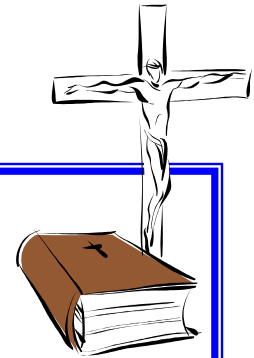


A Life of LOVE



Love, from the ages (4-8 that is)

Within us:

- a need for love (a motivating element for everyone)
(An empty spot within us that only God (who is love) can fill.)
- a natural ability to love to some degree

I Pet. 4:8 “And above all things, have fervent love one for another...”

Eph. 5:2 We are exhorted to live a life of love.

John 15:9-10 We are to abide in God’s love.

To love is not an option or choice, it is a command.

If we are faithful to God’s commands, we will be a loving body.

Advice to young ministers: “Preach the Word and Love the sheep”

A Life of Love



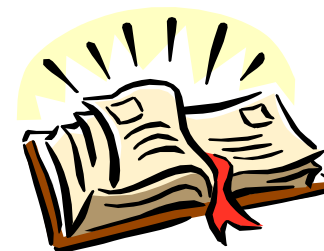
- Central theme of the Bible (Over 750 Xs in the Bible)
- Love was God's motivation for providing our salvation ("For God so loved the world..." (John 3:16)
In this verse, we also see that :
 - Love is active. (God acted, He gave, He reached out to us)
 - Love initiates. (He didn't wait for a response from us.)
 - Love (God's) is not self-focused. (It was focused on a dying world.)
 - Love is costly. (He gave His only and His best.)
 - Love's expression comes from our own resources.
 - Love continues to give. (Our salvation is a work in progress.)
- I John 3:16 "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us."
We can know God's love.
- The very nature of God (God is love.) I John 4:8
 - the Father
 - the Son
 - the Holy Spirit

A Life of Love

- Matt. 22:37

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

The first and greatest command is to love God.
We must first learn to love God in the way of agape.
Then, we can turn and learn to love our neighbor.



But, since there are several different kinds of love in the world today, we need to first learn what is God’s love (agape) and how it is different than the other kinds of love. (This will help us to understand “how” to love God.)

LOVE – the Biblical words: *Storge*



1. *Storge*

Source – the natural man

Definition

- a natural affection or obligation of the soul for a husband, wife, child or dog.
- love within the family (C. Smith, “Living Water”)
- It is a quiet abiding feeling within that rests on someone or something close to you and that you feel good about.

Usage in Scripture - very sparse

Rom. 1:31 and 2 Tim 3:3 *astorge* (without natural affection)

Rom. 12:10 *philostorgoi* (kindly affectioned)

Note: This love appears to be similar in some ways to *phileo*.

Love – The Biblical Words: 2. *Eros*

2. *Eros*

Source - the natural man/the physical realm

Definition - erotic love

- a love of passion, an overmastering passion that seizes and absorbs itself into the mind
- an emotional involvement based on body chemistry
- the basic idea of this love is self-satisfaction.

The foundation of this love is some characteristic (e.g. physical attractiveness) in the other person which pleases you. If the characteristic ceases to exist, then the love would be gone.

e.g. Amnon and Tamar (the love turned to hate)



Note: the effect on Tamar (remained desolate in her brother's house)

Philosophy – Being loved depends upon being attractive in some way to another person.

This is considered a conditional love.

Usage – not used in the New Testament

Love – The Biblical Words : 3. Phileo



- *Phileo*

Source – natural man

Definition – affection, fondness, liking

It is a love that is called or drawn out of one's heart by qualities in another or as a response to the pleasure one takes in a person or object.

It is a love that responds to kindness, appreciation or love. It involves giving as well as receiving but when greatly strained, it may collapse in a crisis.

Phileo is higher than *eros* because it is an “our happiness” not “my happiness” relationship.

It is a love between friends.

I like this person because of who he is or what he does.

I enjoy being with this person.

