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A Renewal Of Love

Introduction: In the Gospel of *John, Chapter 21:15-17*, we find Jesus asking the Apostle Peter three times, *Lovest thou me...* "Why the three times and why at this particular time?"

February is known as, "the month of love." That's why we have Valentines' day and so many choose this month for marriage. I decided to use this chapter to reveal how love is so important and to get you to realize that love must have regular maintenance to last.

What prompted the question, *Lovest thou me...?*"

FIRST: THE SAD SITUATION.

JOHN 21:3

Just a short time has gone by since the Apostle Peter told Jesus that, *I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death.* *Luke 22:33*. Let's look at *Luke 22:57, I know him not...*"

Peter has gone from being a cocky, proud, bold child of God to a scared, running-and-hiding-from-God backslider. Why? He has a love problem.

Illustration: Dr. Curtis Hutson told me several years ago that the problem in the churches is not that God does not love us, but that we have churches where the people do not love God.

The greatest tragedy of having our love for Christ grow distant and cold is that it ruins so many others. Notice *John 20:13, We also go with thee.*" People never backslide alone. Parents that backslide take their children with them. You will find the boyfriends and girlfriends that backslide take their friends down with them.

SECOND: THE SAVIOUR'S PRESENCE.

JOHN 21:7

.. It is the Lord."

Whether it is at church, in a home, or around a Godly person, if the presence of the Lord is there, then conviction will follow.

.. for he was naked, and did cast himself into the sea."

Peter, once realizing that this was the risen Saviour, hid his naked body immediately. When a child of God is backslidden, it should be not be a surprise that he or she goes back to their old life and lowers their dress standards to match the world's.

THIRD: THE SIMPLE QUESTION.

JOHN 21:15

"... lovest thou me more than these?"

Notice the word *'these.'* What was Jesus trying to get Peter to look at?

1. Food on the fire.
2. His boat for fishing.
3. His friends.

Jesus was telling Peter that his problem was in perception. Peter was allowing his love for God to be smothered by food, fishing, and friends. *Matthew 22:37, "Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."*

There is nothing wrong with loving our friends, but our best friend should be our Saviour.

Illustration: In *Revelation 2:4, "... Thou hast left thy first love."* This happened to an entire church that had Jesus on the outside of the door, asking to be let in. The saddest part of the story is not that Jesus was on the outside of the church asking to be let in, but that they did not even notice that He was gone.

Conclusion: Nothing has changed when it comes to our Saviour's love, the devil's tricks, or our tendency to become cold in our relationship to the Saviour. I know more people that have placed their faith in Christ, and then became cold in their relationship to Christ and the church than I do those who remained faithful. Several years ago an old buddy of mine asked me, "How did you do it?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Ever since you got saved, you just kept going. How do you remain so consistent?" I told him a true story. "When I first got saved, my dear Pastor would ask me every time he saw me, 'Son, do you still love Jesus?' Whether it was at the store, or saying goodbye, or when he would meet me on the street, or leaving church, he would ask, "Son, do you still love Jesus?" That question still bothers me today.

Question: Do you still love Jesus?