

DOCTRINE OF LOVE

- I.** Preliminary considerations:
- A.** Love is described in scripture as an attribute expressed by both God and man.
 - B.** In both cases, for this attribute to be expressed, there must be an object animate or inanimate, towards which to express.
 - C.** It is the expression/assertion of love in the Bible that proves to be complex in understanding of its application.
 - D.** There are three distinct levels of application of love taught in Scripture:
 - 1. Sexual love.
 - 2. Affectionate or brotherly/natural love.
 - 3. Divine love.
 - E.** Of these three levels of application, it is Divine love that completes all other love and ultimately places love within the parameters of Divine viewpoint and obedience to God.
- II.** Vocabulary:
- A.** Hebrew:
- 1. אָהַב – (-ahab) Verb: Root meaning to desire, to pant after, to long for, to love. Translated beloved, dearly love, friend, lover. Used of God only in a good sense; used of men in both a good and bad context.
 - 2. אֲהַבָּהּ - (-ahabah) Noun, a cognate of –ahab: Means love or lovesick.
 - 3. דּוֹד – (dod) Noun: Means love, lover, beloved. Used of an object of love, a loved one, or a relative.
 - 4. חָשַׁק – (chashaq) Verb: Root meaning to be attached to, to be joined together, to cleave. Translated longs, loved, pleased.
 - 5. עָגַב – (agab) Verb: To have inordinate affection, to lust after. Used of love for idolatry Eze.23:5,7,9
 - 6. חֶסֶד - (chesed) Noun: Means goodness or kindness. Translated loyalty, loyal love called loving kindness, faithfulness, unchanging love.
- B.** Greek:
- 1. There are only two word groups in the New Testament to define love.
 - 2. It is through the use of these two families of words that one draws a distinction in nuance of their application.
 - 3. φιλέω – (phileo) Verb: To love, to have affection for something or someone.
 - 4. φιλία – (philia) Noun: Friendship, affection.
 - 5. φίλος – (philos) Noun: A friend, love.
 - 6. φιλαδελφία – (philadelphia) Noun: Brotherly love, love of the brothers.
 - 7. The above word group looks to the attributes of the one to whom love is expressed.

8. ἀγαπάω – (agapao) Verb: To love. Used primarily of God’s love. It may or may not include affection or an emotional attachment. It denotes a commitment, fidelity, sacrifice and obedience towards the object. It is used technically for application of Bible Doctrine under the filling ministry of God the Holy Spirit.
9. ἀγάπη – (agape) Noun: An abused word in the fundamentalist world. Means love. It has the same nuance as agapao and is used for Divine love. It is not sentimental/maudlin/gushing/syrupy in application but is the overt expression of Divine good (Rom.12:9). Again, when applied to men, it is love produced from Bible doctrine in the soul, in FHS.
10. This word group emphasizes love based on the attributes of the one expressing love not dependent upon the attributes to whom love is expressed.
11. It is in the gospel accounts that the clear distinction of nuance between phileo and agape love is presented. Joh.15:13 Love (agape) is seen as an application of sacrifice; philos is translated as “friends” and denotes those whom the one who makes the sacrifice towards as being someone with whom there is a natural affection or emotional tie. Joh.21:15-17 The word “love” in Jesus’ question to Peter is vs.15-16 is agapao while Peter’s response is phileo. Vs.17 Jesus changes “love” in his question to phileo love to emphasize that Peter’s affection is ok but not the “true/Divine love” that He is speaking of unless Peter fulfills the imperatives Jesus has presented.
12. There is no Greek word used in the New Testament to express sexual love, however ἔρωσ – the Greek word for sexual love is used in the LXX. Pro.7:18 (translated “caresses” and denotes sexual enjoyment. The Hebrew word used is dod.); Pro.30:16 (translated “barren womb” and via context expresses a desire for sexual relations in order to produce offspring.)

