fallen! He could be wallowing in self-pity. He could have treated whatever happened during these few years as a horrible nightmare and start his life anew. He could have moved on with his life as a fisherman and associate himself with new friends and partners. After all he was living quite well when the Lord found him and called him to become a fisher of men. But he did not.

How would the rest of the disciples treat him from then on? Their esteem and respect for him must have been reduced to a level unimaginable. His approval ratings had gone so far south and there was nothing he could do about it. Did the rest of the disciples laugh at him for his empty boasting? Maybe not openly but privately they might be thinking. But the fiends from hell must be having a field day chuckling and mocking at Peter to his utmost annoyance. If the disciples did laugh at him, did Peter take it in his stride? After all, it was Christ who told Peter and gave him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In fact Peter was a very important member in the team of disciples following the Lord.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:18&19)

Christ is the true Rock and Peter is the stone. It is upon Christ the Rock of Ages that the Church will prevail. However, the keys to the kingdom of heaven were given to Peter to open the door of salvation through the foolishness of preaching to the Jews and the Gentiles. After denying Christ, what was the use of these keys to the kingdom of heaven? He might as well throw them away. No one would probably trust him with these keys anyway!

What would the Lord think of him from now on? Did the Lord make a mistake by giving him the keys? Can Peter be trusted to be the custodian of these keys? How could you trust him with the keys when he could deny knowing Christ during the most crucial moment? If he could deny Christ, would he betray Him and give the keys to the enemies instead? He could not even stand up to the enemies, how could he use these keys properly? How could he bind things on earth and heaven would honour his binding? How could he loose things on earth and heaven would loose them according to his usage of these keys? Could Peter be trusted? Would Peter betray the rest of the disciples? If Peter could deny the Lord, would the rest of the disciples be safe from him?

It seemed like Peter was loosing these keys and losing them fast. Was Peter still thinking about these keys? Had he forgotten his calling altogether? But the Lord had compassion on him. The Lord did not forget him. The Lord did not abandon Peter though Peter had denied Him and abandoned Him. Instructions were given to the angel guarding the empty tomb to relay a message to Peter after the resurrection of Christ.

And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. (Mark 16:5-7)

There was a personal message for Peter. Of all those who needed assurance, Peter needed it most. Had Peter gotten over with the incident that he had denied the Lord three times after three short days? The good news about the resurrection of Christ was not only to be told to the disciples. Peter was singled out to meet Christ in Galilee. Unlike other disciples, Peter was so privileged to be mentioned by name. How good the Lord must have been to His poor and needy servant! The Lord knew the weakness of Peter in advance. He allowed it to happen and used the incident to draw Peter closer to Him. Unto whom much is forgiven will one love much. Have not the Lord dealt with us like this before? Not only Peter was guilty of sinning by denying Christ, we had also sinned many times willfully and yet the Lord restored us when we came to Him in repentance.

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? The Lord asked Peter three times whether he loved Him. Christ did not ask Peter these questions before the meal. He asked him after the meal. We see the consideration of Christ. Had the Lord asked Peter before that, he probably had no more appetite for his meal. It was after the meal that the Lord confronted him on this matter. The Lord was indeed very gracious to His erring servant. Peter probably did not expect the Lord to spring these questions on him. These questions were only asked after a sumptuous meal prepared by the Lord. Everyone was enjoying the meal at the beach. They were all having a good time especially with the resurrection of Christ and dinning in His Holy presence.

It would be interesting to note whether Peter and the Lord had any eye contacts during the previous two meetings. Did Peter look the Lord in the eyes as though nothing had happened? It was that most unforgettable last look after his denying Christ that caused Peter to weep bitterly. There was no question that Peter was very bitter and sad that day having denied the Lord. He must be very sad that day when he left the scene having denied his blessed Lord whom he loved. He realized he had failed and he failed

completely. He might be blaming and cursing himself for such cowardice and sickening behaviour. That last look from the Lord must have been a most unforgettable event in his life. Now that he was looking at the Lord, did he raise this matter of his denying the Lord three times? Did Peter tell the Lord he was sorry about the incident?

Perhaps he was too embarrassed to talk about the matter. He probably hoped time would erase away what happened in the past. Fallen men believe time will heal but this is not true. Things or sins may have been forgotten but they are seldom forgiven. They need to be dealt with. Peter did not initiate to ask the Lord for forgiveness. Neither did the rest of the disciples. The Lord had to come calling for repentance. Back in the Garden of Eden the Lord God had to come calling for Adam who went into hiding. It is always the Good Shepherd seeking after the lost sheep. The Lord is seeking after Peter's love now at the seaside barbeque picnic. What an occasion to exact a confession from Peter!

