

## The Love of God Selected Scriptures

### Introduction

Today is my parents 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary. That is quite an achievement when you do not get married until you are 30! My dad will reach 100 on September 29 of this year. Why do I mention those things? Well, in part to publically share with you a great joy in wishing them a happy anniversary, but more so to give praise to God for His goodness and mercy which in this case is exhibited in Him giving them such long lives and a long marriage. While both of my parents at 89 and 99 are among the few in their generation to reach such ages, even more so is the rarity in our day and age of such a long marriage. When people express amazement at marriages that have existed for only half that length of time, it is nearly jaw dropping for them to consider one that is just shy of seven decades long. What enables such a marriage? In one word, love. Not love as defined by our society, but love as defined by God in His word and by His actions.

I explained this kind of love briefly in my sermon for Robby & Amanda Tumbarello's wedding this past Friday. I talked about it much more extensively in my sermon, *A Biblical View of Love & Romance*, on February 27, 2022 (<https://gracebibleny.org/a-biblical-view-of-love-romance-selected-scriptures>). While the world pursues the fleeting feelings generated by romance, God directs married couples to follow His own example. Jesus commands all of His followers to "*love one another, even as I have loved you, that you love one another*" (John 13:34). Ephesians 5:25 commands, "*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.*" This is a selfless love that sacrifices itself in the best interest of the one loved. Titus 2:3-4 directs older women to be godly examples who teach what is good that "*they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children.*" That passage makes it clear that the love being described is far beyond emotion, for this is a love that is taught, not just experienced.

### Confused about Love

Being pragmatic when I was young, I did not think it would be wise for me to pursue a girl friend if I could not support her, so I waited until I was done with college and could get a good, full time job. I was now in my mid-twenties and ready to look for a wife, but I was not sure what I should look for. Women were confusing to me, and having only brothers did not help with that. I was also very skeptical of what was popularly promoted in society as love. Even back then, most movies and television shows depicted the quest for love as either a romance whose story ended with the couple finally being together and suggesting they would "live happily ever after," or it was a quest full of a lot of pain and heartache and questionable if it was worth the effort - yet one which would always be renewed. An idea encapsulated in the song, "*I'll Never Fall in Love again,*" The song's refrain is "*What do you get when you fall in Love? You only get lies, pain and sorrow, so for at least until tomorrow, I'll never fall in love again.*" That was not something I was interested in, and I was old enough to know that "happily ever after" is a fairy tale. Relationships take hard work because conflicts are inevitable and there has to be something stronger than romance to enable the marriage to endure and mature. My parents had a good marriage, but I also knew too many friends whose parents had divorced, and an aunt and uncle I idealized as a child had also divorced.

I started reading a lot of books on subjects that I thought might help - dating, courtship, premarital counseling and marriage counseling. One book I picked up along the way that was not on any of those

subjects directly but which turned out to be extremely helpful was by Leon Morris entitled, *Testaments of Love*. It was a word study of the Hebrew and Greek words for love found in the Bible. That particular book more than any other shaped my ideas about the nature of true love because it explained it from God's perspective and design for it instead of man's wishes and desires for it. It pointed to God's revelation in the Scriptures of His own love as well and His design for mankind to reflect that attribute.

Diane can tell you first hand that I can and will do romantic things, but I am generally not very thoughtful or good at it. The first valentine's day after we were engaged, I bought her a box of Kleenex on our way out to have a picnic lunch because she was crying because I had not even bothered to get her a card. The next year I did slightly better. I did get her a gift to help make her feel more secure living in the barrio in Van Nuys - a lock for the door. It made sense to me, but it was about as romantic as what it was named - a dead bolt - emphasis on dead. It is also not very romantic to answer her periodic question, "*honey, why do you love me?*" with "*because God has commanded me to do so.*" However, Diane can also tell you first hand that she has no doubts about my love for her because I have sought to do it according to God's commands. Love that seeks her best interest is a whole lot better than Samson's, "*she looks good to me*" (Judges 14:3).

