

Begin in Christ

Life Now Bible Exploration 1.0

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Introduction

On the back of a business card these words were found, "If you have not met me, you have missed little. If you have not met my Savior you have missed everything!" The following studies are designed to acquaint you with the life of a man who changed history forever. They present many of His life-changing claims that you can investigate at your own pace. You will find action points that will require you to choose whether or not to respond to what you have learned. Choose carefully! God knows the heart. He knows if a person is honestly searching for truth. God doesn't play games. He reveals His truth to the degree a person is open to His words. The prophet recorded, "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind" (Jeremiah 17:10a). In another place He states, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). You are invited to objectively examine the claims of a unique man and what those claims imply.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:13-16)

This is the first of three booklets in the *Life Now Bible Exploration* series. Each booklet references many Bible verses. The task of looking up the verses can be lightened by using an electronic Bible such as can be found at www.bible.com or www.biblegateway.com. Or groups can study together, each person looking up a different verse and reading it aloud for the group to answer together.

I. JESUS CHRIST: THE PERSON

One Solitary Life

Here is a young man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

While he was still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, and that was his coat. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race, and the leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever sailed, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has that ONE SOLITARY LIFE.

—Anonymous

All Man

1. Jesus is a part of history in time and place. Where and when?
Matthew 2:1

2. How did Jesus begin His life? Luke 2:6,7

The next three questions pertain to Jesus when he was 12 years old.
Begin reading at Luke 2:42.

3. What characteristic did Jesus seem to have from His early years?
Luke 2:46

4. How was Jesus' youth like most others? Luke 2:52

5. What can we conclude about Jesus' sense of direction and purpose as a boy? Luke 2:49

6. How was Jesus just like us?

Mark 4:38 _____

John 4:6 _____

John 11:35 _____

Hebrews 4:15 _____

All God

1. UNIQUE BIRTH

What was unique about Jesus' birth? Matthew 1:18-23

In Isaiah 7:14 (written in 742 B.C.) the virgin birth was prophesied as a "sign" (i.e., an attesting miracle) that would validate the true "Immanuel...God with us." Only a virgin birth could have been a "sign," as indeed it was. There are over 300 specific prophecies fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

"I know men, and tell you, Jesus is more than a man. Comparison is impossible between Him and any other human being." —Napoleon

JESUS CHRIST THE PERSON

2. SINLESS LIFE

a. In John 8:46 Jesus challenged the Jews to:

b. What did Pilate claim after “trying” Jesus? Luke 23:4

c. What did Peter and John, who lived with Jesus for three years, say about Him?

I Peter 2:21-23 _____

I John 3:5 _____

3. MIRACULOUS WORKS

a. What was significant about Jesus’ miraculous works?

John 15:24 _____

John 5:36 _____

Matthew 4:23-25 _____

“I am an historian, I am not a believer. But I must confess, as a historian, this penniless preacher from Galilee is irresistibly the center of history.”
—H.G. Wells

4. DIVINE CLAIMS

a. What did Jesus claim about Himself?

John 10:30 _____

John 14:6 _____

John 14:8,9 _____

John 8:57,58 _____

b. Why did the Jews want to kill Jesus?

John 5:18 _____

John 10:33 _____

5. POWER OVER DEATH

a. What was Jesus' teaching before His crucifixion? Mark 9:30-32

“As we stand and gaze with our eyes fixed upon the farther shore, a simple figure rises from the flood and straightway fills the whole horizon of history. There is the SAVIOUR!” —Arnold Toynbee

b. What were the Pharisees afraid of? Matthew 27:62-66

c. On one occasion, how many people saw the risen Christ simultaneously? I Corinthians 15:6

d. What were three evidences that convinced the disciples Jesus had really risen from the dead? Luke 24:36-43; I John 1:1

History records that all these witnesses were killed for claiming that Jesus rose from the dead, except the apostle John, who was then greatly persecuted. Wouldn't you agree that if Jesus had not risen from the dead, it would have been difficult to die for a dead man and his philosophy?

