

What Does Jesus Want From Me?

POINTS TO PONDER:

- The more familiar love grows the easier for the passion of love to become muddy.
- If Jesus is complaining about our love for Him, then what is He looking for as a sign of my love.
- Religious duty is not equated with love for Jesus.
- Often we burden ourselves with religious duties and we call that love.
- It's easy to be busy for God and call that love.

SCRIPTURE READING: Revelation. 2:1 – 4

- Jesus' complaint: "You don't love Me or others as you did at first."
- Something has been lost in the love relationship of the church going Ephesians.
- Jesus must care about something deeper than religious duty.
- If Jesus comments about our love as believers, He must care about my love for Him.
- Jesus wants my faith to be genuine and relational, not just filled with duty of religion.

**If Jesus is commenting about their waning love, what do you think Jesus is looking for?
Why do you feel we often connect religious duty with love for Jesus?
How would you distinguish between religious duty and love for Jesus?**

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew. 23:1 – 4, 25

- Religious duty will always produce unbearable religious demands.
- We tell others to come to Jesus for freedom then pile on rule after rule.
- Religious people love the burdens, it's how they judge or make themselves look better.
- Religion loves the rule keeping. It helps us judge our level of holiness against others.
- When you are really in love with Jesus, all desire to do wrong leaves.
- Jesus combats those that are experts at keeping religious rules.
- At the same time Jesus calls those experts of religious law: hypocrites, lawless, self indulgent, and greedy.
- The experts of law and religion did everything right outwardly.
- Inwardly, the experts of the law were failing in what Jesus was looking for.
- They had conquered religion but never encountered Jesus.
- What were these religious zealots lacking if they were experts in religion but unacceptable in what Jesus was looking for?
- Jesus is stating the issue at hand is inward right standing with God - not outward conformity to religion.

**Have you met Jesus, have you had that intimate encounter with Him?
Are you dating Jesus or are you married to Him? What would be the difference to you?
To be truly in love with Jesus changes your habits. How does religion and relationship differ in their impact on a believer's lifestyle?
What does the word 'hypocrite' mean to you?**

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Kings 1:1 – 4

- God is not looking for perfection.
- He is looking for love.
- King David, in his old age, has an internal problem. His body cannot regulate its own temperature to keep warm.
- A woman, Abishag, is brought into the King's chamber to attend to this need.
- They try blankets to keep him warm.
- They try Abishag to lay next to him to warm him.
- Nothing is working. David's issue is internal. They are trying all the external means to cure an internal problem.
- The core of the matter is revealed when it states, "King David had no sexual relations with Abishag."
- In other words, with all the external attempts to remedy his internal issue intimacy was impossible.
- Could it be this is the heart of Jesus' message? Could it be that we burden ourselves with external remedies to cure an internal heart problem.
- Could Jesus be saying to the Ephesians above, "You've lost intimacy with Me. Although you are burdened down with external religious duty you have lost that inward ability to love me and produce fruit for me."

Why do we often look for external remedies for an internal problem?

What does intimacy with Jesus look like to you?

What are some signs that should be evident if you are in love with Jesus?