

How Much Do You Love Jesus?

There is a question we need to begin asking and answering more earnestly in the Church.

Do you love Jesus?

For some of us in the Church, the question itself is offensive. We think it is too emotional, too touchy-feely. We believe in God and want to go to heaven, and we know this means believing in Jesus; but all that love talk is just uncomfortable.

For some of us in the Church, the question is metaphysical. We love to feel and express love in our souls. The high of feeling loved is what we crave, and we worship to get that high that will carry us through the week, until our next fix.

For some of us in the Church, the question is quizzical. We may believe that Jesus saves people from their sins, but the idea of *loving* someone we can't see may sound good, but it just isn't real or possible.

For some of us in the Church, the question is frightening. We want to love Jesus, but we aren't sure what that will entail. And frankly, we have been hurt too many times already, when we risked expressing and receiving love.

For some of us in the Church, the answer to the question is no. For others, the answer is maybe. For the rest, the answer is yes. The problem is that many of us have never asked or

answered the question truthfully. And this really is the only question that ultimately matters, because the way you answer it affects every part of your life.

Maybe you have answered this question in your own soul, and have received peace in the Holy Spirit that you are God's child through faith. You do love Jesus. He is your Lord, your Savior, and your God, even though you don't always show it very well.

If this describes you, then praise God, for only he can change a heart of stone into a heart of flesh that can love as God loves.

Now it is time to ask yourself the harder question.

How much do you love Jesus?

Do you love Jesus enough to let go of your old life and embrace a new way of living?

Do you love Jesus enough to confess the sin in your life and ask him to take it away?

Do you love Jesus enough to change your work habits, or maybe even your job, so that you can make him your top priority?

Do you love Jesus enough to live simply, so that you can use the wealth God gives you to bless the poor?

Do you love Jesus enough to forgive people who hurt you, even though they don't deserve it, and even though they haven't asked?

Do you love Jesus enough to tell other people about him and the good news of what he has done in your life?

Do you love Jesus enough to let him call the shots; to really direct your steps?

Do you love Jesus enough to walk into places that are dark, dirty, and dangerous, if he asks you to?

Do you love Jesus enough to follow him, even if it leads to your death?

Do you love Jesus enough to make your relationship with him the most important part of your life?

When we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord, we are saying that our allegiance has changed. We are no longer to be driven by self-interest, by fear, by longing for the things of this world. When we say that someone is Lord it means that we live under their protection, but also under their direction.

When we say that we love Jesus, it means that our desires should be for him, our loyalty to him, our trust in him. And if we really love him, the answer to these other questions will be yes.