What sets Biblical Christianity apart from the rest of the world's religions is that its founder actually rose from the dead. Christ is the living Savior who conquered death. For further details about Jesus Christ's resurrection read Matthew 28:1-20; Luke 24:1-53; John 20.

"I thoroughly believe in a university education:" (yet) I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without a knowledge of the Bible."

—Dr. William Lyon Phelps (Professor, Yale University)

6. PERSONAL EVIDENCE

If Jesus is God-Man, died on the Cross to pay the penalty for all our sin, and then rose from the dead, that means He is above all, right now, and vitally interested in us. How did Jesus say we can personally come to know Him and experience the reality of His forgiveness, love, and meaningful life now and forever?

John 7:17 _____

John 1:12 _____

John 20:31 _____

Thought Question

Write down what you especially remember from this study and conclude by briefly mentioning what Jesus Christ means to you.

Think about:

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."— John 14:6

II. JESUS CHRIST: HIS MISSION

*"This is a visited planet."
—Dr. J.B. Phillips*

Christ Came To Give To Us

With one word, answer, "What did Christ come to give us?"

John 10:10 _____

John 15:9 _____

John 14:27 _____

John 15:11 _____

Christ Came to Die for Us

1. Why are most people not experiencing this kind of life? Jeremiah 5:25

2. According to Romans 3:23 what have we missed because of our sin?

3. According to Romans 6:23 what is the penalty (wages) for sin?

The word "death" in the Bible often refers not only to physical death, but also to spiritual and eternal death.

"Greater love has no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friends." —Jesus of Nazareth

4. How many people have sinned? Romans 3:9-19

5. How many sins do we have to commit before we are guilty before God (James 2:10):

- ten
- 328
- 1000 or more
- one

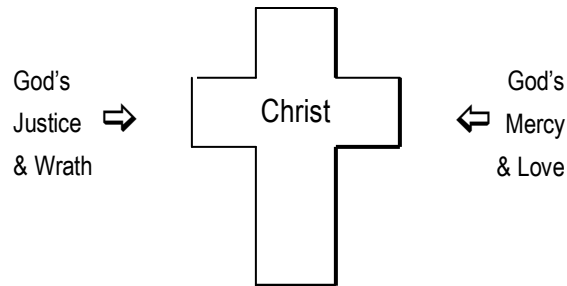
6. Can God give us sinners eternal life and still be holy and just when His justice demands death for sin? If so how? II Corinthians 5:21

7. Circle the phrase which best describes what Jesus was for us according to II Corinthians 5:21:

OUR FORGIVER

OUR SUBSTITUTE

OUR REDEEMER



Why did Christ come into the world? I Timothy 1:15

8. Read Romans 5:7-8

a. How did Christ prove God's love for us?

b. How is His love different from most of the love that you see in the world today?

9. Read Colossians 2:13-14

a. List three things that Christ's work on the cross accomplished for those who believe.

b. Because of Jesus' death on our behalf we are forgiven:

- some of our sins
- half of our sins
- all but the worst of our sins
- all of our sins

11. How well did Jesus carry out His purpose and mission in coming to the world? Hebrews 10:10,14

Since Christ perfectly paid for all of your sins and since Christ completely satisfied God on your behalf, what does this say about any good works you might do to gain His acceptance?

12. A person can believe that Christ died for the sins of the whole world but this really doesn't count until he accepts that Christ died for all of his personal sins.

According to Acts 10:43, we receive something when we trust Christ as our only Savior. What is it?

