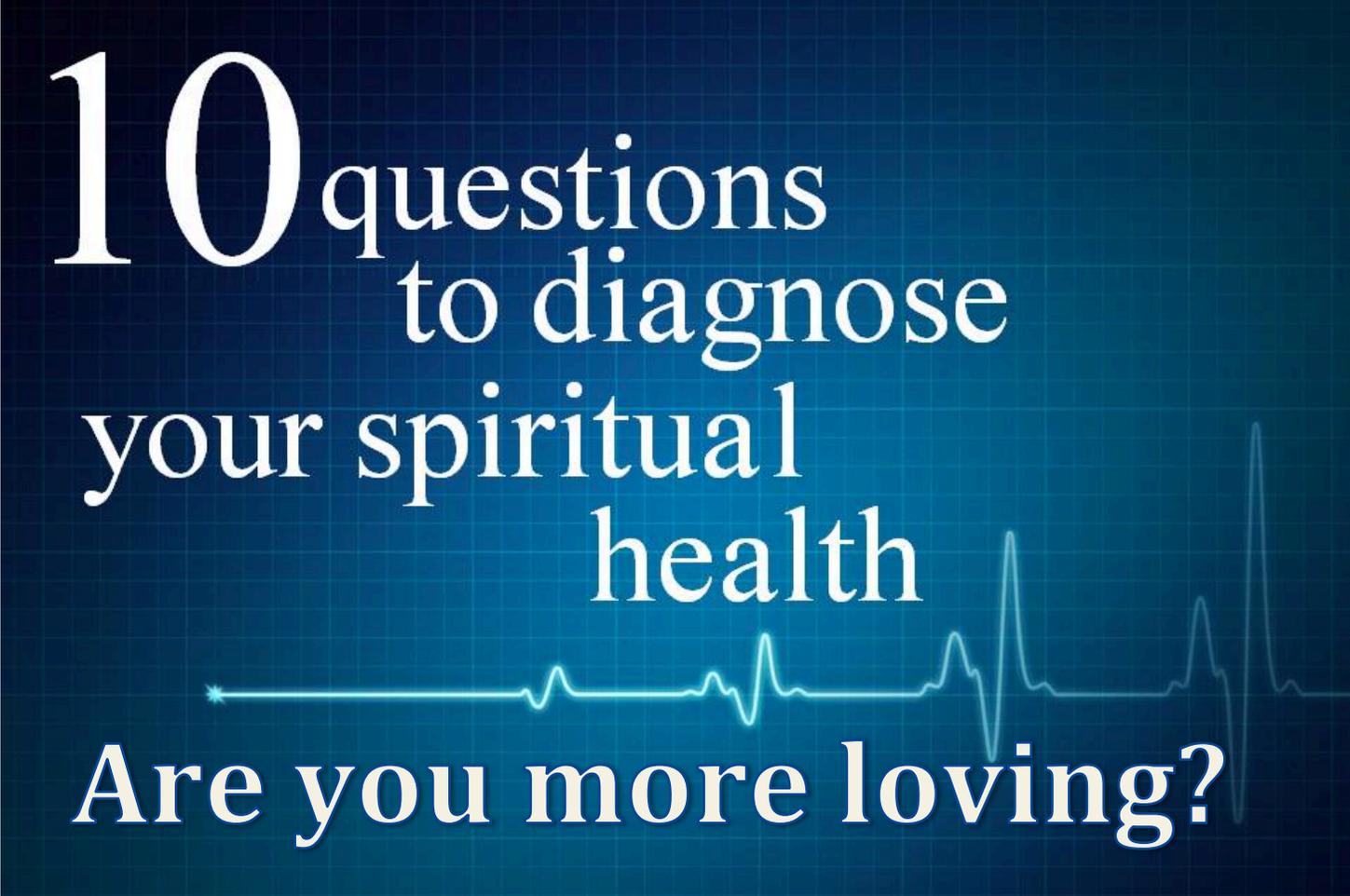


# 10 questions to diagnose your spiritual health



## Are you more loving?

### Recap:

- Our aim is spiritual diagnosis, to see how spiritually healthy we are, to see what areas need attention in our lives.
  - So, just as a doctor asks questions to help diagnose physical health, we are asking questions to diagnose our spiritual health.
- Do you remember question 1?
  - Do you thirst for God?
  - How often do you experience a longing for God? Do you want to know Him more?
- Question 2? Are you increasingly governed by God's Word
  - God's word should control and influence our lives

