

Do You Love Me?

For those of us that have been married for a long time (in my case over 30 years) we have asked or been asked that familiar question many times, "Do you love me?" Probably one of the most poignant conversations Jesus had is the one with Peter when he asked him that haunting question, "Do you love me?" Now, the first two times He asked the question Jesus used the word for Love that means God's unconditional love when he asked him if Peter loved him and Peter answered back that he loved Jesus with man's brotherly love. That was the best love he could muster. Also some people have pointed out that Jesus may have asked Peter if he loved him three times. Perhaps Jesus wanted Peter to reaffirm his love for Him the same number of times that he had denied Him only a short time before.

As I read in the margin notes in my bible I found another interesting piece of information. Jesus added some words onto the first time he asks this question when he said, "Do you love me more than these." Now we might think that the words "more than these" refers to the disciples that were there that day. In that case Jesus was asking Peter if he loved Him more than he loved the other disciples – his earthly friends. Another possible explanation was that Jesus was asking Peter if he loved Jesus more than the other disciples loved Jesus. Was Peter's love so strong that he was willing to say that because he had been forgiven so much that he loved Jesus more than anyone else could possibly love Jesus? The last possibility was that Jesus' words "more than these" was not referring to people but things. It is possible Jesus could have been gesturing towards the boats, nets, ropes, anchors and other gear that was all part Peter's possessions and livelihood.

I like to consider Jesus' question and answer the question as if He is asking it to me. Do I love Him more than I love anyone else? Do I love Him with an exclusive love that surpasses all other's love for Him and do I love Him more than I love all of my possessions?

JOHN 21:15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

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