

The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

Learning to Love Christ Supremely

Jesus is Supremely Valuable

As we have stated above, Jesus Christ is supreme in all things. He is Lord over the entire Creation, being not only the Creator Himself, but also the sustainer of everything in existence.

Acts 17:24-25 - 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since **He is Lord of heaven and earth**, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, **since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things**; NASB

He is the very Lord of History, directing all things to fulfill the purposes for which He made them. Everything was made by Him and for Him, and therefore exists for His own purposes, pleasure and satisfaction.

Proverbs 16:4 - 4 **The LORD has made everything for its own purpose**, Even the wicked for the day of evil. NASB

Does not reason therefore demand that we understand Jesus Christ to be the most valuable *being* in existence? If He is the source of all other things, then He is infinitely more valuable than everything He has created! What thing in existence could it be said is of greater worth than the One who created it? The very thought is ridiculous. If Christ created the mountains and the valleys, are they of greater worth than He? If He made the most majestic, beautiful and powerful angels in Heaven, are they more beautiful than Him? If He made man and woman, the very pinnacles of His creative acts, and endowed them with splendor and beauty, intelligence and emotions and creative minds, are they more splendid or beautiful, more joyful and wise than the One who spoke them into existence? Of course the obvious answer is by all means NO! In Scripture the Psalmist wonders how God can be so gracious to mankind as to endow him with such gifts, and sees God the Creator as infinitely higher and exalted above mankind the creature.

Psalm 8:3-5 – 3 when I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; 4 **What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him?** 5 Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God, And dost crown him with glory and majesty! NASB

The fact of the matter is, Jesus Christ is infinitely more valuable than everything He has created. When we see the creature, we should see in it just a glimmer of the infinite majesty of the One who created it. The earth and the heavens, in all their glorious beauty, only show us a small portion of the infinite beauty of Christ their Creator! When we look at mankind, and see the virtues in us, lovely things which are valuable, we see only a dim reflection of the infinite virtue of Jesus Christ, the very source of all virtue and goodness in the creation. In Jesus is the fullness of every grace, goodness and virtue! He is altogether lovely! He is glorious in His perfections! He is infinitely wise and powerful and loving and righteous! He is supremely valuable! This is why the greatest commandment in all the Scripture is to.....

Matthew 22:37-38 - 37 And He said to him, "**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.**" 38 "**This is the great and foremost commandment.**" NASB

This loving of our Lord is expressed briefly by the great Puritan Pastor Thomas Brooks....

"There is not only fulness, but an overflowing of fulness in Jesus Christ. All wisdom, all knowledge, all light, all life, all love, all goodness, all sweetness, all blessedness, all joys, all delights, all pleasures, all beauties, all beatitudes, all excellencies, all glories are in Christ. The true lovers of Christ know that Christ loves as a head, as a king, as a father, as a husband, as a brother, as a kinsman, as a friend. The love of all relations meets in the love of Christ; and this raises up a believer to love Christ with a transcendent love. They know that Christ loves them more than they love themselves; yea, that he loves them above his very life. And magnes amoris

amor, love is the magnet of love. Christ is amiable and lovely; he is famous and conspicuous; he is spotless and matchless in his names, in his natures, in his offices, in his graces, in his gifts, in his revelations, in his appearances, in his ordinances. He is full of gravity, majesty, mercy, and glory. "He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." His mouth is sweetness; yea, all of him is desires, or all of him is delights, [Song 5:10-16](#). Christ is wholly delectable; he is altogether desirable from top to toe; he is amiable and lovely, he is glorious and excellent. Christ is lovely, Christ is very lovely, Christ is most lovely, Christ is always lovely, Christ is altogether lovely. He is "the express image of God;" he is "the brightness of his Father's glory." If the soul can but discover him, it shall find in him all high perfections and supereminent excellencies. And upon these and such like considerations the saints are led forth to love Jesus Christ with a most transcendent love." Now if these things be true, and they are, then our value system, the principles by which we value things, must come into conformity with what is truly valuable. Therefore if our affections are to be properly placed, they must be placed upon Him.