13. Someone may say, "Since I now have eternal life, I can then sin all I want!" What does God do, sooner or later, with every child of His? Hebrews 12:5-7

"There is a God-shaped vacuum in every heart that only Christ can fill." —Pascal, (physicist, mathematician, and philosopher)

Yourself

There is one question *you* must have, and have with great desperation, if you are to have any profit from this study. What is it? Acts 16:30

Life

1. What can never give you real life or help save you?
 - a. Acts 8:20 _____
 - b. Ephesians 2:8, 9 _____
 - c. Galatians 2:16 _____
 - d. Titus 3:5 _____
 - e. Romans 11:6 _____

2. We can conclude that no good or righteous works or deeds (baptism, sacraments, confession, prayers, charity, living a good life, etc.) can help save us. True or False?

3. What, then, is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?
Romans 3:20

“The world is now a very tragic and anxious world—more people are asking today (than ever before) and asking with a new intensity, ‘What must I do to be saved?’” —H.G. Wells

The law (The Commandments) could be compared to a thermometer; it only shows how sick we really are. A thermometer cannot cure. Likewise the Law cannot cure. A person can be saved only by depending on Christ alone and not his own good deeds.

4. How can we know that a person can not have faith in Christ as his personal Savior and at the same time trust in his good deeds to become right with God and gain eternal life? Romans 3:28, 11:6

5. Realizing you are a sinner and deserve the death penalty (separation from God, hell), and realizing that you cannot earn eternal life by your good deeds but that Jesus Christ, God's Son, died in your place on the Cross for the penalty of your sins...

WHAT IS THE ONLY THING YOU MUST DO TO BE SAVED? Acts 16:30, 31

6. In John 1:12, 13
a. How does a person believe in Christ?

b. What happens to the person who receives Christ?

verse 12 _____

verse 13 _____

7. What is true of a person who rejects Jesus Christ? John 3:18

8. According to I John 5:11, 12

a. What two kinds of people are there in the world?

b. What kind of person would you want to be?

9. According to II Corinthians 6:2 when is the best time to receive Christ as your personal Savior? (Check one)

- tomorrow
- later
- five minutes before I die
- right now!

10. You can receive Jesus Christ right now as you are filling out this Bible Study. In Revelation 3:20, Jesus Christ is speaking.

a. What is He doing right now? _____

b. What should you do right now? _____

c. Will you? _____

d. What will He do? _____

11. When we receive Jesus Christ, what Person actually comes to live in us? I Corinthians 6:19

12. a. According to I John 5:13, for what purpose was the book of I John written? I John 5:13

b. How certain can you be of having eternal life?

13. Do you have eternal life?

“There is one thing that mars all the pleasure of my life. I am afraid the Bible is true. If I could only know for certain that death is just a sleep, then I would be happy. But here is what pierces my soul – if the Bible is true, I am lost forever.” — A modern atheist

Thought Question

What is the single most important decision you can make as a result of this study? What are the implications that follow for you?

Think about:

Assurance verse:

“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.” —John 5:11, 12

III. JUST THE BEGINNING

In the last study we conclusively demonstrated the need to receive and believe in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. But that was just the beginning! There are many exciting truths for you to discover that will affect every day of your life from now until you actually see Jesus Christ face to face. A fundamental thing that you, and all believers in Christ, need to realize is that your salvation is absolutely certain.

Assurance From the Father

1. If you have become a believer, and God has started a work in you, what can you be confidently assured of? Philippians 1:6

2. According to Romans 8:35-39, which one of the following can separate you from the love and salvation of God?

- unbelievers
- death
- the devil and demons
- no one and nothing
- difficult circumstances
- persecution

3. If you have been born again, what does the Father promise about your inheritance that you are to receive in heaven? I Peter 1:3, 4

4. Romans 6:23 says that eternal life is a free gift of God. According to Romans 11:29, what is true about this gift?

5. According to I Thessalonians 5:9, God has determined two things about a true believer, which cannot fail to happen.

a. What will he never experience from God? _____

b. What is he destined for? _____

6. In I John 5:9-13, the Father gives us His witness (sworn statement of truth). Read this passage and answer the following questions.