III. The three levels of employment of love further defined.

- A. Sexual love refers to the sexual partnership as a legitimate expression of love in the Divine institution of marriage:
 1. This love is reserved for husband and wife and only in the context of marriage. 1Cor.7:2; cp. Pro.5:15-20
 2. God designed sexual love for both recreation and procreation as designated in the Old Testament. Gen.2:22-25; cp. 1:27,28
 3. It is commanded for the husband and wife. 1Cor.7:3,4
 4. The omission of a particular “love” word in the N.T. in the context of sexual love is to highlight that the sex act in and of itself alone does not reflect “love”. Rather, it also requires the application of the married partners towards one another revolving around the communion that portrays sexual love fully. 1Cor.7: vs.2 – *“But because of (sexual) immoralities (sex outside marriage initiated through the STA), let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband (employs monogamy and fidelity). vs.3 – Let the husband fulfill his duty*

(ὀφειλή/sexually that what is due/owed/debt) *to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband* (Neither party is to deny one another sexually whether it stems from an emotional affection or a natural drive/libido). *vs.4 – The wife does not have authority* (ἐξουσιάζω/to have the right or power over) *over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does* (Sexual love comes from a reciprocating act of submission of their bodies, demanding a respect/natural affection towards one another and thus providing sexual satisfaction for both parties).

5. Sexual love is not divorced from agape since it requires a fulfillment of God's word and a volitional choice of both parties in its application. (Sexual love was designed by God not to be separated from soul love, but in addition to it. Gen.2:24)
 6. In addition, sexual love pictures the unity and like-mindedness spiritually of husband and wife, which according to agape should accompany the physical unity in relationships. Phil.2:2
 7. Application of doctrine under the filling ministry of God the Holy Spirit increases closeness between partners rather than detracting from it.
 8. Sexual love is a bond and source of closeness and pleasure that is much abused by the cosmos.
- B.** Affectionate love (phileo) is love that focuses primarily on the feelings or affections that are generated by the object of the love. It is a natural response one has based on the affinity/fondness/attraction one has towards the object. The object may be bonafide (ex. our brothers and sisters in Christ) or non-bonafide, animate or inanimate, physical or spiritual. It centers on the attributes of the object loved.
1. Other than our affection for and devotion to our brothers and sisters in Christ, this love is not commanded. Rom.12:10; 1Thess.4:9; Heb.13:1; 1Pet.1:22; 2 Pet.1:7 *(It is of interest to note that in three of these verses [1Thess., 1Pet., 2Pet., agape is associated with phileo love.)*
 2. Phileo stems from affinity based on a common/close relationship, common ideas or common desire.
 3. This love exists because of some concrete/actual, physical or emotional reason that prompts it; for example, a family relationship or something that the object does for the one who loves in this manner.
 4. This love often deals with emotions that are pleasurable.
 5. Due to this, it may be based on selfish reasons or motivations.
 6. Phileo can be good or bad depending on the reasons for its existence:
 - a. Bad – Mat.6:5; 10:37; 23:6; 1Tim.6:10; 2 Tim.3:4
 - b. Good – Joh.5:20; Ti.2:4
 7. God possesses this affection/natural bond for believers. Joh.16:27
- C.** Divine love (agapao/agape) is the most far-reaching kind of love. Emotions are not the motivator of this love. In fact, emotional considerations are moot with regard to its application. This love does not depend on the merit of the object. Rather, it is comprised of the mental attitude willingness (deliberate choice) to set aside one's own ideas, plans, good welfare/advantage, feelings

etc., and do what is in the best interest of the object, in the good/Divine sense, spiritually.

