

Why did Jesus ask Simon Peter, "**Do you love Me?**"

- John 21:15-17 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, **do you love Me?**" He [Simon Peter] said to Him [Jesus], "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

Answer: Because Jesus loved Peter! Jesus also loves you! Because Jesus loves you and all people, for their own eternal joy He asks every one of us, "**Do you love Me?**"

God: Father, Son and Spirit, is our Creator and the Creator of all things. By God's Word He brought into existence this beautiful place called earth, and He hung it in the heavens attached to nothing.

God then created man to have fellowship with Him in a manner which He did not do for any other created being.

God created within man something mysterious, fragile yet eternal . . . **the human soul.**

Subsequently, in His ultimate simplicity, with perfect love and justice, He made man's eternal well being to either be unlimited joy or never ending suffering, dependent upon one single question:

Do you love Me?

To properly frame the answer to your question, we must ask a simple question: ***Why do we human beings desire to have children?***

We desire children because we desire a close family and fellowship with them. We make every effort to love and care for our children as we hope that they grow from cute little boys and girls into lovely, helpful, productive men and women.

We do this in hope that our children will love us and want to be a part of our lives as loving family members as all of us age.

So it is with God our Creator.

Creator God desired a family made in His own image as eternal beings with a "free-will" to be able to love. With this "free-will" every person is given the capacity to love God. Love to be true love and not merely a duty must be a voluntary choice. To accomplish the reality of loving their Creator expressed as a voluntary choice, God's human creation must also be given the capacity to hate their Creator. To know true love one must also know true hate. For the emotions of love vs. hate are opposites, giving clear definition to each other.

When the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created and brought to life, they were placed in a perfect garden, the Garden of Eden, specifically for the purpose of having a unique relationship with God, which no other creature enjoyed. Creator God perfectly provided everything necessary for their comfort, joy and pleasure.

Because Adam and Eve were created with a capacity to love, they had to be given a test. Did Adam and Eve love God for His gifts to them or did they "love" Him as God their Father? So that Adam and Eve could be certain that they loved their Creator as their Father and NOT

simply a provider of good gifts, God set one and only one single TEST to determine the true value of their love.

The TEST to determine the truth about the love Adam and Eve held in their hearts. Would they love themselves above their Creator?

- Genesis 2:15-17 Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**"

Commentary:

- John 3:16 "For God **so loved** the world he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life".

God loves us and desires that we love Him. *Love cannot be coerced, love must be voluntary.*

God wanted a family. He could have created individuals, robot-like, to serve Him. But, God desired His creation to choose to love Him voluntarily. To do this, they needed a "free-will" choice . . . *because love cannot be coerced.*

No outside force could compel God to do anything, much less to love us. God chose to love us, because He wanted to love us! For this love to come about, God the Son had to die in our place as our perfect righteous substitute to pay the death penalty mandated for our death-causing sin.

Yes, God so loved and wanted to be loved that He died for you and for me . . . and for anyone who would accept His offer of forgiveness by believing and trusting in His Son, Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 2:3-6 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.

We want God to love us, we want all our children and all our friends to love us . . . that is the way it is with all people, all families and all neighbors. You want us to love you, and we want you to love us.

But, love cannot be coerced, it must be voluntary.

God wanted Adam + Eve to love him. Like everything else in creation, the reality of the true value of something is always clearly declared by testing.

God provided everything for Adam + Eve to be totally, completely joy-filled, but would they love Him without reservation?

With perfect wisdom and in perfect love + kindness, Sovereign God established One and only One Law as a Test for Adam and Eve to know, for themselves, whether their love was true and founded upon a true **love of the Giver**, not merely a love for His **gifts**.

Yes, Adam + Eve needed to know if their love for themselves was greater than their love for their Creator! Their love had to be tested.

Genesis 2:16-17 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Adam + Eve already knew the good as they had perfect, unbroken intimacy with Holy God in the Garden, but, if they ate of that Tree of Knowledge, evil would now become a known reality to them.

What would they do? *Would they, or would they not, eat the forbidden fruit?*

The devil, by asking Eve a simple question, cunningly tempts Eve to question God [Genesis 3:1] **“Has God indeed said . . .?”**

Because Eve did not flee from the horrific thought of questioning her loving Creator, the sin of pride was sown, fertilized and came into full bloom as a sin-filled thought.

Idolatry definition: The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts that are unworthy of Holy God. Idolatry always begins in the mind and may be present where no overt act of worship has yet taken place.

At that very point, Adam + Eve became idolaters! They elevated themselves and their own emotional desires over the clear logic of obeying Holy God, their Creator and His authority over all creation.

Pride and wanting to become independent of God is a holocaust-producing, infectious deadly disease which always produces death. Without fail, sin, as God had forewarned, brought death to Adam and Eve and to every person born since that one moment in time.

The terrible free-fall into fear, pain, separation from God began by this wrong thought and their subsequent choice.

Then the devil introduced this inconceivably tragic lie:

Genesis 3:4-5 Then the serpent said to the woman, “*You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*”

*Yes, the devil **called God a liar** and received absolutely no rebuke from Eve or Adam!*

The first two people on earth, chose, with their free-will mind and emotions, to disbelieve God, and take their own way by thinking they knew better than their Creator what was best for them and their happiness.

James 1:13-15 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

You and I, and every human being since Adam + Eve were born into this world as God-rejecting creatures, who disbelieve God.

