

Love Christ More

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Introduction: “Have You Left Your First Love?” (Rev. 2:1-5)

- A. How is it possible for hard working Christians who stand for the truth and fight against error to leave their “first love”!?!
 - 1. Isn’t our love for the Lord demonstrated by the good deeds we do? (**Jn 14:15**)
 - 2. Christian service can become mere duty and our love for the Lord grow cold.
- B. *First* love means there is *no other* than can compare to the love you have for the Lord!
 - 1. The one who is your *first* love, is first place in your heart and life.
 - 2. The one who is your *first* love is loved with a love greater than the love you give to anyone or anything else on earth.
 - 3. For the Christian, our love for the Lord Jesus Christ is to be **first!**
- C. For the Lord to remain our first love, our devotion to Him must never be compromised.
 - 1. You may have obeyed, but have you obeyed God *wholeheartedly*?
 - 2. You may worship the Lord, but do you honor Him *above all others*?
 - 3. Christ will not compete for our love; we must *choose* to love Him first!

I. In the Heart of Every Disciple, Christ Must Be First.

- A. The Lord demands our total and complete love (**Luke 10:27**).
 - 1. To love the Lord with *all* our heart, soul, mind, and strength is the most important commandment there is! (**Mat. 22:37-38**).
 - 2. If our love for the Lord is not a sincere, genuine, and total devotion, we have not truly made the Lord our first *love* (agape = devoted, sacrificial, best, highest).
- B. A person must “hate” (i.e., love less) everyone, *including* his family members and even himself to be a disciple of Christ (**Luke 14:25-26**).
 - 1. For Christ to be teaching that we must literally hate family members and even ourselves would be a contradiction! (cf. **Luke 10:27**).
 - 2. Jesus is teaching us to “hate” or “love less” all others (**e.g., Rom. 9:13**).
 - 3. *This is a great challenge Jesus gives to be one of His disciples:* To love our family members and even ourselves less than we do Christ!
 - 4. The Lord will not be treated as “second best.”
- C. We are not worthy to be Jesus’ disciples, unless we love Christ more than **anyone** else.
 - 1. Those who love the Lord with an **AGAPE** love seek to do the highest good for Jesus by obeying His commandments (**John 14:15**).
 - 2. Worthy disciples of Christ will also have a **PHILEO** love for Jesus which is greater than their love for anyone else (**Mat. 10:37**).
 - 3. “Love” for Jesus (from Greek word PHILEO) is to have a fond affection for Jesus, a warm, intimate friendship with Jesus that surpasses all others.
 - 4. To be worthy as one of Jesus’ disciples, we need to be more fond of Christ, more attached to Christ, than even our closest, most dearest family members!

II. Disciples Must Love Christ More.

- A. Love Christ more than your parents (**Mat. 10:37; Luke 14:26**).

1. The desire to please our parents can be very powerful in the decisions we make in life, *even after leaving their home*.
 2. Choosing to love Christ more than your parents takes much courage.
 - a. It may start with your obedience to the gospel to become a Christian, to go up against their wishes and family traditions (**cf. Mark 7:7-9**).
 - b. Parents may threaten to disown you for your stand for Jesus (**Lk. 6:22**).
 - c. Parents may try to usurp your authority in your new home and family (**Mat. 19:5a**).
 - d. You may even have to go up against your parents who once were Christians, but no longer stand for the truth (**cf. 1 Tim. 5:19-21**).
- B. Love Christ more than your spouse (**Luke 14:26**).
1. Your husband/wife is not to be your *first* love!
 2. It is awfully tempting to give in to the wishes of a spouse in order to have harmony or avoid conflict.
 - a. Being married to a non-Christian can be exceedingly difficult in your service to the Lord (**2 Cor. 6:14-16**).
 - b. Sometimes a Christian spouse later becomes unfaithful - worldly, and disobedient and conflict ensues (**1 Pet. 3:1-2**)
 3. Yet, for the disciple of Christ, he or she must *choose* to love Christ more than the husband or wife in the decisions he/ she makes everyday.

Examples: Parenting, spending of money, choices of entertainment, purity from evil, choice of clothing, choice of religion, attendance to the worship assembly, etc.

- C. Love Christ more than your children (**Mat. 10:37; Luke 14:26**).
1. Too many parents love their children too much in the sense that *have more affection and devotion to them than they do for Christ!*
 2. We must not compromise our love for Jesus in order to appease our children! (e.g., when they walk in sin or practice error; made the center focus of our life).
- D. Love Christ more than your brothers and sisters (or any relative or friend) (**Lk 14:26**).
1. Sometimes we are tempted to compromise what is right in order to please our brothers and/ or sisters (e.g., Reuben - **Gen. 37:18-29**).
 2. There can be enormous peer pressure to give in to sin and hypocrisy in order to belong or have close ties with our siblings, cousins, or friends (**1 Pet. 4:3-5**).
 3. Our love for Christ is often tested by the persecutions of those closest to us (**1 Pet. 4:12-16**).
- E. Love Christ more than yourself (**Luke 14:26; cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-3**).
1. Perhaps a greater temptation than all the rest is to love self more than Christ.
 2. Everyday cannot begin with what do **I** will to do, but *what does the Lord will me to do* (**Mat. 16:24; cf. Gal. 5:24; Mat. 25:31-40; Gal. 6:14**).
 3. Just as Christ sacrificed Himself out of love for us, we too must be willing to sacrifice our very lives for Him (**Mat. 10:38-39**).

Conclusion: To Be a Disciple of Christ, Choose to Love Him More Than Anyone Else Including Yourself. Put Him First in Your Heart and in Your Life.