Love is confusing to people because true love is quite different from the love most people are searching to find. People are inherently selfish due to their sin nature. The quest for love becomes a quest to find someone that will fulfill your desires and needs while stimulating particular emotions. Romance occurs when two people find they stimulate those feelings in each other and that the other person does a decent job in meeting their felt needs. Romantics will refer to this as the quest to love and be loved, but a more honest description would be a tick looking for a dog. The tick is happy if it finds a good dog, and though the dog finds the tick to be irritating and at times will scratch at it, but for the most part the dog is content to live life even if it is host to a blood sucking tick. That may be sad, but the real trouble arises when it is finally recognized that there are two ticks and no dog.

If you want to understand what love is supposed to be like, then you need to understand it from God's perspective and follow His example. But it is right at this point that people struggle with what is true and best for them. While God's love is not denied as much as His goodness, the two are related and people will question or even reject God's declarations and example of love because it does not match their own ideas or what they desire for themselves. They project upon God their own ideas about love in human relationships instead of looking to God to learn the nature of true love. God is not like us.

God's love is inherently unselfish, but people are selfish and want their desires fulfilled. They view God's commands as too restrictive and old fashioned. It is hard for selfish people to see beyond themselves and the desires of that moment. They react like spoiled children and complain when they do not get what they want when they want it, and they can react even worse if they manage to get what they wanted and it does not satisfy, and even worse when they are corrected or punished. They want their candy bar and they want it now, but God makes them wait until dinner and then gives them chicken, rice and broccoli instead.

Confusion reigns when lust - striving to fulfill strong, selfish desires - is substituted for love. God's love and man's substitutes for love are opposed to each other. While I have used the quest for a romantic relationship as an example of this, the principle and its application are much wider encompassing all human desires that occur in life. People will question and challenge God's love because they are confused about what it is supposed to be. In order to understand and then imitate God's love in your own life, you need God's help. Praise the Lord that He willingly gives it.

## **Defining Love**

There are two Hebrew words commonly translated as love. The primary one is אהב (ahb word group: aheb, ahav, ohab, ahava) which occurs 212 times. The Dictionary of Biblical Languages defines it as "*an affection based on a close relationship - it can be familial,*

*proper romance or attraction; have a desire for an object with a focus on a preference for one thing over another.*” Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament explains that though “*there is little variation in the basic meaning of this verb. The intensity of the meaning ranges from God’s infinite affection for his people to the carnal appetites of a lazy glutton.*” Here are some examples from TWOT. Much like our own English word “love,” the sense of meaning is determined by the context.

**Relationships:** A husband for his wife such as Elkanah for Hannah (1 Sam. 1:5). The love of a father for a son and a mother for her son as seen in Abraham for Isaac (Gen 22:2), Rebekah for Jacob (Gen. 25:28), and Israel for Joseph (Gen 37:3). The word is not used of children for parents who are to instead be honored, revered and obeyed. The word is used for Ruth who loved Naomi, her mother-in-law (Ruth 4:15). A slave might love his master to the point of indenturing himself for the rest of his life (Exod. 21:8). This is the word used in the command in Lev. 19:18 to “*love your neighbor as yourself*” and in Deut. 10:19 to “*show love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.*” It also describes the love between friends such as Jonathan & David (1 Sam 20:17). In 1 Kings 5:1 this word is translated as “friend” to describe the relationship between king Hiram of Tyre and king David of Israel, and in 2 Chronicles 20:7 of Abraham as God’s friend.

**Things:** The word is also used to describe love of things both concrete and abstract. Gen 27:4 describes Isaac’s love for savory meat, while 2 Chronicles 26:10 describes king Uzziah’s love for the soil (agricultural land). Prov. 21:17 gives a warning to those who love wine and oil, Prov. 10:17 those who love sleep, and Eccl. 5:9 those who love money. Psalm 119 describes the Psalmist’s love for God’s commandments (vs. 47), law (v. 97), testimonies (v. 119), and precepts (v. 159). Psalm 52:3 describes those who love evil, Psalm 4:2 those who love vanity, and Psalm 109:17 those who loved cursing. Opposite to those kinds of people, Amos 5:15 gives the command to love good and Zechariah 8:19 to love truth and peace. Prov. 29:3 describes the blessing of those who love wisdom, Prov. 22:11 those who love purity of heart, and Psalm 40:16 those who love salvation.

