

In search of...

Truth & Right

Volume 11 Issue 2

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Do You Love God?

Let's say that a survey taker decided to make it his goal to stand outside of every church building in America each Sunday and ask every person who left the building if they loved God. How many do you think would answer in the negative? My guess would be that the overwhelming majority of churchgoers would gladly and sincerely profess their love for God, and I am thankful for that. It is due to their love of God that they are attending church in the first place. It's because of their love of God that they own a Bible and peruse through it from time to time. Their love of God is a major reason why they love others and help others in their time of need. **Professing a love of God is an important first step.**

"First step'?" you might ask. "What do you mean, 'first step'? I thought loving God is the ultimate, the pinnacle, the highest we can achieve!" That is true, but consider this. We say that we love God...but does God agree? Does God think we love him? Does God define us loving him the same way that we define loving him? We might be tempted to assume that he does, but God's Word suggests otherwise ([Is. 55:8-9](#)). In fact, Jesus said that there would be religious people who call him "Lord" and are involved in many good works who would still be condemned at judgment ([Matt. 7:21-23](#)). Obviously, those who call Jesus "Lord" and do many good things in his name would also gladly say that they love him...so

why are they being condemned?

The answer lies in finding out how God defines our love for him, and the way to do that is to go to his Word. This makes sense when you think about it. Consider your spouse and your closest friends and the love you have for them. When you think about it, the love you have for them and they have for you is based upon your mutual knowledge of each other. You know each other well, you understand each other, and that's what causes your love for each other to grow more and more. It's the same with our relationship with God. The more we come to know God, the more we will love him...especially when we grow in our understanding of just how much he loves us! (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16).

But how do we come to know God? The only way that will happen is by going to his Holy Spirit-inspired Word (2 Pet. 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). After all, no one knows the mind of God except the Spirit (2 Cor. 2:9-11), and the Spirit revealed the mind of God to the writers of Scripture (John 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:9-13; Eph. 3:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:19-21). When we study

and meditate upon God's Word day and night (Ps. 1:1-3), we grow in our knowledge of God and how he looks at things. We also grow in our knowledge and understanding of how God defines our love for him.

So just how does God define loving him? **Over and over again, the Scriptures correlate love of God with obeying God** (John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 1 John 5:3). In fact, obeying God is how we come to know him as well as to love him (1 John 2:3-5). Even in the Old Testament, God always defined the concepts of loving him and obeying him interchangeably (Deut. 6:4-5; 7:9; 10:12-13; 11:1). So if you obey God, you love him. If you choose to unrepentantly disobey God, you don't love him. If you love him, you obey him. If you don't love him, you will not obey him. It's that simple.

With this in mind, go back to Matthew 7:21-23. Why did Jesus condemn some even though they called him "Lord" and did many good things in his name? He tells us why. ***"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of***

my Father who is in heaven."

They weren't doing the Father's will. Perhaps they were doing some of it, but they weren't obeying him in all areas of their lives. That's why he called them **"workers of lawlessness."**

Do we love God? Sure, we might say we do. We might sincerely think that we do, and perhaps in some areas of our lives we do. All of that is good and shouldn't be ignored. Like I said earlier, it's an important first step. However, ask yourselves this. How well do you know God? How well do you know the Bible? How often do you go out of your way to study his Word in depth? Furthermore, are you obeying his Word? Are you doing so as best you can in all areas of your life? Are you willing to obey God even if his revealed will in the Scriptures goes against your most cherished belief? Are you willing to put God above even family, even above self? When you disobey him, are you willing to repent? Are you willing to obey him no matter what?

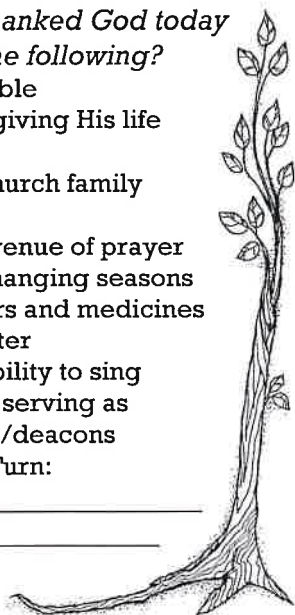
That, and that alone, shows how much we truly love God.

Jon Mitchell

God gave you a gift of
86,400
seconds today. Have
you used one to say
THANK YOU?

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Jobs
- The avenue of prayer
- The changing seasons
- Doctors and medicines
- Laughter
- The ability to sing
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- Your Turn:



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Qualifications for Deacons

H	Q	Q	L	S	P	C	Q	Z	M	Q	W	L	Z	I	E	M	Y	K	L
C	W	I	C	M	K	K	V	B	S	G	X	C	M	M	H	V	E	N	Y
C	U	T	Y	L	X	H	G	K	K	A	K	G	N	S	D	D	B	M	Y
C	E	M	Y	S	T	E	R	Y	S	X	L	U	F	K	U	Z	D	H	I
I	U	A	U	K	E	Z	V	B	D	V	V	M	A	N	A	G	I	N	G
H	D	S	D	U	S	O	V	T	N	P	R	B	I	N	O	D	S	Z	P
O	J	Y	Y	D	T	S	Y	N	Y	F	P	Q	T	I	S	P	H	E	K
C	Z	B	T	I	E	L	Y	F	B	K	V	O	H	P	Z	B	O	X	C
N	Z	H	A	O	D	A	A	E	E	L	A	B	F	Q	I	X	N	D	D
A	T	D	U	X	R	N	P	J	C	B	D	G	U	G	M	D	E	I	U
N	U	Z	N	Q	N	D	E	N	S	J	D	N	L	M	A	R	S	D	A
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C	E	F	D	A	W	R	O	V	E	J	I	I	V	R	P	L	R	H	O
F	V	F	P	B	K	E	V	O	E	A	H	G	G	S	H	R	T	R	N
M	M	B	T	M	P	R	L	C	M	I	U	N	I	W	M	W	O	N	S
L	R	L	N	S	H	S	P	R	H	Y	S	I	Q	S	J	X	N	F	C
C	Q	T	C	S	K	Q	W	U	E	J	B	F	W	K	H	S	G	K	I
B	L	A	M	E	L	E	S	S	X	D	A	I	G	Z	I	T	U	V	E
E	L	Z	N	K	B	U	F	N	N	D	N	E	N	D	N	J	E	R	N
P	H	W	Y	U	K	A	F	Y	N	A	D	D	I	C	T	E	D	F	C
L	A	I	O	S	U	F	W	H	P	K	R	U	B	F	Z	D	J	A	E

DIRECTIONS: Look up the scripture in the Bible, and find the answer in the crossword above.

- 1 Tim. 3:8, Likewise must be _____.
- 1 Tim. 3:8, ...not double-_____.
- 1 Tim. 3:8, ...not _____ to much wine,
- 1 Tim. 3:8, ...not greedy for _____ gain.
- 1 Tim. 3:9, They must hold the _____ of the faith...
- 1 Tim. 3:9, ...with a clear _____.
- 1 Tim. 3:10, And let them also be _____ first;
- 1 Tim. 3:10, serve as deacons if they prove themselves _____.
- 1 Tim. 3:11, ...not _____, but sober-minded,
- 1 Tim. 3:11, ..._____ in all things.
- 1 Tim. 3:12, ...each be the _____ of one wife,
- 1 Tim. 3:12, ..._____ their children and their own households well.