COASTAL NOTES | JOHN 21 | NOVEMBER 1, 2026

DO YOU LOVE ME?

BIG IDEA: THE ONLY QUALIFICATION FOR SERVING JESUS IS LOVING HIM.

INTRODUCTION

There are questions that are hard to answer, and there are questions that are hard to sit through. This is the second kind. It is only four words long: "Do you love me?" And Jesus asks it of the same man, on the same morning, three times.

It is not a trick question. There is no hidden grammar and no theological trap. It may be the simplest question in the Gospels, and for the man standing on that beach, it is the hardest one he has ever been asked.

Jesus never wastes a question. He asks this one because He is about to hand this man something precious, and He wants to know what it will be built on.

SCENE 1 — LOVE BEFORE WORK (John 21:15)

15 **When they had finished breakfast,**
Jesus said to Simon Peter,
"Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"
He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."
He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

1. Simon, son of John, do you _____ me more than these?
2. Simon, son of John, do you love me more than _____?
3. Feed my _____.

NOTES:

- **The Context: John 21 takes place after the after the resurrection of Jesus.** Verse 14 says, "This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead." And yet, in verse 3, Simon Peter says, "I am going fishing." The question about that statement has always been, why did he say that? What does it mean. There are two theories. Peter just wanted to go fishing, nothing more. Some disciples joined him. Or Peter was quitting the ministry. He had given up and wanted to go back to his old way of life.

  This was not the first time Peter saw Jesus since the denial. Jesus had already appeared to Simon alone (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5), and Peter was among the disciples at the two other appearances that come before this one (John 20:19–23; John 20:26–29). "**But… it is the first one-on-one conversation** between them that Scripture records after his resurrection.

- **Okay, back to the boat. Back to the nets. That night they caught nothing.** At daybreak a man on the beach tells them to cast the net on the right side. They do, and they cannot haul it in because of the great number of fish.

- **Then the disciples realize who it is.** "When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment and threw himself into the sea. A man who denied Jesus three times heads straight for Him.

- **Then Peter steps onto the beach and sees breakfast.** "When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread." Jesus has made breakfast. Before one word of correction, there is food. "Come and have breakfast," He says in verse 12.

- **A charcoal fire**. **That word combo shows up only twice in the entire New Testament, and both times it is in John.**

  John 18:18: *"Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself." Verse 25: they ask whether he is one of Jesus' disciples, and "He denied it and said, 'I am not.'"*

- **Notice whose fire that was. The first charcoal fire was built by the servants and the officers, the people who had come against Jesus.** Peter warmed himself at their fire and denied Jesus.

- **The second charcoal fire is Jesus' own, already in place when Peter walks up.** John does **NOT** tell us if there was any hidden meaning. But notice the contrast: Peter once stood at an enemy's fire and denied Jesus. ("I am not"). Now he stands at Jesus' breakfast fire, and he is fed first and asked second.

- **Simon, son of John.** Jesus does not call him Peter. He uses Peter's full family name, the way you do when something serious is about to be said. This is not small talk.

- **Jesus then says the phrase, "More than these." Who are the "these"? The verse does not say, and I think there are two answers.**

- **First, the other disciples. On the night Jesus was betrayed, Peter said,**

  - ***"Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away."* And then*: "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!"***

  - **Matthew adds, "And all the disciples said the same." So they all made the promise, and all of them fled. But Peter was the one who answered for the group.**

- **The Second Possibility. Jesus was referring to the boat, the nets, and the fish.** Verse 3: "I am going fishing." Why? He wanted to go back to his old way of life. His old trade. Without Jesus.

- **Jesus' question fits BOTH. Do you love me more than the OTHER DISCIPLES around you like you once claimed? Or more than his old pre-Jesus?**
- **Notice what Jesus does NOT ask. He does not say, "Why did you deny me?" He does not say, "Let's talk about the courtyard." Instead, he asks about love.** The question that matters most to Jesus is **NOT "What did you do?"** but "Who do you love?"

- **Love is not a résumé.** Imagine you ask someone, "Do you love me?" and they hand you a list: everything they have done for you, every sacrifice, every hour they put in. That is not what you asked. Jesus does **NOT** ask Peter for his résumé, even though Peter had plenty to put on it. He asks for his heart.

- **Notice what Peter does not say.** He does **NOT** say, **"More than these."** The man who once said, "I will lay down my life for you," now says only, "**Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He has stopped ranking himself. No comparison. No big promise.** Just, "you know."

