

## IS IT LOVE OR IS IT LUST?

What is the difference between the two? Love is self-sacrificing and lust is self-serving. Lust can sometimes be dressed up as love. Many people say, "I love you" when in fact they are just lusting after someone. Matthew 5: 28 says, "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." The Lord Jesus Christ here is condemning the sin of mental adultery. There are many reasons why Jesus speaks against the wicked act of lust. Firstly, lust causes people to make excuses for sin rather than stop sinning. Secondly, lust destroys marriage and the family. Thirdly, it is deliberate rebellion against God. Lastly, this sin always hurts someone else.

The Bible warns against ungodly lusts in Romans 1: 26-27, "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error."

The Bible teaches that we commit the sin of lust when we are tempted and follow the desire of sin. It is not a sin to be tempted, but choosing to give in to the temptation is sinful. There are consequences to giving in to lustful thoughts and desires. Many times it results in the breakdown of relationships and family.

1 John 2: 16 says, "For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions--is not from the Father but is from the world."

The Bible tells us that lust is not of God. It is not the way to please God. We ought to live godly lives because righteousness and godliness honours not just God but is for the greater good of mankind and society. The apostle Peter wrote, "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul" (1 Peter 2:11). Sinful desires are always bad for us to follow. Lust is against that which is clean, wholesome and good.

The Bible rightly warns all those who continue in the sinfulness of lust to repent. The one who keeps on breaking this command of God will be judged. The greatest judgement of God is eternity in Hell.

Many people will claim that God is love. That is true. 1 John 4: 8 says, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." The Bible says that those who do not love do not know God for God is love.

Today it is not that God is love but that love is a god. The modern world has made love the be all and end all. Love is the Bible is not what man has made it.

We must have a true and correct understanding of what love is from the Word of God. If you love God you will forsake a life of sin, not promote it or continue in it or support it. Jesus said in John 14: 15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." The one who loves God will seek to keep His commandments. True love is telling the truth regardless of what you may think.

For example it would not be loving to watch someone walk into a harmful situation without warning them. If you saw a house on fire and the occupants inside were unaware of the fire, the loving thing to do would be to call for help and warn the people inside of the coming danger. Sadly, many people today are not aware of the dangers of lusts and the harmful effects of following such ungodly desires.

Jesus said in John 14: 21, "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

The great love chapter of the Bible can be found in 1 Corinthians 13. Verses 4-6 say, "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth." This is the biblical definition of love.

Love is long suffering, meaning patient. Love is kind, meaning a generous, and considerate nature. Love does not envy, meaning is not resentful. Love does not parade itself. Love is not puffed up, meaning proud and arrogant. Love thinks no evil. Love does not behave rudely. Love is not self-centred. Love does not rejoice in sin but rejoices in the truth.

If you rejoice in your sins today then you do not love God nor His truth. Sexual immorality is sin. Fornication is sin. Promiscuity is sin. Having a sexual relationship outside of the bonds of marriage is a sin. Marriage is defined by God as the union of one man and one woman for life. Genesis 2: 24 declares, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Search your heart now. Do you really love God? If not then repent and believe the gospel while God has given you time. Call out to God. Ask Him to show you His love, mercy and grace.