**God.** אָהַב / aheb is used in Deuteronomy 6:5 in the command to love God with all your heart, soul and might and various Psalms contain assertions of such love for God (Psalm 116:1). The word is also used of the Lord’s love for men, especially Israel (Deut. 23:5; Psalm 47:4; Jer. 31:3; Hosea 11:1). This word is also used to describe the Lord’s love for righteousness and justice (Psalm 11:7; 33:5; Isa. 61:8), Mt. Zion (Ps. 78:68) and the sanctuary of the Temple (Mal. 2:11).

A second Hebrew word, אָהַבָּ (hāšaq word group) is also translated as love, but its root only occurs 12 times. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament explains, *hāšaq emphasizes that which attaches to something or someone; in the case of emotions, it is that love which is already bound to its object. . . This root may denote the strong desire of a man toward a beautiful woman (Gen. 34:8) who could, however, be put away if she did not live up to expectations (Deut. 21:11–14). . . A deep inward attachment (in a positive sense) is descriptive of God’s love of Israel (Deut. 10:15). He was bound to them of his own volition (love) and not because of anything good or desirable in them (Deut. 7:7). It is to God’s attachment (love) that Hezekiah attributes his deliverance (Isa. 38:17). This is the love that will not let go. If a man has such an attachment toward God he will be delivered (Ps. 91:14).”*

A third Hebrew word, דָּוָד / dod, is most commonly translated as “beloved,” but also as “love” and “uncle” with context determining the meaning. It is used throughout Song of Solomon to refer to my “beloved” is the sense of the one who loves me or my lover and as “love” in the sense of physical attraction and love making. The Septuagint uses many Greek synonyms to express its range of meanings, but it is not used in reference to either love for God or God’s love for people.

I covered the Greek words for love in some detail in my February 27 sermon, *A Biblical View of Love & Romance*, which I mentioned earlier, so I will only describe them briefly here.

The first Greek words translated as love I will mention is ἔρως / eros. It is not used in the Scriptures, but it was an important concept in Greek society. It is characterized as a “*love of the worthy*” combined with “*a desire to possess*” directed at something or someone who is thought to be worthy, desirable,

attractive, and it wants that person or thing to become his or hers. It is equated with either romantic love or sexual love in human relationships and its proper place is in marriage as expressed in the Song of Solomon. Within marriage it can and should be beautiful and valuable, but outside of marriage it can quickly become tawdry and descend into immorality.

The second word is *στοργή* / *storgā* which occurs in the New Testament only in its negated form, *ἄστοργος* / *astorgos* (Romans 1:31; 2 Timothy 3:3 - without natural affection). The term refers to natural or family love. It is a glue that helps hold families together extending from the nuclear family to kin and very close friends.

The *φιλέω* / *phileō* word group along with its many compound forms is next. It carries the sense of “like” and “value” in a wide range of intensities for both material and immaterial objects as well as people. The word is applied to the love of money (1 Timothy 6:10) pleasure (2 Timothy 3:4), prestige and honor (Matthew 6:5; 23:6), lying (Revelation 22:15) contention (1 Corinthians 11:16) and self (2 Timothy 3:2-4). It is also applied to love of what is good (Titus 1:8-9), hospitality (Hebrews 13:2), mankind (Titus 3:4), parents and children (Matthew 10:37), and the brethren (1 Peter 1:22). When used of human relationships, this refers to the love of friendship which extends beyond family and relatives to those you like for whatever reason. Levels of friendship can range from casual to intimate and intensity of commitment can range from minor inconvenience to great sacrifice. This is an important word group for Christians for we are to love one another in this manner (Romans 12:10) as well as the Lord but not the world (1 Corinthians 16:22; James 4:4). This word group is used for the love of God the Father for the Son and for those who love the Son (John 5:20; 16:27). However, there is another Greek word which is much stronger that is used to characterize God’s love and the love Christians are to have for God and one another.