Jesus Must be Supreme in Our Affections

What do you love? What do you treasure? Of what can it be said about you that you long for and desire it above all other things in your life? Whatever that thing may be, it can be said that this is what you *worship*. That is because the word *worship* originates from the idea of "*ascribing worth*" or "*value*" to something. So then, that which you worship is that which you value or ascribe worth to, that which you treasure or adore. It is that which you revere or honor, that which you venerate or idolize, it is that which you glorify or consider to be highly valuable. Now if Christ is supremely valuable in reality, and there is truly nothing that even comes close to being as infinitely worthy of all glory and honor, worship and adoration as Him, it only stands to reason that to fail to give Him this proper place of honor in our hearts and affections is to be sorely mistaken and self-deceived in our value system. This is because He is the One who is worthy of Glory and honor!

Revelation 4:11 - 11 "**Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power**; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created." NASB
Revelation 5:12-14 – 12 **Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.** 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "**To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.**" 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshipped. NASB

If we love something more than Christ, we have misplaced affections. He is altogether lovely, therefore not to love Him is to have a degraded mind, and to throw contempt on the highest manifestation of human excellence and Divine love. This is why the Scripture pronounces a curse upon those who fail to love Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:22 - 22 **If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed.** Maranatha. NASB
This is to say if you do not love Christ, you are accursed already! In fact, the very state of being accursed is the state of not properly valuing that which is truly valuable. If we love and adore that which is wretched and worthless, we are then by virtue of this, wretched and worthless. If we truly love what is supremely lovely and virtuous and valuable, we will then be lovely and virtuous in ourselves, because we properly value what is *truly* virtuous. You see, **we become what we value. We become what we worship.**

Psalm 135:15-18 - 15 The idols of the nations are *but* silver and gold, The work of man's hands. 16 They have mouths, but they do not speak; They have eyes, but they do not see; 17 They have ears, but they do not hear; Nor is there any breath at all in their mouths. 18 **Those who make them will be like them, Yes, everyone who trusts in them.** NASB

So this is what the Scripture says, if we worship dead idols which are mute, deaf and dumb, we shall become like them, mute, deaf and dumb! This only stands to reason, does it not? If we

ascribe worth to anything, it is that thing that we pursue, and ultimately seek to possess. If that is a dead idol, a piece of wood and metal, than wood and metal we will have! What a wretched state we are in when we value dead and lifeless things! Consider what ignorance is in man that he would value and honor a worthless thing above the Great and Glorious Creator who made it all! With what blindness has man been stricken as to do such a deplorable thing? ***What profit would be gained to a man for bowing down to a block of wood? Indeed those who worship a dead lifeless thing will become like them, a dead lifeless thing!*** They will be cut off from the Author and Source of life! The Scripture addresses this “folly of idolatry” in Isaiah 44.....

Isaiah 44:9-11 - 9 Those who fashion a graven image are all of them futile, and **their precious things are of no profit; even their own witnesses fail to see or know, so that they will be put to shame.** 10 Who has fashioned a god or cast an idol to no profit? 11 Behold, all his companions will be put to shame, for the craftsmen themselves are mere men. Let them all assemble themselves, let them stand up, let them tremble, let them together be put to shame. 12 The man shapes iron into a cutting tool, and does his work over the coals, fashioning it with hammers, and working it with his strong arm. He also gets hungry and his strength fails; he drinks no water and becomes weary. 13 *Another* shapes wood, he extends a measuring line; he outlines it with red chalk. He works it with planes, and outlines it with a compass, and makes it like the form of a man, like the beauty of man, so that it may sit in a house. 14 Surely he cuts cedars for himself, and takes a cypress or an oak, and raises *it* for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a fir, and **the rain makes it grow.** 15 Then it becomes *something* for a man to burn, so **he takes one of them and warms himself; he also makes a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it; he makes it a graven image, and falls down before it.** 16 Half of it he burns in the fire; over *this* half he eats meat as he roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, "Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire." 17 But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships; he also prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for thou art my god." 18 **They do not know, nor do they understand, for He has smeared over their eyes so that they cannot see and their hearts so that they cannot comprehend. 19 And no one recalls, nor is there knowledge or understanding to say,** "I have burned half of it in the fire, and also have baked bread over its coals. I roast meat and eat *it*. Then I make the rest of it into an abomination, I fall down before a block of wood!" 20 He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver himself, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" NASB

So then we see what a ridiculous endeavor it is to worship that which is less than valuable. Knowing this, we should be all the more eager to worship the Glorious Creator, Jesus Christ! Even Jesus Himself taught us that our love for Him was to exceed all other loves and affections in our lives.