- **Then Jesus says, "Feed my lambs." Love gets a job right away.** And listen to one small word: **"my."** **NOT** your lambs. Not the church's lambs. The flock belongs to Jesus. Peter is a caretaker, never the owner.

- **Love comes first. Work comes second. And the work is never about us. It's about Jesus!**

SCENE 2 — NO MORE COMPARING (John 21:16)

16 **He said to him a second time,**
"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"
He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."
He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

1. He said to him a _____ time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?'

2. 'Yes, Lord; you _____ that I love you.'

3. _____ my sheep.

NOTES:

- **Same man. Same question. Almost.** Notice what is missing in the second question. The words "**MORE THAN THESE**" are gone. The comparison has been taken off the table.

- **Love for Jesus is not a competition.** It is **NOT** about whether you love Him more than the person sitting next to you. Many of us measure ourselves that way: more faithful than him, less gifted than her. **JESUS TAKES THE SCOREBOARD AWAY.** He does not ask, "Do you love me more than your pastor does?" **He asks, "Do YOU love me?"**

- **Comparison does damage in two directions. Look at the people who seem further along, and you decide your love is too small to be of any use. LOOK AT THE PEOPLE WHO SEEM BEHIND, AND YOU DECIDE YOU ARE FINE.** Either way, you stop hearing the real question. Jesus **NEVER** answers it by pointing at anyone else.

- **And Peter gives the same answer. The very same words: "YES, LORD; YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU."** He does not improve it. He does not add a promise. Remember Peter on the night Jesus was betrayed: **"I will lay down my life for you." PETER LEARNED SOMETHING ABOUT BIG PROMISES.** Now he says less, and it is more honest.

- **Then Jesus says, "Tend my sheep." TO TEND IS TO CARE FOR, TO WATCH OVER. A shepherd does more than feed.** A shepherd **leads**, **guards,** and **goes after the one that wanders**. **Love for Jesus does NOT stay IN YOUR HEART. IT SHOWS UP IN SOMEONE'S LIFE.**

- **IF YOU LOVE HIM, YOU CANNOT LOVE HIM FROM A DISTANCE.** The sheep are **NOT** an idea. **They have names, and they live close enough to be inconvenient.**

SCENE 3 — YOU KNOW EVERYTHING (John 21:17)

17 **He said to him the third time,**

"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time,

"Do you love me?" and he said to him,

"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

1. Peter was _____ because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?'

2. 'Lord, you know _____; you know that I love you.'

3. Feed my _____.

NOTES:

- **Okay, here is the Third time. NOTICE THE PATTERN, THREE DENIALS IN A COURTYARD**, with a **CHARCOAL FIRE burning. THREE QUESTIONS ON A BEACH**,

with a **CHARCOAL FIRE BURNING**. It is hard not to notice. **Jesus walks Peter back through it, one question for each wound.**

- **PETER WAS GRIEVED BECAUSE HE SAID TO HIM THE THIRD TIME, 'Do you love me?'" NOTICE WHAT HURTS**. **It is not a rebuke**. There is no rebuke**. IT IS HEARING "DO YOU LOVE ME?" FOR THE THIRD TIME, because the third time reaches back to the three denials**.

- **YOU MAY HAVE HEARD A POPULAR EXPLANATION FOR WHY THAT THIRD QUESTION HURT. In the Greek, Jesus asks twice, "Do you agapao me?" That is the word we associate with GOD'S PERFECT, SELF-GIVING LOVE.**
- **Peter answers both times with phileo, the love of a friend**. **So the story goes that the third time Jesus comes down to Peter's level and asks, "Do you even love me as my friend (Phileo)?"** And **THAT IS WHY PETER IS GRIEVED**. **I used to teach that. It preaches.**
- **At Bible College, I asked Tim Mackie, that question about this exchange**, and he told me **the two words are interchangeable**. As a preacher, **I did not like that answer**. I asked him to reconsider on another occasion, he would not.
- **THEN I NOTICED JOHN 5:20 THIS VERSE**: **"*For the Father loves the Son."*** John uses phileo there. The Father's own love for the Son is phileo. So if phileo is the lesser love, John has a problem.
- **I go back and forth, but ultimately, that's a strong argument, it's hard to argue with the text, same word, same book, same author. PHILEO IS USED TO DESCRIBE GOD'S LOVE FOR JESUS**. If you want the deep dive go to the Bible Nerds section in your notes.
- **HERE IS WHAT I AM SURE OF:** Jesus asks the same question **THREE TIMES**, and Peter gives the same answer. The third time it hurts, because it reaches back to three denials.