The *ἀγάπη* / *agapā*, *ἀγαπάω* / *agapaō* word group is an equivalent for *אָהַב* / *ahab* in the Septuagint, but it also often overlaps with the *φιλέω* / *phileō* word group in many contexts and at times are used synonymously (John 12:43 - used in the sense of “like”). However, there are also significant differences in New Testament usages. Louw Nida notes that *φιλέω* (*phileō*) and *φιλία* (*philia*) are likely to focus upon love or affection based upon interpersonal association, while *ἀγαπάω* (*agapaō*) and *ἀγάπη* (*agapā*) focus upon love and affection based on deep appreciation and high regard.” More importantly, the TDNT article on this word group points out that Jesus’ use of it as a description of God’s love and the demands made of His followers in loving God (Matthew 22:37) and one another (John 13:34) stress that it is an act of the will, a decision to love rather than an emotion that is expressed. That is in keeping with the Hebrew Scriptures description of God setting His love upon Israel despite Israel’s shortcomings simply because He chose to do so (Deut. 7:7-8), and His commands concerning the necessity to “love God with all your heart, mind and strength” (Deut. 6:5). This emphasis on it being a love of choice made even at self sacrifice in the best interest of the one loved (Eph. 5:25) was continued by the apostles in the rest of the New Testament.

## Man’s Love

Each of these types of love can be expressed and experienced by man, but because of his inherent sinfulness, the love of the natural man is rooted in his own desires - usually selfish - so that the object of his love is loved because it meets some desire or interest. The range of emotion and type of desires varies and with it the particular aspect of love. The love described by *ἔρως* / *eros* results in immorality outside of marriage and within marriage it is often highly emotional, ecstatic, and usually possessive in seeking fulfillment. The familial love of *στοργή* / *storgā* can create strong ties within a family, but selfishness and sin can break those ties causing family members to become estranged from each other for years, sometimes permanently. Blood may be thicker than water, but it is not thicker than selfishness. The love inherent in friendship, *φιλέω* / *phileō*, usually develops due to shared interests which can range from very shallow to very deep fond feelings of affection, but sin and selfishness makes friendship

fickle, quickly changing and lost. Even best friends can become arch enemies. The Biblical concept of ἀγάπη /agapā in a commitment to do what is best for the other person even at self-sacrifice can occur among the ungodly, but it is rare. Among believers it is to become normal as the Christian learns to walk in love of Christ with this kind of love developed toward others, especially other believers. It is a love of action, not necessarily emotion.

### God's Love

God's attribute of love is a stated fact of Scripture and it is evidenced throughout the Bible. 1 John 4:8 states directly that "*God is love.*" In 2 Corinthians 13:11 the apostle Paul calls Him the "*God of love*" through whom we can have peace. Ephesians 2:4 reveals that God's great mercy arises because of the love by which He has loved us. It is because of God's great love that we can approach God who is described in Hebrews 12:29 as a "*consuming fire*" and not be terrified. Instead, like children in the presence of their strong and powerful father, we are at peace and safety, though dad is a grave danger to any that would threaten his family.

God's ἀγάπη /agapā love is an essential quality of God by which He seeks what is best and good for the objects of His love even at self-sacrifice. As we will see in a moment, it is best demonstrated in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners. The love He commands Christians to have for both one another and for the lost reflects that love and is generated by the Holy Spirit in the believer. It is a response to God's love as stated in 1 John 4:19, "*We love, because He first loved us.*"

All of God's attributes reflect on each other for they originate from within God Himself as part of His being self-existent and self-sufficient. God's love is infinite in breadth, depth and expanse for God is omniscient and omnipresent. His love is without end because it is eternal. His love will not change because He is immutable. It is beneficent, that is, it seeks the welfare of its objects because God is good. It extends to those who do not deserve it because God is merciful and gracious. It will accomplish all of God's purposes because God is omnipotent, faithful and sovereign. His love can never be the cause of evil because God is holy, but it will be the cause of the condemnation of the wicked who reject it because God is righteous and just.