a. What is the requirement for having true life from God? v.12

b. How long will this life last? v.11

- 30 years
- until you “fall from grace”
- until you sin too much
- until you stop believing
- until you stop reading the Bible
- for eternity
- until you commit a “mortal sin”

c. How sure can you be of your salvation? v.13

- wait and find out
- hope
- remain in doubt
- know absolutely

“Oh that I had known the art of life, or found some book or someone had taught me how to live.”—Theodore Parker (early American rationalist, philosopher, lecturer)

d. If we don't believe His witness (that God has given us eternal life)
what are we saying about God? v.10

Assurance From the Son

1. According to Jesus, what will happen to every person who has believed in Him? John 3:16

2. In John 5:24 Jesus states three things that are true about the person who has believed in Him. What are they?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. Read John 10:27-29

a. Where are Jesus' sheep (believers) and who is protecting them?

b. When will Jesus' sheep perish?

- when Jesus denies them
- when they force themselves out of Jesus' and the Father's hands
- never
- when they turn away from Jesus and reject Him

4. Jesus Christ is coming back again for us. The Bible calls the time of His return and the end of our age as we know it, "The day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Read I Corinthians 1:7-9 and answer the following questions.

a. How long will the Lord Jesus keep you strong?

b. What will be your standing at the judgment in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ?

c. Whose faithfulness does a believer's enduring until the end depend upon?

5. According to Isaiah 59:2 and Romans 6:23, the only thing that could separate you from God for eternity is your sin.

a. Through His death, how many of your sins has Jesus forgiven?
Colossians 2:13

- b. According to Hebrews 10:12, Christ's sacrifice of Himself ...
- paid for all my past sins
 - wasn't good enough to pay for all my sins
 - paid for all my sins past, present and future
- c. Hebrews 10:17 says that because of the sacrifice of Christ, God ...
- won't punish me for my sins but still holds a grudge against me
 - doesn't even remember my sins anymore
 - forgave all except my worst sins
- d. According to Acts 10:43, every believer ...
- will be forgiven on the judgment day
 - will have his sins forgiven as he confesses them
 - has *already* received forgiveness of sins
- e. Since all a believer's sins—past, present and future—have already been forgiven through the death of Christ, what is true of us?
Romans 8:1

Assurance From the Holy Spirit

1. After you listened to the gospel about Christ and believed, what immediately happened to you? Ephesians 1:13
-
-

a. In Bible times a seal was affixed to documents as a mark of identification and ownership and as a means of security. Since the Holy Spirit (God) Himself is your seal, what does this say about you and your salvation?

b. According to Ephesians 1:14:

Who is the deposit? _____

Who gave the deposit? _____

What for? _____

2. Since the Holy Spirit, God's deposit, is sealed in you forever, if you went to hell, who would have to go with you?

If you could lose your salvation, then it would mean that God couldn't keep His guarantee of eternal life to you and would lose His deposit. Of course, this will not happen.

"I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good of the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book". —Abraham Lincoln

3. Where is the Holy Spirit right now? I Corinthians 6:19

4. Can a person be a genuine believer and not have the Holy Spirit living in him? Romans 8:9

5. How long will the Holy Spirit be in you? Hebrews 13:5; John 14:16

6. With God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit all completely, totally, and unchangeably on your side, what can you conclude about your salvation?

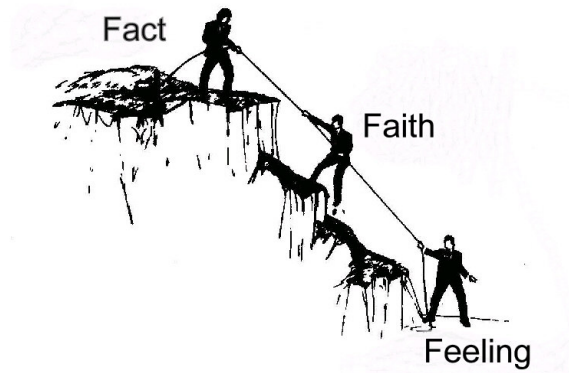
Take some time right now to talk to God. Thank Him that He has given you eternal life and that He will never leave you or forsake you.

