

**JCI #169 February 2016**  
**Just Checking In**  
**“Do you love Me more...?” John 21:15**

When our Lord Jesus re-commissioned Peter after his disastrous denial, He asked Him the question that still rings in our ears today... “Do you love me more than these?” John 21:1-17

**Question 1 - What are the “these”?** (John 21:15) The entire account (John 21:1-5) is impregnated with fishing.

Peter went fishing.

His friends went fishing with him.

They caught no fish.

Jesus asked them if they caught any fish.

They said they didn’t catch any fish.

Jesus told them to cast the net on the other side of the boat and they would catch fish.

They did and they caught a huge number of big fish.

They couldn’t pull the net in because there were so many fish.

They come to shore and find Jesus with a fire and cooking fish.

He tells them to bring more fish.

They count the fish.

They bring fish to Jesus.

After eating fish Jesus says to Peter....

“Do you love me more than these?”

I think he was pointing to the pile of fish. Some think he meant “Do you love me more than the other disciples love me? If Peter were truly humbled and ashamed of his former denial of Jesus, he never would have said “Yes Lord, I love you more than these other disciples” ... Because that would have been a bald-faced lie! I think the context demands that Jesus meant the fish because Peter’s former occupation and love was fishing and he had gone back to it for the first time since he left it three years before. If Peter were going to be re-commissioned as a follower of Jesus, He would need to make that same break he made 3 years earlier when he left his nets and followed Jesus. Here was his opportunity to make a clean break with his past and renew his commitment to the Savior.

**Question 2 - Why did Jesus confront Peter with an almost exact repeat of his original calling?**

Peter probably thought he could never really qualify as a disciple again after such a repeated and cowardly denial. But Jesus orchestrates a perfect repeat of that earlier scene as He calls Peter to follow Him anew. ( See Luke 5:1-11) Think of it - 5 elements of that call all repeated...

1) All night

2) No fish

3) Jesus’ command to cast the net

4) huge catch

5) call to follow.

Jesus was re-enacting the original call to bring Peter back to a fresh start. Isn’t our Lord amazingly gracious? He is severe to confront, yet tender in His question. He is clear in His challenge, yet compassionate in His correction. He is unrelenting in His pursuit, yet loving as He restores us again and again and again.

**Question 3 - Why does Jesus ask Peter about his love, rather than his commitment?** Because love is the only sure foundation for a lasting commitment. That which I love is that which I serve. That which I love is that which always wins the choice. "No man can serve (commit to) two masters. He will either love the one and hate the other, or cling to the one and despise the other." (Luke 16:13) The key question is: Do you love Jesus more?

### **This is the question I face every day. Do I love Jesus more?**

**Do I love Jesus more than I love myself?** If I am recurrently offended, frequently hurt, regularly irritated and habitually troubled by the looks, words and actions of others, it is because I love myself more than I love Jesus. If I loved Jesus more than I love myself, I would not be offended. Instead, I would, like Jesus, weep over Jerusalem as it planned his murder! I would pray like Jesus... "Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing" as they tortured Him. I would reach out to Peter and offer grace instead of judgment. I hear the Savior ask again and again.... Do you love me more?

**Do I love Jesus more than I love praise, appreciation and approval?** Jesus warned us that desiring the approval and praise of others is a snare that strangles the conscience and creates a hypocritical heart. "Beware that you do not (serve) to be seen by others." (Matthew 6:1-2) While appreciation is not wrong in itself, it has turned my heart away from the Savior when I expect it, resent it when it's absent, and feel slighted when others receive it. Whenever appreciation comes my way, so must the gentle question of the Savior.... "Do you love me more?"

**Do I love Jesus more than I love my expectations?** It is so easy for us to misplace our affections. Jesus can move from the heart's center to its perimeter in a moment. I know when my affections have become misplaced. Jesus ceases to be my pursuit, and becomes the means to get the something else I really am pursuing. If I am frustrated with God, it is because He is not giving me what I really want. When God becomes a tool to use instead of the Lord to love, I have ceased to love Him as I should. If loving Jesus more is my real priority, I shall have it to the full.

**Do I love Jesus more than being right?** The church of Ephesus was spot on doctrinally, but way off the target devotionally... they had left their first love. (Revelation 2) It's good to be right in our teaching. The Bible everywhere warns against false doctrine. But it also warns against a loveless heart that goes through the motions without any meaning in the soul. A right heart is not only doctrinally accurate, it loves Jesus more.

**Do I love Jesus more than security?** The church of Laodicea had financial success yet heart failure... they were lukewarm about their Lord. (Revelation 3) The book of Proverbs is filled with warnings about poor financial judgment, and instructions about good financial decisions. But it also makes it clear that money without loving God more than money will result in only greater misery down the road. Real security is not found in more money, but in loving Jesus more.

**Do I love Jesus more than ministry?** Serving Jesus is a marvelous and undeserved privilege. But serving without love is the definition of slavery. Serving is what Jesus called Peter to.... If you love me, feed my sheep, feed my lambs, shepherd my sheep. But the serving, feeding and leading can only be done right and well if I love the Lord more than I love the labor. Before He said "feed my sheep" He asked, "Do you love me more?" Is it any wonder that John ends His first letter with the warning.... "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Love Jesus more than your ministry and you won't lose heart.

**Self-check**

- 1) Am I pursuing Jesus more than anything or anyone else?
- 2) When was the last time I realized I was an idol worshipper... that Jesus had ceased to be the goal and had become the means to another goal (idolatry)?
- 3) Which of the above questions hits home? Ask the Savior to forgive you and become your heart's pursuit once more.

**For Further Study:**

Examine the first calling of Peter in Luke 5:1-12 with John 21:1-15

Do a study on loving God

Cross references Revelation 2:4-5 Psalm 73:25-26 John 14:20-23 Luke 14:27-28 Psalm 18:1-3

Psalm 84:2-4 Mark 12:30 Psalm 63:1-3, 7-8 Matthew 6:24 Matthew 10:37-39 Phil 1:9-11

1 Peter 1:7-9 Philippians 3:7-10 Mark 10:17-27 2 Timothy 4:5-8

**More love to Thee, O Christ, more love to Thee!  
Hear Thou the prayer I make on bended knee.  
This is my earnest plea: More love, O Christ, to Thee;  
More love to Thee, more love to Thee!**

**Once earthly joy I craved, sought peace and rest;  
Now Thee alone I seek, give what is best.  
This all my prayer shall be: More love, O Christ to Thee;  
More love to Thee, more love to Thee!**

Elizabeth Prentiss

***“Lord, forgive me for allowing my heart to pursue other things rather than You. Forgive me for loving myself more than You... for loving my expectations more than You... for loving good things more than You. I know that when I love even good things more than You they become false gods and lead my heart astray. Let me hear Your continual query deep within my heart ... “Do you love Me more?” Lord, I long to love You more. I long to know what it means to love You supremely. Teach me to love You more, dear Lord. Let me never be content to love You as much as I do now. Let me ever pursue loving You more and more and more. O worthy and forgiving Savior, I give You my heart once again. Show me how to love you more, I pray in Your Matchless Name, Amen.”***

**Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.**

**Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4**

**Ron& Val**

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable,  
changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible  
with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,  
spending our time on eternity,  
owning nothing yet possessing everything  
that matters and lasts.  
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.  
Welcome to THE JOURNEY