God's love is demonstrated in a multitude of ways. Consider these

A) We begin with the fact that God created the universe and all things within it in six days and pronounced all of it to be very good (Genesis 1:31). He did so for His own purposes and He continues to hold all things together and provide for all life (Colossians 1:16-17; Psalm 145:15-16; 147:8-9). God's action in bringing about the existence and sustaining of all things is an act of His love since He is self-sufficient and without need for anything He created.

B) When Adam & Eve sinned, God could have justly taken any one of many actions that would have resulted in them being eternally punished and separated from Him. Instead, God began to display attributes of patience, mercy, grace, justice and love. Though there would be a curse placed upon the man, the woman, the serpent and the earth, God also provided a substitute sacrifice for their sin with a promise of future redemption when the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3)

C) As mankind continued its descent into wickedness reaching the point described in Genesis 6:5 as "*every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,*" God could have again chosen to follow any of many possibilities resulting in the destruction of mankind and eternal punishment. Instead, God again displayed love in the midst of His wrath against sin by extending His grace in providing a warning and means of preserving life on the earth of Noah and his family as well as the air breathing land animals (Genesis 6-9).

D) After the flood was over and humanity began to repopulate the earth, they also began to quickly forget the truth about God and instead believe demons and lies resulting in widespread paganism. Yet God kept a witness and in mercy chose Abraham and as an act of love made him His friend and blessed him to become a great nation, have a permanent land, and become a blessing to all the families of the

earth (Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23). Abraham would become the example of justification by faith (Romans 4), and through him would come the Messiah.

E) God choose to love Jacob (Romans 9:13) and the nation that would arise from him to be His holy, covenant nation (Deuteronomy 7:7-13). God would make Israel His own possession and a kingdom of priests to proclaim God to the nations (Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 43:21)

F) Because God loved Israel, He turned the curses that Balak wanted Balaam to pronounce upon them (Numbers 22-24) into blessings (Deut. 23:5).

G) God's choice of Abraham's descendants through Jacob, the nation of Israel, is set in an everlasting love as His own people (Jeremiah 31:1-3). It is for that reason that God has set and kept His promises to restore them even after they have suffered the consequences of their own rebellion against the Lord. Deuteronomy 27-30 record God's promises of blessings if they obeyed, curses if they disobeyed and future restoration following punishment. The rest of Jewish history is a record of God fulfilling those promises. All of that is due to God's love for His people.

H) The Lord's love is demonstrated to all that belong to Him through His reproof and discipline of them. Hebrews 12:5-10 quotes from Proverbs 3:12 in explaining that God treats the redeemed as sons in dealing with their sin - <sup>5</sup> ". . . *'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; <sup>6</sup> For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.*' <sup>7</sup> *It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?* <sup>8</sup> *But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.* <sup>9</sup> *Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?* <sup>10</sup> *For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.* <sup>11</sup> *All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*" Revelation 3:19 gives the Lord's warning, "*Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.*"

I) God's plan of redemption arises out of God's love. That is stated succinctly but very powerfully in John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*" This love is magnified when it is remembered that Jesus came into the world to seek and save the lost, sinners in rebellion against him (Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15) (See [https://gracebible.org/love\\_god\\_john\\_31621](https://gracebible.org/love_god_john_31621)).

J) This sacrificial love for sinners is stressed in Romans 5:8 which I pointed out last week. "*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" Like God's choice of the nation of Israel to be His people, God's choice to love and redeem any human is based solely within Himself and not because of anything attractive in the object of His love. That is why of all the words for love, only the ἀγαπάω / agapaó word group is adequate. It is a sacrificial love of choice for the best interest of the one loved.