1. Agape is an attribute of divine Essence. 1Joh.4:8 “...for God is love.”
2. It is equally present in all three members of the Godhead:
 - a. The Father: Joh.3:16
 - b. The Son: Rom.8:35-37; Eph.5:2
 - c. The Holy Spirit: Rom.15:30
3. God’s love does not exist apart from His righteousness and justice. Therefore, it is not sentimental but faithful. Since God acts according to standards of His own absolute righteousness (+R), His love is not motivated by personal considerations, nor is it based on the merits of the recipients. It is based solely on His own righteous character. Rom.5:8-10; Eph.2:4,5; 1Joh.4:10
4. Since each member of the Godhead is +R, it follows that each member of the Trinity loves the other. cp. Joh.17:1-23
5. The agape love of God is most closely resembled by the Hebrew word chesed. Chesed has the nuance of loyalty/faithfulness/fidelity/mercy/kindness/immutability. It is this word that emphasizes that which governs God’s love:
 - a. Love is an extension of God’s +R and +J. Psa.89:14
 - b. God reveals these three attributes together. Jer.9:24
 - c. His love reveals His mercy and is consistent/immutable/unchanging. Mic.7:18
 - d. His love is not apart from BD but goes hand-in-hand with it. Psa.85:10 “*Lovingkindness (chesed – merciful love) and truth have met together (the reality of that being in the person of Jesus Christ); Righteousness and peace have kissed each other (because Christ fulfilled the Law qualifying Him as sin bearer, reconciliation has been achieved).*”
 - e. Divine love promotes justice either good (Psa.62:12) or bad (Exo.34:7; Num.14:18).
 - f. It is the volition of the individual that renders Divine love as a love of substance and real or makes it empty/vacant of reality. Deu.5:10; Psa.25:10; Psa.86:5 “...to all who call upon You.”
 - g. There is absence of Divine love in the life of the unrighteous, but it comes in spades to the righteous. Psa.32:10
6. Agapao is also used in a bad context where it embraces the idea of “commitment/allegiance/loyalty” to an object. Joh.3:19; 1Joh.2:15
7. It is of interest to note that the writers of the LXX render God’s love for +R and +J as agapao through His faithfulness as the entirety of His plan “fills” the earth. Psa.33:5 “*He loves (agapao) righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the faithful love of the Lord.*” cp.vs.4.
8. Divine love also requires a sacrifice in its application. Joh.3:16
9. Believers are commanded to have this love.

10. For believers to have this love, they must fall under the same parameters of restrictions and sacrifice as God's love while maintaining total integrity to the truth. Joh.17:23,26
 11. This love by believers originates in the soul under the filling of God the Holy Spirit and is demonstrated by the willingness to make whatever application is necessary within the parameters of BD.
 12. Because emotions are neutral in the application of this love and the worthiness or merit of the individual to which it is expressed is a non-issue, it is possible for us to have agape/love even for our enemies. Luk.6:27,35
 13. Because Divine love originates from the Holy Spirit, it is impossible for unbelievers to possess it; it is also impossible for the believer to express it who is out of fellowship and not therefore, ruled by God and Bible doctrine. Gal.5:22
- D. Agapao focuses primarily on the spiritual welfare/interest of the object while phileo focuses on the gravitational affection generated by the object.

IV. Love and the Attributes of God.

- A. Love is but one of the attributes of God's essence, which also includes Absolute Righteousness, Justice, Eternal Life, Immutability, Veracity, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Sovereignty.
- B. Righteousness and justice are the "watchdogs" of God's essence.
- C. All other attributes must check their expression if they would violate +R in their expression.
- D. God's love is only expressed in accordance with +R and +J; otherwise, it would be partial and thus He would cease to be totally +R. Exo.34:6,7; Deu.7:6-11
- E. While God loves all of mankind, His love is limited in benefit based on His +R and +J.
- F. It is thus restricted due to -V. Joh.5:42
- G. Since God is immutable, His love is eternal and unchanging. Mic.7:18-20
- H. God loves (agapao) the world. Joh.3:16
- I. However, He both loves (agapao) and has affection (phileo) for the believer. 1Joh.4:9-19 (agapao); cp. Joh.16:27 (phileo)
- J. To "blanket" state that God's love is "unconditional" or "unlimited" is a misnomer based on His essence and these terms if applied to His love should be minimally qualified with the proper doctrines such as: unlimited atonement, impartiality, grace, fills, etc.

V. God's love and the SAJG.

- A. Due to the fall of Adam, all of mankind possesses the indwelling OSN/STA and thus born spiritually dead. Rom.5:12
- B. In this condition, mankind produces sins that are violations of God's +R character. Rom.3:23; 5:19
- C. In their fallen condition, mankind is alienated from god, hostile toward God and totally deserving of His wrath. Rom.5:10; Eph.2:3; 4:17-18

