

Love II
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
May 12, 2007

Last week, we started looking into the use of the word “love” in the Bible. We talked a bit about the plethora of songs that deal with love and I read a sermon dated May 14, 2006 given by a United Methodist Church pastor named Dennis Kuder from Kansas. It served as a perfect lead-in to our study.

Today, we will begin by looking at the Biblical words that are translated into today’s English word “love”.

Old Testament

157 ahab (aw-hab) – like, friend

158 ahab (ah-hab) – affection

159 ohab (o-hab) – same as 158

160 ahabah (a-hab-aw) – feminine of 158

Deuteronomy 10

- 12 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,
- 13 "and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?
- 14 "Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it.
- 15 "The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day.
- 16 "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.
- 17 "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.
- 18 "He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.
- 19 "Therefore **love** the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

1730 dowd (dode) – beloved, father’s brother, love, uncle

Proverbs 7

- 18 Come, let us take our fill of **love** until morning; Let us delight ourselves with **love**.

2836 chashaq (khaw-shak) – to cling, to love, to delight in – to desire

Psalm 91

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- 14 "Because he has set his **love** upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.

5690-1 egeb (eh-gheb) – to dote on, amorousness

Ezekiel 33

- 31 "So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much **love**, but their hearts pursue their own gain.

7355-6 racham (raw-kham) – to be compassionate

Psalms 31

- 23 Oh, **love** the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person.

New Testament

25-6 Agape – love in a social or moral sense

2309 thelo – to desire, to choose, to prefer

5360-1-8 – Philadelphia – brotherly love

Philia - friendship

Eros

Storge - affection

There are a number of different **Greek words for love**, as the [Greek language](#) distinguishes how the word is used. [Ancient Greek](#) has three distinct words for love: *eros*, *philia*, and *agape*. However, as with other languages, it has been historically difficult to separate the meanings of these words. Nonetheless, the senses in which these words were generally used are given below.

[Eros](#) (Ἔρως *érōs*) is passionate love, with sensual desire and longing. The Modern Greek word "*erotas*" means "(romantic) love". However, Eros does not have to be sexual in nature. Eros can be interpreted as a love for someone who you love more than the Philia love of friendship. It can also apply to dating relationships as well as marriage. [Plato](#) refined his own definition. Although eros is initially felt for a person, with contemplation it becomes an appreciation of the beauty within that person, or even becomes appreciation of beauty itself. It should be noted [Plato](#) does not talk of physical attraction as a necessary part of love, hence the use of the word platonic to mean, "without physical attraction". [Plato](#) also said Eros helps the soul recall knowledge of beauty, and

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contributes to an understanding of spiritual truth. Lovers and philosophers are all inspired to seek truth by eros. The most famous ancient work on the subject of *eros* is [Plato's Symposium](#), which is a discussion among the students of [Socrates](#) on the nature of *eros*.

[Philia](#) (φιλία *philia*), means friendship in modern Greek, a dispassionate virtuous love, was a concept developed by [Aristotle](#). It includes loyalty to friends, family, and community, and requires virtue, equality and familiarity. In ancient texts, *philia* denoted a general type of love, used for love between family, between friends, a desire or enjoyment of an activity, as well as between lovers. This is the only other word for "love" used in the ancient text of the [New Testament](#) besides *agape*, but even then it is used substantially less frequently.

[Storge](#) (στοργή *storgē*) means affection in modern Greek; it is natural affection, like that felt by parents for offspring. Rarely used in ancient works, and then almost exclusively as a descriptor of relationships within the family.

Ancient usage

Agape as a term for love or affection is rarely used in ancient manuscripts. A title of the goddess [Isis](#) was *agape theon*, or "beloved/darling of the gods," denoting her role as a fertility goddess and her pairing as a partner with multiple gods. While this pairing was often sexual in nature, the term "agape" implied a genuine affection and love for the goddess. *Agape* appears in the [Odyssey](#) twice, where the word describes something that creates contentedness within the speaker. It is this usage that is most common in later texts, where *agape* is used to describe one's feeling about a certain meal, one's feelings towards one's children or spouse, and epigraphs of heroes who are described as being "*enoroen agapeon*," loving or contented with heroism. In the Roman Empire, *agape* was often used to open letters of friendly correspondence, analogous to the modern usage of "Dear ____."