K) It is also God's love that gives absolute security to the redeemed for it is in God's love we have His promises for our provision, protection, sanctification and eventual glorification. Romans 8:28-39, <sup>28</sup> *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* <sup>29</sup> *For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;* <sup>30</sup> *and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.* <sup>31</sup> *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?* <sup>32</sup> *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?* <sup>33</sup> *Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;* <sup>34</sup> *who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.* <sup>35</sup> *Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will*

tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” <sup>37</sup> But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

### **Responding to God’s Love**

The first response to God’s love is repentance - Romans 2:4. There needs to be a change of your mind about yourself, sin and the Savior. The bad news is you are not good and your sins condemn you before our holy Creator. The good news is that God loves you and has provided a Savior. Redemption, the forgiveness of sin is offered to all who will believe in the person and substitutionary atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, you love God as stated in 1 John 4:19, “We love, because He first love us.” That love will be demonstrated by becoming a follower of Jesus Christ and obedient to His commands as stated in John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” The obedience is the natural response to the primary command to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength (Matthew 22:37-38).

Third, you will love your neighbor as yourself which is the second great commandment (Matthew 22:39). That begins with loving other Christians as Christ loved you by which you demonstrate you are His disciple (John 13:25). This will be practically seen in fulfilling all of the “one another” commands and in humility putting the interest of others before your own (Phil. 2:3-4). Then, as you spiritually mature, it will extend to even loving your enemies and praying for them (Matthew 5:44). This kind of ἀγάπη /agapā love is a demonstration that you are born of God and know Him (1 John 4:7).

Fourth, Romans 5:1 and 8:1 apply to you. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” and “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.” As 1 John 4:18 explains, God’s perfect love casts out fear and therefore we are secure. A. W. Tozer stated it well. “God is love and God is sovereign. His love disposes Him to desire our everlasting welfare and His sovereignty enables Him to secure it.” You can have absolute trust in our loving and sovereign God.

See also: [https://gracebibleny.org/lies\\_against\\_gods\\_goodness\\_love](https://gracebibleny.org/lies_against_gods_goodness_love) and [https://gracebibleny.org/no\\_greater\\_love\\_memorial\\_day\\_sermon](https://gracebibleny.org/no_greater_love_memorial_day_sermon)

**Sermon Notes - 5/1/2022**  
The Love of God - Selected Scriptures

**Introduction**

The basis for a long marriage is \_\_\_\_\_

While the world pursues fleeting \_\_\_\_\_, God directs couples to follow His own example of love

**Confused about Love**

Did the pursuit of \_\_\_\_\_ love result in “happily ever after” or “lies, pain and sorrow”?

There are many \_\_\_\_\_ marriages, but there is also a lot of estrangement, separation & divorce

*Testaments of Love* by Leon Morris - word studies on love in the Bible

Committed \_\_\_\_\_ love is better than worldly ideas of romance

Love is confusing because \_\_\_\_\_ love is quite different from the love most people are searching to find

True love must be understood from \_\_\_\_\_ perspective and experienced by following His example

God’s love is inherently \_\_\_\_\_, but people are selfish and want their desires fulfilled

God’s love and man’s substitutes for it are \_\_\_\_\_ to each other

**Defining Love**

אַהֲבָה / aheb - “an affection based on a close relationship” - \_\_\_\_\_ ranges widely

Used of \_\_\_\_\_: Husband / wife; Parent / child; slave / master; friends; neighbors

Used of \_\_\_\_\_: food; wine & oil; sleep; money; God’s law; evil; vanity; good; truth; wisdom, etc.

Used to describe man’s love for \_\_\_\_\_; God’s love for men - esp. Israel; the Lord’s love for righteousness

קָשָׁה / hāšaq - “that which attaches to something or someone” - “\_\_\_\_\_” - “bound by own volition”

דָּוָד / dod - “beloved, love, uncle” - not used in reference to \_\_\_\_\_

ἔρως / eros - a “love of the worthy” combined with “a desire to \_\_\_\_\_” - not used in the Scriptures

στοργή / storgā - \_\_\_\_\_, natural love (family, kin, very close friends)

φιλέω / phileō: “\_\_\_\_\_” “value” - a wide range of intensities for both material & immaterial objects & people

In human relationships, it is used in reference to \_\_\_\_\_ - from casual to intimate.