It was a pleasant day and after a wonderful meal in the midst of joyous fellowship with everyone that the Lord approached Peter on this matter. John was present with the rest and John recorded the incident for us. So the Lord asked Peter three times whether he loved Him. The three times of asking Him was designed to deal with Peter's denial of knowing the Lord three times. Though two different Greek words were used in the passage when the Lord asked Peter whether he loved Him, it had absolutely nothing to do with the various different meanings of the Greek verbs "agapao" or "phileo". The scholars are lying and they do not know the Scriptures. The moment they set themselves to be the final authority, they do not see light from the Scriptures anymore. It is in God's light shall we see light.

Peter denied the Lord three times and the Lord had to ask him three times about Peter's love for Him. If Peter could deny the Lord three times, what was wrong with the Lord asking Peter three times? The Lord knew that Peter truly loved Him. But the Lord still chose to deal with the issue of Peter denying Him three times. That was why Peter was grieved. Peter certainly remembered denying Christ three times. He might not even have the confidence in telling the Lord he loved the Lord anymore. Peter also knew the Lord Jesus knew his heart. In his heart, he really loved the Lord. He was simply too ashamed of himself. He was ashamed of his cowardice and his empty confident boasting. But the Lord showed him how weak he was in the flesh.

Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? The first question the Lord asked was whether Peter loved Him more than the rest of the disciples loved Him. Nathaniel and Thomas and other disciples were present in the meeting that day. They remained silent when the Lord asked Peter the question. They might be wondering what Peter would say. They might be whispering to one another in anticipation of Peter's reply. Would Peter be boasting again? It was another embarrassing moment Peter had to go through. He had to look at these disciples and gave the Lord an answer. Would he lie to the Lord? Would he just tell the truth? Could he honestly tell the Lord he loved the Lord more than the rest of these disciples? What would the rest of the disciples think and say? Will they protest if Peter answered in the affirmative? After all, Peter had no qualms in speaking his mind in the past even in front of all the disciples. He was quite aloft and indifferent to others whenever he asserted himself. He was used to boasting in front of others. What would he say now? It is quite embarrassing to tell the Lord he loved

Him more than the rest of the disciples especially in their presence. But Peter said yea. He must have mustered a lot of courage to answer in the affirmative. He told the Lord he loved the Lord more than the rest of the disciples. He was no longer boasting this time. He was simply telling the truth. Indeed Peter loved the Lord. We could see his zeal and his love for the Lord when he jumped into the sea to swim towards the Lord.

And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. (John 21:6-8)

Peter had gone back to his fishing trade and the rest joined him. It was a fruitless night toiling without blessings from above. They caught nothing. When the Lord showed them the way, they had a bountiful catch. John noticed it was the Lord first and told Peter about it. Peter was so keen and eager to meet the Lord that he could not wait to come ashore first. So he jumped into the sea. He swam to shore while the rest came on the ship. Peter did not mind getting wet to come and be the first to meet the Lord. He was not interested in the huge catch of fish. The most important person to him was the Lord. He was so excited at the prospect of meeting the Lord again that he wanted to be the first to meet him. His love for the Lord was unquestionable. He proved it by his actions. Did not the Lord know his heart?

Nevertheless, the Lord asked him two more times whether he loved Him. Each time when Peter replied, he told the Lord that the Lord knew he loved Him. Why asked some more? It seemed that Peter felt that the Lord did not believe Peter loved Him. The feeling of misgiving was something that caused grief. That was why Peter was grieved. Peter's third reply was full of vehemence. **Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.**

Peter insisted that the Lord knew all things and Christ knew that Peter loved Him. In the past when the Lord told Peter he would deny Him three

times, Peter did not believe Him. He was boasting that he would even die with the Lord. Now Peter acknowledged that the Lord knew all things. The Lord had to deal with Peter's former denial and to restore Peter to where he was supposed to be. The Lord of course knew all things. With this confrontation, Peter was given a responsibility and a duty to prove that he truly loved the Lord. Empty boasting will not do. Having being through such an unforgettable lesson, would Peter still want to take things for granted?