- **JOHN NEVER SAYS PETER REPENTED. Jesus never asks for a speech. But the grief shows his heart.**
- Paul writes, ***"For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death." (2 Corinthians 7:10) Peter's grief is not the kind that walks away. It is the kind that says, "you know that I love you."***

- **RESTORATION IS NOT PAINLESS. WE WANT TO BE HEALED WITHOUT GOING BACK. Peter could not be.** He had to walk back into the very place where he failed, and hear the question asked again, and answer it.
- **Jesus does not skip the wound. HE GOES THROUGH IT WITH US, ONE QUESTION AT A TIME.** James Boice calls this kindness, not cruelty: "The truly cruel thing would

have been to let the matter go on festering in Peter." A wound that is never touched never heals. Real healing goes through the place that hurts.

- **Then Peter says something new: "LORD, YOU KNOW EVERYTHING**; you know that I love you." Listen to the difference. **BEFORE, HIS CONFIDENCE rested on himself**: ***"Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!"***

  NOW IT RESTS ON JESUS: "YOU KNOW EVERYTHING." He stops defending himself. He does not argue about the denial or explain the circumstances. Everything: the failure, the fishing trip, the motives, the fear. Peter hides none of it.

- **And remember, Jesus knew. HE TOLD PETER AHEAD OF TIME: "THE ROOSTER WILL NOT CROW TILL YOU HAVE DENIED ME THREE TIMES."** So when Peter says, "**YOU KNOW EVERYTHING**," **that includes the fact that Jesus SAW this coming.**

- **I hear Peter saying, in a sense, "Lord, I am NOT a perfect man, and you know that. I was overconfident. But you know everything, and AS IMPERFECT as I am, you know that I love you."**

- **PONDER POINT: That is freedom for us, too. You CANNOT surprise Jesus. There is no sin He is hearing about for the first time. And He is still asking, "Do you love me?"** He does not ask because He does not know. He asks so that we can say it out loud.

- **SOME OF US DODGE THE THIRD QUESTION.** We are glad to answer the first two. Yes, I love Jesus. Yes, I am here on Sunday

- **But there is an area WE KEEP OFF LIMITS, the place with the wound or the habit or the grudge, and when Jesus gets near it, we get grieved.** Peter shows us what to do with the third question. **YOU DO NOT CHANGE THE SUBJECT. YOU TELL THE TRUTH.**

- **PONDER POINT: AND REMEMBER WHO MOVED FIRST. JESUS IS THE ONE WHO MADE THE FIRE. Jesus is the one who made breakfast.** And remember who moved first. Jesus is the one who made the fire. Jesus is the one who made breakfast. Peter's love is an answer, not an achievement. "We love because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

  THAT GOES AGAINST HOW WE HANDLE CONFLICT. We tend to think the guilty party should make the first move. But when Jesus talks about reconciliation, He never asks who is right. "If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you… First be reconciled to your brother." (Matthew 5:23–24)

Right or wrong, Jesus says go. Paul does the same with Euodia and Syntyche. He does not take sides. He asks them “to agree in the Lord” (Philippians 4:2). And that is how Jesus treats sinners again and again: He takes the first step.

Peter wronged Jesus on that night, and here on the beach, Jesus is the one who comes to Peter. Peter's love is an answer, not an achievement. "We love because he **FIRST LOVED US**." (1 John 4:19).

- **And look what Jesus does with an honest answer: "Feed my sheep."** No probation. No waiting period. No "let's see how you do." Three denials, three commissions. Out loud, in front of the other disciples.

- **Think about how most businesses would handle this.** An employee fails publicly. The boss says, “You answered well, and you can stay. But we’re giving the lead role to someone else.” And honestly, nobody would have flinched. The other disciples would have understood. Peter would have understood. It would still have been gracious. But Jesus did not do that. He puts the whole flock back in Peter’s hands: “Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep.” Grace did not just forgive Peter. It handed him the work.