ἀγαπάω / agapaō word group - overlaps φιλέω / phileō - an equivalent for אַהֲבָה / aheb in Septuagint

“love & affection based on deep appreciation & high regard” - A love of \_\_\_\_\_ and sacrifice

**Man’s Love**

Each type of love is expressed & experienced by man, but it is tainted with inherent selfishness & \_\_\_\_\_

ἔρως / eros can be good in marriage, but it leads to \_\_\_\_\_ outside of marriage

στοργή / storgā can create strong \_\_\_\_\_ ties, And blood is thicker than water, but not selfishness

φιλέω / phileō is needed for friendship, but \_\_\_\_\_ can make even best friends into arch enemies

ἀγάπη / agapā among the ungodly is \_\_\_\_\_, but it is to be a hallmark of Christians



## God's Love

God is \_\_\_\_\_ (1 John 4:8; 2 Cor. 13:11), & it is the basis for His mercy & grace (Eph. 2:1-10).

ἀγάπη /agapā is an \_\_\_\_\_ quality of God and a characteristic demanded of Christians in response to Him  
\_\_\_\_\_ of God's attributes reflect on each other & His love reflects both His infinite & moral attributes

\*God \_\_\_\_\_ all things very good & He continues to sustain all things as an act of His love

\*God in love \_\_\_\_\_ a substitute sacrifice for Adam & Eve instead of destroying them for their sin

\*God in love \_\_\_\_\_ grace to Noah & his family & the animals instead of destroying them in the flood

\*God in love extended \_\_\_\_\_ to Abraham & his descendants & to bless the world through Messiah

\*God chose to love Jacob and make the nation of Israel \_\_\_\_\_ people

\*Because God loved Israel, He turned the curses Balak wanted pronounced on them into \_\_\_\_\_

\*Because God loves Israel He has kept all of His promises to the nation including \_\_\_\_\_

\*The Lord's love is demonstrated in His \_\_\_\_\_ of those that belong to Him - Hebrews 12:5-10

\*God's plan of \_\_\_\_\_ of sinners through Jesus' atonement arose from His love (John 3:16, etc.)

\*God's love demonstrated in Christ's substitutionary death for sinners is the basis for Christian \_\_\_\_\_

\*God's love provides \_\_\_\_\_ security for the saved (Romans 8:28-39)

## Responding to God's Love

\* \_\_\_\_\_ - the kindness of God should lead to repentance - Romans 2:4

\*Love \_\_\_\_\_ because He first loved you (1 John 4:19) & obey His commandments out of love (John 14:15)

\*Love \_\_\_\_\_ beginning with other believers (John 13:25) and extending to others, even enemies (Mt. 5:44)

\*Rest in the \_\_\_\_\_ of being justified by faith & without fear because of God's love - Rom. 5:1; 8:1; 1 Jn 4:18

**KIDS KORNER** - Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Count how many times the word "love" is mentioned. 2) Discuss with your parents the different kinds of love & God's love for you

**THINK ABOUT IT!** Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What enables a marriage to be long and successful? Why does the pursuit of romance cause such confusion about the nature of true love? How does romance differ from true love? What role can proper romance play in true love? Why do people doubt or even deny God's love? What are the major general differences between God's love and love as most people define it? What is the meaning of each of the following Hebrew & Greek words translated as love (Biblical words followed by Strong's #): אָהַב / aheb #H157; חָשַׁק hāšaq #H2836; דָּד / dod #H1730 - ἔρως / eros; στοργή / storgē; φιλέω / phileō word group #G5368 & G5373; ἀγαπάω / agapaō word group #G25 & G26. Describe the nature of normal human love within marriage, family & friendship and what causes those kinds of love to diminish or disappear. Describe the essential characteristics of God's love. Describe the relationship between God's love and His other attributes both infinite and moral. Reflect on the importance of God's love in creation; responding to Adam & Eve's sin; rescue of Noah, his family and the animals from the Flood; God's calling of Abraham; God's choice of Jacob and then the nation of Israel; God's discipline of His children; God's plan of redemption of sinners. What is the relationship between a Christian's eternal security and God's love? How should man respond to God's love? How have you responded to God's love?