Peter was a very individualistic person. He was outspoken and was the leader of the twelve. His denial of the Lord had caused his leadership position to come into question. Peter probably had no more confidence to lead anymore even though the Lord had given him the keys to the kingdom of heaven in the past. He had even gone back to his fishing trade instead of getting himself busy for the Lord's work. He probably thought that the Lord had passed the keys onto someone else more worthy to lead the flock. But the Lord told him to feed His lambs and sheep. The restoration was complete when Peter reaffirmed his love for the Lord. With it comes the responsibility to feed the Lord's lambs and sheep.

Has anyone of you thought you have lost your calling? Have you felt you have denied the Lord? Come back to Christ and reaffirm your love for the Lord. The Lord will restore you again. Go and love the Lord's sheep and feed them. Do not go back to your worldly trade and put all your time and energy on your trade. The Lord has a work for you to do in the coming kingdom. If the Lord asked you like He asked Peter these three times whether you loved Him, what would your reply be? How would you respond? Do you really love the Lord? How are you going to prove that you love the Lord? What are you going to do to prove your love for Christ? What have you been doing to prove your love for the Lord?

Are you doing more to prove that you love your wife or your husband or your children by doing things for them and buying things for them that they do not need? Valentine is coming and you feel compelled to do some proving? What about the Lord? Have you never denied the Lord in some ways? If you love the Lord, then go feed the Lord's lambs and sheep. Do not insist on your own liberty to do the things that please yourself. Do not insist on your own rights. Think about the Lord's lambs who are weak in the faith. Help them to grow and feed them. A good way is to heed the apostle Paul's instruction. **Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. (Romans 14:1)**

Do not prove to them it is acceptable to drink wine and play mahjong or go dancing. Young lambs are easily frightened of sinning against the Lord. So do not wound their weak conscience. Young lambs do not understand the difference between things that are lawful and things that not expedient. Learn to be like the apostle Paul.

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. (1 Corinthians 9:19-22)

Paul gave up his own rights in order to serve Christ. The Lord loves His sheep and we likewise must love what Christ loves. We ought to grow to be all things unto all men to do the Lord's work if we really want to return a little measure of our love to Him. "Lovest Thou me?" the Lord may ask. What are we going to say? I think so or I hope so? We better be sincere and tell the Lord we truly love the Lord like Peter.

It is a terrible shame if we cannot look the Lord in His eyes and tell Him we love Him. If we love the Lord, we have a responsibility to fulfill. Feeding the Lord's lambs and sheep are not confined to a church setting. The Lord's lambs and sheep are all over and everywhere. They can be found in schools, in your work place and the people you meet. Help them to grow in Christ and protect them from the wiles of the devil. If we truly love the Lord, we will love the brethren.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. (1 John 3:14) Those who love the brethren have the mark of Christ's love in them. They have eternal life. Those who hate the brethren abide in death. They do not possess eternal life. Those who truly love the Lord will also be willing to lay down their lives for the brethren. **Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16)**

Actually, we cannot love the Lord without Christ loving us first. Christ initiates His love for sinners. When sinners get saved, they will reciprocate this love to the Lord. We have been praying that we return a little measure of our love to Christ. Then we better prove it by firstly loving the brethren and then feeding Christ's lambs and sheep. Telling the Lord we love Him is not a practical way we demonstrate our love for Him.

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. (1 John 4:12) None of us sinners saved by grace has seen God literally face to face in this body this side of heaven. But the love of Christ will unite the brethren in love one for another. This is the perfect love of God that is unconditional. If we love the Lord, then we have to love the brethren though Christians are not always lovable just like us. We all have our faults and shortcomings. We still live in this body of death and we still sin against the Lord in the flesh.

We ought to feed the lambs and sheep of the Lord despite their stubbornness and stupidity where sheep are prone to getting lost. It can be a thankless task to feed the flock of God but the love of Christ constrains us to do it for His sake. The commandment from the Lord is to love one another. Loving one another in Christ comes automatically for those who are born again in Christ. Christians will want to love another Christian because he or she belongs to Christ and we are all part of the family of God.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (1 John 4:16-18)

When the Lord asked Peter whether he loved Him, Peter could reply that he loved Him. Peter indeed loved the Lord though he had failed Him in the past. Peter did not doubt his love for Christ because he ever denied Him. He wept bitterly when he realized that he had denied the Lord three times as warned by the Lord. There were tears of repentance from Peter unlike the pride of Judas that led him to commit suicide. Perfect love cast out fear and Peter did not fear telling the Lord that he loved Him. Peter even told the Lord that he knew all things including his heart that he indeed loved the Lord.