- D. In spite of this, God's love motivated Him to provide salvation for His enemies. Rom.1:16-17
 - E. He provided what was necessary in His son, Jesus Christ, who took upon Himself, the sins of mankind. 2Cor.5:21; 1Pet.2:24
 - F. Because of His great love, God sacrificed His own perfect Son on behalf of sinners. Rom.5:8
 - G. God's love was based on His integrity, not on our merit. 1Joh.4:10
 - H. Since Christ died for all men, salvation is potential for all mankind (unlimited atonement), contingent only on their faith in His Son. 1Tim.4:10; 1Joh.2:2
 - I. God's love does not motivate Him to violate Divine Institution #1 by forcing anyone to believe.
 - J. God loves all of mankind, but He will personally cast the majority of them into the lake of fire. Mat.7:13,14
 - K. His love will not cause even on exception to be made, even in matters of eternal consequence as all unbelievers will come under eternal separation. Rev.20:15
- VI.** There are 5 categories that the 3 levels of love are to be applied by believers.
- A.** Category 1 love is the believer's love for God.
 1. Many believers make claim, as to the love they possess for God.
 2. If we clearly understand how God defines and evaluates love for His person, pseudo professions will not take us in. Eze.33:30-32
 3. Love for God is commanded and therefore a volitional decision. Deu.11:1; Mat.22:37; Jud.21
 4. The believer's love for God is not dependent upon emotions, stands separate from human viewpoint activities, and is evidenced by the intake and application of Bible doctrine. Joh.14:15, 21-24; 1Joh.5:3
 5. Category 1 love is also called "occupation with Christ". 1Pet.1:8
 6. The blessings associated with love of God in truth are found in Deu.7:13; 11:13-15; Joh.14:15,21,23,24; Jam.1:12; 2:5
 7. There is a curse on the one who does not have personal affection for Christ. 1Cor.16:22 (phileo)
 - B.** Category 2 love is love under the Divine Institution of marriage.
 1. All 3 levels of love (sexual, affectionate, agape/Divine) are applicable in this relationship.
 2. It is commanded of husband to wife. 1Cor.7:2 (sexually); Eph.5:25,28,33; Col.3:19 (agape)
 3. Sexual love is forbidden for all others. Exo.20:14; Mat:5:27; Heb.13:4
 4. The highest expression of love for the wife entails complete submission to the husband's authority. Eph.5:22,23; Ti.2:4,5 (phileo – show natural affection); 1Pet.3:1-6
 5. For the husband, the expression of Divine love is to acclimate to self-sacrifice and the weaker vessel principle. Eph.5:25-28; 1Pet.3:7
 6. For both husband and wife, the Word of God dictates that the marriage vow is not to be broken. 1Cor.7:10-13
 7. Category 2 love is inclusive of parental love for their children.

- a. Affectionate love for the parent to the child and vice versa is to be expected. Ti.2:4
 - b. Divine love is evidenced when the parent overrules any emotions that hinder application of discipline to the child under the principle of love. Pro.13:24
 - c. Physical correction coupled with verbal instruction is the norm set forth by BD. Pro.29:15
 - d. The parent is to deal with the real problem, which is the child's STA. Pro.22:15
 - e. This is God's method for training the child to avoid STA activity and the resulting DD. Pro.23:12,13
 - f. The parent must consistently overrule their own STA and emotions to provide correct discipline or you do not love your children. Pro.13:24
 - g. God demonstrates this same love with discipline for His children. Heb.12:5-11
 - h. Neither are parents to exasperate/incite to anger their children. Col.3:21
- C. Category 3 love is love for friends.**
- 1. David and Jonathan illustrate this type of love. 1Sam.18:1-4; 2Sam.1:26
 - 2. A true friend loves consistently at all times. Pro.17:17; 18:24
 - 3. A true friend tells you what you need to hear. Pro.27:6
 - 4. A true friend does not malign. Psa.15:3
 - 5. A true friend shows hospitality. Lk.11:5,6
 - 6. The maximum expression of love is physical sacrifice. Joh.15:13
 - 7. A friend of the cosmos is not a friend of God. 1Joh.2:15,16
 - 8. A believer who desires friendship with negative volition is not a friend of God. Jam.4:4; 2Cor.6:14-18
- D. Category 4 love is love of one's enemies.**
- 1. We are commanded to apply Divine love to our enemies. Luk.6:27,35 (agape)
 - 2. Believers are to pray for those who persecute them. Mat.5:43-48
 - 3. You are to avoid revenge tactics and use opportunities to bless them. Rom.12:20,21
 - 4. It is through this application that God is allowed to apply wrath on your enemies on your behalf and in turn bless you. Pro.25:21-22
 - 5. As you apply category 4 love, you imitate God's love as seen in the cross. Mat.5:44-48
 - 6. It was taught under the Law. Exo.23:4
 - 7. This category is an acid test of your relative maturity. Mat.5:48
 - 8. These verses are not in conflict with bonafide violence.
 - a. War: Deu.7:1-5
 - b. Capital punishment: Gen.9:5,6; Rom.1:32; 13:4
- E. Category 5 love is love for the Royal Family.**
- 1. This is love for fellow believers in the local church and is commanded. Joh.13:34; 15:12,17; 1Pet.2:17; 1Joh.2:5; 3:11,23; 2Joh.5
 - 2. It is called the royal law. Jam.2:8