Luke 14:25-27 - 25 Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 26 **"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.** 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. NASB

The word *hate* here does not suggest positive antagonism but rather "to love less". Our love for Christ must be so strong that all other love is like hatred in comparison to it. In fact, we must hate our own lives and be willing to lose our lives and carry our own cross to follow Him. We must love Him more than our own very lives because He is more valuable than our very lives themselves. When we do this, we have properly placed our affections on that which is worthy of our love, and we will then become like Him because we value His virtue and long to possess it more than anything else. If your treasure joy, you will seek to be joyful. If you honor and esteem justice, you will seek to be just in all your affairs. If you esteem love and compassion as most valuable, then you will become loving and compassionate. If you honor, esteem, venerate, treasure and glorify God more than anything else, in all of His glorious virtue, then you will become like Him, because you seek to possess Him above all other things. The most loving and beneficial thing that God can command us is to treasure, esteem and love Him more than anything. This because He is what is in reality most worthy of being loved, and this causes us to become like Him because we seek His virtue and want to possess it more than anything else. Thus we see the reason why the greatest of all commandments is to love God! In other words the

highest of priorities for our lives is the love and honor of God. This is said in many ways in Scripture, consider these few.

Matthew 6:33 - 33 "But **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**; and all these things shall be added to you. NASB

Exodus 20:2-7 - 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 "**You shall have no other gods before Me.** 4 "**You shall not make for yourself an idol**, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 **You shall not worship them or serve them**; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. 7 "**You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain**, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. NASB

Consider how in commanding these things for us, to treasure Him first, God really does the greatest service to us because, in doing these things, we will ultimately be benefited more than any other thing because our value system will be transformed so that we assess our lives according to truth and reality, and make decisions according to God's heavenly wisdom! **God's gives us His commandments for our good!**

Deuteronomy 10:12-14 - 12 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but **to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?** 14 "Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. NASB

Love What He Loves, Hate What He Hates

How then can we cultivate affections for Christ? One very obvious way is to begin to value things which He assigns value to, and also to disdain things which He disdains. We begin to love Christ and value Him when we begin to see life as He sees it and begin to conform our lives to that which He values. When our value system becomes defined by His value system, He is then honored, esteemed and valued by us. It only stands to reason then, that we must come to know what He values and what He disdains. And this dear reader, is the great purpose that the Scripture fulfills in us. It causes us, by the power of the Spirit, to be transformed in our thinking so that we come to know what God loves and what He hates and what is His perfect and pleasing will!

Romans 12:1-2 - I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship.* 2 And **do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.** NASB

So then, as we go to the Holy Scriptures each and every day, there we feed on the heavenly delights that God gives us by His Holy Word! We feed on the bread of Life, and we partake of God's wisdom, which causes us then to hunger and thirst for His righteousness and His Kingdom and His person like no other thing. The Scripture is pure revelation of God and His wisdom! So as we go to the Scripture, we seek for nuggets of truth, and morsels of heavenly wisdom that change us and cause us to become like Him. More and more being filled and blessed with His virtue, which we see revealed in all of its Glory in the revelation of Scripture. And this dear reader, is how we become blessed! In fact this is the state of being blessed, it is properly assessing God, His Kingdom, and His virtue so that we properly and appropriately see our world through the eyes of true wisdom from the Creator God, who made everything for His own purpose and for His own glory!

Psalms 1:1-3 - **How blessed is the man** who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But **his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.** 3 And he will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. NASB

How we may know that we love Christ

Consider that of all the things that God commanded us to do, the greatest is to love Him supremely, then this ought to be our response. Consider with me if God is the Sovereign, the Supreme Authority, if He is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and He has given us high and holy commandments, our response should then be one of unwavering obedience. If a powerful earthly authority gives us a directive, what would we do? We would obey. How much more should we honor God with obedience to Him? Shall we rail against our maker? We had better be sure to obey God lest we be found to be rebels against our Sovereign Creator and our Righteous Judge! Jesus said,

John 14:15 - 15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." NASB

"If" you love me, *"you will"* keep my commandments. In other words, it will be plainly seen if you really love me when you obey my commandments. Love for Christ produces obedience to His commandments. If we look at our lives and see disobedience to Christ's commands, then we have good reason to question whether our love for Him is genuine.