People disbelieve God's truth about Himself, even though He **daily** proclaims His existence and the reality of His loving compassion and provision for them. God clearly makes Himself known by the order and provision of Creation and His Creatures [Romans 1:20-25]. Even more intimately, God makes Himself known to individuals by the individual's Conscience [Romans 2:15-16], and by the inspired Written Word (the Bible). In addition, God gave us the irrefutable testimony of His very own Son, Jesus Christ.

Because this sin-virus was passed down from Adam + Eve to all their descendants, all of mankind has sinfully desired to be "independent from God" and can only be reconciled back to God through the one and only acceptable sacrifice for sin, the shedding of blood.

Hebrews 9:22 without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness [for sins].

Jesus came to earth some 2000 years ago, to give us a perfect view of God in human flesh, as a perfect, sinless Man. Jesus came as God to specifically and intentionally die as our substitute, paying the death penalty due for our sins, because He has an infinite love for us.

John 15:12-14 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **Greater love** has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

But, this sin of wanting to be like God, who is completely independent, will plague us all of our lives. *We want to **direct** our own steps [Isaiah 53:6] and we do not want anyone to tell us what to do, even if it means that we call God a liar to be able to take our own way!*

Following is the lie [paraphrased in thought] which the devil introduced. This lie has catapulted every person into the depths of pain and suffering, since the day it was first spoken and believed:

The lie: *You will not be happy until you are independent, directing your own way and are free from being under the control of God."*

Happiness vs Joy.

As stated earlier, Adam + Eve had the fullness of joy, total, unbroken intimacy with God and all their physical needs were satisfied beyond imagination, yet, by their free-will choice they wanted to *pursue their own happiness!*

The devil, by his question, implied that Creator God was untrustworthy and was trying to keep something "emotionally rewarding and good" from them. He suggests they would be so much happier, if they would throw off God's commands which restrains them from their pursuit to be fulfilled in their own power. The devil is implying, "If you become your own god [paraphrase in thought behind Genesis 3:4,5] you will have ultimate happiness and fulfillment."

Since that sin-filled moment, men and women have desperately sought to pursue their own happiness, which is temporary at best and guaranteed to leave only dust and ashes in the mouth at the end of their life on earth.

We do this by stimulating our emotions through drinking, eating, drugs, sex, money, ambition, materialism [acquiring things], etc.

All of which leaves us with a bag full of holes . . . *life runs out and we are empty, emotionally destroyed and filled with despair as death stalks our every step.*

But, God, in His great love and mercy, has not left us in that lost, horrible, hopeless condition.

God tells us, return to Me and I will give you something better than happiness, *I will give you joy, which is everlasting!* God then put this in writing. The Bible is simply God's written historical record of His work in the past and the foretelling of His future working out of His plan of redemption and reconciliation of lost men and women to Himself.

For us, the best phrase explaining God's Plan of Redemption, Reconciliation and Regeneration of mankind is this: Jesus Christ, the Greatest Love Story Ever Told.

But, as always, for this Plan to be brought about, we must be tested, just like Adam and Eve.

*God still asks each one of us, "Will you **now** trust me for everything and obey what I ask you to do? Do you now truly love Me?"*

God's ways are not hard to see nor understand because they are so plain.

God asks us to simply [paraphrased in thought from various Bible references].

1. Love. *Will you love Me? Do you want to be alone with Me ["walking with Him in the Garden" - Genesis 3:8] by reading My words and talking [praying] with Me?*

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His [Jesus] blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

"If you do this, I will give you joy on earth. As a new Christian, your joy will still be incomplete and imperfect while on earth, because you are still mixed with fallen humanity and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But, through faith, I will finish in my perfect timing, My work of re-creation. I will make you into a completely new creature and will give you eternal Joy after you die, having left your old body in the dust" [Genesis 3:19; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58].

2. Trust. *Will you trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and that His death and shed blood paid the "death penalty" required for your sin? [Isaiah 50:10; 2 Corinthians 1:9]*

3. Obey. *Will you obey My directions for your life as written in My words, the Bible?*

Now your question is answered, so now the only thing left still unclear, is your own response to Jesus' question to you personally: Do you love Me?

Jesus loves you. Jesus died for you so that you could be given a new heart and be able to return His love.

What will your decision be?

- John 3:14-17 even so must the Son of Man be lifted up [crucified], that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only

begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

- 1 Peter 2:24-25 who Himself **bore our sins in His own body on the tree** [crucifixion], that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by **whose stripes you were healed**.

Dear Friend, you were created in the image of God **with a free-will choice**. **You have been allowed by God**, to love Jesus or reject Jesus. You can refuse the acceptance of His death for the just payment of your rightly deserved eternal death penalty and suffer eternal pain.

Please find attached three of our videos which may help in your choice:
Can Love be Commanded? <https://vimeo.com/903148991>

The following help explain the love of God for us and how we return His love by believing, trusting and following Jesus Christ.

The Love of God - <https://vimeo.com/912288970>
"I BELIEVE" - <https://vimeo.com/943289655?share=copy>

We love you because Jesus loves you.

We also are deeply concerned about your eternal welfare. Would you please write back and tell us in which group you belong: 1.) **Whoever** loves Jesus will have everlasting life. 2. **Whoever will not love Jesus** is condemned already, because he has **not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**"

All our love to All,

In Christ -

Jon + Philis + Friends @ WasItForMe.com