3. It was taught under the Law. Lev.19:18
4. This is an area of prayer for the local church. 1Thess.3:12
5. We demonstrate love for other believers when we:
 - a. Exercise patience toward them. Eph.4:2
 - b. Forgive offenses both intentional and unintentional. Eph.4:32
 - c. Help them with physical needs. 1Joh.3:17,18; Jam.2:16
 - d. Avoid “twitting” the new believer on doctrine who is weak. Rom.14:1,14,15
 - e. Separate from the errant believer. 1Cor.5:1-13; 2Thess.3:6,14,15
 - f. Receive back the one who makes a reversion recovery. 2Cor.2:4-8
 - g. Hold the P-T and deacons in high regard. 1Thess.5:12,13
 - h. Apply in areas of need in the local church. Gal.5:13
 - i. Show hospitality. Heb.13:1,2
 - j. Avoid gossip and backbiting. Gal.5:14,15
 - k. Avoid phoniness and hypocrisy. Rom.12:9; 1Pet.1:22
 - l. Avoid partiality. Jam.2:8,9

VII. Positive volition is to love God’s word. Psa.119:47,48,97,113,119, 127,159,163,165,167; Pro.4:6; 8:17,21; 2Thess.2:10

VIII. Love and GAP (Grace Apparatus for Perception).

- A. The P-T who loves God feeds his congregation. Joh.21:15-17
- B. Love for God is to keep His commandments. Ex.20:6; Deu.6:5; 7:9,10,12,13; 11:13,22; 13:3, Josh.22:5; Neh.1:5; 1Joh.2:5
- C. The Holy Spirit broadcasts the knowledge of God’s love for us in our hearts. Rom.5:5
- D. The love of Christ for the believer is comprehended under GAP. Eph.3:14-19; Col.2:2,3
- E. GAP gives us the discernment so our love applications may abound. Phil.1:9
- F. Capacity for and acclimation to the dictates of love produce unity in the local body and maximum production and SG3. Col.3:12-17
- G. The prayer for the Royal Family is multiplication of love, which comes through GAP. Jud.2

IX. Love is a characteristic of the filling of the Holy Spirit and is expressed in the commands to “*walk in love*” (Eph.5:2), “*abide in love*” (Joh.15:10), and “*put on love*” (Col.3:14).

X. Regeneration is the catalyst for Divine love. 1Pet.1:22-23

XI. In 1Cor.13, love (agape) is technical for the filling ministry of God the Holy Spirit, apart from which there is no divine good production.

- A. Five hypothetical statements are used to show the foolishness of great service, insight, and sacrifice apart from the FHS (vss.1-3).
- B. In vss.4-7, Paul describes the characteristics of the FHS both in positive and negative terms.

- C. In vs.8-12, Paul explains that the FHS (love) will continue long after the temporary gifts have ceased.
 - D. In fact, love (FHS) will continue into Phase 3, where faith and hope cease (vs.13).
- XII.** To the extent you stay under the FHS, to that degree you will have divine good production. Joh.15:5; cp. vs.9
- XIII.** The mature believer loves His appearing. 2Tim.4:8
- XIV.** Inappropriate objects of love.
- A. Lies: Rev.22:15
 - B. Darkness: Joh.3:19
 - C. The world: 1Joh.2:15
 - D. The details of life: 1Joh.2:15
 - E. Money: Mat.6:19-34; 1Tim.3:3; Heb.13:5
 - F. Pleasures: 2Tim.3:4
 - G. Yourself: 2Tim.3:2
 - H. Your life: Rev.12:11

“He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.”

Joh.14:24

“pursue love” (1Cor.14:1); *“in genuine love”* (2Cor.6:6)

“Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible.”

Eph.6:24