Agape and the verb *agapao* are used extensively in the [Septuagint](#) as the translation of the common Hebrew term for love which is used to denote sexual desire, affection for spouse and children, brotherly love, and God's love for humanity. It is uncertain why *agape* was chosen, but similarity of consonant sounds (*aḥaba*) may have played a part. It is not impossible that the Greek concept even originated as a [transliteration](#) from some Semitic tongue. This usage provides the context for the choice of this otherwise obscure word, in preference to other more common Greek words, as the most frequently used word for *love* in Christian writings.

Agape in Christianity

Agape received a broader usage under later Christian writers as the word that specifically denoted "Christian" love or "[charity](#)" ([1Corinthians 13:1-8](#)), or even God himself (1 John 4:8, *Theos ein agape*, "God is Love"). The [New Testament](#) provides a number of definitions and examples of *agape* that generally expand on the meanings used in ancient texts, denoting brotherly love, love of one's spouse or children, and the love of God for all people.

THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO

By Dale Evans

A Mickey McBride Arrangement

OH, HOW DO I KNOW,
OH, HOW DO I KNOW,
THIS IS HOW I KNOW:
HAVE FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY,
THAT'S THE WAY TO LIVE SUCCESSFULLY,
HOW DO I KNOW?
THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO,
DO GOOD TO YOUR ENEMIES,
AND THE BLESSED LORD YOU'LL SURELY PLEASE,
HOW DO I KNOW?
THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO,
DON'T WORRY 'BOUT TOMORROW,
JUST BE REAL GOOD TODAY,
THE LORD IS RIGHT BESIDE YOU,
HE'LL GUIDE YOU ALL THE WAY,
HAVE FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY,
THAT'S THE WAY TO LIVE SUCCESSFULLY,
HOW DO I KNOW?
THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO,
HOW DO I KNOW?
THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO!

The Christian usage of the term *agape* comes directly from the canonical Gospels' account of the teachings of [Jesus](#). When asked what was the greatest commandment, Jesus said, "'Love (*agape*) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love (*agape*) your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'" ([Matthew 22:37-41](#))

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At the [Sermon on the Mount](#), Jesus said:

You have heard that it was said, 'Love (*agape*) your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love (*agape*) your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?

Christian writers have generally described *agape*, as expounded on by Jesus, as a form of love which is both unconditional and voluntary; that is, it is non-discriminating, has no pre-conditions, and is something that one decides to do. [Saint Paul](#) described love as follows: "Love (*agape*) is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails" ([1Corinthians 13:4-8a](#)). [Tertullian](#), in his 2nd century defense of Christians remarks how Christian love attracted pagan notice: "What marks us in the eyes of our enemies is our loving kindness. 'Only look' they say, 'look how they love one another'" (*Apology* 39).

"Agape" and its various forms are generally used in the New Testament in a positive sense. However, [2Timothy 4:10](#) is the New Testament exception where the Greek word is used in a negative sense: "...for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world...." Thus it is clear that the word did not always refer to "divine" love.

From another source:

Agapē (ἀγάπη *agápē*) means "love" in modern day Greek. The term *s'agapo* means "I love you" in Greek. The word "*agapo*" is the verb "I love". In Ancient Greek it often refers to a general affection rather than the attraction suggested by "*eros*"; *agape* is used in ancient texts to denote feelings for a good meal, one's children, and the feelings for a spouse. It can be described as the feeling of being content or holding one in high regard. The verb appears in the New Testament describing, amongst other things, the relationship between [Jesus](#) and the [beloved disciple](#). In biblical literature, its meaning and usage is illustrated by self-sacrificing, giving love to all--both friend and enemy. It is used in [Matthew](#) 22:39, "Love your neighbour as yourself," and in [John](#) 15:12, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you," and in [1 John](#) 4:8, "God is love." However, the word "agape" is not always used in the New Testament in a positive sense. II Timothy 4:10 uses the word in a negative sense. The Apostle Paul writes, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved (*agapo*) this present world...." Thus the word "agape" is not always used of a divine love or the love of God. Generally, in the New Testament it refers to a total commitment or self-sacrificial love for the object loved. Because of its frequency of use in the New Testament, Christian writers have developed a significant amount of theology based solely on the interpretation of this word.}