Fact or Feeling?

1. Sometimes you may not feel that you are forgiven or going to heaven. Why should you not trust your feelings? Jeremiah 17:9

2. What should we trust and why? Psalm 119:89; Psalm 119:160

In this illustration if "Faith" holds onto "Fact," progress is made up the mountain. However, if "Faith" cuts the rope connecting him to "Fact" and starts relying on "Feelings" to hold him up, catastrophe results. It is much the same for a Christian. The fact that believers in Christ are saved forever is unshakably secure, but if we forget this fact and start depending on our feelings, we soon lose assurance. Both our faith and our feelings plummet and we don't make progress until we again start trusting in the truth. God's word, not how we feel, must be the basis for our assurance of salvation.



Evidences of Faith

1. What is one indication that our faith is genuine and that we have been born of God? 1 John 4:7-8

JUST THE BEGINNING

2. What will genuine faith, hope, and love produce in a believer?
I Thessalonians 1:3

3. What are some evidences that the Spirit is present in our lives?
Galatians 5:22-23

4. How much fruit is necessary to indicate that a person's faith is genuine? Matthew 13:23

5. What is true of someone who totally abandons the faith? I John 2:19

Thought Question

What do you remember most from this study?

“When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense: therefore take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the context indicate clearly otherwise.” –David L. Cooper (contemporary Christian author)

List one Bible reference from this study that shows that you have

- a. assurance from the Father _____
- b. assurance from the Son _____
- c. assurance from the Holy Spirit _____

Think about:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

John 5:24

IV. THE FIRST BIG STEP

When a baby is born, it has life, just as much as an adult does. But unless it learns to walk, it won't experience all that a healthy, walking child will. So it is for a Christian. When we are born again, we start a new life. We begin to walk as we start to obey the Word of God.

The first big step is what the Bible calls baptism. Baptism doesn't save you, but through it you start to experience the reality of obeying and walking with God. Remember, you can't walk until you're born, but when you walk, you begin to experience life like you never have before. With this in mind, look at what the New Testament has to say about baptism.

Who?

1. Who should be baptized?

- a. What is the first thing that Jesus commands to be done to those who have become His disciples? Matthew 28:19

- b. Who did the apostles baptize? Acts 2:41

- c. In Acts 10:47, 48, who did Peter say should be baptized?

- d. Referring to these people who had just become true Christians, Peter:

- asked them to be baptized
- suggested that maybe they should be baptized
- left it as an opinion
- commanded them to be baptized

"I have never been satisfied to think of the Bible as simply containing God's Word, or as a record of man's yearning after heavenly things. I accept it in its entirety as God's Holy Word and approach it in expectation of meeting Him on virtually every page."

— Dr. Carl G. Morlock (former Mayo Clinic physician)

2. Who should baptize?

a. Is Matthew 28:19 a command only to be baptized, or is it also a command to baptize others?

b. According to Matthew 28:19, who can baptize?

- only a minister or priest
- only older believers
- any believer who wants to obey Matthew 28:19

Any faithful believer who leads someone to Christ will baptize him or make sure that he is baptized.

When?

1. How soon after they believed were the following people baptized?

a. 3,000 people. Acts 2:41 _____

b. Ethiopian official. Acts 8:35-38 _____

c. Paul. Acts 9:17-19 _____

d. Philippian jailer. Acts 16:32-33 _____

2. Were any of these people baptized before they personally believed in Christ?

THE FIRST BIG STEP

3. There is no command or example anywhere in the Bible for the baptizing of babies.
- a. How can we know that baptizing a baby will not help save his soul?
Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 10:9

- b. Today, there are many traditions (teachings of men) that have been added to what the Bible teaches. Infant baptism is a tradition that arose long after the death of Christ.