- **Grace first. Then the assignment.** Jesus does not use the flock to punish Peter. He does not say I can still use you, but no longer as an apostle, and still be right. But he restores him in front of others. He hands Peter the flock because He has forgiven him. **Who are the sheep? THEY ARE THE PEOPLE JESUS LOVES**.

  - **The new believer in your row.**
  - **The friend who stopped coming.**
  - **The teenager who is faking it.**
  - **The neighbor at the end of the street.**
  - **The coworker who is just surviving.**

- **Feeding looks different for different people.** Some of you will never teach a class or lead a group, and you may think this is not for you. But Jesus says feed My sheep, and the sheep are hungry in more than one way.

  - **Some are hungry for the Word.**
  - **Some are hungry for a meal.**
  - **Some are hungry for someone to notice them.**

- **Love and work belong together.** Serving is good. But love is what makes it His work. In Revelation 2, Jesus has a complaint against a church: "But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first."

- **But how do you love someone you cannot see?**
  - **1 John 4:20 says it like this**, "He who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen." **If you do not love your brother, how can you love God? The Lord we cannot see is loved through the people we can.**

  - **Jesus says, "as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."** (Matthew 25:40) The Lord we cannot see is loved through the people we can. That is how you gauge your love for God.

► PRACTICAL EXAMPLE: [Your story here: someone who fed you spiritually when you least deserved it, or a time you fed someone else (a possible tie-in: CCF's feeding ministry). About 60 to 90 seconds.]

CLOSE

Think about where this started. A charcoal fire. A courtyard. Three times Peter denied Jesus. And now, beside another charcoal fire, three times Peter says, "you know that I love you." Same man. The difference is not that he got stronger. The difference is that he stopped pretending, and Jesus had already made breakfast.

Some of you have gone back to the old boat. The old habits. The old nets. You think you have failed Him one time too many. Look at the beach. There is a fire, there is breakfast, and there is a Man who already knows everything and is asking you one question.

Jesus is still asking. "Do you love me?"

PERSONAL REFLECTION

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love Me more than these?" What gets more of your attention than Jesus does: work, family, screens, success, a hobby? These are not necessarily sinful things, just things that can crowd Him out. What is one of them for you?

Peter was grieved when Jesus asked the third time. Is there a question from Jesus you have been dodging? What would an honest answer sound like, even if all you can say is, "Lord, you know everything"?

Who is your lamb? Name one person God has put near you who needs to be fed: encouraged, taught, prayed for, or simply noticed. What is one thing you will do for that person this week?

Some of us have gone back to the old boat, the old habits and the old nets. What would it look like to stop and come to the fire Jesus has already built for you this morning?

BIBLE NERDS ONLY

BIBLE NERDS ONLY

The Love Debate and Other Puzzles in John 21
Jesus asks Peter one question three times, and Bible nerds have been arguing over it for centuries. Here are four things in John 21:15–17 that Bible nerds enjoy digging into, plus one short sidebar. All Scripture is ESV.

Agape or Phileo? The Love Debate

Biblical Reference: John 21:15–17; John 3:35; 5:20; 11:3, 5; 13:23; 20:2; 3:19; 12:43; 16:27

Context: Two Greek verbs for "love" appear in this conversation. Jesus uses agapao ("Do you love me?") in verses 15 and 16. Peter answers with phileo ("I love you") each time. Then in verse 17, Jesus switches to phileo himself, and Peter is grieved. The table shows exactly what each person says.

	JESUS ASKS	PETER ANSWERS
Verse 15	agapas me: "Do you love me more than these?"	philo se: "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."
Verse 16	agapas me: "Do you love me?"	philo se: "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."
Verse 17	phileis me: "Do you love me?"	philo se: "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

The popular reading: James Montgomery Boice, in his expositional commentary on John (Baker, 2005, pp. 1637–1640), reads the switch as a deliberate step down. Agapao is the love of God, self-giving and unconditional. Phileo is the love of friendship.

So Jesus asks twice, "Do you give yourself to me completely?" Peter will not claim that, and answers, "I am your friend." The third time, Jesus meets Peter where he is and asks, "Are you even my friend?" That is why Peter is grieved. It is a popular explanation, and you will hear it in many sermons and Bible studies.

The problems with it: John does not use these verbs the way the reading needs him to. (1) Agapao is not always the high love. "People loved the darkness rather than the light" (3:19) and "they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God" (12:43) both use agapao.