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1 John 4:

- 1 ¶ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
- 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,
- 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.
- 4 ¶ You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.
- 5 They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.
- 6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.
- 7 ¶ Beloved, let us **love** one another, for **love** is of God; and everyone who **loves** is born of God and knows God.
- 8 He who does not **love** does not know God, for God is **love**.
- 9 In this the **love** of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.
- 10 In this is **love**, not that we **loved** God, but that He **loved** us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
- 11 Beloved, if God so **loved** us, we also ought to **love** one another.
- 12 No one has seen God at any time. If we **love** one another, God abides in us, and His **love** has been perfected in us.
- 13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.
- 14 ¶ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.
- 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.
- 16 And we have known and believed the **love** that God has for us. God is **love**, and he who abides in **love** abides in God, and God in him.
- 17 ¶ **Love** has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.
- 18 There is no fear in **love**; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in **love**.
- 19 We love Him because He first **loved** us.
- 20 If someone says, "I **love** God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

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- 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who **loves** God must **love** his brother also.

John 21:

- 15 ¶ So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, 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."
- 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you **love** Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I **love** You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."
- 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, 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 all things; You know that I **love** You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

1 Corinthians 13:

- 1 ¶ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not **love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
- 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not **love**, I am nothing.
- 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not **love**, it profits me nothing.
- 4 ¶ **Love** suffers long and is kind; **love** does not envy; **love** does not parade itself, is not puffed up;
- 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;
- 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;
- 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- 8 ¶ **Love** never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.
- 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.
- 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.
- 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
- 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.
- 13 And now abide faith, hope, **love**, these three; but the greatest of these is **love**.

I told you about the 3 conversations I had recently.

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One was with a young mother who had never been married. She told me, for some unknown reason and totally unrelated to the conversation we were having, that she does not foresee ever getting married. It would be nice if she would meet the right person, but she doesn't "need" a husband.

The second conversation was with a young divorced woman a week later. Likewise, unrelated to the deal we were discussing, she mentioned that she didn't need to be married, but she liked being married and wanted to be married.

My third conversation was with a woman who has been married for several years. Like most marriages, theirs had their rocky times. During one of those times, they were facing a potential separation and he began analyzing their marriage. The end result was that he determined that, while he did not feel "needed" in the marriage, he really wanted to be with his wife and their children.

Did you by any chance catch the subtle similarity in those 3 conversations?

In each case, the person doing the talking did not "need" the other person. However, they "wanted" to be with them.

Most of the songs we have heard that sing about love, equate love with "need". That isn't necessarily so. The overriding part of true love is wanting to be with the other person.

Love means:

- I want to be with you versus I need you
- I want to be with you – sometimes
- I want to be with you – often
- I want to be with you – all the time

We are born with a desire for eternity. We are told that God is love and that He loves us. We are told to love our neighbor as ourselves. We want to live forever – with God, and Revelation 21 portrays a beautiful existence.

But – have you considered the other viewpoint?

But, we are also taught that God created us.

- **Genesis 1:27** So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

He knew us before we were born.

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- **Jeremiah 1:5** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

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He knows our every movement and every thought.

- **Psalms 139**
 - 1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me.
 - 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.
 - 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways.
 - 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.
 - 5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.
 - 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.

Why would He create man? Why would He make us so that He knows us so very well?

God doesn't **need** us! He doesn't **need** you! He doesn't **need** me!

God got along quite nicely, thank you, for eons before He created man!

The strong implication that hit me like the proverbial "ton of bricks" – the thing I have never heard and never been told – yes – I want to live forever and be in God's Kingdom. But it never occurred to me that, if God loves me, that means that **He wants to be with me!**

Think about that deeply! God wants to be with you – forever! What a wonderful thought!