

Finding Light in the Darkness
Session 11: Love (Focus in New Testament)

What is Love?

What are some sayings you've heard about Love?

- i.e. Love makes the world go round
- Love is blind

We hear so much about it, yet see so little of it in action

Our culture says being loved is more important than loving, and that being loved depends on being attractive

Name the things you "love": _____

You have it, want it, or lost it

People fall in and out of it

Love can turn to hate, then switch to passion in a marital squabble

Are there different kinds of Love? Different levels of Love? Different words for Love?

How does it work?

What does it do? What does it look like?

Is Love a process or a state of being?

Write your own definition of love: _____

What was the dominate culture during the days of Jesus and His followers?

Four Greek Words

1. Eros
2. Storge
3. Phileo/Philanthropia
4. Agapao/Agape

1. Eros

- Secular Greek term, not in NT
- Human Love
- Romantic Love (according to studies, the main reason why people get married)
- Fiery passion
- Sexual Love
- Getting something for yourself
- Kindled by the attractiveness of another – excitement, pleasure, satisfaction
- Poses as love for another but is actually love for oneself
- "I love you because you make me..."
- It's based on a characteristic (beauty, intelligence, talent), take away the characteristic – "love" dies
- Primarily looks for what it can get
- May give a little, but the motive is to get something back
- Has the accompanying attitude of a compulsion to possess the object
- If it fails to get what it wants it turns to: resentment, bitterness or hatred

- Over ½ of American Men and Women say that not being in love is grounds for divorce
- It's a mixture of anger, sexual urge, joy & jealousy consummated in ecstasy
- How do most people choose a life partner? chemistry
- Strangely, in the Bible teaching about Christian love, eros is not mentioned in the NT Greek. Maybe it is because the Greeks in Corinth viewed eros as the ultimate religious expression. They thought the highest spiritual experience was the most powerful form of ecstasy. And, what could be more intense than sexual climax?
- That is why there existed in Corinth the temple to Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. At one time, this fertility cult employed about one thousand priestess prostitutes available to provide the ultimate "religious experience." Paul referred to this problem in 1 Corinthians 6:15-20.

2. Storge

- Not used in the NT
- Natural Love
- Family Love – binds families, races, nations, etc
- Inevitable, automatic
- Affection for someone
- Positive side: bonding factor "through thick or thin" / Negative: bigotry, racism – rejecting those not "like us" or "of us"

3. Phileo

- Relates to the human personality...the Soul – mind, will, emotions
- Emotional warmth
- Tender affection toward a friend or family member
- Involves closeness & bonding
- Companionship or brotherly love
- Mutual sharing – 50/50 – give and take
- i.e. Peter talking with Jesus (John 21:15,16)
- There is some eros in philia. We choose friends because of the pleasure we derive from being with them. There are personal qualities in them that we appreciate, intellectual and cultural interests that we share, and mutual self-expression that we find satisfying. We derive something enjoyable from the relationship, but we are also willing to give our fair share. This giving is not free from selfish motivation, but the selfishness is largely obscured by a sense of togetherness. Philia is a higher level of love than eros in that "our" happiness is involved rather than merely "my" happiness.
- Eros is blind. It closes its eyes to faults, laughs off shortcomings, and rationalizes potential problems. Philia, on the other hand, honestly faces all these things and decides whether they are overshadowed by contrasting strengths.
- It's loves "half way" mark
- Can't take the strain
- A couple can make it on this kind of love as long as each one does his part and the circumstances of life remain fairly steady. If one partner fails to contribute his

share, however, or if unusual stress is introduced (financial crisis, serious illness, in-law tensions, sexual problems, child-rearing problems, etc.), the friendship suffers

- It finally becomes selfish and demanding, and comradeship turns to conflict

4. **Agape**

- Rarely used outside the NT, the concept was in the Greek and Roman culture, but the actual word – agape – was not
- To highly value
- Unconditionally have at heart the genuine welfare and best interests of the object loved
- Rational commitment
- Motivation to maintain a relationship even in the face of problems
- It directs kindness, respect and loyalty toward the object loved
- It delights in giving
- Desires only the good of the one loved
- Keeps on loving even when its object is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable, or completely unworthy
- It doesn't give fifty percent and expect fifty percent in return. It gives one hundred percent and expects nothing in return!
- It's not human!! Agape is given by God alone, because He Himself is agape (1 John 4:8)
- Romans 8:35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Bible Search:

- God's love toward us
 - a. John 3:16
 - b. Romans 5:5,8
- Jesus' self-sacrificial love
 - a. John 15:12, 13
 - b. Ephesians 5:1,2
- Our misdirected love towards things
 - a. 1 John 2:15-17
- Our love towards others
 - a. John 13:35
- Our relationship with God
 - a. 1 John 5:1-3
- Our relationship with Jesus
 - a. John 15:14
- Characteristics of Agape
 - a. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Characteristics of Agape 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

1. Suffereth long
2. Kind
3. Envieth not
4. Vaunteth not
5. Not puffed up
6. Not unseemly
7. Seeketh not her own
8. Not easily provoked
9. Thinketh no evil
10. Rejoiceth not in iniquity
11. Rejoiceth in truth
12. Beareth all things
13. Believeth all things
14. Hopeth all things
15. Endureth all things
16. Never faileth

The Growth Cycle of Love

Eros => Phileo => Agape / Think of the Baby => Child => Teen => Adult

Maturing love involves growing from a state of receiving much and giving little toward a state of cheerfully giving everything and demanding nothing in return.

In a marriage relationship, the dominant fire of eros gradually gives ground to the mature phileo of affection. Phileo becomes the cement that bonds and holds families together over the long haul.

There is an actual shift in the balance of bodily hormones during this transition. In popular usage, we call this shift the end of the honeymoon period. The chemicals of eros dominate the emotional areas of our brain, and overrule the critical thinking areas. After those chemicals subside, the thinking regions make a come back, and we may wonder what we ever saw in the other person!

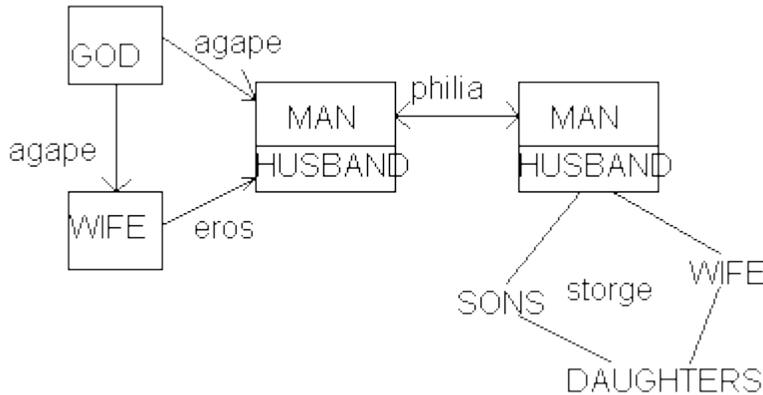
Do you have an intimacy of spirit and soul, as well as body with your mate? We should concentrate (before marriage) on the establishment of communion of spirit and soul first, then body as the crowning glory of a growing relationship (in marriage).

Do you have an intimacy of spirit, soul & body with Father? Luke 10:27

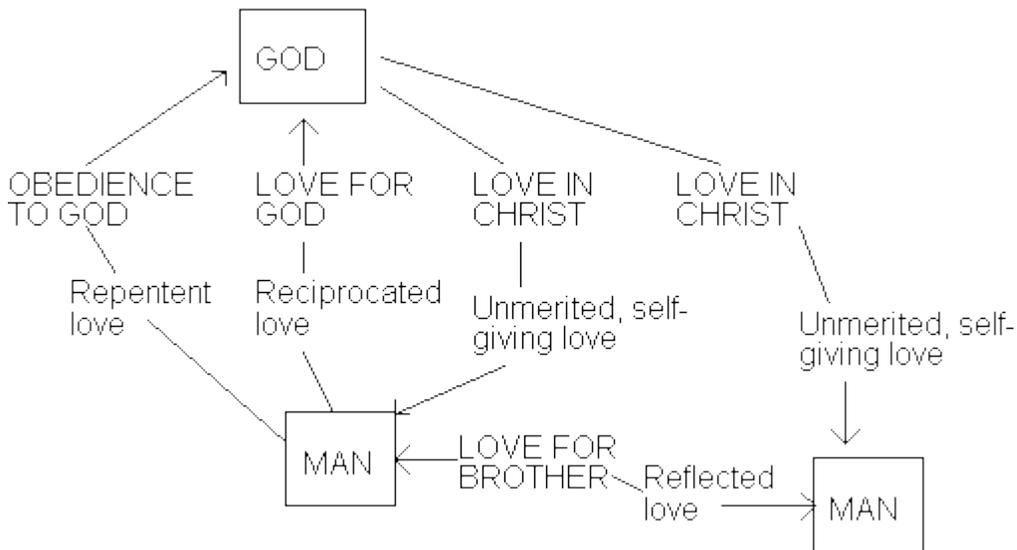
Jesus displayed this Christian love toward Lazarus, as observed, "Lord, behold, he whom You love (phileo) is sick" (John 11:3). In addition, John also wrote of this relationship, "Now Jesus loved (agape) Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" John 11:5).