(2) Phileo is not always the lower love. "The Father loves the Son" is agapao in 3:35 and phileo in 5:20. "The Father himself loves you" in 16:27 is phileo. (3) John swaps the two for the very same people. Lazarus is loved with phileo in 11:3 and agapao in 11:5. "The disciple whom Jesus loved" is agapao in 13:23 and phileo in 20:2. (4) Peter answers the same way all three times, so he never fails at some higher love; he simply answers. (5) Jesus and Peter most likely spoke Aramaic, which does not have this pair of words at all. The distinction, if there is one, would belong to John's Greek and not to the conversation on the beach.

The careful writer objection: John is a careful writer, and he changes the verb in the third question. Why change it if it means nothing? That is a fair point. Commentators who see variation for variety, among them Constable (Expository Notes, bibleportal.com) and Ian Paul ("Are there different 'loves' in John 21?", psephizo.com), answer that John varies his words all through this passage without any change in meaning (see the sidebar below).

Their strongest evidence is his own use of both verbs for the same people. A careful writer can vary his wording and still mean the same thing. The question deserves humility: we cannot prove what John intended by the switch.

Where that leaves us: We do not have to settle the debate to understand this passage. What is certain is the question itself: three times, "Do you love me?", with the same answer each time and a different job each time. Peter was grieved, Jesus asked about love and not about performance, and love is the reason to serve. All of that stands whichever way the Greek verbs fall.

Sources: Boice, J. M. (2005). The Gospel of John: An Expositional Commentary, pp. 1637–1640; Constable, T. L., Expository Notes (bibleportal.com); Paul, I., "Are there different 'loves' in John 21?" (psephizo.com).

Result: The word choice cannot carry the weight the popular reading puts on it, but the

story does not need it. Jesus asks about love three times. The answer is always the same, and it always leads to the sheep.

Two Charcoal Fires, Side by Side

Biblical Reference: John 18:15–27; John 21:9–17

Context: The Greek word for "charcoal fire" (anthrakia) appears only twice in the entire New Testament: John 18:18 and John 21:9. John does not say, "Remember the other fire?" He simply uses the same rare word and lets the reader notice. Read down each row.

	JOHN 18: THE COURTYARD	JOHN 21: THE BEACH
The fire	"The servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold" (18:18)	"They saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread" (21:9)
Where Peter is	"Standing and warming himself" with the people who arrested Jesus (18:18)	On the shore, in front of Jesus, after swimming to Him (21:7)
The questions	"You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" (18:17, 25); "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" (18:26)	"Simon, son of John, do you love me?" (21:15–17)
Peter's answers	"I am not." (18:17, 25); "Peter again denied it" (18:27)	"Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." (21:15–17)
What follows	"And immediately a rooster crowed." (18:27)	"Feed my lambs." "Tend my sheep." "Feed my sheep." (21:15–17)

John does not tell us what Peter felt when he saw the second fire, and we should not pretend he does. What we can say is that the word is shared, both scenes involve a fire, questions and the same man, and the second scene undoes what the first one did. Peter is questioned three times beside the first fire and fails. He is questioned three times beside the second and answers.

Result: The first charcoal fire was where Peter denied Jesus. The second is where Jesus restores him. The text invites the connection through one rare word, though John never states it outright.

Three Denials, Three Questions

Biblical Reference: Matthew 26:33–35; John 13:37–38; John 18:17, 25–27; John 21:15–17

Context: Peter had boasted, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away" (Matt. 26:33), and "I will lay down my life for you" (John 13:37). Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times" (John 13:38). The denials and the questions line up one for one.

	THE DENIAL (JOHN 18)	THE QUESTION (JOHN 21)
First	"I am not." Asked by the servant girl at the door (18:17)	"Do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." "Feed my lambs." (21:15)
Second	"I am not." Asked beside the fire (18:25)	"Do you love me?" "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." "Tend my sheep." (21:16)
Third	Peter "again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed" (18:26–27)	"Do you love me?" Peter was grieved. "Lord, you know everything." "Feed my sheep." (21:17)

John never says, "Three questions for three denials." The match is an observation, not a statement in the text, but it is hard to miss. Notice also what the table shows about direction. Peter's answers go from "I am not" to "you know that I love you," and what follows goes from a crowing rooster to a job on the beach.

Result: Three denials, three questions, three assignments. Jesus does not erase the failure by pretending it did not happen. He walks Peter back through it, one step at a time, and ends each step with work to do.