Telling someone we love that person is meaningless unless it comes from our heart and it is backed up by action. Some women like to hear the husbands tell them that the husbands love them everyday. She might as well record it on a compact disc and play it every other hour if it works that way. Talk is cheap. Anyone could easily tell others that he or she loves that person but true loves can still be missing. It is simply talk only to accomplish a certain purpose and that is all.

But true love is more than verbal affirmation. True love can be felt even without verbal expression. As such, your wife, your husband and your children must know and feel that your love for them is there whether you express it or not. You have to back up your love with action. They will not feel you love them when you are not with them most of the time. They will not think that you love them when you have no commitment for them. True love will result in action and act of love. Otherwise, it is just meaningless posturing.

The Lord's questioning of Peter three times was not because the Lord did not know that Peter loved Him. The Lord had to deal with his previous denial of Him three times. The Lord wanted a commitment from Peter who loved Him. The Lord wanted Peter to feed His lambs and sheep if he loved Him. The Lord also wants commitment from Christians who are supposed to

love the Lord. How many Christians can truly show by their work that they truly love the Lord?

The day of judgment is coming. If we want to have boldness, we have to prove our love for Christ. Perfect love will cast out fear. Fear of failure is not an excuse for not doing God's work. Peter failed the Lord and even denied Him three times yet he could tell the Lord he loved Him. Fear of rejection is not an excuse for not feeding God's flock. Peter feared rejection from the Lord and the disciples yet he still did not go away doing his own things. If we love the Lord, we have to have works to back up our love for Christ. Your wife will not believe you love her just by saying it day in and day out. Your children will not believe you love them unless you are involved in their lives. So prove your love and show your commitment.

We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? (1 John 4:19&20)

Here is the unmistakable mark of those who are not brethren. They hate the brethren. They are false brethren among true brethren. False brethren may pretend to have much love but they are there to spy out the liberty of the saints and cause much harm when the opportunity arises. They are not of Christ and that is why they do not love the brethren. It is impossible to love God whom we cannot see when we do not love the brethren whom we can see. Such profession of love is a lie. Such profession of love is only good for political expediency. Can we really know we love God?

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. (1 John 5:1&2)

Indeed we can know we love God. This is by loving the children of God and keeping His commandments. Those who do not love the children of God and refuse to keep God's commandments cannot know they love God. There is no excuse for not keeping God's commandments. Why? **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. (1 John 5:3)**

God's commandments are not grievous. Someone is lying to you when he tells you it is so difficult to live a Christian life. It is not difficult to live a Christian life at all. It is Christ living in you the hope of glory. It is only difficult when we want to justify indulging in the flesh and at the same time we want approval from God and respect from the saints. Christ's commandment is to love one another. This comes first from the home between husband and wife. Peter who told the Lord he loved Him had this advice for the husband and wife.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:8&9) Peter knew what love really entails. He was a practical man when it came to love. Empty confident boasting would not do. So he gave very clear instruction how a husband and wife should treat each other. They are to love one another as brethren in the Lord. They are both called and accepted in the Beloved. This is how a husband and wife should relate to one another. This can also be applied to the brethren in general.

The Lord may ask, "Lovest thou me?" What would your reply be? What are your commitments to demonstrate your love for Christ? Telling everyone we love the Lord does not count. It must be backed up with concrete action. It must start firstly from the home loving one another and then spread out this love of God to other brethren. Those who do not love their family members but love those outside are strange fire. Some are so deceived in "loving" others having caught up with all kinds of church programs that they neglect that own family members. If a man's love for his family is wrong, his love for others need not be taken seriously. His starting point is wrong. How can he love others correctly when he does not love his own family members? If a man has trouble in the home, he cannot be a blessing to the church. He has to learn how to love beginning from his own home.

If we love the Lord, then feed His lambs and sheep. These lambs and sheep are found in our own homes. We are to love them and feed them not just with physical food but spiritual food. Do not wait on the preacher to do the job for you. Then move out and love the Lord's lambs and sheep and feed them as well. The mark of knowing that we love God is by our love for the brethren.

May the Lord help us to be sincere in our love for Christ and do work that brings delight to our Lord. The Lord indeed knows our heart. May we have the boldness to tell the Lord Jesus Christ we love Him and do those things that are pleasing in His sight! May the Lord bless you with a closer and sweeter walk with Him!

If you have been blessed with the reading of this book and you wish to contact the author, you may write to him at charles@kiv-asia.com.