

# WHAT IS YOUR LOVE FACTOR?

*Luke 7:36-50*

By Chris Losey

## **INTRODUCTION**

How much do you love the Lord? What is your devotion level or love factor? Are you highly committed to the Lord and His work or is it a fairly low priority in your life? Do you serve Him faithfully or do you leave that for others to do? What are you doing for the Lord? How would you rate yourself on a scale of one to ten, one being very low and ten being extremely high?

This message explores a passage in which two people show a considerable different devotion factor. One is a Pharisee and one is a prostitute. A Pharisee was a Jewish religious leader who was quite conservative in his beliefs. The Pharisees in general strictly adhered to the letter of the Old Testament law. Through the years they had even added a myriad of regulations that spelled out in detail what people should and shouldn't do in regard to the law. They were quite legalistic in their beliefs.

Without reading the story, if a person were asked who would love the Lord more, it would seem likely that the Pharisee would. After all he was a conservative religious leader, and the prostitute was a person who clearly violated one of The Ten Commandments by committing adultery. But if a person guessed that the Pharisee would show a higher devotion, he would be wrong.

As this message unfolds we are going to ask and answer three major questions:

- 1. WHAT DOES A HIGH LOVE FACTOR LOOK LIKE?**
- 2. WHERE DOES A PERSON'S LOVE FACTOR COME FROM?**
- 3. HOW IS A PERSON'S LOVE FACTOR LINKED WITH SALVATION?**

Let's begin first by reading the passage and using a brief outline to be sure we understand the story line:

## **OUTLINE OF THE PASSAGE**

### **I. The Pharisee's Request v36**

He asked Jesus to dine with Him. Listen to verse 36, *"Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him. And He entered the Pharisee's house, and reclined at the table."*

This Pharisee was not inviting Jesus into his heart, he had simply invited him into his home because he was curious about Jesus' identity.

### **II. The Prostitute's Devotion vv37,38**

She came into the Pharisee's house and ministered to Jesus. It is obvious that the prostitute had a high devotion level. Listen to verses 37, 38:

*<sup>37</sup> And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining {at the table} in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, <sup>38</sup> and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume.*

### III. The Pharisee's Reaction v39

When the Pharisee saw that Jesus allowed the woman to wash His feet, he silently questioned Jesus' wisdom. He did not even believe that Jesus could be a true prophet, much less the Messiah. Listen to verse 39, *"Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.'"*

### IV. The Lord's Response vv40-50

Being omniscient, Jesus could read minds and He knew exactly what the Pharisee was thinking, so Jesus responded with the following explanation about debt and devotion.

<sup>40</sup> *And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher."*  
<sup>41</sup> *"A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup> "When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?" <sup>43</sup> Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." <sup>44</sup> And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup> "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. <sup>46</sup> "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. <sup>47</sup> "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." <sup>48</sup> And He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." <sup>49</sup> And those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man*

*who even forgives sins?"<sup>50</sup> And He said to the woman,  
"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*

Let's now answer the three questions that were mentioned at the beginning of the message.

- 1. WHAT DOES A HIGH LOVE FACTOR LOOK LIKE?**
- 2. WHERE DOES A PERSON'S LOVE FACTOR COME FROM?**
- 3. HOW IS A PERSON'S LOVE FACTOR LINKED WITH SALVATION?**

Let's begin with:

### **1. WHAT DOES A HIGH LOVE FACTOR LOOK LIKE?**

It is obvious from the story that the prostitute had a high devotion level or love factor toward Jesus. How did it manifest itself. It did it in five ways. These might be called 5 Indicators of a High Love Factor.

#### **1) Personal Sacrifice v37**

- she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, perhaps her last
- we are to be a living sacrifice

#### **2) Passion v38**

- her emotions showed in her weeping
- for others their passion may show in their zeal

#### **3) Humility v38**

- she knelt down and washed his feet with her tears
  - tears of sorrow for her sin
  - but tears of joy that she could show her thankfulness to Jesus
- the Pharisee should have had Jesus' feet washed
- no task was to menial for the woman

#### 4) Unashamed Service

- she did not care what people thought of her  
Matthew 10:33 states, *"But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."*

- she kissed His feet
- her hair would have gotten dirty

#### 5) Boldness

- she walked right into a Pharisee's house
  - he might have thrown her out

Do you have these indicators in your service to the Lord?  
Let's now answer the second question?

## 2. WHERE DOES A PERSON'S LOVE FACTOR COME FROM?

What gave the prostitute such a high love factor? She realized how great her debt of sin was and how much Jesus had forgiven her.

- she had willfully broken God's law
- she had encouraged others to do the same
- she had perhaps destroyed marriages

This was quite a contrast to the Pharisee who undoubtedly saw himself as righteous. v44

You gave me no water for my feet - the socially courteous thing to do  
..... she wet My feet with her tears and wiped...

You gave me no kiss - the socially warm thing to do  
..... she has not ceased to kiss my feet

You did not anoint my head - the socially honoring thing  
..... she anointed my feet with perfume

The truth is a person's love factor is directly linked to his own perception of his own righteousness and how much he needs to be forgiven. The truth is that many of us have a false perception like the Pharisee. He didn't see himself as needing much if any forgiveness. Therefore he had no love factor/devotion level toward the Lord.

The truth is that God looks at all of us the same. We are all sinners. Listen to what the Bible has to say.

Romans 3:23, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

Romans 3:10-12 states, <sup>10</sup> *as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; <sup>12</sup> All have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one."*

Isaiah 64:6 states, *"For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."*

This is the true perception that each of us should have. Each of us is a sinner. There is no way that any of us can save ourselves. We owe an infinite debt to God. Therefore all of our love factors should be high. If your's is low there are two options. First perhaps you aren't saved. Second, perhaps you have forgotten or never realized just how much you owe the Lord.

This brings us to the last question:

### **3. HOW IS A PERSON'S LOVE FACTOR LINKED WITH SALVATION?**

A high devotion level does not save a person, but it may be an accurate indicator of a person's faith.

**1. Curiosity does not save a person**

- at least the Pharisee was searching

**2. Religion does not save a person**

- The Pharisee was very religious but not saved...

**3. Service does not save a person**

- it was not the women's service that saved her, it was her faith in Christ.

**4. To be saved, a person must acknowledge his debt to God.**

- the Pharisee saw no debt  
- the women realized her huge debt

**5. To be saved a person must exercise faith**

- faith brings forgiveness  
- faith brings peace with God and peace within

How do I know the Pharisee was not saved? He called Jesus teacher and believed that he could not even be a prophet much less the Messiah.

Stages that people often go through in becoming committed to God.

CURIOSITY – In Christ and His message.

CONVICTION – Regarding their own sinfulness.

COMMITMENT – Committing oneself to follow Christ.

**CONCLUSION**

If you are a Christian you should have a high devotion level to the Lord!  
Are you saved? Have you ever taken that step of faith?...

Sing song.

He paid a debt He did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay, I needed someone to wash my sins away. And now I sing a brand new song, amazing grace all day long, since Jesus paid the debt that I could never pay!