John 14:21-24 - "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to him, **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word;** and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. 24 **"He who does not love Me does not keep My words;** and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. NASB

If we truly love God we will in fact obey Him. This is how we prove our love for God, through our obedience to Him....

1 John 5:3 - 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. NASB

Obedience to Christ is proof positive that we in fact love Him and honor Him from our hearts! We obey Him because we love Him and we know that His commands are what are best for us. But what are other ways that we can see that we love Christ? Consider these few

- **Christ will be the most engrossing subject of thought.** Are you enamored with thoughts of Christ? Does Christ occupy your thought life with intensity, or do you give your thoughts to lower earthly things?
- **Christ will be the attractive theme of conversation.** What do you spend your time talking about? The weather, sports or God forbid the latest gossip about other people? We know what is in our hearts by what flows out of our mouths.
- **Christ will be the source of the greatest delight in pleasing.** What is it that in your heart brings the most gladness to you? Do you treasure Christ more than anything else in the entire world? If you love Christ, He is your greatest delight!
- **The most transforming power of character.** Are you becoming like Him? If so, you can know that you love Him. Pursuing Christ results in becoming like Him!
- **If you love Christ, you love His cause.** That His kingdom may come, that people might be saved, that love would abound to every person is your great pursuit.
- **If you love Christ You love His people.** How can we say we love Christ and do not love His people. We know we love Christ by how well we love and serve His church!
1 John 5:1-2 - 1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and **whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.** 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. NASB
- **If you love Christ, you love His Word and His commandments.** Love for Christ is clearly seen in a great hunger and desire for His word.

Let us cultivate our love for Christ by seeking after Him and treasuring Him each and every day. Let us give serious thought on regular occasion to our love for Him and our devotion to Him!

9 Things we can do to cultivate a love for Christ!

There are many ways that we can cultivate and grow in our love and esteem for Christ! In these things we are seeking Christ, and our relationship to Him and our worship of Him that we seek to enhance. These things do not replace Christ, instead they enhance and cultivate our love for Him.

1. Treasure and esteem God and His Word above any and every other thing in your life. Let it become a consuming passion in your life to come to know God and see His Glory.
Psalm 119:47-48 - 47 And **I shall delight in Thy commandments, Which I love.** 48 And I shall lift up my hands to Thy commandments, **Which I love; And I will meditate on Thy statutes.** NASB
Job 23:12 - 12 "I have not departed from the command of His lips; **I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.** NASB
2. Have a daily time of meditation and contemplation in the Word of God, undistracted. Allow the Word to judge and confront the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Seek God's face and His truth as for hidden treasure.
Psalm 1:1-2 - How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 **But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.** NASB
3. Do what the bible says. The revelation of truth comes through obedience to God's Word.
Luke 11:28 - 28 But He said, "On the contrary, **blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it.**" NASB
4. As we read through the Word, we stop to ponder how great God is, and how wonderful He is! We marvel, and worship with intensity as we ponder the Majesty of His being and the transcendence of His works and purposes in the world! We consider the perfections of His being and attributes, and we drink from them as a thirsty man in the desert!
Psalm 73:25-26 - 25 **Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth.** 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. NASB
5. Remember that God is personal! He has created us in such a way that we can fellowship with Him intimately through these means and experience the power and fulfillment of relationship with Him! We can treasure Him for He is our possession!
Song 6:3 - 3 "**I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.** He who pastures *his flock* among the lilies." NASB
6. Remember to be thankful and rejoice with thanksgiving for the great things God has done! Revel in and cherish the goodness of God and the blessing that He pours out in our lives!
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - 16 **Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks;** for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. NASB
7. Sing joyfully to the Lord. This is the only proper response for the victory we have been given. More than this, we Him, the highest reason for rejoicing and singing has become our possession!
Psalm 68:4 - 4 **Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Lift up a song for Him** who rides through the deserts, Whose name is the LORD, and exult before Him. NASB
Colossians 3:16-17 - 16 **Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.** 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. NASB
8. Fellowship regularly with people who have a love for Christ and a devotion to Him.
Acts 2:46-47 - 46 And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, **they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God,** and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. NASB
9. There are many very good things for Christians to read, listen to, and watch that help us grow in our appreciation and love for Christ! There also is need for discernment here! Look here for a start.... <http://www.heavenlight.org/resources.html>