

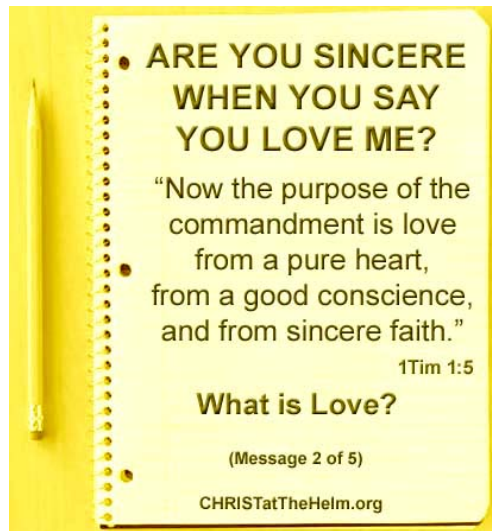
Andy Williams' song, "Are you sincere when you say I love you," echoes a long way into examining ourselves, whether we really mean it when we profess to love God and Christ. Can we imagine Jesus asking us, "Are you sincere when you say you love Me?" How would that resonate in our hearts?

Could we find ourselves in Jesus' statement of Mat 15:8-9; "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men"?

Sincerity is defined as the quality of being truthful and trustworthy; not deceitful or hypocritical. In other words, we're talking about putting our actions where our mouth is, right? That's why Jesus said in Luke 6:46, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

Psalms 15:1-2 describes what true and sincere love for God means: "LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart." That's why Paul said in Eph 6:24; "Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

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In light of Andy Williams' song, "Are you sincere when you say you love me", what's the definition of true love?

True love involves a profound and deep warm personal attachment for a person dear to our heart, a relative, a friend, and most importantly God. In this personal attachment, we find 4 important elements that demonstrate what true love is.

First, love is limitless as Rom 5:8 says, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Secondly, love requires we trust God in spite of circumstances, as found in 1John 4:18: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."

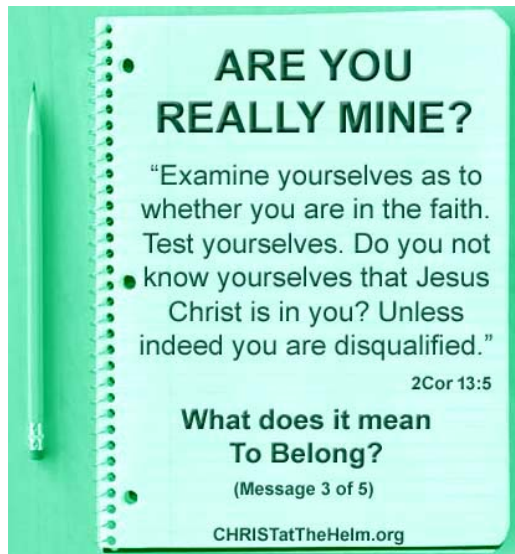
Thirdly, how can we prove our love for God? "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." (1John 5:3)

Finally, how do we demonstrate our love for God? John 4:24 specifies, "God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Conversely, if we love God, we must abide by what 1John 2:15 says, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

How high is our love meter for God right now?

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Keeping on with Andy Williams' song, he adds, "Are you really mine?" To belong is defined as to be attached and bound to a person, and translates into loyalty to that person.

If Jesus asked us, "Are you really mine?" wouldn't it bring us to seriously reflect on our life? James 2:17-18 says, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

2Chron 16:9 tells us, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him." In fact, God sees every action, hears every word and even reads every thought that we entertain. We can't hide anything from God, thus the importance of examining ourselves to see if we are His or only pretend to be.

The solution: "Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the Lord." (Lam 3:40) Then Jesus said in John 15:7, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

If Jesus appeared to us right now and asked, "Are you really Mine", based on God's Word, what would our answer be?

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Adding the words “Every day, all the time” to Andy Williams’ song question, “Are you really mine?” sort of brings an extra element to claim we belong to Christ. In other words, are we wholly dedicated to serving God, or are we part-time Christians walking one foot in the world and one with the Lord?

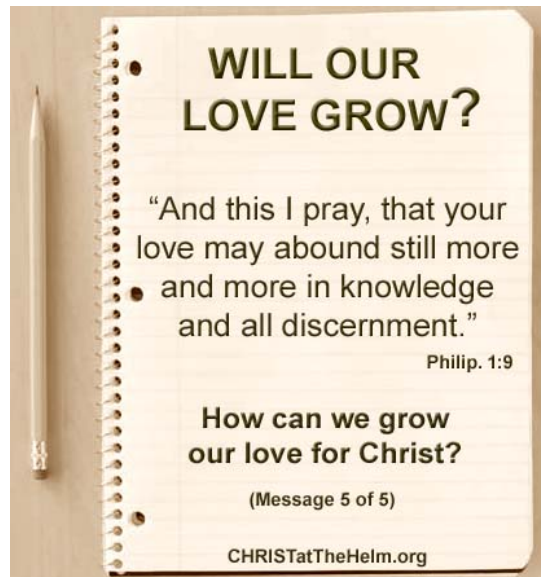
While we aren’t perfect and do miss it at times, the true test is, where does our heart rests? Paul in 1Cor 15:58 said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” In 1Cor 16:13 he added, “Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.”

The decision to be steadfast in serving God rests with us. Steadfastness is defined as the quality of being resolute, dutiful, firm, courageous and unwavering.

The apostle warned us in 2Peter 3:17, “You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked.” God through the prophet said, “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” (Jer 29:13)

Finally, will we ask God to “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me?” Ps 51:10

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Finally, how do we grow our love for God and for the body of Christ? Growing in love is defined as to be committed with a sense of purpose, and that purpose is to grow into a closer and true relationship.

Paul in Eph 4:14-15 describes it this way: “We should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”

In other words, we will only grow in love if we grow in Christ, as 1Thess 3:12 says, “And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all.” That’s why we must study God’s Word so we know His will, and be equipped with understanding and discernment to apply His will for our lives.

In James 4:8 we read, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.” Obviously, how close and steadfast our heart is to God’s Word will determine if our love grows towards God.

Didn’t Jesus prove His love for us, as John 15:13 says, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends?”

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