What did Jesus say to look out for concerning the traditions of men?
Mark 7:6-9

What does God want us to learn? 1 Corinthians 4:6

“If good men wrote the Bible and then claimed it was written by the inspiration of God, they would be liars, and liars are not good men... If bad men wrote the Bible, they would be condemning themselves; because the Bible condemns sin...Bad men couldn't have written the Bible because the Bible is a good book. Since neither good men nor bad men wrote the Bible, the only Person left is God. God wrote the Bible and it is the masterpiece of His handiwork.”

—John Wesley (18th century English preacher)

How?

1. Was Jesus baptized by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling? Mark 1:9,10

2. In Acts 8:38,39, in what way was the Ethiopian official baptized?

The meaning of the word baptism (Greek: *baptizo*) is to dip or immerse. In the New Testament times, the Greek people used the word to refer to "baptizing" their clothes in dye or "baptizing" a cup in dishwater. The meaning of the word shows that baptism should be by full immersion.

Where?

1. Where was the Ethiopian official baptized? Acts 8:26, 36-38

2. Where did John the Baptist baptize?

a. Matthew 3:5,6 _____

b. John 3:23 _____

3. Does baptism have to take place in a church building or baptismal font?

A person can be baptized any place where there is enough water.

Why?

1. Being baptized does not help obtain eternal salvation.

a. In Romans 1:16, what is God's power to save us?

b. Is baptism a part of the gospel? 1 Corinthians 1:17

c. Would you consider baptism to be a righteous or unrighteous deed?

d. Are we saved by any works of righteousness which we do? Titus 3:5

e. The next two questions refer to Acts 16:31.

What did Paul tell the Philippian jailer when the jailer asked what he needed to do to be saved?

- believe in Christ and keep all the commandments
- believe in Christ and be baptized
- believe in Christ

“Have your own way, Lord! Have your own way! You are the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after Your will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.” —Paraphrase of an old hymn

When asked such an important question, do you think that Paul would have left out anything necessary to be saved?

2. Water baptism is a symbol of a believer's spiritual baptism (placing) into Christ. Since we have been spiritually placed (baptized) into Christ, what two events in Christ's life have also happened to us?
Colossians 2:12

a. _____

b. _____

A believer going under the water symbolizes that his old life is dead and buried with Christ; coming up out of the water symbolizes that he has been raised to a new life. Fear boxes us in, but faith in God brings real freedom. Obedience in baptism is a mark of faith.

3. Baptism is a public testimony identifying a believer with Christ. When a person is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, he is declaring to everyone that he now belongs to Christ (Acts 10:48). What effect do you think the public baptism of 3,000 believers in one day had on the city of Jerusalem? Acts 2:41

4. One reason to be baptized after we receive Christ is simply that Jesus commands it.

a. What will happen to the person who hears God's commandment and doesn't do it?

James 1:22 _____

Matthew 7:26,27 _____

b. What will happen to the person who hears God's commandment and does it?

Matthew 7:24,25 _____

John 13:17 _____

John 14:21 _____

Thought Questions

1. For baptism to be Scriptural, when should it be done?

“The real baptism—the inner washing of the human heart—comes first. The water baptism that follows is only a public announcement of what has happened within. We who believe make this public proclamation because we want to share our good news with others.”

— Ceil Rosen (*Jews for Jesus*)

2. For baptism to be Scriptural, how should it be done?

3. According to the Scripture, should a Christian put off being baptized?

4. Why should a Christian be baptized?

Assignment

If you have not been baptized since you personally believed in Christ, God wants you to get baptized. Talk to the leaders of your church about where and when you can be baptized. The rest of this Life Now Bible Exploration series is designed for those who have personally believed in Christ and have been baptized after they believed.

Memorize and think about:

“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.”

John 14:21