

## JESUS ASKS, "DO YOU LOVE ME?"

### John 21:15-17

**Introduction:** Some questions asked often require some thought before answering. Wives ask their husbands, "do you love me?" Girls ask their boy friends, "do you love me?" Children ask their parents, "do you love me?" In a musical movie some years ago, a man was singing a song and some of the words were in a question form. He was singing to his wife and he was asking her "do you love me?" In her reply to his question she said, "I cook your meals, I make your bed, I wash your clothes, I care for you when you are sick, I have your children, well, I suppose I do love you..." Jesus asked one of His disciples that question not once, but three times. What would your answer be if Jesus asked you that question?

### I. JESUS GAVE SIMON PETER A TEST

1. Peter's denial of Jesus three times prior to this question could have caused some question about Peter's loyalty and love to Jesus. So Jesus asked Peter, "*do you love me more than these others?*"
  - Jesus used the "God type" of "love" (agape) first which signifies a deep, constant affection, not a "fearing" kind of love, not an honoring or admiring kind of love, but God's kind.
  - Jesus' question was not "how much did you cry when I died?" or "how long did you fast after I was buried?"
  - Peter was known for his remarks about loving Jesus more than the other disciples but his behavior at the trial of Jesus raised a lot of doubts.
2. Peter (Simon) answered simply, "*...you know that I love you...*"
  - Peter was reminding the Lord about his past behavior and actions.
  - Peter used the word for "love" (philos) that was associated with human feelings, emotions, like brotherly love, friend kind of love, nothing spectacular though.
3. Quietly and without argument, Jesus told Peter to do something for Him.
  - "*Go feed my lambs..*" which was the thought of caring for, watching over, looking after.
  - "...my lambs" were the young, new converts to believing in Jesus, to be concerned for their spiritual growth and welfare.

### II. JESUS GAVE SIMON PETER A SECOND TEST

1. Jesus asks Peter another similar question.
  - He used the same word for "love," "*...do you love me?...*"
  - Not more than anybody else, for Jesus knew Peter's heart and past behavior and that in his heart, Peter was really a humble person.
2. Peter answers in the same way, "*...you know that I love you...*"
  - Peter is reminding the Lord to look at his past behavior, his past record, his love, obedience, and witnessing for Jesus.
  - His past record would show his love for Jesus.

3. Again Jesus tells Peter to do something for Him.
  - Jesus tells Peter to "*...feed my sheep...*" meaning to guide, shepherd, feed, the many who would be following Jesus, like a herd, a group, a flock, of all sorts, young and old.

### III. JESUS GIVES PETER A THIRD TEST

1. Jesus asks Peter once again, "*...do you love me?...*"
  - Jesus used a different word for "love" this time and it was the word Peter had used when answering Jesus which was a word for human care, affection.
  - "*Peter, do you really care about me, do you really care for me?...*"
2. Peter was upset about the third question, especially that it was the very same question already asked twice. He was offended.
  - He had the idea that Jesus didn't believe that he really loved Him.
  - Surely Jesus knew from past experience how much Peter loved him.
3. This time Peter answered in a way that he left no doubt as to his love of and loyalty to Jesus.
4. Again Jesus tells Peter to do something for Him.
  - "*...feed my sheep...*" and this time the emphasis is upon teaching, preaching, spiritual nourishing ALL who would believe in and follow Jesus, thus the Church.

### CONCLUSION:

1. Remembering the song the man was singing to his wife about whether she loved him or not and her answering with the many things she does for him, how would you answer Jesus' question "Do you love me?"
  - Been baptized, a Church member for years, contribute, go to Sunday School, attend regularly might be some of the answers one might give to Jesus if asked about his/her love.
2. If Jesus asked the same question again what would the answer be? Yes or No?
  - If "yes" then are Jesus' commandments kept? Are His Words obeyed? Is there love for one another? Is there genuine concern for others, especially new Christians? Is there witnessing, sharing the good news of Jesus? Is there prayer for the Church, the lost?
3. What would YOUR answers be if Jesus asked you three times about your love for Him?  
What "proof" do you have that you love Jesus?