John also reveals that God displays friendship love (phileo) toward us, and believers toward Jesus (John 16:27).

The Love Covenant God Created:



Love Shared Between Different People:



Love Contrasted:

Phileo	Agape
Natural	Learned
Emotional	Volitional (conscious choice)
Discriminatory (prejudice; biased)	Non-Discriminatory
Conditional	Unconditional
Delight (gives you joy)	Esteem (regard with respect)
Liking	Prizing
Because of	In Spite of
Fails	Never Fails

Practical Applications

- Christian love is important. It forms the relationship foundation between us, God, and other believers – and all people (1 Thessalonians 3:12).
- All kinds of love are vital and important in a healthy marriage relationship.
Phileo can be thought of as love from the soul, and **agape** from the spirit. Agape should be the foundation in a marriage. But, sex is important also, **eros**, which is from the body. Successful love in a marriage incorporates all three.
- Marriage should not be based on eros alone, because when the eros slows down with time and age, you might get bored, and think you have fallen out of love.
- Don't confuse eros and phileo with true Christian love: agape. Falling out of eros is not falling out of love.
- Love can grow if cultivated, it's not automatic.
- We must be wary of "platonic" relationships with the opposite sex. The heartfelt intimacy of phileo can quickly turn to the raging passion of eros.
- Agape love is the sign of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life (Galatians 5:22).
- Both agape and phileo should characterize the relationships among Christians (Romans 12:9, 10).
- How can we possibly love this way? (1 John 4:19) God's love for us generates love in our own hearts. Is your heart filled with bitterness, resentment, or hard feelings? God loves you, just as you are, in spite of your sinful, selfish attitudes and acts. God loves you! Contemplate His love, enjoy His love, revel in His love, drink deeply of His love, thank Him for His love. (Galatians 5:22 / 6:7 / Luke 6:38)
- You can't give what you don't have. Loving others comes out of the overflow of loving Him & being loved by Him.

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Describe how Christian love (agape) is to work out in your life (Mark 12:29-31).
2. In what manner did God display His Christian love (agape) toward us (Romans 5:8)?
3. What is a source of hope to Christians (Romans 5:5)?
4. List and explain five ways you can express Christian love (agape) in your most important relationships (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).
5. How important is Christian love (agape) in your relationships with others (1 Corinthians 13:13)? Explain.
6. Explain the difference between eros, agape, and phileo.
7. What should be our relationship to the world (1 John 2:15-17; John 3:16; Matthew 5:24). How can you reconcile these verses? Agape is used in all three.
8. Describe two ways how husbands can relate Christian love (agape) to their wives (Ephesians 5:25)?
9. Describe two ways wives can express love (phileo) to their husbands (Titus 2:4).
10. What stood out the most to you in this Bible study? Explain.

*John 15:9-11 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

*John 17:26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

*Romans 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

*Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

LOVE (NOUN AND VERB)

A. Verbs.

1. agapao NT:25 and the corresponding noun agape (B, No. 1 below) present "the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, inquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the NT. Cf, however, Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5.

"Agape and agapao are used in the NT (a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Rom 5:8, and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ particularly John 14:21; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34-35, and toward all men, 1 Thess 3:12; 1 Cor 16:14; 2 Peter 1:7; (c) to express the essential nature of God, 1 John 4:8.

"Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1 John 4:9,10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Rom 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself, Cf. Deut 7:7,8.

"Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor 5:14; Eph 2:4; 3:19; 5:2; Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian, Gal 5:22.

"Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, John 14:15,21,23; 15:10; 1 John 2:5; 5:3; 2 John 6. Selfwill, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God.

"Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom 15:2, and works no ill to any, 13:8,9,10; love seeks opportunity to do good to 'all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,' Gal 6:10. See further 1 Cor 13 and Col 3:12-14."

From Notes on Thessalonians, by Hogg and Vine, p. 105.

In respect of agapao as used of God, it expresses the deep and constant "love" and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a

reverential "love" in them towards the Giver, and a practical "love" towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the Giver. See BELOVED. 2. phileo NT:5368 is to be distinguished from agapao in this, that phileo more nearly represents "tender affection." The two words are used for the "love" of the Father for the Son, John 3:35 (No. 1), and 5:20 (No. 2); for the believer, 14:21 (No. 1) and 16:27 (No. 2); both, of Christ's "love" for a certain disciple, 13:23 (No. 1), and 20:2 (No. 2). Yet the distinction between the two verbs remains, and they are never used indiscriminately in the same passage; if each is used with reference to the same objects, as just mentioned, each word retains its distinctive and essential character.

Phileo is never used in a command to men to "love" God; it is, however, used as a warning in 1 Cor 16:22; agapao is used instead, e. g., Matt 22:37; Luke 10:27; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 8:3; 1 Peter 1:8; 1 John 4:21. The distinction between the two verbs finds a conspicuous instance in the narrative of John 21:15-17. The context itself indicates that agapao in the first two questions suggests the "love" that values and esteems (cf. Rev 12:11). It is an unselfish "love," ready to serve. The use of phileo in Peter's answers and the Lord's third question, conveys the thought of cherishing the Object above all else, of manifesting an affection characterized by constancy, from the motive of the highest veneration. See also Trench, Syn., Sec. xii.

Again, to "love" (phileo) life, from an undue desire to preserve it, forgetful of the real object of living, meets with the Lord's reproof, John 12:25. On the contrary, to "love" life (agapao) as used in 1 Peter 3:10, is to consult the true interests of living. Here the word phileo would be quite inappropriate.

Note: In Mark 12:38, KJV, thelo, "to wish," is translated "love" (RV, "desire").

B. Nouns.

1. agape NT:26, the significance of which has been pointed out in connection with A, No. 1, is always rendered "love" in the RV where the KJV has "charity," a rendering nowhere used in the RV; in Rom 14:15, where the KJV has "charitably," the RV, adhering to the translation of the noun, has "in love."

Note: In the two statements in 1 John 4:8 and 16, "God is love," both are used to enjoin the exercise of "love" on the part of believers. While the former introduces a declaration of the mode in which God's love has been manifested vv. 9,10, the second introduces a statement of the identification of believers with God in character, and the issue at the Judgment Seat hereafter v. 17, an identification represented ideally in the sentence "as He is, so are we in this world."

2. philanthropia NT:5363 denotes, lit., "love for man" (phileo and anthropos, "man"); hence, "kindness," Acts 28:2, in Titus 3:4, "(His) love toward man." Cf. the adverb philanthropos, "humanely, kindly," Acts 27:3.

Note: For philarguria, "love of money," 1 Tim 6:10, see MONEY (love of). For philadelphia, see BROTHER, Note (1).

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

Worksheet: **Love** (Focus in New Testament)

Name the things you “love”: _____

Write your own definition of love: _____

Four Greek Words

1. **Eros**

Strong’s Number: _____

Meaning: _____

2. **Storge**

Strong’s Number: _____

Meaning: _____

3. **Phileo/Philanthropia**

Strong’s Number: _____

Strong’s: _____

Vine’s: _____

4. **Agapao/Agape**

Strong’s Number: _____

Strong’s: _____

Vine’s: _____

Bible Search:

- _____
 - a. John 3:16
 - b. Romans 5:5,8

- _____
a. John 15:12, 13
b. Ephesians 5:1,2
- _____
a. 1 John 2:15-17
- _____
a. John 13:35
- _____
a. 1 John 5:1-3
- _____
a. John 15:14
- _____
a. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Characteristics of Agape 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

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List The Growth Cycle of Love

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____