

## LOVING JESUS

Michael Pickford

There is a great misconception in our day and age, at least in our society, about what true love is. For example, there are many religious folks who would claim with their mouths to love Jesus, and they may even feel an emotional sense of love for him in their heart. But, according to the words of Jesus Himself, does this necessarily equate to loving Him?

Jesus made it clear that if one really loves Him, he will show it by keeping his commandments. In fact, Jesus taught that if we do not keep His commandments, we don't really love Him at all. "He who has My commandments and keeps them, It is he who loves me" (John 14:21). This is who really loves Jesus!

Honoring Him with our mouths equates to vain worship if we don't worship and serve Him according to His commandments rather than according to man-made teachings, philosophies, and traditions (Matthew 15:8-9).

Jesus said, "he who believes and is baptized will be saved..." (Mark 16:16). And baptism is a commandment (Acts 10:48). How many today claiming to love Jesus really love Him when they refuse to accept this commandment of the Lord?

Let's strive to love Jesus truly, according to how He has said we must love Him. 🔍

### The elements of our worship, as prescribed by God's word, are as follows:

- **SINGING:** Ephesians 5:18,19; Colossians 3:16
- **PREACHING/TEACHING:** Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:11,12
- **PRAYING:** Acts 2:42; Acts 12:5
- **LORD'S SUPPER:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7
- **GIVING:** 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7

## COME WORSHIP WITH US!

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY...9:00  
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP.....10:00  
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP.....6:00  
WEDNESDAY EVENING SERVICES....7:00



- [www.defendthegospel.com](http://www.defendthegospel.com)
- 1st Sunday Singing Night: 6 pm
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Night: Guest Speaker
- Men's Business Meeting. 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month at 7 pm.



## SOUTHSIDE SEARCHER

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"They...searched the scriptures daily..." –Acts 17:11

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## SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

Michael Pickford

When one is spiritually blind, the results are devastating. Not only does it bring them misery and hopelessness in this life, but it brings everlasting punishment in eternity. One way to avoid and overcome spiritual blindness is to identify the causes. Knowing the source of a problem is the best way to then overcome the problem. Consider from the Bible these causes of spiritual blindness. ...

**Some Want to be Blind.** Matthew 13:15; 2 Corinthians 4:4. There are some who remain blind to the truth of the Gospel because they simply don't like its message. For this reason, they turn their ears away from the truth and to religious error which is more soothing. They intentionally close their eyes to the light.

**Lack of Growth Leads to Spiritual Blindness.** 2 Peter 1:5-11. Failing to add all of these essential components to our faith will cause one to be spiritually blind. Due to a lack of study and putting into practice what they learn, they remain weak in the faith and eventually stumble.

**Love For Money Leads to Spiritual Blindness.** Matthew 6:23. In the context, the "bad" eye is the one that tries to stay focused on a pursuit of material wealth and possessions; so much so that their spiritual service is hindered or prevented altogether halted. You cannot serve God and Riches!

**Hatred of Brethren Leads to Spiritual Blindness.** 1 John 2:11. If we fail to learn to love our brethren, and to act lovingly toward them, in effect, we are walking in darkness even when we think we are serving the Lord. Our love for brethren should be expressed in patience, kindness, forgiveness, and understanding. In times of need, our love should be expressed in physical and monetary assistance (1 John 3:16-23).

**Fleshly Desires Leads to Spiritual Blindness.** Ephesians 4:17-24. Our desire for spiritual things can be clouded and snuffed out if we allow ourselves to be overtaken by the fleshly pleasure this world has to offer. The shiny pleasures of this world are unsatisfying and temporary. We must remember that in the end, because of the eternal reward, it is preferable to choose to suffer affliction with the people of God than to be deceived by the passing pleasures of sin (Hebrews 11:25).

Spiritual blindness and ignorance leads to destruction. Hosea 4:6 🔍

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## GOING FOR THE GOLD

John Isaac Edwards

The attention of the world has been directed to Sochi, Russia, host site for the 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Watching the competition, we are impressed with going for the gold.

We Are Going for the Gold. Heaven, the reward for the faithful, is described as a city of gold. "...the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass...and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Revelation 21:18, 21). Unlike the gold medals awarded in Sochi, the reward in heaven is "... incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away..." (1 Peter 1:4).

Gold-Winning Essentials. These are a must, if we are going to lay hold of heaven.

*Desire.* The Olympic athletes have a strong desire to win the gold. You can see it in their eyes. Our burning desire must be heaven! It is said of the faithful, "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly..." (Hebrews 11:16).

*Commitment.* We see commitment on the part of those competing in Sochi. Our commitment to the Lord must be real! "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind..." (Luke 10:27).

*Sacrifice.* Athletes in these games, and their families, know the meaning of sacrifice. As we strive for heaven, we must sacrifice. Paul said, "...present your bodies a living sacrifice..." (Romans 12:1). The Lord taught, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

*Endurance.* Olympians bear pain and endure hardships. So must we! "...let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). "...he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

"...Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21) will trump any national anthem heard in Sochi!-

## THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Michael Pickford

Someone once said "A broken home is the world's greatest wreck."

What a shame that fifty percent of all marriages in the USA end in divorce. Everything is tugging us away from home; Overworking, overplaying, etc.

Sadder still, everything is tugging us away from keeping God in the home. We've got to get daily Bible study and prayer back in the home!

"The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the home of the just." –Proverbs 3:33 ☞

### DUTY LIST...

#### SUNDAY MORNING

- Announcements.....Michael Pickford
- Scripture Reading...Tim Thompson  
Reading: Proverbs 14:29-35
- Song Leader.....Mike Pickford
- Opening Prayer.....Kenny Johnson
- Lord's Table:
  - Lead.....Kenny Todd
  - Serve.....Jeff Isbell
  - Serve.....John Nelson
- Closing Prayer.....Lynn Buttrey

#### SUNDAY EVENING

- Song Leader.....Michael Pickford
- Invitation.....Michael Pickford
- Lord's Table.....Michael Pickford

#### WEDNESDAY EVENING

- Song Leader.....Kenny Johnson
- Invitation.....Kenny Todd

**Thank You For Serving!**

### GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

There is only one true saving plan of Salvation outlined in Scripture. No substitutes will do. Have you really been saved? Get out your Bible and study the plan below.

- Hear The Gospel: Romans 10:17
- Believe: Mark 16:16; John 8:24
- Repent of Sin: Acts 2:38; 17:30
- Confess Faith: Romans 10:9, 10
- Be Baptized: Mark 16:16;  
Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21
- Remain Faithful: Rev. 2:10

***Obey Today!***

***Home Bible Studies  
Available Upon Request!***