Usage – many times in NT in both noun and verb forms

In John 21:15-17 (Jesus/Peter “do you love me” discourse) – it is contrasted with *agape*:

1. *agape* – *phileo*
2. *agape* - *phileo*
3. *phileo* - *phileo*

Love – The Biblical Words : 4. *Agape*

4. *Agape*

A little-used word in Greek culture infused with new meaning in the New Testament.

Source: the Spirit

Note! This is not a love possessed by the natural man. As a result, without the new birth, you cannot exhibit this kind of love.

Definition: It is called out of the heart by the preciousness of the object loved.

It is a love of esteem, of prizing, of highly valuing.

It is the highest, most noble word in Greek for love.

It is not kindled by the merit or the worth of its object.

It delights in giving.

It is active on behalf of the beloved.

It keeps on loving even when the object loved is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable and unworthy. It is unconditional love.

It desires only the good of the loved.

It is a consuming passion for the well-being of others.

This is not a “What’s in it for me?” love.

Usage: ~ 320 Xs in the NT

This word is very rare outside of the Bible.



I Corinthians 13 – What does this agape look like?



1. Suffers long (is patient) – patient endurance
- capable of bearing delay and waiting for the right moment
2. Kind – friendly, generous, hospitable, warmhearted, helpful, showing sympathy, considerate, gracious, compassionate, tender, gentle, shows evidence of concern for others (not self seeking or me-centered)
3. Does not envy – can truly rejoice when others are blessed (even if they get something you have wanted)
(as opposed to jealous, envious, malice, ill-will, spite)
4. Does not parade itself – is not prideful or conceited, does not draw attention to itself
(This person is not looking for attention and is not focused on self.)
5. Is not puffed up – is not proud, arrogant, doesn't think more highly of itself than it ought to think
6. Does not behave rudely – versus ill-mannered, discourteous, uncivilized, harsh, coarse, uncouth
7. Does not seek its own – willing to set aside our own plans or agenda; does not insist on having its own way

I Corinthians 13 - What does this Agape Look Like?

8. Is not provoked – not easily angered or overly sensitive (not the same as being sensitive to the leadings of the Spirit)
“Provoke” – to stir or incite to anger or resentment
annoy, irritate, exasperate, goad, vex, touchy
9. Thinks no evil
 - desires a pure heart, does not hold grudges, keeps no record of wrongs;
 - doesn't engage in fault-finding, grumbling or complaining
10. Doesn't rejoice in iniquity – has no delight in wickedness, does not enjoy being in situations where sin is occurring
11. Rejoices in the truth – delights in righteous acts
12. Bears all things – withstands adversity, never gives up, always protects
13. Believes all things – has faith, always trusts, has a heart to please God
14. Hopes all things – hopes steadfastly for the things unseen;
doesn't rely on natural vision or physical circumstances.
15. Endures all things – accepts any hardship, rejection or difficult paths
16. Never fails – doesn't give up (Churchill)



Practical Application - Learning to Love

- How can I apply this in my life?

Select a person: e.g. My wife:

1. Attend to her needs first.
2. Help her to become the person God created her to be.
3. Support her in her commitments to serve the body.
4. Don't be jealous or envious of attention she gets.
5. Initiate daily acts of kindness.
(demonstrate my love) (love is active/initiates)
6. Be willing to give up my agenda, resources, time, energy to minister to her needs.
7. Be gentle and kind (especially with words), not harsh, overbearing, demeaning. My words should: encourage, build up, heal, help, be instructive not destructive, comfort
8. When the peace between us is disturbed, fix my problem first.
9. Don't ever give up on her.
10. Don't ever exalt myself over her.
11. Continue praying for her.



How do we get this love?

1. Rom. 5:5 “Now hope does not disappoint us because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (note the verb tense)
See also Rom. 15:30 (“...and through the love of the Holy Spirit”)
2. Gal. 5:22 “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...”
3. Lk. 11:9f “ask, seek, knock”
4. Being filled with the Spirit – see C. Smith book “Living Water” chapter on “A torrent of Love”

Bottom line: This kind of love (agape) comes from God.