"More Than These": Three Readings

Biblical Reference: John 21:3, 15; Matthew 26:33

Context: "Do you love me more than these?" The Greek pronoun is ambiguous, and commentators have proposed three readings. Boice and Constable favor the first, and the second is also possible. This message holds both.

READING	THE QUESTION BECOMES	WHAT POINTS TO IT
These disciples	"Do you love me more than these other men do?"	Peter's boast, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away" (Matt. 26:33). The other disciples never publicly denied Jesus, and Peter's claim is what Jesus is answering.
These things	"Do you love me more than this boat, these nets, this fishing life?"	Peter's own words in 21:3, "I am going fishing," and the breakfast on the beach with the boat and the catch right there.
These love me	"Do you love me more than these men love me?"	The Greek can be read this way, but it fits the context less naturally than the first two readings.

Notice what the three readings share. In every one, Jesus asks Peter to compare. Whatever "these" is, Peter says nothing about it. He does not answer, "More than these." He says only, "You know that I love you." In the second question, the comparison is gone completely.

Notice what the three readings share. In every one, Jesus asks Peter to compare. Whatever "these" is, Peter says nothing about it. He does not answer, "More than these." He says only, "You know that I love you." In the second question, the comparison is gone completely.
Result: We do not have to decide among the readings to see the point. In every version, Jesus asks about love before He gives any work.

Sidebar: John's Synonym Pairs

Biblical Reference: John 21:15–17

Context: In these three verses, John varies his wording for almost everything while the meaning stays steady. That is the best argument that the two verbs for "love" are also just variety.

	VERSE 15 AND 17	VERSE 16	NOTE
Feed / tend	"Feed my lambs" (15); "Feed my sheep" (17), boske	"Tend my sheep," poimaine	Two verbs for the shepherd's work. Tend (poimaine) covers all of shepherding; feed is one part of it.
Lambs / sheep	"Lambs" (15), arnia; "sheep" (17), probata	"Sheep," probata	Young and grown. The flock Jesus gives Peter is the whole flock.
Know / know	"You know (oidas) that I love you" (15, 16)	"You know (oidas)"	In verse 17 Peter uses both: "you know (oidas) everything; you know (ginoskeis) that I love you."

The insight in one line: Whatever John meant by two verbs for love, the question is Jesus' and the answer is Peter's, and both of them end at the sheep.

ANSWER KEY

SCENE 1 — LOVE BEFORE WORK

1. **LOVE**

2. **THESE**

3. **LAMBS**

SCENE 2 — NO MORE COMPARING

1. **SECOND**

2. **KNOW**

3. **TEND**

SCENE 3 — YOU KNOW EVERYTHING

1. **GRIEVED**

2. **EVERYTHING**

3. **SHEEP**

FAMILY TABLE TALK: TOUGH QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

DO YOU LOVE ME?

Week 4 • John 21 • Nov 1

BIG IDEA: The only qualification for serving Jesus is loving Him.

THE STORY IN 4 STEPS

1
THE BREAKFAST
Jesus cooks fish on the beach for His friends. Peter is there.

2
THE QUESTION
Three times Jesus asks Peter: "Do you love me?"

3
THE ANSWER
Peter says, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."

4
THE JOB
Jesus says, "Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep."

YOUR TURN: Who is your lamb?

Write or draw one person you can help this week.

PICK A CARD (talk about one or two at the table)

WOULD YOU RATHER
Would you rather cook a big breakfast for your friends or be the one who gets served?

HOT SEAT
Who do you know that could use a friend this week? What could you do?

REAL TALK
Parents, go first: who fed you spiritually, by teaching you or praying for you?

BRAVE QUESTION
If Jesus asked you, "Do you love me?" what would you say, and how would you show it?

PARENT CHEAT SHEET

"Why did Jesus ask Peter three times?" Peter denied Jesus three times. Jesus gave him three chances to say "I love you" out loud, and three jobs to do.

"What does 'feed my sheep' mean?" Care for the people Jesus loves: teach, encourage, pray, help. It is not only for pastors.

Not sure? Say: "Great question, let's find out together."

THIS WEEK'S MISSION
Feed one "lamb" this week: encourage, serve, or pray for one person. Tell your family how it went.

PRAY TOGETHER
Thank Jesus for loving and forgiving us. Ask Him to help our family love Him and care for others.