

I want to be a Christian because I love God!

➤ Intro:

→ **There are a lot of reasons people want to be a Christian.** In this series, we explore a few of the most common reasons, people want to be Christians.

! **this lesson:** I want to be a Christian because I love God.

! **future lessons:** because I want to go to heaven, because I want to be strong, because Jesus died for me, etc.

→ **The word "love" communicates** the rightful relationship we should have with everyone.

! **God, family, brethren, neighbors, etc.**

! **Mk. 12:29-31**

! **Rom. 13:8, 10**

→ **This lesson:**

! **Title:** I want to be a Christian because I love God!

! **Purpose / Convince:** review the relationship of love that we have with the Lord

! encourage you to be a faithful Christian because you love God (make commitment)

➤ #1 Loving God is a decision first, and an emotion second.

→ **What's the difference between agape (love) and phileo (love)?**

! **Agape:** a **mental commitment** resulting in acting properly toward others

! This type of love is a mental decision. It is not emotional. With this type of love, we do what is good and right toward others without consideration of our emotional prejudices and motives.

! **Phileo:** an **emotional / affectionate commitment** resulting in acting properly toward others

! This type of love is an emotional affection (attachment) whereby we do what is good and right toward others.

! It is the emotional feelings we have toward our friends, family, God, etc.

➤ → **Christians have both types of love for God.**

! **Agape:** mental commitment

! **Mk. 12:30** Jesus' answer to scribe, which is greatest commandment — *agape* God

! **Phileo:** emotional / affectionate commitment

! **1 Cor. 16:22** phileo the Lord, or accursed (doomed to destruction)

! **illus:** **Peter** illustrates the love we should have as Christians:

! **Jn. 21:15-19**

! first two times Jesus asked if Peter loved (agape) him, third time asked if loved (phileo) him

! all three times Peter answered that he loved (phileo) him

! **Peter's love tested:**

! **work as apostle:** tend and shepherd

! **his death:** Jerome said that he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was (Foxe's Book of Martyrs).

! **from Peter's perspective:** he loved Jesus beyond a mental commitment, he also had an affectionate commitment

! **Trench, Easton's Bible Dictionary:** difference between *agape* and *phileo* here

! **vs. 17** Peter grieved, Jesus knew all things: Peter believed that phileo was a greater commitment, and that it was built upon the foundation of agape (rf. 1 Cor. 16:22)

! **application:**

! with both *agape* (mental commitment) and *phileo* (affectionate commitment) working in tandem, we

obey the Lord with the proper attitude (1 Jn. 5:3)."

➤ → **Agape (love) tempers our affections, so that we obey God with godly affections.**

! **Gal. 5:6** (faith works through love, agape)

! **Gal. 5:19-23** e.g., faith working in love

! **application:** agape steers (tempers, directs) our affections in the right direction

! if have proper commitment (agape), will have proper affections (phileo)

! illus.: picking friends

! but if have improper commitment (agape), will have improper affections (phileo)

➤ → **Unconditional love: popular expression in society today**

! **As Christians, we have unconditional love for God** - phileo built upon agape

! *Agape, Phileo*

! **application:** we love God, obey whatever commanded, with sincere heart

! **As Christians, we have unconditional love for others** - God, family, neighbors - sometimes only a commitment toward those with whom we have no emotional connection - sometimes commitment and affection with those whom we have agape and phileo

! **1 Jn. 5:3** **God, Jesus**

! **1 Cor. 13:4-8** **love is:** patient, kind, not jealous, does not brag, not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly, does not seek its own, not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, rejoices with the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, love never fails (*is unconditional*)

! **illus.: Sgt. Rafael Peralta, grabbed a grenade and cradled it into his body** before it exploded.

! **application:**

! What would you have done?

! Are you sacrificing yourself for God and your brethren, cradling the proverbial grenade?

➤ #2 **To love God, we must obey Him.**

→ e.g., **Jesus loved His Father and obeyed Him.**

! **Jn. 14:31a** Jesus loves His Father, and obeyed

! **application:** How do people know we love God? parents? neighbor?

! by the things we do — obey God, obey parents, do good to neighbor

! **application:**

! because Jesus obeyed the Father, we can be saved

! to be saved, we must be like Jesus — love God, obey God

! **1 Pet. 2:21** Jesus is our example

➤ → **Jesus' disciples love and obey God.**

! **God loves us; therefore, we should love God and obey Him.**

! God's love for us:

! **1 Jn. 4:7-9**

! We should **reciprocate** God's love — love Him in return:

! **1 Jn. 4:19**

! If we love God, we will **obey** Him.

! **1 John 5:2-4**

➤ → **Jesus' disciples love and obey Him.**

! **Jesus / His friends:**

! **Jn. 15:13-14**

! **application:**

! Jesus loved us and laid down His life for us.

! if we love Jesus, we will lay down our life for Him

! **Lk. 14:26-27**

! **If we love Jesus, we will obey Him:**

! **Jn. 14:23-24**

! **rf. Gal. 5:6** love is the engine of faith

! **rf. Jn. 15:10** keep Jesus' commandments, abide in His love

➤ → **Three illustrations of unconditional love for God:**

! **illus.: Polycarp, refused to deny Christ and was burnt alive**

! **Application:** unconditional love for God, do anything to obey, God supplies the strength

! **illus.: Cassie Bernall, 17 yrs. old, girl, shot at Columbine because she confessed her faith in God, martyred April 20, 1999 about 11:30 AM**

! **Application:** to love God is to obey Him, even at the cost of your own life

! **illus.: Jesus, in the garden** (rf. Jn. 14:31a; Rom. 5:19)

! **Heb. 5:7-9**

→ **Summary:** Love is obedient to God.

! Jesus loved His Father and obeyed Him.

! as Jesus' disciples, we also love God and obey Him

! Christ's disciples love God (Jesus, Father) and obey Him.

! Jesus died on the cross because He loves us.

! If we love Him in return, we will obey Him.

➤ **Conclusion / inv.:**

→ I want to be a Christian because I love God!

! mental commitment - decision first

! affectionate (emotional) commitment - emotion second

! buttressed by mental commitment

! result: obey God and Christ, not burdensome (1 Jn. 5:3)

→ inv.

! If you love God, what will you do?

! not a Christian yet

! Christian

Audio sermon notes:

! ➤ denotes the place to proceed to the next PowerPoint slide.

! All Scriptures are NASB unless otherwise noted.

! Sermon recorded 10-2-05, Church of Christ, South Livingston congregation in Lutz, FL.