### Chapter 3: Are You More Loving?

- What is love?
  - What are some common understandings and definitions of love?
  - How do people use the word love?
  - Merriam Webster offers good definitions, do you agree?
    - Love is a strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties

- Love is unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another
- Let's Look at **1 John 4:7-11**
  - **Verse 8** states that God is Love, how does God fulfill Webster's definitions of love?
    - How does God have a strong affection for another?
    - How does God have an unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another?
  - **Verses 9 and 10** clearly states that God's love was manifested when He sent His Son to be a propitiation of sin.
    - See also **Romans 5:8, John 3:16**
    - Propitiation means a sacrifice given to atone or payment of an offense that appeases the anger or justice of another.
  - Because God had a strong affection for us, because we are His highest creation, He bore our punishment, an unselfish and benevolent act, so that we can be forgiven and free from sin's curse.
- So, according to **verse 11**, what ought we to do since God has loved us?
  - Look back at **verse 7**, everyone who knows God and is born of God, loves
- So, according to verse, how is love a measure of spiritual health?
  - If we don't have love for others, then we don't have right relationship with God.
  - See also **verse 20 and 1 John 3:16-19**
- Flip over to **1 Corinthians 13:13** – what is greater than faith and hope?
  - Why do you think that love is greater?
    - One day, faith will no longer be needed because we know God face-to-face, **13:12**
    - And one day, our hope will be fulfilled. All that we are looking forward to in Christ will be fulfilled.
    - But love will never cease
- Since Love is of such importance in God's economy, it is a high diagnostic of spiritual health.
  - What are some ways that we struggle with love?
    - We don't put others first. We overlook and neglect the needs of others.
    - We have relationships that are not right and we just let it be, instead of reconciling and fixing the relationship
    - We let anger and malice rule rather than love – see **Colossians 3:8-9**
      - Anger is a resentful bitterness
      - Rage (wrath) is a sudden outburst of anger
      - Malice – a vicious disposition, a spirit that wishes to injure another

- Slander –tearing someone’s life and reputation down with words.
  - Obscene talk = abusive speech, trying to hurt someone with words
  - Lying – deception, which characterizes Satan – **John 8:44** and not God – **Titus 1:2**
  - To counteract the flesh, we must purposefully put on Christian virtues and love – **Colossians 3:12-14**
- How is a Christian’s love different than a worldly love?
  - Worldly love is conditional and fickle – see **Matthew 5:43-48**
    - Even sinful people love those that love them back, are nice to those that are nice to them, etc. But they withhold love from others.
  - But Jesus calls us to love all, even our enemies
    - And to express that love – see **Romans 12:20-21**
      - Heaping burning coals was actually a beneficial thing, as some would carry hot coals on their heads to heat their homes.
      - Or it could possibly be a sign of contrition. So, our genuine love and service to them will hopefully lead them to repentance.
    - It’s not enough to say that we love others, or even to feel loving towards them, love must be expressed and shown
  - Our love is to be the evidence that we know Jesus – **John 13:35, 1 John 3:14**
- So, how can we cultivate love?
  - Since we want to be spiritually healthy, what can we do to grow in love?
- Cultivate Your relationship with God
  - Let your heart be warmed by the fire of God’s love
  - *“The more enjoyment we find in God as God, the more we truly enjoy being like Him by loving others.”*
  - Love is a fruit of the Spirit, so the more we walk with the Spirit, the more loving we will be.
  - Make it a priority to spend time with Jesus daily.
- Cultivate your relationships with others
  - Think of love as a verb. Think of loving things you can do for others.
    - Think about the people that you will interact with and how you can show love.
  - How about this, actually say the words to others: I Love You
- Ask the Question and let God answer it
  - Am I more loving? And listen to God, He will show you where you need to grow; He will guide you to be more loving.